

Welcome back! This is it, the last semester of the Croft senior thesis. Hopefully by now you have a good sense of the structure of your chapters and have completed most if not all of your analysis. It is time to start writing. The most important piece of advice I have for you is to work hard on your thesis **now**. Contact your mentor and third reader right away, block off ten to fifteen hours a week on your calendar, open up your files from last semester, and get to work!

Rough Draft

The **first, rough draft** of the thesis is due **Monday, September 24**. This is only **five weeks away**. Think about what your finished thesis will look like and what you will need to do each week to get there by Monday, September 24, and make a detailed plan. This is the moment to work the hardest on your thesis. Your other classes are just getting started and you have more time now than you will later in the semester. A good, complete first draft will lay the groundwork for a high-quality thesis and a low-stress semester.

Complete Draft

The **complete draft** of the thesis is due to your mentor, second reader, and your third reader on **Friday, October 19**. Send your second reader (and me, if I'm not your reader) an electronic copy, either a Word document or a PDF, and ask your mentor and third reader if they prefer a printed copy or an electronic file.

At this point you should have revised all of the rough language, found all of the missing references, and elucidated the unclear points that you still had in your first draft. Your mentor and the second and third readers should be reading a complete and polished paper so that they can aim their comments at helping you push your analysis to the next level, not correcting basic grammatical mistakes. If you do not have a full draft completed at this point, you will be facing an uphill battle for the rest of the semester, and your final product will not reflect the best of your abilities.

Comments from Readers

Over the two weeks after you submit your second draft you should continue polishing your work as your committee reads it over. This is also a good time to prepare the presentation work that you will give at your defense (see <http://www.croft.olemiss.edu/current/thesis-defense> for instructions). Your committee will return your thesis to you with comments by **Friday, November 2**, at which point you will meet with your mentor and discuss how to integrate your other readers' suggestions into your work, taking into consideration the scope of your project and the time remaining before the end of their semester.

Final Draft

After making all necessary revisions, you will turn in the **final draft** of your thesis on **Monday, November 26**, and, in conversation with your mentor and third reader, you will schedule a time for your thesis defense during regular hours between **Wednesday, November 28** and **Friday, November 0**. You are responsible for finding a time that is convenient for both your mentor and your third reader.

Please refer to the Senior Thesis Format page on the website (<http://www.croft.olemiss.edu/current/croft-thesis-format>) a detailed explanation of the **formatting requirements** for the thesis.

If you do not turn in your final draft by the deadline of **Monday, November 26** you will not be able to defend this semester. Do not let yourself get behind!

Final Grade

Your final grade for Inst 422 will be based on the evaluations of your three readers of both your written thesis and your thesis defense. The criteria for this evaluation are as follows:

- The student has articulated a *compelling research question or hypothesis*.
- The student has *contextualized the research topic*.
- The student has used *appropriate literature and primary sources*.
- The student has employed *methods of analysis* that are both *explicit* and *appropriate* for testing the hypothesis.
- The student has convincingly *demonstrated the validity of the hypothesis*.
- The *note apparatus, bibliography, and any graphs or tables* are organized and presented in a manner in keeping with the standards of the discipline.
- The thesis meets the *linguistic and stylistic standards* of the discipline.
- The student *met my deadlines and those set by the Croft Institute*.
- The student *kept the appointments we set and was respectful of my time*.

- The student's *oral presentation at the outset* of the defense was successful.
- The student's *oral defense* of the thesis was successful.

Your written thesis will count for 80% of the grade for Inst 422 and your defense for 20%. A grade of C or better is required to complete the course for credit and graduate. Please discuss these criteria with your mentor to determine what his or her expectations are for each of them.

Model Theses

Remember, the Croft Institute has posted model senior theses and thesis prospectuses on its website. The theses can be found at: <http://www.croft.olemiss.edu/current/model-theses>. You will have to log in to see the theses.

Let me reiterate that the key to success this semester is working hard now so that you can turn in a complete draft of your thesis on **Monday, September 24!** This should be your absolute number one priority for the next four weeks. As always, if you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me at wschenck@olemiss.edu or 915-1500.