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**COURSE GUIDELINES:
HLTH AGE 4Z06**

**UNDERGRADUATE HONOURS
HEALTH, AGING AND SOCIETY
THESIS**

2017 – 2018

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PURPOSE:

The purpose of this outline is to provide a convenient guide to the components of the thesis course and to help you in preparing a thesis. Some requirements **must** be met in detail; most notably including **deadlines**. In addition, the guide contains some suggestions that might be useful in planning the thesis proposal, oral presentation, poster and final report.

If you are in doubt about anything, please consult with the Thesis Coordinator.

Three Opportunities in the Thesis Experience

Students are given a choice of one of three thesis experiences, based on different goals and student interests. One is oriented to developing expertise in academic knowledge and understanding; another in practice and program issues; the third in the process of knowledge production.

Option 1: Theses in Theory and Knowledge in Health and/or Aging

This has the student integrate theory and knowledge in a substantive area. Working with an academic supervisor, the student and supervisor would choose current literature in a specific area of interest. The student would produce a paper or papers that would advance their knowledge. They would be expected to analyze, synthesize and evaluate the material they are reading.

Option 2: Theses Experience in Health or Social Care Practice

This option involves the student working with a community supervisor to develop, implement and evaluate a program. Some examples might be an art therapy program, an exercise program in a long term care facility, or a training program in electronic communication. Pedagogically, this might proceed using a formal learning contract in which the student proposes a partnership with a community group or supervisor, an idea for a project, a plan for implementing it and a set of evaluation criteria. The student may also implement the program and evaluate the implementation. Students could work in teams, depending on the scope of the project.

Option 3: Theses Experience in Research/Inquiry

This option sees students working with a supervisor to develop a research question, determine appropriate research methodology, conducting the research, analyzing the data and writing up the project in a traditional research thesis format. The emphasis would be on the process of research/inquiry as well as the product. Pedagogically, this fully embraces self-directed or active learning. Students would work with an academic supervisor from either inside or outside the department.

TOPIC/SUPERVISOR SELECTION

Students can choose their own topic and then recruit a faculty member (not necessarily in Health, Aging and Society) as their supervisor. Alternatively, students can participate in the existing research program of a faculty member. The Thesis Coordinator may grant approval for a supervisor who is not a McMaster faculty member.

Students in Combined Honours B.A. programs in either Gerontology or Health Studies are encouraged to link with their other major (e.g., Sociology, Religious Studies, History, etc.) in selection of a project.

TOPIC/SUPERVISOR APPROVAL:

The topic and thesis supervisor must be approved by the Thesis Coordinator.

ETHICS APPROVAL:

All research involving direct contact (in person, by phone, or by mail) with human subjects **must** be approved by the McMaster Student Ethics Committee. If you are working on a project for which your supervisor has already obtained University ethics approval, you will not need to go through this step. If you are unclear as to whether your project requires ethics approval, discuss the matter with the Thesis Coordinator. You may obtain an ethics form online at <http://www.mcmaster.ca/ors/ethics/>. **Please note that ethics approval can take 2-4 weeks.**

A Note on Data: If you are gathering data on your own, it is important to keep your raw data and a list of people from whom data were obtained until after you receive your final grades from the Registrar.

SCHEDULED MEETINGS (BSB 108, unless stated otherwise below):

September 7: lecture on course requirements

September 14: lecture on ethics proposals (with Nick Caric)

September 21: individual meetings - in KTH 240 - to discuss thesis proposals (sign-up sheets)

September 28: individual meetings - in KTH 240 - to discuss thesis proposals (sign-up sheets)

October 19: oral presentations of thesis proposals and literature reviews to class (sign-up sheets)

October 26: oral presentations of thesis proposals and literature reviews to class (sign-up sheets)

January 4: individual meetings – in KTH 240 - to discuss thesis progress (sign-up sheets)

January 11: individual meetings – in KTH 240 - to discuss thesis progress (sign-up sheets)

February 8: lecture on thesis posters (See Appendix II)

March 8: present thesis posters (See Appendix II)

April TBA: poster presentations at Reception for Graduates

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Proposal and Literature Review (marked by Supervisor) **25%**

Proposal and Literature Review 15 min Presentation (marked by Thesis Coordinator) **10%**

Poster (marked by Class and Thesis Coordinator) **10%**

Full Thesis (marked by Supervisor) **55%**

DEADLINES:

- 1) Supervisor Information Sheet and Project Approval Form must be submitted to the Thesis Coordinator **at the first class on SEPTEMBER 7 or at the first individual meeting on SEPTEMBER 21 or 28.**
- 2) A 12- to 15-page thesis proposal and literature review must be submitted both to the Supervisor (directly) and Thesis Coordinator (via the department office) **ON NOVEMBER 17.** Your supervisor will need to inform the coordinator of your grade by **DECEMBER 8.**
- 3) A completed ethics approval form (if required) must be submitted to the Thesis Coordinator (via the department office) **ON NOVEMBER 24, (or as soon as possible thereafter).**
- 4) The thesis must be handed in to your supervisor **NO LATER THAN MARCH 29.** Plan ahead to meet the deadline. You are **STRONGLY** encouraged to hand in a draft of the thesis ahead of that time, so that the supervisor can provide comments that you can incorporate into the final version. Your supervisor will need to inform the coordinator of your grade by **APRIL 13**
- 5) The **FINAL COPY** of the thesis must then be submitted (by either you or your supervisor) to the Thesis Coordinator, before grades can be submitted to the Registrar. Grades are normally submitted to the registrar **WITHIN TWO WEEKS OF THE LAST DAY OF CLASSES.** Keep in mind that this copy of the thesis will remain in the Program Archives. Most of the rules that will follow are to ensure consistency among all theses.

NUMBER OF COPIES:

TWO (2) bound copies are required: one for your supervisor, and one for the Thesis Coordinator. A **THIRD** copy (not bound) should be given to your supervisor for marking; this copy will be returned to you with notes/comments on it. If you want a clean copy for yourself (and you likely will), keep a **FOURTH** copy for yourself.

COMPUTER ACCESS:

Students may use the Social Sciences' computer laboratory for word processing, statistical analysis, and electronic mail.

THE WRITTEN RESEARCH* THESIS

OVERVIEW:

The Honours thesis should represent the results of a substantive scholarly investigation of an issue of significance to gerontology and/or health studies. It is a statement or argument that the student would be willing to defend.

All projects will be based on analysis and synthesis of the literature and an original investigation or analysis of secondary data.

A thesis is a written report of the student's search for knowledge or understanding conducted to meet a requirement for the Honours degree. The Honours degree is a prestigious degree awarded to people who have proved their worth in many ways. The point of doing a thesis is to establish the candidate's ability to search for knowledge in an independent way. The student will work closely with a faculty member, while being the major intellectual contributor to the project. The student identifies the topic and writes the report.

FORMAT:

ORIGINAL TYPESCRIPT

The original copy should be printed using letter-quality type on 8½" x 11" good quality paper.

TYPESCRIPT

Textual material must be double-spaced; footnotes and long quotations should be single-spaced. The entire thesis must be in the same type and care should be taken to ensure that good quality typing/printing produces a black, even copy.

The Program copy may be photocopied on both sides of the paper.

* The format of the Thesis in Gerontological Theory and Knowledge or Practice should be developed with your supervisor and the co-ordinator.

MARGINS AND INDENTATIONS

The first line of each paragraph and of each footnote should be indented five (5) spaces.

Each chapter or division should begin 2" from the top of a new page, as should also the Table of Contents, the Abstract, a List of Illustrations, and the Bibliography. All other pages should have top and left-hand margins 1½" wide and a right-hand margin of 1" wide. The last line of the page, whether of text or footnote, should be no less than 1" from the bottom.

These margins apply to all illustrative material: diagrams, maps, photographs, charts, tables, and computer print-outs.

PAGINATION

All pages are to be numbered except the half-title page, which is disregarded in the pagination, and the title page, on which the number (i) is implied but not given. For the remaining pages of the preliminaries, lower-case Roman numerals (ii, iii, iv, etc.) are centred ¾" above the bottom of the page. For the first page of each chapter or section, Arabic numerals (1, 23, 56, etc.) are similarly centred at the bottom of the page.

On all other pages of the text and reference matter, Arabic numerals should be in the top right-hand corner, 1" below the top of the page (this includes maps, tables, etc.).

ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIAL

Maps, diagrams, tables, and figures for reproduction should be drawn in black ink. Do not use colours on graphs as they appear in varying shades of gray on photocopies.

SEQUENCE OF PARTS

NOTE: Students may find it helpful to look at some theses from previous years. These are available in the Health, Aging & Society office (KTH-226). A thesis normally comprises the following parts, arranged in this order:

1. **The Preliminaries**

(a) **Title Page:** The material on the title page is arranged symmetrically on either side of an imaginary vertical line 4½" from the left side of the page. Spacing and capitalization should be like those in the sample attached. (See sample.)

(b) **Descriptive Note:** To consist of degree and year; department; University name and location; full title in lower case; full name of author; supervisor; number of pages. To be numbered ii. (See sample.)

(c) **Abstract:** An abstract of not more than one page shall be included and shall indicate the major emphasis of the thesis, new discoveries and its contribution to knowledge. To be numbered iii.

(d) **Acknowledgments:** An expression of thanks for assistance given by the supervisor and by others should be set forth on a separate page. To be numbered in lower case Roman numerals.

(e) **Table of Contents:** A list of the major divisions in the thesis indicating their page numbers.

(f) **List of Tables:** A list of the titles of tables, with page numbers.

(g) **List of Figures:** A list of the titles of figures (illustrated charts), with page numbers.

2. The Text

The main body of the thesis should be approximately forty (40) pages in length and should normally consist of the following four (4) parts (see Note 2 on Page 7):

(1) Introduction and Literature Review: This includes a brief (1 - 2 pages) introduction which sets up the topic and tells the reader in general terms what the purpose of the thesis is and how the research was done. The literature review (15 - 18 pages) presents relevant previous research, relates the research to your topic, and is synthesized so as to show both what is known and what still needs to be examined (i.e., show how your thesis will fill a gap in knowledge). Following the literature review, if appropriate, you should have a section on the theoretical approach you will use and/or describe the major concepts you will use. The end of part 1 should include a section, Research Questions. List the specific questions (1 - 5) that your thesis will ask and seek to answer, in order to address the gap in knowledge you have identified through your literature review. Note that this section takes your overall topic and breaks it into researchable questions. If appropriate for your thesis, also list your hypotheses in this section.

(2) Method: This section informs the reader of the methodological approaches to be used in the investigation. This includes (as appropriate): setting, sample, measures, and methods of analysis.

(3) Results: This section deals with the findings of the investigation. It provides the kind of data that enable the reader to make independent judgements regarding the nature and quality of the investigation. Your presentation of the results should reflect the research questions posed in part 1.

(4) Discussion: The discussion presents the major findings and interprets them in the light of the issues raised in the Introduction and Literature Review. This section also presents any recommendations regarding policy or practice issues.

3. Reference Matter

- (a) **References**: Use the format of one style manual (e.g., American Psychological Association).
- (b) **Appendices**: Appendices may include lists of materials, data, or whatever the supervisor deems appropriate.

SUGGESTED MARKING SCHEME:

The following guidelines have been suggested to supervisors:

Introduction and Literature Review 15

Methods 10

Results 30

Discussion 25

Style 5

Process 15*

Total 100

* Process refers to such things as student participated in regular meetings (at least once a month), completed tasks on schedule, followed through on supervisors suggestions, revisions, etc.

Sample of Title Page:

**PERCEPTIONS OF HEARING
IMPAIRMENT IN OLD AGE
(note: All Capital Letters)**

BY

**JOHN THOMAS DOE
(note: All Capital Letters)**

**A Thesis submitted to the Program in Gerontology
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree
Bachelor of Arts Honours Gerontology (and)
McMaster University
April, 20xx**

Sample Descriptive Note:

BACHELOR OF ARTS (2005) McMASTER UNIVERSITY

Hamilton, Ontario

GERONTOLOGY (AND)

TITLE: Perceptions of Hearing Impairment in Old Age

AUTHOR: John Thomas Doe

SUPERVISOR: Professor A.B. Smith

NUMBER OF PAGES: vii, 34

APPENDIX I

1. PROPOSAL AND LITERATURE REVIEW:

(**SUBMIT ONE COPY TO YOUR SUPERVISOR AND ONE COPY TO THE THESIS COORDINATOR)

- The Supervisor will mark the proposal. The Thesis Coordinator will read it and may offer comments.
- The proposal is worth 25% of the final grade. The proposal will be assigned a mark out of 100. Supervisors may wish to alter the suggested marking guidelines.

The following is suggested for a research inquiry thesis:

Introduction and Literature Review - 55

Statement of the Research Problem/Questions/Hypotheses -10

Methods, Ethical Issues, and Limitations - 25

Writing Style, Grammar - 10

- The proposal is due on **November 17**. Supervisors will be asked to submit the grades to the Thesis Coordinator **by December 8**.
 - If your research requires ethics approval, the ethics applications must be submitted to the SERB (copy to the Thesis Coordinator).
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- Research Proposal and Literature Outline:
 - Title
 - Abstract (a brief summary of the proposed research and method) - no more than 250 words
 - Introduction (state a general problem; state the general objective of the research)
 - Literature Review (hints)
 - work from the general to the specific problem of interest
 - locate your research within the existing body of research
 - if applicable, locate your topic within a theoretical perspective or conceptual framework
 - clearly reference all sources
 - do not simply summarize current literature study by study; instead, build your argument point by point, using studies to illustrate the point you are making
 - argue that there is a need for your project
 - end with the objectives (formulate as questions or hypotheses) of your research

- Methods

- describe your research methods
(quantitative/qualitative, interview/survey/archival,
etc.)
- population/sample
- operationalization of concepts/research questions -
measures
- method of analysis
- ethical issues
- limitation/s of the study

2. 10-MINUTE ORAL PRESENTATION:

Present the handout to the class and review the content, highlighting challenges with regard to the argument or methodology. Be prepared to answer questions from the class and the Thesis Coordinator.

PREPARE A 1-PAGE HANDOUT (1 copy for each student and one for the co-coordinator)
FOR THE ORAL PRESENTATION IN NOVEMBER

Name, Advisor

Tentative Title for Thesis

Background/ (relevance, previous research)

Purpose

Method (how you will achieve your purpose; include how you will obtain your data/information and how you will analyze the data to obtain your results)

References (approximately 3)

APPENDIX II
PREPARING A POSTER

- poster display boards are available for purchase at Titles Bookstore
- pages (6 - 8 approximately) to be mounted on poster board
- 8½" x 11" sheets of paper - good idea to mount these on construction paper and then on poster board, for visual impact

OR use the electronic poster service

- make it visually friendly and easy to read -- **larger type** than usual, perhaps **bolded**
- the poster tells a story -- boils down your paper/thesis to the essentials
- should be clear on its own, but remember you will be there to provide further details to interested viewers

Pages Should Consist Of:

1. Title, author, and supervisor (place this at top of centre of display board)
2. Background:
A brief review of the literature -- highlight the key points -- to show what is known and not known about your topic, i.e., why the research is needed, but also how it emerges from previous research.
3. Purpose:
A statement of the problem/thesis, with your research question(s) -- and hypotheses if you have them.
4. Method:
 - sample -- number of people, how selected/obtained (criteria for inclusion/exclusion, include setting if appropriate)
 - how you obtained data -- e.g., interview, charts
 - measures (brief, the key ones)
 - analysis -- how you did it (SPSS, crosstabs, multivariate, frequencies; if qualitative, describe how you did it)
5. Results:
Answers to your research question(s), major findings -- charts, tables if appropriate
6. Discussion/Conclusions:
Relate your findings and conclusions to previous research
Include importance/relevance
7. Reference list

PROJECT APPROVAL FORM
THESIS, HEALTH AGING AND SOCIETY

This form is to be completed by the student and signed by the student **AND** the Supervisor, and must be submitted to the Course Coordinator. The study will extend over two terms.

1. **NAME:** _____ **I.D.#:** _____

2. **ADDRESS:**

Postal Code

TELEPHONE NO.: () - _____
Area Code

3. **TERM OF REGISTRATION:**

Term I _____ Term II _____ Summer _____

Beginning Date:

Ending Date:

4. **TOPIC:**

5. **BRIEFLY DESCRIBE THE NATURE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT:**

(attach you one page description)

6. **SIGNATURES:**

_____ Date: _____
Student

_____ Date: _____
Faculty Supervisor

_____ Date: _____
Course Coordinator

THESIS: HEALTH, AGING AND SOCIETY
**** REQUIRED ****
SUPERVISOR INFORMATION

**THIS FORM IS TO BE COMPLETED IN FULL BY THE STUDENT AND/OR SUPERVISOR,
AND MUST BE SUBMITTED BY THE STUDENT TO THE COURSE COORDINATOR.**

STUDENT NAME:

I.D. #:

SUPERVISOR:

NAME:

TITLE: (e.g., Dr. Mr., Mrs., Ms., etc.)

POSITION:

WORK ADDRESS (including postal code):

PHONE NUMBER: ()

FAX NUMBER: ()

COMPLETE E-MAIL ADDRESS:

NOTE 1: ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, specifically Appendix 3, located at http://www.mcmaster.ca/senate/academic/ac_integrity.htm

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

NOTE 2: Some thesis projects (e.g., a project that consists of a literature review and data gathering in order to produce educational material for caregivers) may require that the outline on Page 6 be adapted somewhat. If this applies to your thesis, consult with your supervisor and, if necessary, the Course Coordinator to work out an appropriate format.

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

E-MAIL COMMUNICATION POLICY

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Email Forwarding in MUGSI:

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/uts/support/email/emailforward.html>

*Forwarding will take effect 24-hours after students complete the process at the above link

(Approved at the Faculty of Social Sciences meeting on Tues. May 25, 2010)

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check their McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.