

CSOn4001 Thesis Writing Seminar

Scope

0/2/0, 20 ECTS

Objectives of the course

The Thesis Writing Seminar is the second in a pair of courses focused on the preparation and implementation of the thesis. Students typically enroll in the seminar in their final semester of study. They continue to do so in collaboration with a faculty member from the Sociology Department who has taken on the thesis supervision. The goal in this course is to build on the thesis project from the previous semester(s), complete the thesis, and submit it for defense. The submission of the thesis consists of several steps and it is important to follow the timetable set by the department (faculty). All the necessary deadlines are always published before the beginning of the semester (IS - Documents - Faculty of Social Studies - Department of Sociology). Successful completion of the course is conditional on the submission of the thesis in the specified form and by the specified deadline to the seminar's submission space. If the defense of the final thesis is evaluated by the examination committee as "failed", the committee will decide on further action, including possible change of supervisor or modification of the thesis topic. This decision (to change or keep the topic and supervisor) is always recorded in the minutes of the state final examination, communicated to the student immediately and is binding for them.

Learning Outcomes

Students will learn the general principles of independent research and the creation of professional texts (in particular, they will expand their knowledge of social science research methodology, try out the application of analytical methods, learn the rules of authorial ethics and the formal principles of creating professional texts). After completing the course, students will be able to develop a project proposal into a complete thesis. They will also be able to address a research question or problem sociologically and be able to employ sociological theory to solve it. They will further be able to engage with relevant academic literature and utilize empirical evidence to support a sociological argument. Last but not least, students will be able to write a coherent multi-chaptered text on a sociological topic.

Teaching methods

Self-study, consultation.

As part of self-study, learners

- study the document "Instructions for Writing Final Theses," which they can obtain from the IS
- consult with the supervisor
- study academic sources relevant to the thesis (literature review on the topic) and sources generally focused on the production of professional texts
- write and complete a thesis.

Consultation forms a key part of the work on the text of the thesis. The student has the right and duty to actively consult with the supervisor about the progress of the thesis. The frequency of consultations depends on individual agreement with the supervisor. Contact

consultation includes both in-person meetings and email-exchange, the details of which are arranged directly with the supervisor. Theses which are produced without regular contact with the supervisor and/or projects where there is reasonable suspicion of plagiarism or other breaches of academic work ethics cannot be accepted by the supervisor as eligible for credit.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) can be a useful tool for assistance for a work on a master thesis but it is not accountable for conducting research and writing – the ultimate responsibility for thesis writing lies with the student. Students can use the AI tool as a brainstorming partner to exchange ideas while developing the theme. AI can also give good initial overview of existing approaches or existing literature on a theme. However, the use of AI cannot replace current research sources such as library or databases available through the university library. These research sources are more reliable. Generally, students should not trust any AI outputs that they cannot trace back to original credible sources! Students can use an AI platform for a grammar check and for editorial improvements, but using an AI to write a portion of a thesis project constitutes plagiarism.

Students must acknowledge how they used AI in the process of working on their thesis in the signed declaration that forms a part of thesis.

The supervisor leads the project and guides the learners through the process of its creation, or points out problems in the overall direction of the project. The supervisor is contacted by the learner at pre-agreed intervals or points in the project work so that major deficiencies can be addressed in time, i.e., the supervisor has sufficient time to identify them and the learner has sufficient time to correct them. Revisions of the thesis draft must be uploaded into the course's homework vault in the IS and they need to include a "cover letter" ahead of the uploaded document (exceptionally in an email), a brief summary of the main changes in the document, how the students has implemented the suggestions and addressed the concerns of the supervisor.

Thesis supervisors oversee the creation of the thesis and guide learners through the process of its creation, or point out problems in the overall direction of the project. The supervisor is contacted by the learner at pre-agreed intervals or points in the work so that major deficiencies can be addressed in a timely manner, i.e., the supervisor has sufficient time to identify them and the student has sufficient time to address them. If the student fails to meet the agreed timetable and submits work at the last minute, it is not the responsibility of supervisors to read or comment on the text. Instead, supervisors are obliged to respond to relevant queries from learners within a reasonable time. Supervisors are not obliged to edit or correct the project.

Methods of evaluation

The course is completed by a passing grade. The credits are awarded for the submission of a final (80%) draft of the thesis in the seminar's submission room in IS by the deadline set in the IS. The student may also receive credits for a later submission of the thesis, but its defense will not take place in the given semester. The final document must include the following:

- Final introduction of the thesis with clear identification of the topic and aim of the thesis

- the final theoretical framework of the thesis with the formulation of the research problem(s) and/or research question(s)
- the final methodological part of the thesis
- the final structure of the whole thesis, including the titles of individual chapters
- formatting according to the specified template and all formal requirements: title page, bibliographic record, annotation, statement, table of contents, list of tables/graphs/figures, bibliography, name index (some of these, e.g., bibliography or name index, may be added before the final version is submitted); the style of references must follow ASA style guidelines (5th edition).
- at least 80 % of the planned text length

Credit load composition:

- contact consultation with the supervisor (approx. 20 hours)
- search of literature and other resources (approx. 20 hours)
- study of literature and sources (approx. 80 hours)
- elaboration of the thesis (approx. 130 hours)

Required literature

- Babbie, E. 2020. *The Practice of Social Research*. 15th Edition. Wadsworth Publishing Company, pp. 491-514 (24 pp.)
- Edles, L.D. 2002. *Cultural Sociology in Practice*. Malden; Oxford: Blackwell.
- Reed, I. 2011. *Interpretation and Social Knowledge. On the Use of Theory in the Human Sciences*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Flick, U. 2014 (ed.). *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*. London; Thousand Oaks: Sage.