Gallatin Master’s Thesis Seminar
CORE-GG 2225 (Section 003)
Fall 2012

Tuesdays 6:20-8:00pm
Room 501, 1 Washington Place

Instructor: Amy Spellacy (amy.spellacy@nyu.edu)
Office hours: Mondays 11:00-12:30 and Thursdays 3:30-5:00 (Room 831, 1 Washington Place)
Mailbox: 8th Floor, 1 Washington Place
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The Master’s Thesis Seminar is designed to prepare Gallatin graduate students for researching and writing the master’s thesis. Before embarking on the thesis, Gallatin M.A. students are required to complete a thesis proposal, which is a map for the thesis itself, and submit the proposal to Gallatin for approval. This course is structured to take students through the stages of writing a thesis proposal: defining the field of research, formulating the problem, identifying and articulating a research question, developing a bibliography, choosing an appropriate research methodology, gathering information, organizing the material, revising, and preparing the proposal for submission. Through discussions of both published research articles and student work, the seminar examines the conventions of scholarly discourse, strategies of analysis and argumentation, and the ways in which writing can serve as a means to discover ideas. The final product of the course is a complete draft of the thesis proposal.

This course will provide practical information about the research and writing process and about the components of a thesis proposal, but it will also give us an opportunity to consider broader questions about the nature and purpose of academic inquiry as well as the particular challenges and opportunities involved in working across or between disciplinary boundaries.

Because the process of conceiving of a thesis project involves research, writing, and reflection, students in this course will complete a number of short writing and research assignments along the way, as well as drafts of sections of the thesis proposal. Our class sessions will include a combination of large-group discussions and small-group workshop sessions. Because students in the course represent a diverse range of academic interests, I will create sub-groups of students with shared interests and you will read and critique the work of the members of your group throughout the semester.

Students in the course should have completed the majority of the coursework for the M.A. degree, and should have begun to formulate a reasonably clear conception of the thesis. It is possible to take this course before, after, or concurrently with the Review of the Literature. While you are enrolled in the course, you should plan to be in close touch with your primary academic adviser.

**Required Text** (available at the NYU Bookstore):

**Other Suggested Texts:**
Students may want to check out or purchase some of the following books on research and writing:


**Course Website:**
The course website will be available on the new NYU learning management system Sakai CLE 2.8. This system is currently being phased in to replace Blackboard, so please note that our course website is **not** on Blackboard. You may access the course website through your NYUHome page through the “Academics” tab by selecting “NYU Classes Login,” which is located in the “Blackboard” section of the page. You will be asked to login to “NYUClasses Beta.” You will use the course website to access course readings (where indicated on the syllabus), submit completed assignments, and exchange comments on work in progress. If you ever encounter difficulties using the course website, please let me know by email.

**Expectations:**

- Come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings for the day and to participate in any in-class discussions or activities.

- Thoughtfully respond to work submitted by your peers. This will involve reading drafts outside of class time and completing written evaluations of work to be discussed in peer workshops.

- Complete all assignments for the course and submit them on the due dates listed on the syllabus.

- Be willing to engage with and comment on work outside of your fields of interest. Because students in the course will be designing interdisciplinary projects that draw on different fields, none of us will be experts on all of the subject matter. As a result, you will be expected to consider and comment on work from a variety of academic disciplines.
Assignments:

**Thesis topic and research question** ................................................................. 10%
Narrative summary of your thesis topic and completed template/worksheet (1-2 pages). Initial version due in class on 9/11 (5%) and revised version due in class on 10/23 (5%).

**Annotated bibliography** .................................................................................. 10%
Complete citations and annotations for 10-15 sources that will be relevant for your thesis.

**Statement of disciplinary affiliation** ............................................................... 10%
Describe the disciplines from which you will be drawing in your thesis project (1-2 pages). What are the methods and assumptions of these disciplines? What are you drawing from each discipline? Are there points of tension between the methods or approaches of these disciplines?

**Analysis of scholarly model** ............................................................................ 10%
Review of scholarly article or book chapter that you see as a model for your work (2 pages).

**Draft of Thesis Statement and Research Methods** ......................................... 10%
First two sections of Thesis Proposal (approximately 4 pages).

**Draft of Justifications and Limitations, and Conclusion** ................................. 10%
Third and fourth sections of Thesis Proposal (approximately 4 pages).

**Thesis Proposal** ................................................................................................. 25%
Complete Thesis Proposal (8 pages plus the annotated bibliography). The draft of the thesis proposal is due on 11/19 (5%) and the complete, revised proposal is due on 12/10 (20%).

**Oral Presentation** ............................................................................................ 15%
10-minute presentation of your work in class on 11/27 or 12/4.

**Note on Research Involving Human Subjects:**
If your project involves research on human subjects, you will need to follow the guidelines regarding Human Participants as dictated by the NYU Committee on Activities Involving Human Subjects. At New York University, all research involving human subjects (funded or not funded) must be reviewed and approved by the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) before being carried out. For more information, see [www.nyu.edu/ucaihs/](http://www.nyu.edu/ucaihs/)

**Policies:**

**Attendance**
Regular attendance is required for this course. Barring a major emergency, students are expected to attend all meetings of the seminar. Please notify beforehand me if you have an emergency or other circumstances that will prevent you from coming to class. If you miss class more than two times, your grade in the course may be affected.

**Classroom Etiquette**
Cell phones and other electronic devices should be turned off during class. Laptops should be used only for taking notes or for reading electronic versions of course materials.
**Grading:**
This course will be graded on a pass/fail basis. In order to earn a passing grade, students must come to class, group and individual meetings on time, submit assignments promptly, and complete a full, polished thesis proposal. An incomplete grade will be given only under extreme circumstances.

**Paper Formatting and Deadlines**
Assignments should be double-spaced with one-inch margins and page numbers. Please be attentive to correct formatting in all components of your paper, including the bibliography or works cited. You may choose a citation format appropriate to your discipline, such as MLA (Modern Language Association), described in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* or Chicago style, which is covered in the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Assignments should be submitted to the course website as indicated on the syllabus. If you ever encounter problems with the course website, you may email me an assignment.

**Academic Honesty**
Plagiarism happens any time you present the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. It can be anything from stealing a phrase from a book without citing the source to turning in a paper that you didn’t write. If you commit plagiarism, you will be faced with the possibility of disciplinary action. Think for yourself and cite your sources and you won’t have any problems.

**Special Needs**
Please let me know if you have a disability that may require some modification of the seating, testing or other class requirements.
# SCHEDULE

## Course introduction

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<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Tues. 9/4</th>
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|        | • Course introduction: the nature and scope of the Gallatin M.A. thesis  
|        | • Soon after the first course meeting: complete profile on course website |

## Defining your research question

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<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Tues. 9/11</th>
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|        | • Booth, “Prologue: Becoming a Researcher”; “Thinking in Print: The Uses of Research, Public and Private”; “Connecting with Your Reader: (Re-)Creating Yourself and Your Readers”; “Prologue: Planning Your Project—An Overview”; “From Topics to Questions”; “From Questions to a Problem” (p. 3-65)  
|        | • Read description of Thesis Proposal on Gallatin website and also read Sample Thesis Proposals (available on course website)  
|        | ► Due: Thesis Topic and Research Question (upload to course website by 5pm and bring to class) |

## Library resources

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<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Tues. 9/18</th>
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|        | • Library Instruction Session with Nicole Brown. **Meet in PC Lab 1 on Lower Level 1 of Bobst Library**  
|        | • This week you should also contact the subject librarian or librarians in your field(s). If possible, arrange for an in-person consultation about your project. |
### Finding and engaging sources

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<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Mon. 9/24</th>
<th>➢ Due: Annotated Bibliography (5pm, course website)</th>
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|        | Tues. 9/25| * Booth, “From Problems to Sources” and “Engaging Sources” (p. 68-101)  
* In-class workshop of Annotated Bibliographies |

### Discipline and interdisciplinarity

| Week 5 | Tues. 10/2 | • Marjorie Garber, “Coveting Your Neighbor’s Discipline,” *Chronicle of Higher Education* 47.18 (January 12, 2001). Course website.  
➢ Due: Statement of disciplinary affiliation (upload to course website by 5pm and bring to class) |

### Identifying scholarly models

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<th>Week 6</th>
<th>Mon. 10/8</th>
<th>➢ Due: Analysis of scholarly model (5pm, course website)</th>
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|        | Tues. 10/9| * Read two sample theses (course website)  
* In-class discussion of essays on scholarly models |

### Fall Break

| Week 7 | Tues. 10/16 | NO CLASS—Fall Break |
### Arguments and evidence

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<th>Week 8</th>
<th>Tues. 10/23</th>
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<td>➢ <strong>Due: Revised Thesis Topic and Research Question</strong> (upload to course website by 5pm and bring to class)</td>
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### Drafting the thesis proposal

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<th>Week 9</th>
<th>Mon. 10/29</th>
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<tr>
<td>➢ <strong>Due: Draft of Thesis Statement and Research Methods for Thesis Proposal</strong> (5pm, course website)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Tues. 10/30</th>
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<tr>
<td>In-class presentation by Dr. Jane McCutcheon from the University Committee on Activities Involving Human Subjects (UCAIHS), NYU's Institutional Review Board (IRB).</td>
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<td>This class meeting is <strong>optional</strong> for students who are certain that their thesis will not involve work with human subjects. If there is some possibility that you will interview or work with human subjects, please plan on attending class.</td>
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<th>Week 10</th>
<th>Mon. 11/5</th>
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<tr>
<td>➢ <strong>Due: Draft of Justifications and Limitations and Conclusion for Thesis Proposal</strong> (5pm, course website)</td>
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<th>Tues. 11/6</th>
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<td>• Booth, “Prologue: Planning Again”; “Planning”; “Drafting Your Report” (p. 173-202)</td>
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<td>* In-class workshop of drafts</td>
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<td>Week 11</td>
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|          | Tues. 11/20 | • Booth, “Revising Your Organization and Argument”; “Introductions and Conclusions”; “Revising Style: Telling Your Story Clearly” (p. 203-212 and p. 232-269)  
* In-class workshop of drafts |

**Presenting your work in progress and responding to colleagues**

| Week 12  | Tues. 11/27 | • Turabian, “Presenting Research in Alternate Forums” (p. 122-128). Course website.  
• In class: Student Presentations |
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<td>Week 13</td>
<td>Tues. 12/4</td>
<td>• In class: Student Presentations</td>
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**Looking toward the thesis**

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<th>Week 14</th>
<th>Mon. 12/10</th>
<th>➤ <strong>Due: Thesis Proposal (5pm, course website)</strong></th>
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|          | Tues. 12/11 | • Guest speakers: Gallatin thesis writers  