

Syllabus & Schedule

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Eng 209A

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Course Description

Students graduating with the BS in Professional & Technical Communication must demonstrate competence in their field with a capstone thesis or project. Though largely an independent work, the development of this thesis/project is facilitated through a Senior Thesis/Project seminar with the guidance of a faculty advisor.

The Senior Thesis/Project seminar is a two semester sequence. The first semester consists primarily of thesis/project proposal development: a literature review, research, and context-framing. The second semester consists primarily of writing/development of the thesis/project and presentation.

A thesis is a piece of traditional scholarly research that usually takes the form of an intellectual proposition that argues for a particular position or interpretation. Typically, a thesis for the PTC BS degree would be about 30 pages in length (text only; double-spaced with 12-point font and 1" margins) with about 100 scholarly ("peer reviewed" or refereed) sources. Ideally, a thesis is of publishable quality.

A project, on the other hand, will involve the same amount of work (approximately 200 hours), but will take a more practical form. Typically, a project for the PTC BS degree might take the form of a short film or a multimedia production such as a web site or DVD. Sometimes, the student works with a particular client in a service learning project that fulfills a community or not-for-profit agency need. Ideally, a project makes a significant contribution to the community or society.

Required Texts

In addition to whatever sources you research for the literature review, two texts will serve as core readings for seminar presentation/discussion in the first semester:

- Jenkins (2006) *Convergence Culture: where old & new media collide*
- Verzuh (2008) *The Fast Forward MBA in Project Management*

Note that the project management text has been adopted because nearly all students choose the project option. This text will be less relevant to students choosing the thesis option; although even for these students the Verzuh text helps you build important career/professional skills.

Course Grade

- Seminar Presentation 1 (Jenkins) 10%
- Seminar Presentation 2 (Jenkins) 10%
- Literature Review 35%
- Six Assignments from Verzuh 20%
- Formal Thesis/Project Design & Proposal 25%

Course Site

Senior Thesis Blog <http://ptc4996.blogspot.com>

Description of Course Work

In part, the work of the first semester will involve students making formal seminar presentations about the various chapters and topics in Jenkins. Each student will make two presentations. More than one student may choose to present the same chapter or topic. Please choose chapters or topics most relevant to your interests. Presentations are 25 minutes and provide a basis for class discussion.

DO NOT present an outline of the material from Jenkins. You may want to include a 2-minute summary of Jenkins as part of your introduction. Your presentation must be based on a chapter or topic in Jenkins, but present it in an original way using your own examples. Draw on your own work as well as what you have learned in other classes.

A literature review is a thorough survey of scholarly (peer-reviewed or refereed) sources relevant to your thesis or project. As a guide, the text of the literature review will be approximately 15 pages in length (double-spaced, 12-point font, 1" margins) and include at least 20 scholarly sources (not including bibliography). It may also include popular sources, but the text of the review must focus on the scholarly sources.

The thesis or project design and proposal document must state and explain your research question or project goal. Based on information such as the literature review or needs of your client, the thesis or project must then be organized into particular tasks that you intend to accomplish and/or questions that you intend to answer in the second semester. The formal proposal must also include a timeline of tasks (e.g. Gantt chart) to be completed, a list of resources or information you will need to accomplish each task, and a signature sheet indicating that your thesis or project faculty advisor has approved the design and proposal. Projects will also require a signature sheet indicating that your client has approved the design and proposal. As a guide, the design and proposal document will be approximately ten pages long (double-spaced, 12-point font, 1" margins) not including signature sheets.

Late work will not be accepted without prior arrangement.

PTC 4996W, Senior Thesis/Project, Fall 2009 (2 credits) Monday

Course Schedule (week by week, listed by the Monday date)

Seminar presentations are on Mondays. Class discussions are on Wednesdays. When no presentation is scheduled for Monday, discussion may also take place that day.

1. 25 August Course Introduction
2. 01 September What have you learned in the PTC program?
3. 08 September No Class (Mining Summit)
4. 15 September Seminar Presentation
Initial Proposal Due (1 page)
Discussion: Verzuh Part One, Chapters 1 & 2
5. 22 September Seminar Presentation
Discussion: Verzuh Part Two, Chapter 3
6. 29 September Seminar Presentation
Discussion: Verzuh Part Two, Chapter 4
7. 06 October Seminar Presentation
Due Friday 10 October:
 - Project Proposal
 - Project Charter
 - Communication Plan
8. 13 October Seminar Presentation
Discussion: Verzuh Part Three, Chapter 5
9. 20 October Seminar Presentation
Discussion: Verzuh Part Three, Chapter 6
Due Friday 24 October:
 - Risk Analysis Template
 - Risk Log
10. 27 October Seminar Presentation
Discussion: Verzuh Part Three, Chapter 7
11. 03 November Seminar Presentation
Discussion: Verzuh Part Three, Chapter 8 & 9
Due Friday 31 October:
 - Action Plan in Gantt Chart Form
12. 10 November Seminar Presentation
Discussion: Verzuh Part Four, Chapter 10
Due Friday 14 November
 - Literature Review
13. 17 November Seminar Presentation
Discussion: Verzuh Part Four, Chapter 11
14. 24 November -- no class --
15. 01 December Seminar Presentation
Discussion: Verzuh Part Four, Chapter 12
16. 08 December No Seminar Presentation
Discussion: Verzuh Part Four, Chapter 13
Due Friday 12 December
 - Formal Thesis/Project Design & Proposal

Final Exam Time: 11:30 am – 2:30 pm, Friday, 12 December