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**EMP980: Dissertation Proposal and Qualifying Exam [A-Exam]**

(3 credits)

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course provides guidance and experience for defining a doctoral research project; developing initial drafts of the literature review and assessing research methodologies appropriate and adequate to the substance of the project. The course culminates in a written and oral examination, to demonstrate the student's competence to advance to doctoral degree candidacy.

## **COURSE AUDIENCE and PREREQUISITES**

This course is open to graduate students in Energy Medicine who are ready to proceed to candidacy for the doctorate and to formally define their dissertation research project. Participants must complete (or be concurrently enrolled in) all academic coursework (except the dissertation) required for the PhD degree before enrolling in this course.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

To prepare the applicant to formally begin the dissertation research stage of their program, as the final step towards completion of the requirements for the PhD degree. Once the oral and written examinations are successfully completed, the applicant is officially a candidate for the doctoral degree.

The final project is the cornerstone of graduate degree work. It may take any of several forms, quantitative, qualitative, or participatory action research, or a major project demonstrating excellence, depending upon the expectations of the program faculty. In whatever form it takes, it must represent original work by the participant. At the Masters level, it is the demonstration of mastery of an advanced body of knowledge in a given field. At the doctoral level, it is an original contribution to the field. The final project will take the form of a standard “traditional” academic dissertation of 100 or more typewritten pages for the dissertation. The document will conform to the guidelines of the University, the expectations of faculty, and an acceptable style manual. This research preparation course is intended to empower the participants:

- To effectively plan and prepare to complete a major work of research (or a major project in lieu of research) which permits the demonstration of excellence within the student’s general area of study.
- To state a problem or formulate an hypothesis for intensive study and research.
- To prepare an overall design of a project, an experiment or a critical analysis and synthesis in the chosen field of study.
- To plan for the effective interpretation of data and information from the planned study.
- To determine techniques for drawing valid conclusions.
- To understand the proper manner of reporting results to other scholars within the field of study.
- To understand the guidelines that govern the structuring of the academic argument, the presentation of the scholarly discussion, and the formatting of the document.

## **BRIEF NEED STATEMENT**

Effective preparation is the first key to a dissertation. A great deal of literature exists in support of building an effective thesis and sufficient time must be dedicated to reviewing appropriate University materials and recommended guidebooks to gain sufficient orientation to the standards, procedures, and expectations of the effective thesis process.

## **COURSE TOPICS**

- Building effective dissertation proposals
- Selecting and narrowing a research topic
- Justification of need for the project
- Establishing an effective research plan
- Selecting an appropriate research methodology
- Using a style manual
- Building the academic argument and scholarly presentation
- Presenting valid findings
- Testing the results
- Identifying limitations of the study
- Drawing appropriate conclusions
- Deriving recommendations for future research

## **FACULTY-STUDENT COMMUNICATIONS**

- Telephone Contacts

The student will set up an initial telephone conference with the academic committee Chair to clarify a plan of action for the course. This initial contact will permit the transmission of clear expectations for completion of all requirements. Regular contact should be continued for the duration of the course.

- E-mail Communications

Frequent e-mail communications between student and Chair should be initiated and continued for the duration of the course. E-mail communication may, during active stages, require up to three or more exchanges per week.

- Alternative Communications

Students may send communications and materials via postal service and fax, as appropriate, with permission of the Chair.

## **COURSE DELIVERY STYLE**

Distance Education - Coursework is completed at a location determined by the student utilizing a computer that has the ability to play audio and video clips, with Microsoft Office Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Adobe Reader, along with a current web browser, internet connection and email address. Contact and communication with distance students is typically conducted by telephone, Internet, Skype, text chat, and email. Students are also encouraged to contact the University by facsimiles, and postal mail, and by personal visit to the University.

All lessons, coursework and papers must be copied to [lessons@energymedicineuniversity.org](mailto:lessons@energymedicineuniversity.org) from both the student and professor.

Participants will gather supportive books and materials and conduct extensive reading before undertaking the preparation of the formal research (or project) proposal. Participants will maintain journal notations of the salient points of the literature. Upon preparation of the

complete first draft of the proposal, participants will submit the document for peer review. Following peer review, participants will prepare and submit a final draft of the proposal for formal review by the instructor, before proceeding to the written and oral examination.

## **REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS**

Participants are required to make use of the materials provided by the University, as follows, and to select a style manual to conform their written work. It is highly recommended that participants also select a dissertation research guide and a writing guide to support their project and preparation of the manuscript. (See SUPPLEMENTAL LEARNING RESOURCES at the end of this syllabus.)

Required Materials Provided by the University:  
University Catalogue  
Student Handbook

Required Style Manual (select one from this list or another appropriate guide)

- American Psychological Association. Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Washington, D.C.
- Turabian, Kate L. A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Modern Language Association. MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations. New York: The Modern Language Association.

## **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

### **Assignment #1: Conceptualizing the Project**

Under the direction of the instructor, and referring carefully to the materials provided by the University, a style manual, a thesis or dissertation research guide, and a writing guide, begin conceptualizing your project. First identify your goal for research (or major project). Search research abstracts and local graduate university libraries for thesis or dissertation manuscripts with similar topics and methods and give these materials a careful review. With reference to the literature in research methods, select a research methodology which is highly appropriate for the focus of your research. Conduct library research and reading to identify the major existing research literature in support of your project. Identify literature that justifies the need for the project, as well as materials which effectively inform your work. Build a workable data gathering plan and conceptualize your techniques for evaluation of the data. Prepare your thinking with regard to structuring the dissertation manuscript. Carefully maintain journal notations of the salient points of all readings and your reflections in preparation for the project proposal.

### **Assignment #2: Annotated Bibliography**

Conduct a major search for available literature in support of your proposed research topic. Identify the primary works which inform the area of research. Conceptualize the thesis question, the theoretical foundation for the study, and methodology for conduct of the project. Carefully

review the essential literature concerning this dissertation, maintain journal notations, and build a brief annotated bibliography clarifying the essential literature in support of your project. This preliminary bibliography need not exceed twenty entries.

### **Assignment #3: Research Plan**

With the guidance of the instructor, read the literature related to the research methodology you wish to use in conducting your project. Also review a number of related theses and dissertations in the field that utilize similar research methods. Maintain journal notations concerning the salient points of the readings. According to the directions of the instructor, prepare a first draft of the research plan. This draft should include, at a minimum:

- A one-page abstract of the proposed project.
- An introduction of the topic.
- A statement of the research question(s).
- A brief definition of terms.
- A review of the relevant research and theory.
- A thorough discussion of the project procedures to include a clarification of the conceptual framework to be employed, the sources, evidence, and authority to which you will refer the analytical technique and research design, and a timetable for completing the project.

### **Assignment #4: Manuscript Outline**

Conceptualize the proposed framework of the research manuscript by preparing a project manuscript outline in the format of an expanded table of contents. Divide the outline into proposed chapter headings (Roman Numerals), subchapter headings (capital letters), section headings (Arabic Numbers) and subsection headings (small case letters). The chapter headings should follow the recommendations of the selected style manual. The subchapter headings are used to identify the major elements of each chapter. The section headings break down the chapter into still more defined areas. The subsections can be used to identify the flow of the manuscript from start to finish, clarifying the importance of the study, the research methodology, the derivation and testing of the theses questions, the presentation of the academic argument, the progress of the scholarly discussion, referencing of the literature, identification and interpretation of the findings, limitations of the study, conclusions to be made, final recommendations, and other essentials of the manuscript.

### **Assignment #5: Peer Review**

Submit your draft proposal to two colleagues familiar with the research topic for peer review, red lining (editing) of the document, and recommendations for improvement of content and clarity. Include the research plan, the annotated bibliography and the manuscript outline. Based upon the outcome of the peer review process, restructure your materials into a formal research proposal of approximately 20 double spaced typewritten pages. Attach your data gathering instruments and a brief annotated bibliography. Attach evidence of the peer review, including the names and contact information of the peer reviewers and their written comments.

### **Assignment #6: Formal Research Proposal Package**

Submit the final draft of the research proposal for formal review by the instructor. Include the project plan, the annotated bibliography, the manuscript outline, and evidence of the peer review process. You will receive written feedback concerning all aspects of the research proposal and recommendations for final rework of the proposal. Once the proposal meets the expectations of the instructor, proceed to the examination phase.

### **WRITTEN AND ORAL EXAMINATION**

The examination phase of the coursework involves three elements: 1. a draft of the dissertation proposal; 2. a written examination over the proposed dissertation topic and how it fits into energy medicine; and 3. an oral examination over the same material. The examination process proceeds in the following steps:

1. Applicants send to each member of the committee:
  - a. A one-page statement describing the proposed Dissertation topic.
  - b. A draft of the Literature Review and Manuscript Outline created while developing the proposal.
  - c. The bibliography supporting the Literature Review.
2. Once these documents are approved tentatively, the applicant will submit five questions which, when answered, will give the committee a substantial knowledge of why the proposed research is important and how the dissertation fits into energy medicine.
3. The Chair edits and, if desired, amplifies the questions and passes the edited version on to the committee. The committee further edits and, if desired, amplifies the questions and passes the edited suggestions back to the Chair. The Chair reconciles all suggestions and submits the five to seven questions to the applicant and sets up a one-week to three-week time period during which the applicant will write from three to seven pages on each of the questions.
4. The applicant submits the written responses a week before a scheduled oral examination over the same material or any other aspect of Energy Medicine the committee members choose to examine during the oral proceedings. If the written responses are acceptable, the oral exam will be held as scheduled. If not, the orals will be postponed until the written responses are deemed acceptable by the committee. The oral exam will be held on a telephone conference call, and will last from 60 to 90 minutes in length. The scheduling of the telephone conference exam will be handled by the Chair of the graduate student's committee. It will be done with at least ten days notice. Such exams may not be scheduled on Saturday, Sunday, or national holidays. If students or committee members are not from the U.S., an effort will be made to honor their national holidays as well. It is the responsibility of the student to make sure that any and all materials necessary for the faculty members to conduct the exam are on the computer of the faculty members in readable form at least one week prior to the exam. If a committee member requests a hard copy of the examination essays, it is the student's responsibility to see that it reaches that member within the same time frame. It is the responsibility of the committee chair to poll the committee and verify at least 48 hours before the exam that each member of the committee agrees that the necessary materials for the exam are acceptable, and the exam may proceed. Otherwise the student will be informed of the necessity to postpone the exam.

**See the Semester Schedule for deadlines.**

5. The exam will be evaluated by the committee. At its conclusion the committee will go into private session and a grade of Satisfactory, Unsatisfactory, or Honors will be awarded.

**SUPPLEMENTAL LEARNING RESOURCES**

Recommended Thesis and Dissertation Research Guides

- Madsen, David. *Successful Dissertations and Theses: A Guide to Graduate Student Research From Proposal to Completion*. Jossey-Bass Publishers. San Francisco, CA.
- Meloy, Judith M. *Writing the Qualitative Dissertation: Understanding by Doing*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Sternberg, David. *How to Complete and Survive a Doctoral Dissertation*. St. Martin's Press. New York, NY.
- Davis, Gordon B. and Parker, Clyde A. *Writing the Doctoral Dissertation: A Systemic Approach*. Barron's Educational Series. Woodbury, NY.
- Cone, John D. and Foster, Sharon L. *Dissertations and Theses From Start to Finish: Psychology and Related Fields*.
- Williams, J. M. *Style: Toward Clarity and Grace*. University of Chicago Press. Chicago, IL.
- Strunk, W. and White, E.B. *The Elements of Style*. MacMillan Publishers, New York, NY.
- Growers, E. *The Complete Plain Words*. Penguin Books. New York, NY.
- Cook, C.K. *Line by Line: How to Edit Your Own Writing*. Houghton Mifflin. Boston, MA.
- Barzun, J. *On Writing, Editing and Publishing: Essays, Explicative, Hortatory*. University of Chicago Press. Chicago, IL.
- Baker, S. *The Practical Stylist, Fifth Edition*. Harper Collins. New York, NY.
- Leggett, G., Mead, D.D., and Charvat, W. *Prentice-Hall Handbook for Writers*. Prentice-Hall. Englewood Cliffs, NJ.
- McCrimmon, J. *Writing With a Purpose*. English Grammar Resources, Houghton, Mifflin. Boston, MA,
- Stilman, Anne. *Grammatically Correct, The Writer's Essential Guide to Punctuation*.
- Peters, Pam. *The Cambridge Australian English Style Guide*.
- Princeton Language Institute. *21st Century Grammar Handbook*.
- Moss, Norman. *British/American Language Dictionary: For More Effective Communication Between Americans and Britons*.