

# PROD 511

## Thesis Prospectus

### Student Syllabus

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# Syllabus: PROD 511: Thesis Prospectus

**CREDITS:** 1 (one)

**PRE-REQUISITE:** Acceptance to the MCU master's degree program

## **COURSE PURPOSE & OVERVIEW:**

In this course you will develop a prospectus for your thesis. The prospectus is a detailed outline that will guide your future thesis work. You will select your thesis advisory committee.

## **SPECIFIC LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

At the completion of this course, the students will have:

1. Completed Thesis Prospectus
2. Established Thesis Advisory Committee

## **TEXTS:**

None required. Suggested reading is listed in Appendix A.

## **COURSE ORGANIZATION:**

Thesis Prospectus (Pass/Fail)

Advisory Committee commitment forms submitted (Pass/Fail)

## **GRADING:**

You will be expected to complete the course satisfactorily and receive an A grade. There is no partial credit or "passing grade" for this class. Only the best will do. The Course Instructor and all members of your Thesis Advisory Committee must agree that you have achieved an 'A' grade on your prospectus before you can receive your final grade for the course.

**HELP SESSIONS:** There will be at least two online help sessions during each semester. These will be scheduled at the beginning of the semester and a notice sent to all students enrolled in PROD 511. Sessions will be conducted using "Go to Meeting" web conferencing. This will be a good opportunity for you to discuss concerns and challenges with the Graduate Dean and/or the Asst. Graduate Dean.

## **MANA CORE COMPETENCIES:**

*Core competencies reflect the fundamental knowledge, skills and behaviors expected of an entry-level midwife. Midwives Alliance of North America (MANA) has developed a list of midwifery core competencies. The following core competencies are introduced/taught/or tested in this course:*

MANA Core Competencies will be addressed according to the topic selected by the student.

## **NARM VERIFICATION FORM**

The following NARM Skills are introduced/taught/or tested in this course:

NARM Skills will be addressed according to the topic selected in this course

## **CANADIAN COMPETENCIES**

*Canadian Competencies are the skills and knowledge expected of an entry-level midwife practicing in Canada. The following competencies are introduced/taught/tested in this course:*

Canadian Competencies will be addressed according to the topic selected in this course.

### **SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS:**

With a few exceptions (MATH 212 and some of the Labs), all classes must be completed online. If you have questions on how to complete your classes online, please contact the Director of Distance Studies through the internal messaging system.

When you complete coursework electronically online, it is NOT necessary to send a cover sheet when submitting assignments. Please note that some assignments call for completion of tasks for which you will need to upload corresponding pictures, files, etc., as proof of completion. Typing legends such as “completed” or “finished” is not enough to fulfill the requirement.

### **TESTS**

There are no tests for this class.

### **TIME LIMITS/COURSE EXTENSIONS:**

Please see the student catalog for a full description of course time limits, as well as Midwives College of Utah course extension policy.

This course should be completed within one year from the time of enrollment. It is possible that the syllabus will be updated during that time period. It is the student’s responsibility to make sure they are working from the most recent syllabus. MCU reserves the right to update syllabi on an annual basis.

### **RECORD KEEPING:**

MCU suggests that you keep a file of all final grade notices, transcripts and communications to and from the college.

### **AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT:**

If you have a disability for which you need accommodations for this class, please let your instructor know as soon as possible. You will be required to submit documentation of your disability from an appropriate care provider to the Registrar.

### **MIDWIVES COLLEGE OF UTAH POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

A high sense of personal honor and integrity is imperative in the completion of courses from the Midwives College of Utah. Although students can work in a study group, you must complete your own work. The syllabus should not be copied or given to other people without permission from the Midwives College of Utah. Distance education students must take examinations through a proctor who must certify that the exam was completed without the assistance of books, notes, or any other outside help unless otherwise stated on the exam. The exam itself must not be copied in any way.

It is the expectation of the Midwives College of Utah that all work turned in by a student is the product of her own endeavors. Violations, which include but are not limited to, cheating, providing misleading or false information to staff or instructors and plagiarism, are cause for disciplinary action, including failure of assignment, conferences with MCU President and/or Academic Dean or expulsion from Midwives College of Utah.

### **PLAGIARISM POLICY**

Failing to give credit where credit is due is known as plagiarism. Copying, distributing, modifying or displaying a copyrighted work is known as copyright infringement.

1. Students are required to use APA format to cite all specific sources both in-text and in a reference list.

2. Avoid writing papers that "cut and paste" beyond what is appropriate. Generally speaking, no more than 20% of your paper should be direct quotes. Your instructor is looking for papers with your thoughts and ideas as well as supporting references.
3. Did you know that if you paraphrase another person's written or spoken words, you are also plagiarizing? "You are guilty of the academic offense known as plagiarism if you half-copy the author's sentences - either by mixing the author's phrases with your own without using quotation marks or by plugging in your synonyms into the author's sentence structure." (Writer's Reference, Diana Hacker, 5th edition). This is not to say that you cannot use another person's ideas or words and put them into your own words. Just remember that when you do so, you acknowledge the source of information using the APA format.
4. MCU does not tolerate the submission of a paper that is written by another person or is "ghostwritten".
5. If you own a copyrighted audio or video recording, you must have permission from the copyright holder to copy, distribute, modify, display or perform their work. If you do not have this permission, you are infringing upon the copyright and could be subject to legal prosecution by the owner of the copyright.

**Any time a teacher sees plagiarism, it will be reported to the Academic Dean and/or President and a log of the incident will be placed in the student's file. If offenses are taking place in more than one class, any offense after an initial warning from any or all class instructors will accrue towards a second or third offense.**

- **First offense: Instructor will conference with the student and student will redo the assignment.**
- **Second offense: Automatic failure on the assignment and mandatory conference with MCU President and/or Academic Dean.**
- **Third offense: Failure of the course and possible expulsion from Midwives College of Utah.**

#### **WITHDRAWAL/ REFUNDS:**

An official withdrawal from MCU courses **requires a written request**. Please see the student catalog for a full description of the Refund Policy.

#### **DISCLAIMER:**

MCU does not take responsibility for the outcome of any activities suggested in this course or in any other MCU course. The students remain completely responsible for the consequences of their own behavior in regards to how they choose to implement the information contained herein.



## PROD 511 Thesis Prospectus

### ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEET

**Student Name:**

**Date:**

**Email Address:**

I am sending the following items with this submission (please check those that apply):

- Thesis Prospectus
- Advisory Committee Commitment Form

**The following must be submitted to receive a final grade.**

- Complete the Student Evaluation Form at the end of this course.
- How many hours do you estimate this course took you to complete? \_\_\_\_\_ Hrs.

## Section 1: Thesis

### What is a thesis?

In the MCU catalog, this description is given of the thesis class. PROD 511 is the prerequisite for your thesis course.

### MDWF 560 Thesis or MDWF 584, Project

MDWF 560 Thesis, 7 Cr.

The thesis is selected, developed and completed under the direction of a committee selected by the Graduate Dean and the student. It will require periodic interface between the committee and the student. The thesis should be geared toward producing a practical, substantial published work rather than just completing an academic exercise. The thesis must be an original work. Your thesis must be defended at its conclusion.

MDWF 584 Project 7 Cr.

The project is selected, developed and completed under the direction of a committee selected by the Graduate Dean and the student. It will require periodic interface between the committee and the student. Projects can include a variety of things including setting up a clinic, developing midwifery courses, policies and procedures, developing and administering a service, developing birth-related programs such as a birth/postpartum doula training or a certified childbirth education program. Each project must be a substantial work. Your project must be defended at its conclusion.

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The work you do on your thesis will be the culmination of your degree at MCU. All graduate students are required to complete a thesis or final project, and the MCU faculty is ready to help you with your goals. Some students find the process overwhelming, and so the rest of this syllabus will be dedicated to helping you plan and begin work on your thesis.

### Steps to a Creating a Thesis

1. Idea generation and narrowing
2. Background research
3. Thesis Advisory Committee selected and commitment forms submitted
4. Submit idea(s) to PROD 511 instructor for suggestions and approval to proceed. Discuss ideas with Thesis Advisory Committee.
5. Write prospectus
6. Submit prospectus to Course Instructor.
7. Prospectus approved by Thesis Advisory Committee
8. Begin thesis research, consulting with Thesis Advisory Committee regularly
9. Finish research and evaluate findings
10. Discuss findings with primary advisor, may need to revise plans for thesis and mode of thesis
11. Begin writing thesis
12. Review draft(s) with Thesis Advisory Committee and revise
13. Submit thesis for defense
14. Oral defense of the thesis
15. Revise thesis based on defense
16. Final submission of thesis

You will complete steps 1-7 during PROD 511. The remaining steps will be completed in MDWF 560 or

MDWF 584. The suggested time for the entire thesis process (steps 1-16) is three years. If you plan to take longer than three years the timeline that you develop as part of this course should reflect that.

Each step will be discussed in more detail below.

## **Step 1: Idea Generation and Narrowing**

As you begin your thesis, the first task is finding a topic. You might already have an idea, or you might use brainstorming techniques such as freewriting, mapping, or verbal brainstorming to help you think about possible topics. Reading the literature of your field is an excellent way to stimulate the creative process and discover areas where further research is suggested. As you begin classes or your apprenticeship, you will undoubtedly have new ideas. Find a system that works for you to keep track of these ideas—a notebook you carry with you, a file folder for items of interest, a designated location on your hard drive where you save “thesis ideas”, etc.

Eventually you will need to choose a specific topic and make sure it is of the proper scope. Thesis topics should be centered on midwifery and follow the midwifery model of care. Your thesis will be a sizeable work, but needs to be narrow enough to work with effectively over the next three years.

One of the requirements of a thesis is that it be “an original contribution to knowledge.” It’s not always easy to know if something qualifies as original. Madsen (1992) (see Appendix A) helps define an original topic; “...a topic must have the potential to do at least one of the following: uncover new facts or principles, suggest relationships that were previously unrecognized, challenge existing truths or assumptions, afford new insights into little-understood phenomena, or suggest new interpretations of known facts that can alter people’s perceptions of the world around them” (p. 38).

Many of your ideas for either a written thesis or a project will require the use of one or more research techniques. There are many different accepted research techniques—a few examples are: survey research; statistical analysis; observational field research; sampling; experimental study; and policy analysis. If your research requires one or more techniques, it will be your responsibility to ensure that you are familiar with the accepted procedures of the technique; otherwise, your research will not be valid. Information is available on different research techniques so do not let your unfamiliarity with a method deter you from an otherwise excellent idea.

You also need to choose a mode of presentation—examples are a traditional written thesis, a facilitator’s manual, a course syllabus, or a video. If you do a project, there are many possibilities for presentation of your work. Expectations for a project will be set during this course so that you, the Course Instructor, and your Thesis Advisory Committee are all in agreement on the requirements for your final submission. If you are doing a traditional written thesis (MDWF 560) the body of your thesis manuscript must be at least 25 pages. (The body begins with the introduction and ends with the references).

Table 1 gives some examples of problematic topics and shows how the topic can be changed to a workable idea.

<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>PROBLEM</b>	<b>BETTER TOPIC</b>
“Midwifery Care and C-sections”	Too broad	“A Two-Year Prospective Study on How Non-induction of Labor Encourages Vaginal Birth” or “Educating Clients for Vaginal Birth: A How-to Guide for Midwives”
“Brewer Diet and Pre-eclampsia”	Too broad	“Double Blind Study on the Effectiveness of the Brewer Diet in Preventing Pre-eclampsia”
“Safety and Benefits of Homebirth”	Not original	“A Comparative Analysis of Postpartum Depression in Homebirth vs Hospital Birth”
“The Affects of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Stage Position and Perineal Trauma”	Data not obtainable	“A Prospective Study on Perineal Trauma in 2 <sup>nd</sup> Stage Using Upright Positioning”
Brochure: “The Risks of Group B Strep in the Newborn for Homebirth Families”	Not substantive	Brochure AND a background research paper AND a poster presentation
“The Efficacy of Maternal Education in 3 <sup>rd</sup> World Countries”	Not substantive	“The Efficacy of Risk/Benefit/Alternative Education Regarding Common Birth Practices in Bali”
Table 1: Topic Selection		

The advice in this section is not intended to stifle your creativity but rather to give you a framework to start thinking about a thesis topic that will allow you to demonstrate your mastery of a subject and make a valuable contribution to the midwifery profession.

## Step 2: Background Research

As you formulate ideas, you will need to do some background research on the topic. Your background research will become the literature review section of your prospectus and your thesis. You may not need to do any background research until after you complete step 4 (Submit ideas). This will depend on your familiarity with the topics you are interested in.

The literature review is a critical part of your research. It helps you put your research into the proper context. It helps you acquire an understanding of your topic. Unless you do a thorough literature review, you will not know what is already known about your topic, how the existing research supports or contradicts your ideas, and what is assumed but not proven. The literature review will help you to identify gaps in the literature, which in turn can lead to an innovative thesis proposal (Remember the idea of “originality” discussed in step 1). The literature review section that you will include in both your prospectus and thesis is also critical to the reader of your work as it provides a framework to both understand the background of your topic and why your topic is important.

As you read the literature you should be looking not only for knowledge of subjects but also for how data is collected and analyzed in a certain field, what research methodologies are used, and how results are presented. The standard method of communicating scholarly research is through the scholarly journal (peer-reviewed). Your bibliography should contain a preponderance of citations from scholarly journals. There are exceptions to this (i.e., certain topics may have been discussed primarily in books). However, if you have not done a thorough review of the scholarly journal literature in your subject area, you have not done an acceptable literature review.

Compiling a literature review can be difficult if the process is new to you. The best way to become familiar with a literature review is to read a lot of them. Most scholarly work (found in scholarly journals and books) will have a literature review section. If at all possible, you should look at a variety of theses. This will help you not only with the literature review but all aspects of your own thesis.

Finding the literature for your background reading can be challenging and time consuming. Appendix B lists suggestions for obtaining the literature you will need.

Any resource you use as part of your literature review (and anywhere else in your prospectus and thesis) must be cited in your bibliography. Your bibliography should be in APA format. See Appendix A for resources that will assist you with APA style. You can also ask your writing advisor on your committee for help.

Most students find it useful to create an annotated bibliography for their own use during the thesis process. An annotated bibliography is simply a bibliography with notes—things like what pages applicable sections are on, what this source has to say about your topic, etc. If you start your annotated bibliography as soon as you begin your research, you will save yourself invaluable time throughout the lengthy thesis process. The background research often takes place throughout much of your thesis process, not just at the beginning. Make sure that when you use a source you copy down all the information that will be needed to do a complete citation in APA format. You will be amazed at how much time you can spend looking for an article you read a year ago so you can get the correct page numbers, rereading an article because you can't remember why it might be useful, etc. Come up with a system of keeping track of all your background research and stick with it. You might use something as traditional as 3x5 note cards or you might invest in reference tracker software such as Procite™,

Endnote™, or Reference Works™.

### Step 3: Advisory Committee Committed

The Thesis Advisory Committee is a group of individuals chosen by the student and approved by the Graduate Dean to help and advise the student during the process of writing the thesis. Advisory Committee members will review and provide feedback on the prospectus, drafts of the thesis as needed, and the finished thesis during the oral defense. They also make themselves available to discuss questions, problems, and ideas that come up during the process. A Thesis Advisory Committee must include at least: 1) a midwife with a Master's degree in any field; 2) another midwifery advisor or expert on the topic; and 3) a writing advisor. You may have more than three members on your committee if you feel it is beneficial. For example, your topic may use a method such as statistical analysis and you will request as a fourth member a research techniques advisor.

Advisors for a Midwives College of Utah graduate thesis must fill requirements depending on their role in the committee. The Primary Advisor must meet MCU's preceptor requirements (please see the MCU clinical handbook for details). For the second person on the committee the student may choose to invite an expert in their thesis subject, for example, a psychologist or counselor, statistician, medical doctor, herbalist, etc. An expert advisor should be an expert in his or her field, as well as experienced and willing to work with the student on her thesis. This person can also be a second midwifery advisor. Unlike the Primary Advisor who must have a Master's degree, the second advisor does not need a Master's degree. The writing advisor will help the student with the technical writing required for this piece of work. The student may choose from MCU's research and writing faculty, or may use another writing "expert" if she prefers.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Makeup of a Thesis Advisory Committee</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Primary Advisor: A midwife with a Master's degree in any field.</li><li>2. Another midwifery advisor or an expert advisor in the specific area of your topic.</li><li>3. A writing advisor</li><li>4. OPTIONAL: Additional midwifery advisor or expert advisor, research techniques advisor</li></ol>
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See the *Thesis Advisory Directory* (available under the *Graduate Students* link on the MCU homepage: <http://www.midwifery.edu/>). This is a listing maintained by the MCU Graduate Office that gives names, contact information, and areas of specialization for potential advisors.

You must have a commitment form on file for each of your advisors. The *Advisor Commitment Form* is available under the *Graduate Students* link on the MCU homepage: <http://www.midwifery.edu/>. You should keep a copy of the form in your files. A copy MUST be sent to your PROD 511 instructor. When you are selecting your advisors, you should give them an indication of their responsibilities. If this is clearly communicated up front, it will help avoid problems during the thesis process. Some items you may want to discuss with your prospective advisor are:

- Preferred method of communication (i.e. email, telephone)
- Planned absences in the next \_\_\_ years when they will be unavailable to help you
- Your approximate planned date of completion
- What you feel the primary focus for this particular committee member will be. For example, if you see their role primarily as assisting with the writing process you will want to make this clear at the beginning. Other types of roles an advisor might play are to assist with the research methodology, assist you in understanding the background literature, assist you with interpreting

your findings, etc.

Each advisor will have a somewhat different role. Your primary advisor is the one you will probably consult with the most often. On the other hand, a writing advisor or research techniques advisor may only be consulted with questions specific to writing or a research technique. All the advisors on your committee will be expected to provide feedback in a timely manner on your prospectus, your draft(s), your finished thesis, and your oral defense.

If a committee member is unable to maintain service throughout your project, it is your responsibility to find a replacement for that committee member and provide the new member with sufficient background information to perform his/her responsibilities.

The time to bring your advisory committee on board is now. It is highly recommended that you select your committee as soon as you have an idea for your thesis or project. You want the committee to be involved with your thesis work from the beginning. You do not want to complete your first draft of your prospectus only to have a committee member say your idea is “not original”, “not substantive”, “the study methodology is not valid”, etc.

#### **Step 4: Submit Ideas**

The purpose of this step is to get some feedback before you invest a lot of time writing your prospectus. Submit (by email) a brief description of an idea(s) you are interested in pursuing to the Graduate Dean. Hopefully, you have already communicated with at least one member of your committee regarding your idea (see Step 3). Even though the descriptions are brief, they should be clearly written, with correct grammar and spelling. Your description should give an indication of how the research and/or project will be presented. If you have specific questions or concerns about your idea you should include those.

## Step 5: Write Prospectus

A prospectus is a proposal for your paper or project. It gives you a chance to articulate your idea and “sell” it to an audience. It is a critical step in the process of completing a successful thesis or project. It formalizes your ideas and forces you to place them in a research or project methodology. If you skipped this step, you might find yourself spending months on a thesis only to find it is undoable for a variety of reasons—the data can’t be found, it isn’t original, the scope is too broad, and so on.

Your prospectus should be 5-10 pages long, including the bibliography and a cover page. Understand that this prospectus will be reviewed by your Course Instructor and your Thesis Advisory Committee and may be sent back to you for rewriting and/or reassessment of your goals.

The Grading Rubric included in this section clarifies expectations, but either your prospectus will be acceptable in every way or it will need to be redone. It is expected that every student will receive an A in this class.

Your prospectus should include the following (in the order listed):

✓ **Cover page**

Lists the proposed title, the author’s name, address, and contact information; the name of your college (Midwifery College of Utah); the degree sought; the names of your Thesis Advisory Committee members; and the date of submission. A sample cover page can be found under the *Graduate Students* link on the MCU homepage: <http://www.midwifery.edu/>.

✓ **Table of contents**

This section may not seem necessary at this point as your prospectus is fairly short. However, the Table of Contents will be a necessary and useful component of your finished product.

✓ **Introduction**

This section describes your topic. You should state as succinctly as possible the research question or problem, why it is important, and how your thesis or project will contribute to its solution. Your introduction should grab the reader’s attention and make them care about the rest of your proposal. Although it might be only one to two paragraphs, the wording should be strong. You should spend some time “wordsmithing” this section of your proposal.

✓ **Purpose and Audience**

This section details the purpose for doing your research and/or project. You will have already alluded to the purpose in your introduction but in this section you will state it in a more formal manner (i.e. Purpose/Hypotheses; Purpose/Research Questions; Purpose/Objectives).

**Examples:**

➤ *Purpose of the Study:*

The purpose of the present study was to evaluate thermoregulation in non-equipment aided shallow-water aquatic aerobics during second trimester pregnancy.

*Hypotheses:*

1. H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant difference between core temperatures during exercise in control or treatment conditions.

2. H1: There is a significant difference between core temperatures during exercise in control or treatment conditions.
3. H0: There is no significant difference in oxygen consumption during exercise in control or treatment conditions.
4. H1: There is a significant difference in oxygen consumption during exercise in control or treatment conditions.

Above example from: Dunlap, S.R. (2003). *Thermoregulation in shallow water aquatic exercise during second trimester pregnancy* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Idaho,).

➤ *Problem Statement*

The purpose of this study is to examine the efficacy of social support /group exercise program on postpartum weight retention.

*Research Questions*

1. Will a social support / group exercise intervention improve peak VO<sub>2</sub> (aerobic capacity) of women after the twelve-week intervention?
2. Will body composition improve after the twelve-week intervention?

Above example from: Pickering, R. (2006). *The effect of a social support / group exercise intervention on postnatal weight retention and health behaviors* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Idaho).

➤ *Problem statement*

Volunteers comprise the majority of the staffing at the maternity clinic in Bali. There is a high turnover and training procedures are inconsistent.

*Solution*

This project will establish written training procedures and forms that can be effectively implemented with volunteers.

Identifying the audience(s) for your work helps you know what writing style to use. For example, the audience for a traditional written thesis is scholars and researchers and so the writing style and organizational format are scholarly. If you are compiling a pamphlet for medical practitioners, you would use a more formal writing style than if you are compiling a pamphlet for the layperson (i.e. pregnant women). This section should not be difficult to compile as your purpose is the driving force behind your research question or project proposal.

✓ **Literature Review**

This section will vary in length depending on how large a body of literature already exists that pertains to your topic. Although it's not required to have read everything that pertains to your topic at this point, you should have a good grasp of what's out there and you should certainly have read the seminal research. Once your prospectus is approved and you embark on your thesis or project you need to make sure you do a thorough literature review, filling in any gaps that may exist in the literature review of your prospectus.

You may be tempted to include only background material that supports your ideas. However, one mark of unbiased writing is to include ideas that contradict or do not support your own. This shows respect for the reader's intelligence and will ensure that your own conclusions are much more persuasive.

This section should not merely be a listing of the research with some description added but rather an analysis of why the studies and ideas cited are important to the work you are proposing. As you prepare the literature review it might help to assume the reader of your work will be

uninformed. Your literature review serves as an overview to the topic, giving readers enough background knowledge that they can evaluate the remainder of your work.

The literature review should be well organized. A common method of organizing the review is to use thematic headings to divide the review into sections that cover all the different aspects of your research.

### ✓ **Methods and Procedures**

The methodology section outlines your research design. If you are doing a project it describes the steps that will be necessary to complete the project. Creating a methodology will help you see if your project is doable. As you go through the steps necessary for successful completion of a project, you may discover regulations, financial costs, etc. that you did not think of initially. Spending some time planning at this stage is much wiser than finding out months into your project that there are insurmountable obstacles. Try and find someone who has done something similar (i.e. set up a birth center, started a childbirth education course) and discuss with them the process. Hopefully, when members of your thesis committee review the methodology section of your prospectus they will point out things you may have missed.

If your research involves data on which you hope to base conclusions you will need to describe how the data is to be collected, what techniques will be used to analyze the data, and how it will be presented. You will want to do background research and/or consult with an expert (this could be a Technical Advisor on your committee) to make sure your procedures for gathering, analyzing, and presenting your data are accepted and valid in your area of research. Your literature review should include references to your selected methodology.

The methodology section should also discuss your planned mode of presentation, particularly if it is anything other than a traditional written thesis. For example, if you are doing an educational booklet you might mention the software program that you plan to use to lay out the booklet; anticipated costs and methods of publication and distribution, how it will be distributed and shared with its prospective audience, etc.

### ✓ **Timeline**

Part of a prospectus for a thesis is a plan of attack. This helps break down the monumental task into smaller pieces, and sets a timeline for you to work with, although it can be flexible. A worksheet is offered below based on the steps necessary for completing both your prospectus and your thesis. You may decide to add or subtract steps from those listed here based on your particular project and style. In this section of your prospectus, you will want to list the order and pertinent “goal dates” for steps such as: beginning your research or study, beginning writing, meeting with your advisors to go over data, finishing a first draft, your oral defense, and your final due date for the thesis to be turned in. As you create your timeline, allow an appropriate amount of time for communications with the other people involved. For example, a reasonable amount of time to receive your Thesis Advisory Committee forms back might be two weeks.

You will already have completed some of the steps in your timeline when you submit your prospectus. Each time you submit your prospectus (assuming you submit more than one draft) you need to update the timeline to reflect any changes.

	Date to Begin	Date for Completion
Idea generation and narrowing		
Background research		
Thesis Advisory Committee committed		
Submit ideas to PROD 511 Course Instructor		
Discuss questions and/or concerns such as findings in background research, mode of presentation, research techniques with appropriate member(s) of advisory committee and/or Course Instructor.		
Write prospectus/Revise drafts as needed		
Continue background research		
Evaluate findings		
Discuss findings with advisors, may need to revise plans for thesis and mode of thesis		
Writing		
Committee review of drafts		
Submit thesis for defense		
Oral defense of the thesis		
Revise thesis based on defense		
Final submission of thesis		

✓ **Components of Project** (This section applies only to projects)

If you are doing a project rather than a traditional written thesis you will enroll in MDWF 584 upon completion of PROD 511. Along with the Graduate Dean and your committee, you will decide during PROD 511 the basic components of your thesis project. The *MDWF 584 Components* form (available under the *Graduate Students* link on the MCU homepage: <http://www.midwifery.edu/>) must be on file before this course is completed.

Each project must have at least three components as follows:

1. Background paper: This is **REQUIRED** for every project. Total length will be at least 15 pages. The paper is basically your expanded prospectus and will be explained more fully in the MDWF 584 syllabus.
2. Physical components: These are items that will be turned in with your background paper as part of your project portfolio. Each item should be briefly described in the Methods section of your prospectus. Examples of possible physical components are:
  - Video
  - Facilitator's manual
  - Training guide
  - Presentation of your project (i.e. Poster presentation at a conference)
  - Brochure

- Correspondence with various entities (i.e. government agencies, accreditation bodies, etc.)
3. **Presentation:** All projects must include some means of sharing your project in a public venue such as a workshop, a conference presentation, a poster session, etc.

For the purposes of your prospectus, list the components of your project here. As you work with the Graduate Dean and your committee to develop your prospectus this section may well change. Once it is finalized, use the information in this section to complete the *MDWF 584 Components* form.

✓ **Bibliography**

Your bibliography must be in proper APA format. You should include any source that you have used as background for your prospectus. Your bibliography will change as you work on your thesis and you should not feel that you need to have uncovered every source you will use at this point in time.

## Additional Note on Projects

If you are doing a project rather than a thesis, your prospectus should still have all of the above sections. Although not everything discussed in the above section will pertain to some projects, much of it is pertinent. Because of the wide variety of possible projects, it is difficult to come up with guidelines for every situation. You should approach it from the perspective that you are trying to give your Thesis Advisory Committee and the Course Instructor as clear a description as possible of what you want to do so they can offer constructive feedback before you've invested too much time. The introduction section forces you to describe the importance of your project in a way that will sell it. The literature review section ensures that you do some background research and learn from past endeavors. For example, if you were setting up a birth center you might not find anything in the literature that describes the steps that were taken, the obstacles encountered, etc. As part of your background research, you might need to contact people who have set up a birth center. The methodology section gives you an opportunity to think about your plan of attack, step by step. Creating a timeline should give you a sense of if the project is doable in a feasible time period.

## Grading Criteria for Prospectus

Remember that you are required to pass this course with an "A". The grading rubric will be used to help evaluate your work but your prospectus will be returned to you for revision until it is "A" quality.

This assignment is worth 300 points.

### *Rubric for grading Assignment*

points	target
100	Prospectus includes required sections and content: Cover Page

	Table of Contents Introduction Purpose and audience Literature review Methods and Procedures Timeline Components of Project (ONLY FOR PROJECTS) Bibliography
50	Topic/Project is of proper scope, is original, and demonstrates value to the midwifery profession
50	Writing: Grammar/Language Body paragraphs Headings
50	APA format followed, including citations
50	Advisory Committee Commitment Forms (These were submitted in step 3. You receive points for them as part of your prospectus)
<b>300</b>	<b>Total</b>

## Step 6: Submit Prospectus to Course Instructor

Submit your prospectus to the Course Instructor as an attachment to an email. Use the MCU messaging system. **DO NOT** write your prospectus in the body of an email as it is a formal piece of writing in which formatting, etc. is important. The Course Instructor will verify that all the required sections are contained in your prospectus and that APA formatting has been used. The Course Instructor may return the prospectus to you for revisions before it is sent out to the Thesis Advisory Committee. When the Course Instructor feels the prospectus is ready she sends it to committee members along with instructions for reviewing.

## Step 7: Prospectus Approved by Thesis Advisory Committee

The Course Instructor will receive all the reviewed copies from the members of your Thesis Advisory Committee. You will receive the comments of your committee members and the comments of the Course Instructor approximately two weeks after you have submitted your prospectus. There could be circumstances (i.e. a committee member is on vacation) where this timeframe is not feasible. The Course Instructor will keep you informed of any unusual circumstances. Until the Course Instructor and all members of your Thesis Advisory Committee agree that the prospectus is 'A' work it will be returned for further revisions.

## Steps 8-16: Completion of Thesis

Once you have successfully completed step 7, you are finished with **PROD 511: Thesis Prospectus**. The remainder of your thesis work will take place in another course. Your prospectus will be a big part of the remaining work you do. The following information will be good for you to be aware of as you work on your prospectus.

- 1) **Traditional Written Thesis:** If your final product is to be a written thesis your thesis course will be MDWF 560. Your prospectus will form the backbone of your work. The "Timeline" section of your prospectus will be omitted from your final thesis. In addition, your final product should include the following sections:
  - Findings (also referred to as Results or Discussion)
  - Conclusion
  - Definition of Terms (this is an optional section but is helpful if your thesis includes terminology that would be unfamiliar to most people).\
  - Appendices (if applicable)

It would be helpful for you to review the MDWF 560 syllabus (available under the *Graduate Students* link on the MCU homepage: <http://www.midwifery.edu/>) as you prepare your prospectus.

- 2) **Project:** If your final product is to be a project your thesis course will be MDWF 584. Such a wide variety of projects are possible that it is difficult to set guidelines that will fit all of them. As you work through your prospectus with your Thesis Advisory Committee, both you and the

committee members should become very clear about what the expectations for the final product are. Each project will be accompanied by a written paper that is basically your prospectus, expanded. The “Timeline” section of your prospectus will be omitted from your final product. Two sections that you will add to your paper are:

- Discussion (A short discussion of how the project went. What would you do differently? What worked well? Major obstacles?)
- Conclusion (One to two paragraphs)

It would be helpful for you to review the MDWF 584 syllabus (available under the *Graduate Students* link on the MCU homepage: <http://www.midwifery.edu/>) as you prepare your prospectus.



# Course Evaluation

**PROD 511 Thesis Prospectus.**

Instructor:

Date:

**I took this course through:**

Distance Studies

Conference Retreat

**Please Rate the SYLLABUS:**

	Not at all									Excellent	<u>Specific Comments</u>
How <b>organized</b> was your syllabus	? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10										
How <b>clear</b> was your syllabus	? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10										
How <b>complete</b> was your syllabus	? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10										
<i>Other comments on your syllabus:</i>											

**Please rate the CONTENT of this course:**

	Not at all									Excellent	<u>Specific Comments</u>
How <b>useful/relevant</b> was this course	? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10										
How <b>interesting</b> was this course	? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10										
How <b>fun</b> was this course	? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10										
<i>Other comments on this course:</i>											

**Please rate the QUANTITY of material covered for the credit value awarded:**

	Too little	Just right				Too much				
	? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10									
<i>Comments:</i>										

**Please rate your interaction with your instructor:**

	Terrible									Great!	<u>Specific Comments</u>
My instructor was accessible	? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10										
My instructor was prompt in replying to my questions	? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10										
I feel my instructor was sufficiently competent on the content of this course <i>(For Conference Retreat Courses Only)</i>	? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10										
My instructor was effective in her teaching methods	? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10										
My instructor was effective in her use of visual aids and learning activities	? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10										
<i>Other comments on your instructor:</i>											

**Please rate your interaction with the MCU Office:**

	Terrible									Great!	<u>Specific Comments</u>
I received my syllabus in a timely manner	? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10										
The office was prompt in replying to my questions, concerns and requests	? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10										
The office provided wonderful student Service	? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10										
<i>Other comments on the office:</i>											

**What would have made your course experience Fantastic?**

## Appendix A

### ***Helpful Resources***

Madsen, D (1992). *Successful dissertations and theses: a guide to graduate student research from proposal to completion* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Chapters are: Starting and Completing the Dissertation; Working with the Research Adviser and Advisory Committee; Selecting and Shaping the Research Topic; Preparing the Research Proposal; Employing Basic Research Sources and Techniques; Using the Library and Locating Essential Resources; Organizing, Outlining, and Writing; Defending the Thesis; and Adapting the Thesis for Publication and Presentation.

Although somewhat dated, this is an accessible book about the process. Although some of the information and examples are focus on the Ph.D Dissertation rather than the Master's Thesis, both are covered and the differences between the two are discussed.

### **APA Citation Style**

The printed manual is the definitive source for APA citation. In addition to in-text and bibliography citations, it includes information on how to correctly format figures, tables, illustrations, etc. Many libraries will have a copy in their reference section (make sure you are looking at the current edition). The electronic APA style guides may have sufficient information to meet your needs and several good ones are included in the list below.

American Psychological Association (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association

Hacker, D. (n.d.). *Research and documentation online*. Retrieved March 10, 2007, from <http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/>

Covers citation of both print and electronic sources using APA, MLA, Chicago, or CBE. Be sure and select APA format.

Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL) (2007). *APA formatting and style guide*. Retrieved March 10, 2007, from <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

## Appendix B

### Literature Review

#### What is Scholarly Literature?

The purpose of scholarly literature is to communicate research and scholarly ideas. Some characteristics of scholarly literature are:

- A rigorous review process, often material is not accepted for publication
- Technical language and discipline-specific jargon
- Written by researchers or experts in the field
- Procedures often described in detail
- Includes a bibliography

#### How to Find Information?

You may find good information for your research from your textbooks, your own personal library, and on the free web. However, it is important to realize that most scholarly research is presented in scholarly journals and dissertations. Scholarly journals are generally very costly—comprising a major portion of a research library's budget. Only a small portion of scholarly research is freely available online. The following information should help you get started in your literature review.

#### ➤ Article Databases

Article databases index the literature and allow searching by keyword, author, title, subject, etc. Some databases are comprehensive and cover a wide range of disciplines (JSTOR) and some are more discipline specific (PsycINFO). Some cover only scholarly literature, some cover only popular literature, and some a mixture. Some databases are citation only, some include an abstract with the citation, and some have the full-text of the article. It is important to understand the coverage (both in terms of scope and time period) of the databases you use if you want to ensure a **complete** literature review.

- EBSCO Research Databases  
MCU has a subscription to a select set of EBSCO databases covering the medical and health fields. This is a wonderful tool that will give you access to a wealth of material—peer-reviewed articles, popular press, evidence-based reviews, etc. Access is through the *Student Menu* on the MCU website. Much of what you access will NOT be full-text and will include only a citation and abstract. See the section below on Interlibrary Loan for help with obtaining the full text of materials.

Very few scholarly article databases are available on the free web. Some free databases are:

- *PubMed* (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?db=PubMed>)  
Provides access to millions of citations and abstracts in biomedical literature.
- *PubMed Central* (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?db=pmc>)  
A much smaller database than PubMed but has the full-text of articles
- *IngentaConnect* (<http://www.ingentaconnect.com/>)  
Over 20 million articles on a wide range of topics. Only has citations but articles are available for purchase (or you can use the citation to locate them at a library)

- *Google Scholar* (<http://scholar.google.com/>)  
Primarily articles, but also indexes books, theses, reports, etc. The advanced search feature is much more efficient than the general search. Some items have the full-text and some only a citation and abstract. Under “scholar preferences” you can select up to three libraries to link to their full-text content if you are an authorized user of that library and if that library participates. Even if you are not allowed access to the full-text because you are not an authorized user, this feature is helpful to use to determine if a library near you has a particular article/book in their collection.

There are hundreds of other article databases that generally require affiliation with a library to use (see library section below). Many library websites do include a description of their available databases on their website. You should explore some of these so you get a sense of what is available at different libraries.

*Example:* University of Idaho Library database page (<http://db.lib.uidaho.edu/databases/>)  
Select one of the “Databases by Subject” categories. In the table you will see an “info” icon  
Click on this for information about the database.

### ➤ **Books**

Most academic and public libraries make their catalog available online and do not restrict access. Oftentimes a library catalog will offer access to a consortium of libraries. The largest catalog is WorldCat (free Beta version is at [www.worldcat.org](http://www.worldcat.org)) which searches the collections of thousands of libraries around the world. Books are the primary format included but you can also search for articles, videos, sound recordings, websites, etc. Search results indicate libraries that have the item in their collection (not all libraries have added their content to WorldCat).

### ➤ **Theses and Dissertations**

Oftentimes theses and dissertations are only available at the library of the institution where the author completed his/her thesis or dissertation. Searching WorldCat or a library’s online catalog will allow you to see where theses on particular topics are located. You can then try borrowing the thesis through interlibrary loan or purchasing it from UMI ([http://www.proquest.com/products\\_umi/dissertations/](http://www.proquest.com/products_umi/dissertations/)). A more efficient way to search for dissertations and theses is to use *ProQuest Dissertations & Theses (PQDT)*. PQDT is the world's most comprehensive collection of dissertations and theses, with more than 2.3 million doctoral dissertations and master’s theses included, covering graduate research from 1861 to the present. Many academic libraries have a subscription to this database or to an older version on CD-ROM titled *Dissertation Abstracts*.

### ➤ **Interlibrary Loan**

Interlibrary loan is a service through which one library lends an item from its collection, or provides an electronic or paper copy of an item, to another library. Many libraries in the United States and Canada (I’m unsure about other countries) have wonderful interlibrary loan services, even small public libraries. Sometimes there is a small fee involved for printing, copying, and/or postage. This is an excellent way for you to obtain both books and articles that are not available in your library. Most libraries do not lend their audiovisual items and some university libraries do not lend their theses and dissertations. Check with your local library to see what is available. In small libraries staff may not be familiar with interlibrary loan, as it may not be a service that has been requested. Ask to speak to the director and explain your situation. You might also contact the closest academic library, the state library, or large public library. They often are the primary lenders in a region and may be able to help you set something up with your local library.

➤ **Libraries and Reference Services**

You may find that you need to travel to visit a research library if you are not fortunate enough to live near one. Libraries that offer access to scholarly databases and collections are generally academic libraries, although some larger public libraries have excellent research collections. Visit the website of libraries you are interested in to see what services they offer. Some libraries only let their own patrons (staff and students) use their online subscription databases. Some libraries have some public access terminals where any person that physically comes to the library can use their subscription services. Call or email the reference desk before you make a trip and make sure you are going to be able to access the resources you want to.

There are also many consortiums of libraries that may offer services to patrons of the region. For example, many states have purchased subscriptions to various article databases. Check with your local library or state library to see what might be available in your area.

Libraries also offer a variety of reference services. Most academic libraries have virtual or email reference and some do restrict who the service is available to. For example, it might be feasible to ask a librarian to check some databases for citations to a specific topic. On the other hand, it would not be feasible (or good form!) to ask a librarian to do your entire literature search for you.

**NOTE:**

This appendix is included simply to give you a sense of what types of information are available and how to go about finding that information if you are not well acquainted with scholarly research. Because the students of MCU are working under such a diversity of conditions it is not feasible to try and detail every research need and solution. If you have explored the options for gathering information that are available to you and feel you may be missing items of importance, contact your PROD 511 Course Instructor for more assistance.