

MDWF 560

Thesis

Student Syllabus

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Syllabus: MDWF 560

Thesis

CREDITS: 5(five)

PRE-REQUISITE: PROD 511

COURSE PURPOSE & OVERVIEW:

The student will complete a written thesis during this course. The student will interact on a regular basis with their Thesis Advisory Committee. An oral defense of the thesis will be completed.

SPECIFIC LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

At the completion of this course, the students will be able to demonstrate knowledge and skills in the following areas:

1. Produce a substantial, original scholarly work.
2. Analyze data and communicate results effectively
3. Present their thesis in a public venue.
3. Successfully defend their research through the oral defense process

TEXTS & SUPPLIES:

Text(s) for this course:

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5th ed.

MCU Guide to the Preparation of Theses (located under the Graduate Student link on your student menu)

Supplies for this course:

None required

GRADING:

This is a Pass/Fail course. You must complete your thesis course with a “Pass” grade in order to get your Master’s Degree.

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

- Competencies will vary depending on thesis topic.

NARM VERIFICATION FORM

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

- Skills will vary depending on thesis topic.

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:

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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.

Required Assignments for MDWF560

24 Update Forms due monthly. You can find the blank form in your class documents. The forms should be uploaded into the MCU system as an assignment and also e-mailed to your advisors. There are 24 assignments because it is expected you will complete this course in two years. Should you finish the course early, you will receive credit for these updates for months you did not need.

APA Assignment Before submitting your first draft of your thesis, you must complete the APA quiz. It is expected that you will have read the MCU Guide to the Preparation of Theses (found under the Graduate Student link in your student menu) and reviewed the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association before taking this quiz. Your prospectus **MUST** use APA formatting properly. The quiz is open book. If you score less than 90% on the quiz, you will need to have a conference call with your Committee Secretary to review the questions you missed. Your prospectus **MUST** use APA formatting properly. If you take the time to become familiar with APA format and do it right the first time, you will save yourself quite a bit of time and trouble!

Written Thesis Information on this is below and in the MCU Guide to the Preparation of Theses. When you submit your first draft, the Committee Secretary will schedule a GoToMeeting or conference call for your committee to review the draft as a group. With subsequent drafts, the secretary will distribute the drafts to your committee and collect their reviews via e-mail. Expect to go through the drafting and review process multiple times.

Oral Defense Students will present and defend their thesis results to their committee, the Graduate Dean, and the MCU President. Details on this can be found below.

Presentation of Results All graduate students are required to present their thesis results in some way. This can be done through either a presentation or poster session at a national midwifery conference like MANA or Midwifery Today, a local midwifery conference in your area, an MCU conference, or an online presentation to a group of MCU students.

Help sessions

Each semester, the Graduate Dean and Graduate Dean Assistant will hold at least one open help session online. Students may use this opportunity to ask any questions they might have, brainstorm ideas, discuss any obstacles, etc. The Graduate Dean and Graduate Dean Assistant are also available via MCU messaging at any time during the semester, and personal phone calls can be arranged as well.



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Syllabus: MDWF 560 Thesis

Section 1. The Thesis Process

I. Introduction

You have completed PROD 511 and are ready to carry out the research planned and approved in your prospectus. The purpose of this syllabus is to provide information on the remaining steps you need to take for successful completion of your thesis. As listed in the PROD 511 syllabus, the steps to creating a thesis are:

1. Idea generation and narrowing
2. Background research
3. Thesis Advisory Committee selected and commitment forms submitted
4. Submit idea(s) to Committee Secretary for suggestions and approval to proceed. Discuss ideas with Thesis Advisory Committee.
5. Write prospectus
6. Submit prospectus to Committee Secretary.
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

Steps 1-7 were completed in PROD 511. This syllabus covers steps 8-16.

II. Thesis Research (Steps 8-10)

The prospectus you completed in PROD 511 is a good start to your research. Your **literature review** should be fairly substantive at this point. You should add to it as you discover additional pertinent literature. Your focus at this point will be the **methods** section. If you have doubts about your proposed methodology now is the time to clear those up. For example, if your planned methodology involves interviewing people but you are unsure of what type of interview to use (i.e. structured, psycho-social, semi-structured, etc.) you need to clarify before you proceed. Use your Thesis Advisory Committee as a resource. You should be communicating with your committee monthly and submitting records of this in the MCU system. If you are using a data-gathering instrument such as a questionnaire you should get

your committee feedback before you utilize the instrument.

Conducting your research and analyzing your findings will be the longest part of the thesis process for many people. It is imperative that you communicate with your committee often. You do not want to spend a year or more on your research only to find your committee has questions and disagreements concerning your methods.

Helpful Hints:

- ✓ Set checkpoints
- ✓ Work consistently. Don't let long periods of time lapse with no work on your thesis.
- ✓ Communicate with your committee

III. Writing the Thesis (Step 11)

Your prospectus provides the backbone of your written thesis. As your research progresses, you may make significant changes to your draft thesis based on your findings. This is typical and you should expect to do a lot of revision.

The **required** sections of the final thesis manuscript are described in the MCU Guide to the Preparation of Theses found under the graduate student link in your student menu. The body of your thesis manuscript must be at least 40 pages. (The body begins with the introduction and ends with the references).

IV. Submit and Revise Drafts (Step 12)

You will submit each draft of your thesis to your Committee Secretary. The secretary is responsible for scheduling the conferencing for review of the first draft, coordinating e-mail distribution of the drafts to other committee members and collecting the reviews of each draft and forwarding them to the student. The number of drafts will depend upon your committee's expectations and your quality of work. Expect to repeat the process multiple times.

V. Submit Thesis for Defense (Step 13)

Your Committee Secretary will send you a communication authorizing you to schedule the Oral Defense of Thesis. Submit the form *Request for Oral Defense* (available in your class documents) to the MCU Administrative Assistant. Use the MCU messaging system and attach the form. It will be at least two weeks from the date you submit the form until the oral defense (see form *Request for Oral Defense* for more details).

VI. Oral Defense and Revisions (Steps 14 and 15)

On the scheduled date of the Oral Defense, the student meets with all members of the Thesis Advisory Committee, the Graduate Dean, and the MCU President through web conferencing or an approved alternative method (such as conducting the Oral Defense at an MCU conference). Other MCU students and faculty will receive an invitation to observe but will be required to RSVP. The student may request that an invitation be sent to any additional people they would like to attend. The web conference will be **initiated** and **recorded** by the MCU office staff.

During the defense, the Committee Secretary will act as the moderator. The student begins the defense with a 20-30 minute description of their thesis work. This presentation should be

practiced, as it is considered formal. *GoToMeeting* web conferencing is the system currently being used by MCU. The Committee Secretary will arrange for someone to assist you in preparing your materials and becoming comfortable with the *GoToMeeting* interface. A PowerPoint presentation is an effective way to do your presentation; however, you may suggest other alternatives. The presentation is followed by formal and extensive questioning (focus questions) by each committee member. The entire process should last from 1 to 1 ½ hours.

Prior to the defense, the Committee Secretary will ask each committee member to submit two focus questions related to the thesis. Committee members are instructed to write questions that allow the student to share the knowledge they have acquired during their thesis work. Some questions might require the student to discuss their work in a broader context. The two questions below illustrate the kinds of questions you might expect to be asked.

SAMPLE FOCUS QUESTIONS
The data for your study was collected through a survey. In your Methods section you state that convenience sampling was used to develop your sample. Please describe the primary characteristics of convenience sampling. Why did you choose this method of sampling as opposed to other methods such as probability sampling or stratified sampling?
You discuss the option of homeopathic remedies in labor and birth. Drawing on your literature review, briefly summarize several of the major benefits and risks associated with homeopathic remedies in labor and birth.

The Committee Secretary will select a minimum of three focus questions to be asked at the defense. The student will not have prior knowledge of the questions. The student may take up to five minutes to answer each question. After the student answers the question, each committee member will have a chance to ask one follow-up question. The response to each of these should not take more than three minutes.

The student and guests are then excused, and the Thesis Advisory Committee, the Graduate Dean, and the MCU President will have a brief discussion. Within **one week** of the Oral Defense, each member of the Thesis Advisory Committee and the MCU President will prepare and submit written commentary on the students' performance, and send to the Committee Secretary by email. The form *Evaluation of Oral Defense* (available under class documents) is used by committee members to judge your defense; you may find it helpful to review this form.

The Committee Secretary will provide the student and the committee with a Summary Statement of the comments from the evaluation forms. It is possible that the student will be asked to complete some corrective actions (see part 4 of the form *Evaluation of Oral Defense*) before the grade for your thesis course is assigned. The corrective actions might include changes to your thesis materials or redoing part(s) of your oral defense. The Committee Secretary will work closely with you to complete corrective actions in a timely

manner. If any portion of the defense (the presentation or any of the focus questions) needs to be repeated, the Committee Secretary will arrange another defense time. Only the Graduate Dean, the Committee Secretary, and one other thesis committee member are required to be at this second defense.

VII. Final Submission of Thesis (Step 16)

After all corrective actions requested by the Thesis Advisory Committee have been made, the Committee Secretary collects signatures for the *Authorization to Submit Master's Thesis* pages. The pages are inserted into the thesis after the Cover Page. A digital copy of the completed thesis manuscript is sent to the student. A copy of the digitized thesis is included in the MCU Digital Library and a digital copy is archived at the MCU office.

The Graduate Dean assigns the final grade.

Section 2. The Thesis Advisory Committee

I. Working With Your Committee

Your Thesis Advisory Committee is integral to the success of your thesis work at MCU, and you are expected to send (at minimum) monthly updates to all members of your committee, **and** upload these updates into the MCU system as they are required assignments. The Committee Secretary will assign a grade for these updates based on timeliness and the information contained. You have 24 assignments for the two years you may need to complete this course. Should you complete the course in less than two years, you will be given full credit for the months you did not need. Your thesis work is basically self-directed; yet at the same time, you need your committee to be involved. The dynamics of each committee will be different. The relationship each student establishes with her committee will be different. Some tips for successful communication with your Thesis Advisory Committee are:

- Use the MCU messaging system unless you have an advisor that is not MCU faculty.
- Treat this as a professional relationship. Your communications (including email) should be professional. Grammar and punctuation in your written correspondence should be professional.
- Develop a consistent format for communication. For example, a memo format works well for formal communication such as submitting a draft of your thesis.
- You will probably develop a preferred method of communication with each advisor. Don't get "stuck" in one mode. You may find the relationship with some advisors is more productive via telephone conversations.
- There may be times when you need to have a "real time" conference with your entire committee. Contact your Committee Secretary for help in setting up a web conference.
- Be proactive. Your thesis advisors are interested in your work. They are committed to the midwifery profession. They want you to succeed. However, they are busy people and the thesis process is long. Ultimately, you're in charge.

II. Problems During the Thesis Process

Unfortunately, problems may arise during the thesis process. A thesis advisor may not be able to continue due to unforeseen circumstances, an advisor may consistently be late in corresponding, etc. If the problems cannot be satisfactorily resolved you should contact the Graduate Dean.

Once a semester, the Graduate Office will be sending you an evaluation form for your advisors. Please take the time to fill these out. Graduate advisory work is a serious responsibility and the Graduate Office needs to hear about both the outstanding work that the advisors are doing and any problems encountered. Thoughtful evaluations by students will help to make the thesis process better. MCU is committed to assisting you in your thesis work but we need your feedback.

CHECKLIST OF THESIS TASKS		
Description	Responsibility	Completed
Submit draft of thesis manuscript to Committee Secretary	Student	
Send draft to committee members	Committee Secretary	
Schedule conference call or GoToMeeting with student and entire committee to review draft. (Required for first drafts. Subsequent revisions may be handled either via conferencing or e-mail.)	Committee Secretary	
Note: There is not a set number for draft revisions. It will depend on the quality of your work and the expectations of your committee. You should expect to go through the above three steps several times.		
Agree that thesis materials are ready for defense.	Thesis Advisory Committee	
Instruct student (in writing) to prepare for Oral Defense	Committee Secretary	
Submit <i>Request for Oral Defense</i> to MCU Administrative Assistant	Student	
Schedule Oral Defense with all committee members, Graduate Dean, and MCU President	MCU Administrative Assistant	
Create .pdf file of thesis. Send to Thesis Advisory Committee and student	Committee Secretary	
Send focus question instructions to Thesis Advisory Committee	Committee Secretary	
Attend Oral Defense	Student; all members of Thesis Advisory Committee; Graduate Dean; MCU President	
Send <i>Evaluation of Oral Defense</i> to Committee Secretary	All members of Thesis Advisory Committee; MCU President	
Send student Summary Sheet of commentary and detailed instructions of any necessary revisions to thesis manuscript.	Committee Secretary	
If necessary, complete any Corrective Actions assigned.	Student	
Send <i>Authorization to Submit Master's Thesis</i> to all committee members and Graduate Dean for signature	Committee Secretary	
Send final copy of thesis to MCU office and student	Committee Secretary	
Complete course evaluation	Student	
Assign final grade	Graduate Dean	

OTHER:		
Complete evaluation (received from Committee Secretary) of committee members each semester enrolled in thesis class.	Student	