

Welcome back! This is it, the last semester of the Croft senior thesis. Hopefully by now you have done some of your analysis and have a plan for finishing your thesis in the next few months. The most important piece of advice I have for you is to continue working hard on the thesis **now**.

First Draft

The **first draft** of the thesis is due **Monday, February 15**. This is only **five weeks away**. Think about what your finished thesis will look like and think about what you will need to do each week to get there by Monday, February 15. This is the moment to work the hardest on your thesis. Your other classes are just getting started and you have more time now than you will later in the semester. A good, complete first draft will lay the groundwork for a high-quality thesis and a low-stress semester.

Second Draft

The **second draft** of the thesis is due to your mentor, your second reader, and your third reader on **Friday, March 5**. Your mentor and the second and third readers should be reading a complete paper so that they can aim their comments at helping you push your analysis to the next level.

If you do not have a full draft completed at this point, you will be facing an uphill battle for the rest of the semester, and your final product will not reflect the best of your abilities.

Comments from readers

During the two weeks after you submit your second draft you should continue polishing your work as your committee reads it over. This is also a good time to prepare the presentation of your work that you will give at your defense (see <http://www.croft.olemiss.edu/current/thesis-defense> for instructions on preparing the defense). Your committee will return your thesis to you by **Monday, March 15**, at which point you will meet with your mentor and discuss how to integrate the readers' comments into your work, taking into consideration the scope of your project and the time remaining before the end of their semester.

Please refer to the Senior Thesis Format page on the website (<http://www.croft.olemiss.edu/current/croft-thesis-format>) a detailed explanation of the **formatting requirements** for the thesis.

Final Draft

After making all necessary revisions, you will turn in the **final draft** of your thesis on **Friday, April 9**, and, in conversation with your mentor and third reader, you will schedule a time for your thesis defense during regular business hours between **Wednesday, April 14** and **Friday, April 23**. You are responsible for finding a time that is convenient for both your mentor and your third reader.

Turning in a complete final draft by the deadline of **Friday, April 9**, is the only way to ensure that you will be able to defend and graduate this semester.

Final Grade

Your final grade for Inst 422 will be based on an evaluation by each of your three readers of both your written thesis and the oral presentation that you give at your defense. The criteria for this evaluation are as follows:

- The student has articulated a *compelling research question or hypothesis*.
- The student has *contextualized the research topic*.
- The student has used *appropriate literature and primary sources*.
- The student has employed *methods of analysis* that are both *explicit* and *appropriate* for testing the hypothesis.
- The student has convincingly *demonstrated the validity of the hypothesis*.
- The note *apparatus, bibliography, and any graphs or tables* are organized and presented in a manner in keeping with the standards of the discipline.
- The thesis meets the *linguistic and stylistic standards* of the discipline.
- The student *met my deadlines and those set by the Croft Institute*.
- The student *kept the appointments we set and was respectful of my time*.
- The student's *oral presentation at the outset* of the defense was successful.
- The student's *oral defense* of the thesis was successful.

Your written thesis will count for 80% of the grade for Inst 422 and your defense for 20%. A grade of C or better is required to complete the course for credit and graduate. Please discuss these criteria with your mentor to determine what his or her expectations are for each of them.

Model Theses

The Croft Institute has posted senior theses and thesis prospectuses on its website, available for viewing by mentors and thesis writers. These can be found at <http://www.croft.olemiss.edu/current/model-theses>. Note many of these theses are longer than our current target length, but are still useful for their methodology and bibliographies. You will need to be on the University of Mississippi campus network and use your WebID to log into this site. You can also find Croft theses, but not prospectuses, on the University's electronic depository at https://egrove.olemiss.edu/croft_thesis/.

Let me reiterate that the key to success this semester is working hard now so that you can turn in a complete draft of your thesis on **Monday, February 15!** This should be your absolute number one priority for the next four weeks. As always, if you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me at wschenck@olemiss.edu or 915-1500.

Inst 422 Spring 2021 Schedule of Activities and Deadlines

Week	Dates	Activity
1	January 19-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student research and writing; consultation with mentor
2	January 25-29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student research and writing; consultation with mentor
3	February 1-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student research and writing; consultation with mentor
4	February 8-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student research and writing; consultation with mentor
5	February 15-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First draft due with mentor by Monday, February 15.
6	February 22-26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student revises first draft;
7	March 1-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Croft mentor report #1 due to Croft Institute by Friday, March 5. Second draft due to mentor, 2nd, and 3rd readers by Friday, March 5.
8	March 8-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student begins to revise second draft.
9	March 15-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentor and readers return second draft with comments to students by Monday, March 15; student revises and integrates readers' comments as appropriate (based on mentor's advice)
10	March 22-26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student works on revising and completing final draft
11	March 29-April 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student works on revising and completing final draft
12	April 5-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised and final draft due Friday, April 9.
13	April 12-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defenses from Wednesday, April 14 to Friday, April 16
14	April 19-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defenses Continue from Monday, April 19 to Friday, April 23
15	April 26-30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finals Week