

Welcome to Inst 421; the first of our two-semester Croft senior thesis sequence. Generally, students will complete Inst 421 in the fall and Inst 422 in the spring. Inst 421 will follow a traditional class structure, meeting once a week at an assigned time and location with a Croft professor (seminar leader). By the end of the semester, each student should have written an advanced draft with at least two body chapters of the thesis (in addition to the introduction). The ultimate goal is to submit a completed thesis draft by the very beginning of Inst 422, usually in the fourth or fifth week of the spring semester.

In order to keep everyone on task in Inst 421, and to make the writing process more manageable, we have created a series of small assignments, all of which are clearly laid out in the final page of this document. Please make sure to carefully review these dates and assignments, and add them to your personal calendar in the beginning of the semester.

The grade for Inst 421 will be based on the quality of your work and your ability to meet common expectations and deadlines. While your seminar leader will be the one who submits your final grade for Inst 421, your first reader will review and respond to each of your main assignments, some of which will also be read by your second, and third readers. Please note that a grade of C (not a C-) or higher is required for Inst 421 to count for the major and for you to continue with Inst 422.

Readers

Mentor/First Reader • Your thesis mentor (first reader) is your primary guide throughout the thesis year. This person will help you identify a workable research question; develop an appropriate methodology; identify primary and secondary sources; and structure and format your thesis. Your first reader will also meet with you throughout the semester and provide you with regular feedback on your written work. In the spring semester (Inst 422) your first reader will meet with you regularly (in most cases, about once a week), and provide you with feedback on each draft of your thesis.

Second Reader • Your second reader should be someone whose knowledge and expertise complements that of your first reader. In the fall (Inst 421), the primary responsibility of the second reader will be to provide you with feedback on your proposal, prospectus, and preliminary thesis draft. In the spring, your second reader will comment on the second draft of your thesis and attend your thesis defense.

Third Reader: While the first and second readers are chosen by each student, the third reader will be assigned to you by the Croft Institute. The main purpose of the third reader is to make sure that each thesis meets the established requirements of a Croft thesis.

Scope of a Croft Thesis

A Croft thesis should be between 40 and 50 pages (double-spaced), 12,000-15,000 words. A longer thesis is not better: make your thesis as concise as possible, and always focus on your analysis. Your mentor will help you identify a style guide that is appropriate for your work. It will be important to remain consistent throughout the entire thesis.

The Croft Institute has posted sample senior theses and thesis prospectuses here:

<http://www.croft.olemiss.edu/current/model-theses>. Note that many of these theses are longer than our current target length, but are still useful for their methodology and bibliographies. You can also find Croft theses, but not prospectuses, on the University's electronic depository at https://egrove.olemiss.edu/croft_thesis/.

Components of Inst 421

Thesis Proposal: Friday, September 1 • In order to make sure that you have a clear plan at the very beginning of the semester, for your first assignment in Inst 421 we ask that you submit a very brief (one page maximum) thesis proposal in which you lay out your research question (or statement), research goals, and methodology.

Annotated Bibliography: Friday, September 8 • In addition to a list of primary and secondary sources, an annotated bibliography should also include a brief description of the purpose and relevance of each entry. As you gather material for your bibliography, **remember that is required that you use some sources (primary or secondary) written in your primary Croft language.**

Prospectus (First Draft): Friday, September 15 • The prospectus could be understood as an elaborated and revised version of your proposal (usually about 7-10 pages in length, or 1,500-2,500 words). This document should put your research into context within the field, define your research question (or thesis statement), and articulate your methodology. The prospectus should also include a bibliography (not annotated) and a proposed chapter outline.

Prospectus (Final Draft): Friday, September 29 • Once you have received feedback from your seminar leader and first reader, you should submit a final draft of the prospectus to all your readers, your seminar leader, and Dr. Gowan.

Writing Plan: Friday, October 6 • It is essential for you — and your mentor — to have a clear sense of what you plan to do after the prospectus is completed. Your writing plan is a set of research goals with specific benchmarks that you plan to reach (beyond the assignments presented in this document). Make sure to include concrete tasks with proposed dates (including winter break) for completion. As you design this plan, remember that you will need to submit a completed draft of your thesis in the first few weeks of Inst 422 (spring semester).

First Body Chapter: Friday, October 20 • A “body chapter” refers to a single chapter of your thesis (beyond the introduction). While the introduction generally puts your thesis into context by stating your methodological or theoretical approach, your research question (or statement), and the relevance of your work within the wider field of research, your first body chapter is a chance to apply your theoretical framework by analyzing some of your data and/or sources and articulating some of your initial findings.

In-Class Thesis Writers’ Conference: Weeks 12&13 • We will hold an in-class thesis writers’ conference during weeks 12 and 13. During this conference, each student will present a 10-minute overview of their research followed by a 10-minute Q&A session. All students will present their research in their own section of Inst 421. On the week that a student is not scheduled to present, they will attend an alternate section of Inst 421. Students from Dr. Martin’s class (2 PM Monday) will exchange places with students from Dr. Hickman’s class (2 PM Wednesday) and students from Dr. Centellas’ class (1 PM Tuesday) will exchange places with students from Dr. Fransee’s class (1 PM Thursday). The schedule for all presentations will be posted in advance. All first, second, and third readers will be invited to attend.

Preliminary Thesis Draft: Monday, December 4 • For your final assignment in Inst 421, you will submit a preliminary thesis draft with **at least two full body chapters**. If you have completed additional chapters, these should also be submitted at this time. Remember, you will be asked to submit a completed draft (including all chapters, an introduction, and conclusion) at the very beginning of the second semester (Inst 422).

Basic Guidelines for a Croft thesis

1. Must be 40-50 pages in length (12,000-15,000 words), not including front matter, table of contents, or bibliography. Longer or shorter theses must be approved by committee.
2. Must reference and incorporate primary or secondary sources in both English and in your primary Croft language.
3. Must carefully follow style-guide approved by committee. Some possible style guides include, but are not limited to: Chicago, MLA, or AAA.
4. When using direct quotations in languages other than English, must include original text and an English language translation.
5. Must include Croft title page, an abstract, page numbers, and a table of contents. Find more information about formatting here: <http://www.croft.olemiss.edu/current/croft-thesis-format>
6. Must include a complete bibliography that complies with the norms of selected style guide.
7. Final draft must be submitted as a Word or PDF document with consistent formatting (12-point font, double spaced, proper indentations, and 1-inch margins).
8. Some thesis mentors (first readers) may require you to include an ethical statement at the beginning of your thesis. If so, you should discuss the formatting of this with your first reader. Also, if you are dealing with human subjects, please remember that you must receive approval from the University of Mississippi's Institutional Review Board (IRB): <http://research.olemiss.edu/irb>.

Inst 421 Fall 2023 Schedule of Activities and Deadlines

Summer before beginning Inst 421: Choose topic, contact mentor, and complete preliminary research

Week	Dates	Activity
1	August 21-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move from topic to research question based on reading Mandatory meeting: Tuesday, August 22 (4:00-5:00) -- Croft 107
2	August 28-September 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and read primary and secondary sources Submit thesis proposal (one page maximum) to all readers, Inst 421 seminar leader, and Dr. Gowan: Friday, September 1 Last day to confirm second reader, Friday, September 1
3	September 4-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop thesis proposal into prospectus Identify and read primary and secondary sources Submit annotated bibliography to first reader, seminar leader, and Dr. Gowan: Friday, September 8
4	September 11-15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit prospectus (first draft), complete with bibliography and chapter outlines to first reader, Inst 421 seminar leader, and Dr Gowan: Friday, September 15
5	September 18- 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and read primary and secondary sources Revise prospectus
6	September 25-29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and read primary and secondary sources Submit prospectus (final draft), complete with bibliography and chapter outlines to all readers, seminar leader, and Dr. Gowan: Friday, September 29
7	October 2-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing and research; data and source analysis Submit writing plan to first reader: Friday, October 6
8	October 9-13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft first body chapter
9	October 16-20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit first body chapter to first reader, Inst 421 seminar leader and Dr. Gowan: Friday, October 20
10	October 23-27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing and research; data and source analysis; working towards a completed first draft
11	October 30-November 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing and research; data and source analysis; working towards a completed first draft; prepare presentation
12	November 6-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-Class Thesis Writers' Conference. All first, second, and third readers are invited to attend. On the week a student is not presenting, they will attend a section of INST 421 other than their own
13	November 13-17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-Class Thesis Writers' Conference. All first, second, and third readers are invited to attend. On the week a student is not presenting, they will attend a section of INST 421 other than their own
14	November 20-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Thanksgiving break</i>
15	November 27-December 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop preliminary research product based on presentation feedback
16	December 4-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final exams Submit Preliminary Thesis Draft, with at least two body chapters, to all readers, Inst 421 seminar leader, and Dr. Gowan: Monday, December 4
	Winter Break	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare first draft of thesis for submission in February