56.717 Syllabus: PhD Core Course

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Course Objective:

This core course provides a common background for students in the first year of the PhD program to launch their research and careers at the Natural Resource Institute. The aim of the course is to bring PhD students up to speed with respect to the philosophy of interdisciplinary approaches to natural resources and environmental management, and to explore how the students' projects might fit with trends and directions in this field. The purpose of the introductory seminars and course discussions is to help students to advance their PhD proposals to get their research underway. The course provides practice in developing funding proposals and PhD proposals to assist you in reaching your goal of funded successful research.

Week 1- Sept. 9th: "Nuts'n Bolts" of the PhD program (Berkes, Haque and Thompson)

This is only the third year of the PhD program at the NRI – and every year it is getting better. We will "walk through" the PhD process (proposal, candidacy exam, funding...defense) to build a common understanding of the PhD process and expectations. Discussion of the Supplementary Regulations for PhD, the contents of the Handbook for PhD Students and trends in the field will occur.

Week 2 – Sept. 16th: Nature of PhD Research (Berkes, Haque and Thompson)

The seminar group will come prepared to discuss the nature of PhD research, and what distinguishes it from research at the Masters level. What are the characteristics of a good PhD project? A good PhD researcher? What are the implications for your own (preliminary) PhD research proposal.

Class Trip – Sept. 17th to 18th

An overnight two day trip is planned for September 17/18th to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Experimental Lakes Area. You can read more about ELA on the website: <u>http://www.umanitoba.ca/institutes/fisheries/</u>. The cost will be approximately \$50 to \$60 and will include transportation, accommodation at ELA and at least 3 meals, and a visit to Shoal Lake First Nation the next day. We will depart 8:30 on Wednesday 17th.

Week 3 – Sept. 23rd: Interdisciplinarity (Berkes)

What is the interdisciplinarity research? Using examples, we will discuss the meanings of interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and transdisciplinary research. Can a PhD project be truly interdisciplinary? And what are the upside and downside of that?

Week 4 - Sept. 30th: Theory (Berkes)

A PhD thesis is an original contribution. What does contributing to the frontier of a subject area mean? Thinking through the theoretical basis of your thesis: does your PhD thesis need a theoretical framework? Can one use several theoretical approaches?

Week 5 – Oct. 7th: Writing funding proposals (Thompson)

Funding is one area on the minds of many students trying to pay tuition, survive as well as finance their research costs, which can be considerable. Many different funding programs are available and these will be outlined <u>http://webapps.cc.umanitoba.ca/gradawards/frontPage.htm</u>). As well, each student will bring their funding proposal discussion of assignment 1, the very practical assignment of applying for a SSHRC

(<u>http://www.sshrc.ca/web/apply/program_descriptions/fellowships/doctoral_e</u>) and together we will look at the funding criteria and evaluate them. Speaker – (1 hour) Rowena Krentz or Research Services Organization

Week 6 – Oct. 14th: Critical Literature Review Methodology (Haque)

Literature review is a key element in identifying gaps in existing knowledge. There is also a distinction between *survey* and *critical review*. Methods and strategies of making a successful critical review and their pertinent methodologies will be discussed.

Week 7 - Oct. 21st : The Proposal and methodology (Thompson)

At what stage of clarifying your research should you write your proposal? Is the proposal the beginning with your committee regarding your area of study, theoretical framework and methodology, or a contract to fulfill specific research goals? A few proposal "templates" will be discussed, both in terms of content and process by past students.

Week 8 – Oct. 28th: Tools (Berkes/Haque/Thompson)

A few useful research methods techniques, including citation index, will be profiled by the different faculty. Plagiarism will be discussed.

Week 9 – Nov. 4th: Writing a journal paper (David M. Rosenberg/Thompson)

Scientific Writing and Publication Process presentation includes: organization of manuscripts, writing made easy, where to publish, submission of manuscripts, dealing with editors and reviewers and ethics of publishing.

Nov. 11th: Remembrance Day -- no class

Week 10 – Nov. 18th: PhD proposal defense by students (Thompson)

A mock student proposal will be held for each student including a 10 minute presentation to be followed by two rounds of questioning by the committee: 1) general questions 2) specific questions related to the document. The committee will be made up by selected faculty and students. A four page proposal, with a clear thesis statement or research question, will be provided the week prior to the student's defense. Three to four students proposals will be heard each class.

Week 11 – Nov. 25th: PhD proposal defense by students (Thompson) See week 10.

Week 12 – Dec. 2nd : afternoon program (2:00 to 4:00 p.m.) Improving the PhD program (All faculty) – morning program only if required to finish PhD proposal defense program. Dieter Schonwetter, UTS Associate Director, will facilitate a review of the PhD program. All faculty and PhD students (past and present) will be invited to attend to evaluate and provide recommendations for the future.

Course Format:

Classes will involve short lectures, student presentations, guest speakers and group work. This course is an opportunity to explore your thesis topic and find your path in the PhD process. Participation in class will be required.

Evaluation:

Three assignments will constitute 100 percent of the course mark: These involve:

- 1) SSHERC or NSERC or other funding proposal application (due October 7th) (25 percent)
- 2) Proposal defense including 4 page written document and presentation- (25 percent)
- 3) Proposal The proposal should be at least 4,000 words or 15 double spaced pages and include the following sections: thesis statement, introduction, literature review, and if possible (but not required) methodology.
- Please use a simple font in a legible size (e.g., 12 point Times New Roman).
- It is recommended that students review an academic writing manual such as the MLA Handbook for Writers (Gibaldi and Achtert, 1999) or contact the Learning Assistance Centre, 520 University Centre, Phone (204) 474-9251.
- All sources must be referenced appropriately. The paper's bibliography will be reviewed for completeness (i.e., are all references there) and comprehensiveness (i.e., the student has used an appropriate range and number of references).
- Students must conform to the University's "General Academic Regulations and Policy", with particular attention to academic honesty.

Deadlines: December 10th, 2003 to provide a copy both to Dr. Thompson and your thesis supervisor.

Grading: Pass/Fail will be done jointly with your thesis supervisor, who will review your proposal (assignment 3).

Course Text:

Articles and chapters of books are available in a packet in the photocopy room.

Plagiarism:

Students are directed to the University of Manitoba policies on plagiarism as presented in the General Calendar.

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