Course Description:

The purpose of the Thesis/Project Colloquium is to provide guidance and support for graduate students while they are developing their thesis/project topic and prospectus. The colloquium will focus on choosing a thesis/project topic, preparing a prospectus and reading list, organizing a committee, and developing strategies for researching and writing the thesis/project. While the colloquium will necessarily deal with the intellectual/creative issues and contexts of students’ topics, such substance will be linked to practical concerns. For example, a student’s thesis/project topic will be explored not just in terms of viability but also of practicality, research method, organization and positioning vis-à-vis the field, profession and preparation for further graduate school. A secondary objective of this class is to help graduate students develop their professional skills and experience, as time allows, in such area as publication, conference presentations, and career paths. The colloquium will normally operate as a workshop and will draw upon both participants (who present their developing ideas for feedback) and occasionally visiting speakers from the department and/or university at large.

Learning Outcomes:

After successfully completing the course, you will be able to:

1. Develop a thesis/project topic and define the scope of your study.
2. Formulate a research plan appropriate to your thesis project.
3. Identify and use appropriate methods and tools for your work.
4. Identify and use conventions of scholarly research/creative writing and thesis/project manuscript preparation.
5. Cite and document research according to MLA conventions.

Course Requirements:

While this colloquium is designed to give structure and guidance to the experience of preparing to complete your thesis/project, it will necessarily be run in an informal and flexible manner adapted to the particular interests and needs of the students. If successful, the colloquium will become in essence a micro-community of support. As such, evidence of your commitment to your own studies and willingness to contribute to the work of your colleagues is necessary to belong to the community:

1. **Attendance and Participation (20%)**: It is essential that you attend class and come prepared with the reading, writing, or editing activities for class completed. Your class participation is determined by your contributions to discussions and activities, in-class and online, and responses to your peers’ work.
2. **Project Proposal (15%)**: You will draft a 2-3 page project proposal outlining the rationale (aka needs statement) for your study. Project proposals will be circulated via the online discussion board before class and presented in class.
   a. **Thesis**: Identify the problem you will address, its significance in your field of study, what you already know about it, gaps in your knowledge, what others have written about it, and the working title of your thesis.
   b. **Creative Writing Project**: Outline your theme, what you already know about it, the genre(s) in which you will work, gaps in your knowledge, work y other writers you will use as models, and the working title of your project.

3. **Draft Prospectus & Reading List (25%)**: Based on the feedback you receive on your project proposal, you will draft a 4-6 page prospectus and reading list of 15-20 key primary and secondary texts for your thesis/project. Prospectus drafts and reading lists will be circulated via the online discussion board before class and presented in class.
   a. **Thesis**: Revise your rationale (needs statement) for your study, add research questions (hypotheses to test, limitations of study, key terms), and research procedures (theoretical framework, methodology, design of study).
   b. **Creative Writing Project**: Revise your proposal, add the research/writing questions you will address, outline the design of your project, and provide a creative work plan. Draft a reading list of craft books and model works in your chosen genre, as well as research texts, if necessary.

4. **Final Prospectus & Annotated Reading List (40%)**: Based on the feedback you receive on your draft prospectus and reading list, you will prepare an 8-10 page final prospectus.
   a. **Thesis**: Revised rationale, research questions, and procedures, plus an annotated table of contents for your thesis (outlining what each chapter will accomplish). You will also annotate the secondary texts on your reading list. Annotations (approximately 100 words for each entry) should both summarize the main argument of the secondary text and evaluate its usefulness for your thesis.
   b. **Creative Writing Project**: Revise your proposal, research/writing questions, project design, creative work plan, and add an introduction to your project (its significance and literary contribution) and an annotated table of contents (outlining what each section of your project will encompass). Annotate your reading list with an evaluation of the usefulness of each text for your project.

**Expectations**

1. This class only meets once per week. You are expected to attend every class. If you miss three classes I may fail you for the class.

2. Please let me know ahead of time if you have a personal emergency or a medical reason for missing class. You are expected to provide your class work to me before planned absence so that you do not fall behind.

3. I expect everyone to behave respectfully in class, listening attentively to the ideas of others and asking for clarification if necessary. I ask that you provide serious and generous attention to each other’s work.
Late Work

- Late work is not accepted.
- Missed course requirements are entered into grades as “0” points.
- This is a graded course, not S/U.

University Policies:

Academic Integrity
Academic Integrity is a standard set for this course. Students are expected to complete all of their coursework and assignments using their original words and ideas and will properly cite the words and ideas of others. Students are also expected to be honest in their interactions with the instructor. A student found to have not upheld these expectations is subject to failing this course and shall be subject to disciplinary action or sanction.

Special Needs

If you have a disability that may prevent you from meeting course requirements, contact the instructor immediately to file a Student Disability Statement and to develop an Accommodation Plan. Course requirements will not be waived but reasonable accommodations will be developed to help you meet the requirements. You are expected to work with the instructor and the CWU Disability Support Specialist to develop and implement a reasonable Accommodation Plan. For contact information at Center for Disability Services (CDS) please visit http://www.cwu.edu/~dss/cms/.

Class Schedule and Assignments:

This syllabus is subject to change; changes will be announced in class and/or via email.

All class meetings are on Tuesdays, 3:00-4:40 p.m.

Week 1

T 10/1/13  Introduction
Review syllabus and schedule.
Begin preparing tentative thesis topic for discussion.
Week 2


Drafts of Proposals due on Discussion Board Friday, 10/11/13.

Week 3

T 10/15/13  Presentation of Topic Proposals

Week 4

T 10/22/13  Presentation of Topic Proposals

Week 5

T 10/29/13  Prospectus format. Prepare questions for faculty. Questions re prospectus writing. Sign up to present prospectuses.

Drafts of Prospectuses due on Discussion Board Friday, 11/1/13.

Week 6

T 11/5/13  Presentation of Draft Prospectuses.

Week 7


Week 8

T 11/19/13  Presentation of Draft Prospectuses, if necessary. Discussion of progress toward final drafts and committee set up.
Week 9

T 11/26/13    No class meeting—Happy Thanksgiving.

Week 10

T 12/3/13      Group Discussion/ Questions about final prospectus.

Final Prospectus due Friday, 12/6/13.