

CST 352 Senior Seminar, Spring 2010
Monday 4-6:30pm, Hartzel Honors Lounge
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Overview

In this course, students are required to complete their thesis or senior project based on:

- 1) The project proposal written during CST 210, Research Methods in Communication or as revised in subsequent semesters;
- 2) Sound professional and/or methodological practices, including the retrieval, collection, analysis, interpretation, and criticism of information covered in CST 210 and other communication courses.
- 3) A project relating to communication/media that requires the student to create an original website, magazine, video, etc. Specific guidelines will be established depending on type of project.

Agenda/Timeline

Accordingly, students must present an agenda to the instructor by the second week of class. This agenda should include a week-by-week breakdown of planned activities, as specific as possible. **The FIRST DRAFT of your thesis/project will be DUE on or before Tuesday, April 6 by 4pm. The FINAL DRAFT will be DUE on or before the defense date (the week of May 3-7 – date to be determined.)** There are no exceptions to these deadlines.

Thesis and Presentation/Defense

The thesis presentation will be open to all Cedar Crest students, faculty and staff who can ask questions after the formal presentation, and you are also welcome to invite guests who may question/comment. This is a formal defense, so dress accordingly, and use appropriate presentational formats.

Students will meet *at a minimum every three weeks* throughout the semester with the professor to report on their progress. ***These meetings are mandatory.*** It is in your best interest to notify the professor ahead of time if you are not able to make an appointment. At these meetings I expect at least one update from you on your progress. This is especially critical during the month of March/April We will also be meeting as a group throughout the semester. ***These meetings are mandatory as well.*** Points will be deducted from the overall effort percentage of your final grade (see below) for missed individual or group meetings. If you have to miss an individual meeting, please make every effort to give 24 hours notice via both email and campus voice mail. Last minute cancellations, unless in case of documented illness, will also negatively affect your overall effort grade.

Audio-Visual Equipment

Some students may be using communication program audio-visual equipment during the semester for their senior projects. Please see the copies of the Equipment Policies document that are attached to the end of this syllabus. ***If you plan to use equipment, you must sign and date one of the two copies and turn that in to your instructor.*** These policies enumerate the conditions under which all equipment can be borrowed and used. Students must agree to these conditions in writing in order to borrow any equipment and related materials.

Theses are expected to strictly follow the APA format, unless the project itself dictates a different format and this change is agreed upon between the professor and student. All errors of spelling, grammar, and punctuation as well as bibliographical style must be eliminated or they will be taken into account during

grading. Further, these errors must be corrected if the student wishes the thesis to be permanently stored on campus. Research theses will be evaluated as follows:

- 30% Evidence of sound and clear methodological analysis
- 30% Quality of analysis, interpretation, and critique
- 30% Overall effort
- 10% Appearance (see above).

Although different project formats exist, in general, research theses should be constructed in the following manner, and in this order:

Research Thesis Construction

1. A cover page.
2. A table of contents.
3. An introduction, which includes:
 - a. An attention-getting device
 - b. A clear statement of the thesis question
 - c. A preview of the overall project.
4. Literature Review. These should follow the standards of current communication research. Literature reviews are not annotated bibliographies, as I'm sure you know at this point.
5. Discussion and defense of methods chosen to explore your thesis question. Discussion of strengths and weakness of your method, and of any methodological and epistemological issues that may be relevant to your project.
6. Data analysis and interpretation (this may be two chapters, if appropriate).
7. Conclusions drawn from the study. Also include suggestions for further research based on your own critique of the problems you encountered.
8. List of sources.

This is the typical outline for a thesis paper. However, a number of students may be doing senior projects, e.g. a public relations campaign, a video, etc. These projects are usually unique; however there are general expectations for such projects in terms of structure, length, etc. Students who have chosen these kinds of projects should meet with the professor as soon as possible to discuss these expectations.

If a student wishes to alter the thesis outline as provided above, she must consult with the professor before making the changes.

Proposals

Students must refine their proposals before proceeding with the thesis. In other words, all corrections and changes to the proposal must be completed as soon as possible. ALL PROPOSALS (including timeline) MUST BE COMPLETE AND APPROVED BY FEBRUARY 8, unless agreed upon prior to this date by

the professor. Also, you must turn in all copies of your previous proposal drafts, including graded proposals. A second and final draft of the proposal is due February 22.

If a student's proposal is not approved by the time stipulated above, the student **must withdraw from the course**. This means that, for some, they cannot graduate by the end of the Spring. Please take notice and be prepared for such a consequence. This policy is in place because of the difficulty and time-consuming nature of primary research. Typically, a student must be gathering data prior to the month of March in order to conduct a thorough analysis of this data prior to the end of the spring semester. Thus, every effort must be made to establish a reasonable and workable research plan for the semester as soon as possible in January.

Final Grades:

The final grade will be determined as follows:

| Assignment | Value | Points | Due |
|-------------------------------------|-------|--------|----------------------|
| Thesis | 60 % | 600 | Day of defense |
| Approved proposal and timeline | 10 % | 100 | See syllabus |
| Participation & Attendance | 20 % | 200 | Weekly |
| Final presentation – thesis defense | 10 % | 100 | Week of May 3-7(TBD) |

The following is the **grading scale** for this course:

| | | | |
|----|-----------|----|------------------|
| A | = 100-93 | C | = 76.9-74 |
| A- | = 92.9-90 | C- | = 73.9-70 |
| B+ | = 89.9-87 | D+ | = 69.9-67 |
| B | = 86.9-84 | D | = 66.9-64 |
| B- | = 83.9-80 | D- | = 63.9-60 |
| C+ | = 79.9-77 | F | = 59.9 and below |

A student must receive a grade of C- or better on their thesis to graduate. Please be aware that regular meetings with the professor and the class are positively correlated---overwhelmingly so---with successful completion of the thesis and graduation.

Participation/Attendance:

Participation and Attendance is mandatory. You should plan to attend every class period listed in bold and one-on-one meetings with instructor. You must be on time.

Participation means:

- Attending and participating in the class meetings
- Taking an active role in meetings
- Being accountable and completing your work by the deadlines outlined
- Providing constructive criticism of your colleagues' work

Obviously you can't participate if you do not attend meetings and seminars. *Extended absences due to illness or a family emergency will be excused only with notification from the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs assuming that there has been adequate communication with the professor from the beginning of the absence.*

Deadlines:

Deadlines are part of life. Part of learning about the media is learning how to cope with deadline pressure. Work handed in after the deadline without prior approval will be marked down 10 percent for each day that it is late. The best way to make a deadline is to finish work before it is due—don't procrastinate.

Faculty statement on disruptive behavior (C. Cameron, author – edited from original version):

Generally, disruptive behavior in the classroom is any behavior that interferes with the process of learning. At Cedar Crest College, it is the right of every student and faculty member to engage in a classroom experience free from disruptive behavior.

What is disruptive to one person might not be disruptive to another, so the final authority on disruptive behavior is the faculty member. Faculty members have the authority to address disruptive behavior in the manner they see fit under the guidelines set forth in the College Catalog.

Disruptive behavior may be viewed on a continuum ranging from the isolated incidents of mildly annoying or irritating behavior to more clearly disruptive, dangerous, and/or violent behavior.

Examples of disruptive behavior may include the following:

- Persistent speaking without permission
- Use of electronic devices, cell phones, or pagers during class
- Threats or harassment of any kind
- Working on homework for other classes
- Inappropriate personal disclosures during class (sharing too much information)
- Sleeping in class
- Entering class late or leaving early (without permission)
- Eating/drinking in class without permission
- Arguing with faculty and other students

Additionally, classroom participants should note that basic human courtesy is an expectation when interacting with faculty members, staff, and other students.

Plagiarism:

Deliberate or accidental, plagiarism is a serious academic and professional offense and a violation of the spirit of the Cedar Crest Honor Code philosophy. Depending on the severity of the offense, penalties for plagiarism will range from the assignment of an "F" for the article or work, to the assignment of an "F" for the course. All cases of plagiarism will be reported to the Provost. Under certain circumstances, acts of plagiarism may result in suspension or expulsion from the College.

Learning Disabilities:

Students with documented disabilities who may need academic accommodations should discuss these needs with their professors during the first two weeks of class. Students with disabilities who wish to request accommodations should contact the Advising Center.

See course schedule on following page.

Tentative Course Schedule for Senior Seminar
(*Instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus.*)

Jan. 25 – Course Introduction, Progress Reports and Expectations, Discuss defense date

Feb. 1 – Confirm defense date/time, hand in timeline, discuss IRB requirements, other concerns?

Feb. 8– Timeline handed back, Initial proposal due, progress reports

Feb. 15 – Feedback of revised proposal handed back during individual meetings

Feb 22– Work on proposals, research

March 1 – Final proposal due with all additional sections (if applicable) and updated timeline, progress reports

March 8 – Spring Break – no classes

March 15 – Professor at College Media Convention in NYC – no class

March 22 – Student presentations of work done to date (with visual aids – both groups 1 & 2)

March 29 – Individual meetings with students during class time

April 6 –Final project draft due by 4pm

April 12 – Individual meetings with Prof to discuss draft

April 19 –Present progress reports, discuss ideas for presentation

April 26 –Individual meetings with professor during class time

May 3 – TBD

May 3 – May 7 - Defense Date (TBD) – Miller 33 - Final paper due at time of presentation (This will be a professional oral presentation and should include relevant visual aids)