



VG503 Graduate Thesis Writing

Section 2

Summer 2021

Mondays 2:00–3:40pm (Weeks 1–8)

Thursdays 2:00–3:40pm (Weeks 1–8)

Chen Rui Qiu Building CRQ113

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Office hours: Thursdays 10:00am–1pm
Office: Long Bin Building 441A

Teaching Assistant: TBA
Contact: TBA
Office hour location: TBA
Office hour time: TBA

Course Description

This course takes graduate students through the final process of revising, formatting, and preparing a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation for publication. The course is designed for JI students who are currently in the final stages of revising their graduate thesis and preparing for submission and defense. Based on the JI Graduate Office's standards of thesis quality and evaluation, the following knowledge and skill areas will be covered:

- Topic selection, impact, and novelty
- Thesis structure and logical organization
- Writing quality: flow, expression, and presentation order
- Typographical formatting of text, graphics, and references
- Plagiarism avoidance and citation formatting
- JI thesis and dissertation template

Course Structure and Format

The course will be taught in a workshop style, where students will have frequent writing opportunities with immediate feedback and the chance to implement that feedback. In class, roughly one-third of the time will be spent on new material, one-third of the time in writing exercises, and one-third of the time on feedback. The course's pedagogy will be rooted in process writing, where students will continuously revise their thesis manuscript based on self-critique and peer feedback, while simultaneously writing about the changes they made to each draft. This peer review and self-assessment will help to cultivate students' self-awareness of the strengths and weaknesses in their own writing. Additionally, we will collaborate with students' academic advisers, who will provide input and recommendations for further revision as the students prepare for thesis submission and defense.



Course Policies

Attendance: Students will be expected to attend every class meeting. You will receive full credit for attendance if you arrive on time, half credit if you arrive 15 minutes late, and zero credit if you arrive after the halfway break. Of course, I understand that illnesses and family emergencies may occur. A medical-related absence must involve an illness or injury. Routine health and dental checkups do not count. If the reason is serious and you give me advance notice with appropriate documentation, I am willing to work with you on how to best make up assignments. If you have an immediate emergency and cannot inform me of your absence before class, then please inform me as soon after class as you can. But if you miss a class and then wait for days or weeks to inform me of the reason, then I cannot excuse your absence. Moreover, attendance in person is mandatory if you are on campus. Online attendance is only for those who are stuck outside of China or who have UEO-documented approval to remain off campus during this semester. Work, internships, and extracurricular activities are not valid reasons for missing class in person. It is your responsibility to arrange your work and activities in a manner that allows you to meet all of your semester's commitments. If that would be too difficult, then please take this course in a different semester.

In-Class Participation: Students will be expected to participate actively in class. In-class assignments will count for participation credit and will usually not be graded for content; they are meant to give you a chance to practice the writing skills I teach you, before you are graded on them for real in the homework. However, you must submit the assignment at the time that I ask for it, and I need to see that you have made efforts to get as far on the assignment as you could. Otherwise, it cannot count for participation credit. You must also be in attendance that day in order for your in-class submissions to count for participation credit.

Assignments: Due dates, closing date, and grading criteria will be clearly specified for each assignment. It is your responsibility to check that an assignment has been successfully submitted through the Canvas system. If I do not receive it on my end, then it cannot be counted for credit, even if you believe you submitted it on time. Points will be deducted if it is submitted in a manner that does not follow the submission instructions. Assignments submitted late without a valid excuse will have points deducted at my discretion, with an automatic 0 and no submissions accepted after the closing date. If you have an immediate emergency and will be unable to submit an assignment on time, you must inform me as early as possible and before the deadline. If you do not inform me until after the deadline then I must deduct points, and after the closing date I cannot accept the submission. Do not come to me at the end of the semester asking for the opportunity to make up work because you need to pass this course to graduate. I know you need to pass this course to graduate. The time to do the work is during the semester, not at the end of it. If you inform me of problems in advance with appropriate documentation, I am always willing to work with you.

Food: Tea, water, and sodas are permitted as long as they are in a covered bottle or thermos. Packaged snacks are also permitted, as long as they do not distract you or anyone else from the class. Lunches, dinners, or any kind of cooked food are not permitted. Eat before or after class.



Electronic devices: Because you will be doing a lot of writing during class, you will be expected to bring a laptop, tablet, or other device with a large enough screen and keyboard that you can write and submit assignments without difficulty. This means it is not acceptable to do your in-class work on a smartphone. Also, please ensure that the device is fully charged before class. An empty battery is not an acceptable excuse for lack of participation. Bring a spare battery, extension cord, or backup device. You are responsible for ensuring that this requirement is met. In addition, electronic devices are to be used only for class-related activities such as writing exercises, note-taking, and internet research when required for a class activity.

Security: It is forbidden to give course materials or login information (usernames, passwords, meeting IDs, etc.) to anyone who is not enrolled in the course this semester, without my express permission. Course materials may never be given to anyone outside the JI. You may not share your classwork or homework with anyone—enrolled in the class or not—until the semester is over. And even then, classwork and homework may never be shared outside the JI or posted anywhere on the internet or social media. Please help keep the JI's information secure.

Honor code: Your work for this class must be written entirely by you, and only by you. No one else may contribute to its writing, editing, or proofreading. Your work should also be written for a given assignment. This means that no previously-written work can be used, in whole or in part, even if you were the one who wrote it. This applies equally to graphics and all other work you do for the course. As graduate students, you can and should build on your previous research when writing a paper or article. However, this applies to the ideas, not the words. In this class, if you reference any of your previous work, it should be for the purpose of expanding on it with new and original ideas. Moreover, you can and should collaborate with colleagues and faculty advisers when conducting and reporting on your graduate research. However, for this class, you must be the sole author of all the work that you do. If a violation occurs, I might decide (at my discretion) to give a warning, to give a partial or complete deduction on the assignment, or to report the violation to the Honor Council—or some combination of all three of these. Please see the [2019 JI Undergraduate Student Handbook](#) for more information.

- “It is dishonorable for students to receive credit for work that is not the result of their own efforts” (p. 40).
- “It is a violation of the Honor Code for students to submit, as their own, work that is not the result of their own labor and thoughts. This applies, in particular, to ideas, expressions or work obtained from other students as well as from books, the internet, and other sources. The failure to properly credit ideas, expressions or work from others is considered plagiarism” (p. 41).
- “Plagiarism is taken extremely seriously at JI. A student is required to follow the rules of citation and attribution as set down by the instructor. The following list includes some specific examples of plagiarism:
 - Use of any passage of three words or longer from another source without proper attribution.
 - Use of any phrase of three words or more “must be enclosed in quotation marks” (as seen in this example).



- Use of material from an uncredited source, making very minor changes (like word order or verb tense) to avoid the three-word rule.
- Inclusion of facts, data, ideas or theories originally thought of by someone else, without giving that person (organization, etc.) credit.
- Paraphrasing of ideas or theories without crediting the original thinker.” (p. 41)

Course Grading

There will be no exams; those do not work in a writing class. You will be graded by portfolio assessment, meaning that your grade will be based on the combination of the various assignments that you complete throughout the semester.

Grade Distribution

Presentations	20%
Presentation Slides	20%
Writing Segments	20%
Peer Feedback	20%
Attendance and Participation	20%

Grading Scale

100 – 98	A+	82 – 80	B-
97 – 93	A	79 – 77	C+
92 – 90	A-	76 – 73	C
89 – 87	B+	72 – 70	C-
86 – 83	B	60 – 69	D

Week 1

Mo 5/10 – 2:00-2:45 Lecture*	Th 5/13 – 2:00-2:45 Group B	Topic Selection and Novelty
Mo 5/10 – 2:00-2:45 Group A	Th 5/13 – 2:00-2:45 Group C	

* Guest lecture by Dr. David Hung in Room CRQ111

Week 2

Mo 5/17 – 2:00-2:45 Lecture	Th 5/20 – 2:00-2:45 Group C	Structure and Organization
Mo 5/17 – 2:00-2:45 Group B	Th 5/20 – 2:00-2:45 Group A	

Week 3

Mo 5/24 – 2:00-2:45 Lecture	Th 5/27 – 2:00-2:45 Group A	Typography: Text
Mo 5/24 – 2:00-2:45 Group C	Th 5/27 – 2:00-2:45 Group B	

Week 4

Mo 5/31 – 2:00-2:45 Lecture	Th 6/3 – 2:00-2:45 Group B	Typography: Graphics
Mo 5/31 – 2:00-2:45 Group A	Th 6/3 – 2:00-2:45 Group C	

Week 5

Mo 6/7 – 2:00-2:45 Lecture	Th 6/10 – 2:00-2:45 Group C	Typography: References
Mo 6/7 – 2:00-2:45 Group B	Th 6/10 – 2:00-2:45 Group A	



Week 6

Mo 6/14 – 2:00-2:45 Lecture	Th 6/17 – 2:00-2:45 Group A	Plagiarism
Mo 6/14 – 2:00-2:45 Group C	Th 6/17 – 2:00-2:45 Group B	

Week 7

Mo 6/21 – 2:00-2:45 Lecture*	Th 6/24 – 2:00-2:45 Group B	Publishable Evidence
Mo 6/21 – 2:00-2:45 Group A	Th 6/24 – 2:00-2:45 Group C	

* Guest lecture by Dr. David Hung in Room CRQ111

Week 8

Mo 6/28 – 2:00-2:45 Lecture	Th 7/1 – 2:00-2:45 Group C	Language Flow and Editing
Mo 6/28 – 2:00-2:45 Group B	Th 7/1 – 2:00-2:45 Group A	

The above information is subject to change as needed. You will be notified of the changes in advance, and the most recent syllabus will be posted on Canvas.

