TUNI 102: Introduction to Honors Research  
Spring 2019 (Class No. 5327)  
Mondays 10:25 - 11:20 in HU 115

Instructor: Hui-Ching Chang, Ph.D.  
Office: Lecture Center 31  
Email: hchang3@albany.edu; 518-442-3994  
Office Hours: By appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course is designed to encourage second-year honors students to begin thinking about and planning the honors thesis. Although student theses are completed in the student's major area, there are common elements to thesis projects that cut across academic disciplines. Fundamentally, a research methods course addresses a most important issue: given the question you have, how do you find the answers? This course will introduce students to a range of scholarship and methods—i.e., how scholars of diverse fields find answers to their questions. We will also address issues concerning research ethics; the type of help students need to get started on the thesis; and practical advice on what to do with one's thesis after it is completed. Through lectures, discussion, and peer evaluations, the course will help students investigate potential thesis topics, formulate a research question, and identify workable method(s) to implement their thesis projects. Seniors in the Honors College who are completing their theses will also be invited to present their research.

COURSE GOALS
1. To have a basic understanding of the range of scholarship—whether scientific, qualitative, critical, or evaluative—and other creative projects.
2. To learn how to identify a research question, write a literature review, and identify possible methods.
3. To understand the ethical issues pertaining to doing research with humans or animals.
4. To understand what a thesis project is and to write a pre-proposal that will serve as a foundation to complete the thesis in the student's major area.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance
Students are expected to attend each class session. Students unable to attend a class session for any reason will be required to submit a 3-page paper relating to the topic of the class session. Not attending a class and not submitting a paper will result in a reduction of 10% in the student’s grade. The paper will be due at the beginning of the next class.

Classroom Behavior
Students are expected to demonstrate tolerance and respect for the comments and opinions expressed in class by the instructor and fellow students. Use of computers is permitted for educational purposes only. Phones must be turned off and put away during class. In any other use of these devices, the instructor may ask the student to stop using the device or to leave the classroom, and there will also be a reduction of 5% in the student’s grade for each offense.

Readings
Readings are posted on Blackboard or via links provided. Additional readings and books on undergraduate research are available through the university library (see Mr. Bobish, the Honors Librarian, for assistance locating these books).

Assignments

Assignment #1: Preliminary Exploration
Since you have passions about your major, there may be some questions whose answers you may have wondered about. To help you think through, and finally come up with a meaningful research question, for this assignment you will come up with THREE possible research topics in your field of study. Developing your research questions should begin with a general understanding of your field of study and the kind of questions people are researching. Please come up with ONE potentially intriguing research topic from THREE of the following four sources:

1. Explore the Scholars Archive: Consult previously completed Honors theses in your field of study (see https://scholarsarchive.library.albany.edu/honorscollege/);
(2) **Conduct Web Search:** Check out Web pages and other information to find the publications and expertise of faculty in various colleges;
(3) **Talk to Other Researchers:** Talk to professors whose research you are interested in, or talk to your professors/senior honors students about your research interest; or
(4) **Attend departmental seminars and/or thesis defense meetings:** Attend one of these scholarly events and think through the various topics or a specific topic.

**Your paper should identify three questions, respectively. For each question, you should first present the question, then, in one or two paragraphs, explain what led you to this question and why you think this question is significant/important.**

**Assignment #2: Your Question and Important References**

For this assignment, you will decide on one topic and begin consulting relevant literature. There will be three sections to this second assignment:

1. **Your Chosen Research Question.** Identify the one question you decide to pursue. This question may be one of the three questions identified in your previous assignment. It can also be a combined, integrated, or modified question derived from your first assignment.
2. **How You Get to Your Literature.** Explain what database(s) you have consulted—you CANNOT just search Google or Google Scholar—and how you come to choose at least 6 published scholarly works you deem relevant to your topic.
3. **The References.** List and cite your scholarly references in APA style.
4. **The Outline.** Write an outline summarizing the literature as observed through these 6 articles. This will be your preliminary literature review.

**Assignment #3: Research Methods**

Given your research question, describe the methods you plan to use. Make sure you explain how your methods are able to help you answer your research questions. More information will be posted on Blackboard.

**Assignment #4: Proposal**

Your proposal integrates and expands your assignments 2 and 3. It should include the following elements in sequence

1. **Title and advisor/mentor (cover page; you can find an example here:**

2. **Abstract:** a short summary of your project and its potential significance (no more than 100 words) (1 page)
3. **Introduction:** explain the question or problem being addressed; briefly discuss its importance in the field; and show what you hope to demonstrate with your research. (1-2 pages)
4. **Mini-literature review:** here you will write, in narrative form, about the literature you have consulted. The outline you have written earlier will be a good guide. Your literature review will provide the context, and help your readers better understand your research question—i.e., how pursuing this research question will contribute to the field. (4-5 pages)
5. **Methodology:** explain how you plan to answer your research question by identifying and justifying specific methods to be employed. You will discuss the data you plan to collect and also show you plan to analyze the collected data. (3-5 pages)
6. **Significance:** explain why this project is important, including how you hope to offer an original contribution by addressing the problem being studied. (1 page)

**Peer Review**

You will review, and serve as a critical reader for, each other’s pre-proposals. Information about review criteria will be distributed in a future class.

**Course Evaluation**

1. **Assignment #1 (Preliminary Exploration): 10 points**
2. **Assignment #2 (Your Question and Important References): 20 points**
3. **Assignment #3 (Research Methods): 15 points**
4. **Assignment #4 (Proposal): 25 points**
5. **Participation (including quizzes) and presentation: 20 points**
6. **Peer review:** 10 points
Grading
Grading will be on an A-E scale, using the following percentages:
92-100% A  90-91% A-  88-89% B+  82-87% B  80-81% B-
78-79% C+  72-77% C  70-71% C-  68-69% D+  62-67% D  60-61% D

ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Special Accommodations
Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with documented disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring accommodation in this class, please notify the Director of the Disability Resource Center (Campus Center 137, 442-5490). That office will provide the course instructor with verification of your disability, and will recommend appropriate accommodations.

Academic Dishonesty
Cheating on quizzes and assignments will not be tolerated. A student who is found cheating will fail the course and the Violation of Academic Integrity Report will also be filed with the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education. A full description of undergraduate academic regulations can be found on the following web page:

CLASS SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic(s)</th>
<th>Reading &amp; Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/28</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>None.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ Research process and worldviews</td>
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<td>▪ What research is and what a thesis project is about</td>
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<td>▪ How to identify a research question</td>
<td>▪ Preparing for the first assignment.</td>
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<td>▪ How to find a thesis advisor</td>
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<td>▪ How to identify relevant scholarly sources</td>
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<td>2/11</td>
<td>Types of scholarship and range of methods: An overview</td>
<td>▪ Handout #1</td>
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<td>▪ Social sciences, humanities, arts, and natural sciences</td>
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<td>▪ Primary data collection and analysis, secondary analysis, critical reviews, observational studies, etc.</td>
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<td><em>Due: Assignment #1(Preliminary Exploration)</em></td>
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<td>▪ Presentation of Assignment #1</td>
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<td>▪ Conceptions of validity and reliability</td>
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<td>▪ Experiment, field study, survey, and many other possibilities</td>
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<td>▪ Statistical analysis—from descriptive to inferential statistics.</td>
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<td>2/25</td>
<td>Quantitative research, II</td>
<td>▪ Research examples to be assigned.</td>
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<td>▪ Guest presentation(s)</td>
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3/4 Qualitative Research, I.
▪ Participant observation
▪ Ethnography
▪ Textual analysis
▪ Critical studies
▪ Evaluative research


3/11 Qualitative Research, II.
▪ Guest presentation(s)

3/18 Spring Break

3/25 Steps in Writing a Literature Review
▪ From your outline to ka literature review
▪ Why scholarly sources

Due: Assignment #2 (Your Question and Important References)
▪ Presentation of Assignment #2
▪ Preparation of Assignment #3

4/1 Research methods
▪ What methods best answer your questions?
▪ What kind of data to collect?
▪ How do you plan to analyze your data?

4/8 Research ethics and integrity
▪ Ethical considerations when conducting research with humans and animals
▪ Research integrity
▪ Plagiarism and responsible conduct of research

Visit these websites:
▪ Human Participants IRB:
  http://www.albany.edu/orrc/irb.php
▪ Use of Animals: The Institutional Animal Care Use Committee (IACUC):

Read:

**Recommended reading:** *The Belmont Report*

**4/15**  
**Project discussion and presentations by current honors students**

**4/22**  
**Easter Holiday**

**4/29**  
**Honors thesis and its practical applications**
- How to turn your Capstone project into a positive asset for your job search
- How to expand your Capstone into a scholarship/fellowship application

**Due: Assignment #3 (Research Methods)**  

**4/29**  
**Honors thesis and its practical applications**

**Due: Assignment #3 (Research Methods)**

**4/29**  
**Honors thesis and its practical applications**

**Due: Assignment #3 (Research Methods)**

**5/6**  
**Proposal presentations and peer review**

**Peer review due/Last day of class**

**Final proposal due**