

Syllabus for CSC 590: Thesis Seminar

Professor: Zoë Wood

Office: Building 14, room 209

Phone: 756-5540

office hours: T 10-11 Th 10-12

email: zwood@calpoly.edu

Schedule: T 11:10-12 Rm. 14-232B

General: This is a 1-hour graduate seminar designed to aid M.S. students in conducting their research and preparing and delivering their thesis document.

The main course objectives are:

- To learn what is involved in writing a thesis.
- To learn how to do research.
- To learn how to present research: orally and in writing.

Assignments:

- Thesis reading and critique (15%)
- Presentations
 - Short (5%)
 - Long (30%)
- Writing assignments
 - Thesis intro 15%
 - Experimental design 10%
 - Related works 20%
- Participation (5% of final grade)

Cheating: If your work or parts of your work are plagiarized from another student or unapproved source, you will fail the course and a letter will be put in your file with Cal Poly Judicial Affairs.

The following schedule for the lectures and assignments may change

Week 1	9/18/12	Introduction
Week 2	9/25/12	M.S. research and thesis
Week 3	10/2/12	Thesis document: structure
Week 4	10/9/12	Thesis documents: Intro, background
Week 5	10/16/12	Thesis documents: Related Works
Week 6	10/23/12	Short presentations
Week 7	10/30/12	Thesis documents: results
Week 8	11/6/12	Thesis Presentations
Week 9	11/13/12	Thesis Presentations
Week 10	11/20/12	Thesis Presentations
Week 11	11/27/12	Thesis Presentations
Final	12/4/12	Tuesday 10:10-1pm

Assignments:

The course involves three types of assignments: reading assignments, writing, assignments and oral presentations.

Reading Assignments:

There will be two key reading assignments in the course:

Thesis reading and critique: you will be provided with a number of M.S. thesis documents from past Cal Poly M.S. students. You will read these documents, and you will prepare and present your assessment/critique of one of the theses.

Relevant literature: you will be asked to prepare a bibliography of academic literature relevant to your thesis/research topic. You will then be asked to read a number of papers from your bibliography.

Writing Assignments:

The course will have the following writing assignments:

Research Blurb/Thesis Intro: you will write a succinct introduction to your research area. This introduction should provide an overview of the broad research area within which you are conducting your thesis research and should motivate your specific thesis research. As such, this text can be viewed as a draft of your thesis introduction section.

Experimental design: you will come up with a validation framework for your thesis (creative part of the assignment) and present a short write-up describing it (writing part of the assignment).

This can eventually become part of the Validation section of your thesis.

Background/Related work writeup : based on your bibliography of related work you will provide a succinct writeup detailing the background information relevant to your thesis research topic. This may later morph into Related Work or Background sections of your thesis.

Oral Presentation Assignments

You will formally deliver two presentations in this course:

Short presentation: A short (up to 5 mins) presentation describing the essence of your thesis research in terms accessible to your peers.

Long(er) presentation: A longer (15-20 mins) presentation describing your thesis research in more technical terms. This may serve as a prototype of your eventual thesis presentation.

Other Assignments

There may be other assignments in the course:

- M.S. Defense attendance. If any M.S. defenses are scheduled this quarter, we will attend them (ideally, I'd want everyone to attend 1-2 defenses).

Research talks by visiting researchers – you may be asked to attend various talks and to summarize and critique them.

- Peer reviews. Some class activities may involve peer reviews of material produced by others (e.g., past theses) or by other students in the course (e.g., their wiki submissions).