

**Course Syllabus: HON301 Prospectus Writing  
(JGH 203, Tuesday 2:25 – 5:10 p.m.)**

Instructor:	Dr. Fei Xue	Office Hours:
Office:	116 Southern Hall	Mondays and Thursdays (1:00 – 4:00 p.m.),
Phone:	(601) 266-5652	Wednesdays (9:00 a.m. – noon)
Email:	<a href="mailto:fei.xue@usm.edu">fei.xue@usm.edu</a>	and by appointment

### Course Objectives

This course is designed to help Honors students develop a prospectus that outlines the research project for their senior thesis. Students will learn how to conceptualize a research topic, organize and conduct research, present findings in oral and written format, and recognize the value of a mentor. Students are required to turn in a thesis prospectus by the end of this course.

### Course Performance Requirements and Grading

The success of this course ultimately depends on you. You are expected to attend class meetings and participate in class discussions. You will also be given several assignments. Do them carefully and thoughtfully. Observe due dates. Late work will be penalized 20% per day. You are also required to have four meetings with your advisor to work on your research project. All written assignments (excluding Power Point presentations) are to be typed in 12pt Times New Roman, double spaced, and left justified. Please keep in mind that you are expected to turn in perfectly word-processed work that is free of errors. Sloppy work will result in loss of points. **Assignments should be submitted electronically as a MS Word attachment to an email message addressed to [fei.xue@usm.edu](mailto:fei.xue@usm.edu).** Your final grade will be determined as follows:

Advisor Meetings	20%	A: 90 - 100
Assignments	40%	B: 80 - 89
Research Proposal	40%	C: 70 - 79
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Total	100%	F: 0 - 59

### The Research Project

Scientific research involves the formation of a hypothesis/research question, design of methods (experiment, survey, interview, content analysis, etc.) to test the hypothesis or research question, gathering and analyzing data, and finally drawing conclusions. **Writing a standard term paper or review articles is not an acceptable project.** Some students will select a faculty advisor who is doing research in an interesting area and then the advisor will help the student design an appropriate project within that area of research. Some students will independently generate ideas for research projects with the help of an advisor. Students are therefore strongly advised to select a faculty research advisor as soon as possible. This is someone that you will be working with for a long time, so accessibility and regular communication is just as important as research area. An advisor selection form needs to be submitted to the Honors College.

### Attendance Policy

You are expected to come to every class. You are paying for this education, so make the most of it. More than two unexcused absences will result in point deduction from your final grade (three

absences = 5 points, four absences = 10 points, five absences = 20 points, six absences = 40 points). Opportunities to make up a missed exam and/or quiz will only be given for legitimate and documented reasons, including University-sanctioned field trips, serious illness or death. Always talk with me in advance of an absence if possible. All cell phones must be switched off during class, no personal stereos and headphones allowed in class, nor should a laptop be used (except for note taking) during class. Students are expected to arrive on time and prepared for class. Drinks and occasional snacks are permitted but meals are not, i.e. no hamburgers, burritos, etc.

### **Academic Misconduct**

Academic misconduct is a most serious and reprehensible type of student misconduct. Students are advised to read the appropriate sections of the USM Student Handbook that pertains to Academic Dishonesty. A student must not copy another person's work from the class, from a previous class, or a professional's work. Also not allowed and punishable is using the same paper with minor modifications for two courses.

### **Disability Accommodation Statement**

If a student has a disability that qualifies under the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and requires accommodations, he/she should contact the Office for Disability accommodations (ODA) for information on appropriate policies and procedures. Disabilities covered by ADA may include learning, psychiatric, physical disabilities, or chronic health disorders. Students can contact ODA if they are not certain whether a medical condition/disability qualifies. Mailing address: The University of Southern Mississippi, Office for Disability Accommodations, 118 College Drive # 8586, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001; Telephone: (601) 266-5024 or (228) 214-3232; Fax: (601) 266-6035. Individuals with hearing impairments can contact ODA using the *Mississippi Relay Service* at 1-800-582-2233 (TTY) or email Suzy Hebert at [Suzanne.Hebert@usm.edu](mailto:Suzanne.Hebert@usm.edu).

### **Diversity Statement**

The Code of Student Conduct requires that students behave in a manner that is conducive to a teaching/learning environment. It is my intention to respect all types of students and viewpoints. I expect you to extend the same courtesy to me and each of your classmates.

### **Important Dates**

**Sept. 22:** Description of your research topic, including the goal of your research, choice of methodology and research questions (Assignment #2);

**Oct. 6:** Complete literature review with hypotheses and/or research questions (Assignment #3);

**Oct. 20:** Complete description of your research methodology (Assignment #4);

**Nov. 3:** Complete the first draft of your research proposal (Assignment #5).

### **Honors College thesis timeline:**

<http://www.usm.edu/honors/thesistimeline.doc>

**HON 301 PROSPECTUS WRITING**  
Tentative Class Schedule (subject to change at any time)

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Assignments Due</b>
Aug. 25	Introduction/Syllabus/Timeline/Advisor Letter	
Sept. 1	Basics of Academic Research/RQs	Assignment#1: Reading Report
Sept. 8	Conceptualizing Research/Literature Review	Collect Advisor Letter
Sept. 15	Library Tour/ Research Topics	Advisor Meeting Report #1
Sept. 22	Designing Research	Assignment #2: Project Outline
Sept. 29	Progress Report & Discussions <i>Advisor Notification Form to Honors College by Oct.1</i>	Advisor Meeting Report #2
Oct. 6	Research Methodologies I	Assignment #3: Literature Review
Oct. 13	Research Methodologies II <i>Progress Report to Honors College by Oct. 15</i>	Advisor Meeting Report #3
Oct. 20	Progress Report & Discussions	Assignment #4: Methodology
Oct. 27	Writing Research Prospectus	Advisor Meeting Report #4
Nov. 3	No Class. Email Assignment to Instructor. <i>Email Prospectus to Advisor – Email Confirmation</i>	Assignment #5 First Draft
Nov. 10	Progress Report & Discussions <i>Email Prospectus to Honors College by Nov. 15</i>	
Nov. 17	No Class. Work on revisions and presentations.	
Nov. 24	PRESENTATIONS (“defense”)	
Dec. 1	<b>TURN IN FINAL PROSPECTUS</b> <i>Progress Report to Honors College</i>	