

Print Name of Student _____ **Student ID Number** _____

Syllabus/Contract: COMM 699 – Thesis, MA-C

Course Description: Students who select the thesis option will conduct academically-oriented research in a chosen area of communication. The thesis option will enable students to grasp important theoretical, methodological, and content principles and concepts and to author a manuscript of convention and/or journal publication quality.

Eligibility: Students who have completed COMM 601, 602, 603, and at least 15 credit hours of electives are eligible to register for either three or six credit hours of thesis with approval of their thesis advisor.

Action: Prior to registering for COMM 699, students must identify an advisor and two other committee members to guide and evaluate their written thesis project and oral thesis project defense. It is up to each student to select the advisor and committee members that best suit his/her academic endeavors. However, students must select their advisor and committee members using the following criteria:

- Students must select an advisor whose area of academic expertise is most closely aligned with the proposed research project.
- Students must select an advisor for their project that they have had for at least one MA-C course.
- Students must select an advisor from the Department of Communications graduate faculty. Selecting an advisor outside of the Department of Communications faculty is not permitted.
- Students must select an advisor prior to selecting the other two committee members. Each advisor will help to guide the student on the selection of his/her committee.
- Students must select committee members they have had for at least one graduate course at the University of Southern Indiana.
 - It is permitted for students to select one faculty member from a USI graduate program outside of the MA-C program provided they have taken a course from that faculty member and that course counted toward the MA-C degree.
 - In order for students to select an “outside” member of their committee, they must obtain approval from their advisor.
 - No fewer than two members of any student’s committee must be from the Department of Communications Graduate Faculty with one serving as the advisor.
- Students must have at least one committee member with proficiency/expertise in the methodology used in the project. For instance, it is impermissible to have three qualitative researchers evaluate a quantitative thesis project.
- It is only after this contract has been signed by the student, advisor, and committee members that the student can register for COMM 699.
- In order to receive credit for COMM 699, students **MUST** successfully defend their project **prior to the end of the term in which they are registered**. If the student completes coursework, but has not successfully defended their thesis, they must register for additional thesis credit. The thesis defense process will take place in the form of an oral defense to be evaluated by the advisor and the other two committee members. The oral defense should be scheduled in the Office of Graduate Studies, and the Director of Graduate Studies should be invited to attend the presentation. After defending the project, students may be (a) granted the hours for COMM 699 based on a successful defense, (b) asked by the committee to provide minor written revisions to the project prior to being granted credit, or (c) be asked to conduct major revisions requiring a second oral defense before receiving credit.
- **A graduation hold is placed on all students until successful completion of either the thesis/capstone or the comprehensive examination. Thesis/capstone advisors must notify the program director when the student has successfully defended the thesis/capstone.**
- **COMM 699 is graded on a pass/no pass (P/NP) basis. With permission of the thesis advisor, a student may register for 6 credit hours in a single term or 3 credit hours in successive terms. A student must successfully complete all expectations outlined by the thesis advisor to receive a P grade. Students not completing the thesis course requirements during the term in which they are enrolled will be assigned either an NP or an “in progress” (IP) grade for the course. If a student receives an IP grade, the student will not receive credit for the course and must re-register for thesis credit to satisfy degree requirements. Students who receive an NP grade will be required to meet with the program director to request permission to register for additional thesis credit.**

Genesis of Project: Each thesis project topic will be generated by the student. The student's advisor and committee members are responsible for guiding the student throughout the research project; however, it is not the responsibility of an advisor or committee member to produce a project topic or engage in any of the writing of the project.

Scope of Project: Ultimately, the scope of each project will vary based on the determination of the student, advisor, and committee members. However, the following guidelines must be met for any thesis project:

- Each project must have no fewer than four sections (literature review/warrant, method, results, discussion). Thesis projects should ideally be in excess of 40 pages in length (not including title page, abstract, references, tables/charts, and appendices).
- Each project that uses human subjects must be approved by the University of Southern Indiana's Institutional Review Board. It is the responsibility of the student to go through the IRB online training modules in order to be cleared by the university to conduct human subjects research.
- It is the responsibility of the student and advisor to insure that IRB applications are completed and submitted to the IRB early in the research process. IRB applications **MUST** be completed before interviews, focus groups, surveys, questionnaires, or other forms of data collection from human subjects can be conducted.

By signing this form, I understand my responsibilities as a student. I understand that it is my responsibility to select an advisor and two committee members using the criteria listed in this contract prior to registering for the course. I also understand that it is my responsibility to receive IRB training prior to registering for COMM 699 and to complete and submit the IRB application for this project prior to or at the onset of registering for COMM 699. **COMM 699 will be graded as a Pass/No Pass course.**

_____	_____	_____
Print Student's Name	Student's Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Print Thesis Advisor's Name	Thesis Advisor's Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Print Committee Member's Name	Committee Member's Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Print Committee Member's Name	Committee Member's Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Program Director's Signature	Date	