IN THE LAST FEW YEARS you started your journey to earn your Master’s degree in Communication and Leadership Studies at Gonzaga University. Now you are ready for the final step to select a topic important to you and develop a project or thesis to show your mastery of the subject. Since Communication is always about theory and praxis, your work will not only bring out important theoretical concepts of communication, but go that step further to show how the richness of your ideas can contribute to the magis, or more as envisioned by Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits.

The work of your project or thesis is independent, but you will have guidance along the way with your 680 Professor, with the selection of your Mentor, and as always, peer commentary from your colleagues.

The journey is always a challenge as you know from your previous classes, but you are well prepared. Building upon Joseph Campbell’s work on mythic heroes you will move through the “call to adventure,” on to the “road of trials,” and finally end up at the “ultimate boon.” The ultimate boon or the transformation of the self takes place when your developed self-sufficiency and inner power allows for the accomplishment of seeming impossible tasks. You will be a person with a much wider base of knowledge and understanding, who can better lead others in accomplishing important goals. You will truly be among the “women and men for others.”

-Dr. Caputo

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Master’s Program in Communication & Leadership Studies Gonzaga University
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Students who are in their last semester of coursework in the Communication and Leadership program should register on Zagweb for COML 680 (Communication & Leadership Seminar). COML 680 is scheduled to last an entire semester, either in the fall or spring. (The seminar is not offered during the summer). The longer length is designed to give the graduating student more time for reflection and writing, a key aspect of this integrative capstone course.

Your project or thesis should be the capstone of your learning experience in the Master of Arts in Communication and Leadership at Gonzaga University. It is the culminating experience of your academic work and preparation for the responsibilities of the professional world or for further graduate education. Therefore, it should represent the very best of your work.

MASTER’S THESIS or MASTER’S PROJECT?

You have two options for your capstone experience here at the end of your degree: a) Communication Thesis, or b) Communication Project. Both are designed to give you the opportunity to carve out a “niche” of specialized work in communication that you are most interested in that will enhance your knowledge.

For your Thesis or Project, you are expected to supervise yourself under the guidance of a professor (your 680 instructor) and mentor in the production of high quality and creative work. Your Thesis or Project should demonstrate serious effort in terms of the amount of new information gathered, and an advanced, in-depth understanding beyond the level of expertise previously gained from course work.

The Thesis or Project requires that you bring together much of what you have gleaned from your communication and leadership classes (both theory and practice.) If you think about it, during your MA Program you have read perhaps 625,000 words or more about communication, and nearly as much about leadership. Your Thesis or Project therefore should reflect knowledge, insight and subtlety beyond the layperson, and beyond “common sense.”
While a thesis requires scholarly, original research (or creative scholarship), a project involves the application of communication theory or other communication knowledge. A thesis requires the collection of data for analysis and argument. A project is not data driven, but rather begins with a problem and a literature review that leads directly to the creation of the project. Faculty members view the project as essentially a thesis with an additional production element, and it is essential for students to understand this. The production element might include a video, new technology, an extensive website, or a CD-ROM. The student may design and create materials for a persuasive campaign, a semester long course in communication, a broadcast documentary, a connected series of multimedia or web materials, or other practical communication products. The project must include a section explaining how communication theory or other knowledge was applied in the product’s design and production. The difference between a thesis and a project will be in how the work is expressed, not in the rigor of the project.

Students who choose the Thesis Option for COML 680 might also consider taking a 3-credit directed reading course (either COML 660 or COML 661) the semester before or the semester while taking COML 680. COML 501 can and should also be used to develop your thesis question and your review of the literature.

The student's COML 680 Professor is considered the Thesis or Project Director and at least one other faculty member is invited to be a second reader. Students are also required to choose a mentor from among the faculty they have studied with in their MA Program. A list of faculty mentors and their areas of interest will be provided to you. If you are unable to find a suitable mentor, your 680 Professor will serve in that capacity.

It is expected that all COML students will select a topic that reflects their preparation in communication or communication and leadership. Topics that are exclusively leadership will not be accepted.

Later sections in this handbook provide more details about the specific requirements of each approach.

The thesis or project option for COML 680 is designed for students who want to focus on a particular area of research in which they want to explore and develop a depth of understanding and scholarship. While the thesis is highly recommended for those students who are considering doctoral work, careers in higher education or the communication industries, Master’s Projects are often recommended for students interested in practical applications or creative works.
GUIDELINES

Assignment: Ideally, this topic should be developed for the thesis or project in COML 501 and carried out in COML 680. However, sometimes there is a reason for going in an alternative direction. You are to select a COMMUNICATION topic (see the National Communication Association website, and the Rubin & Rubin text for ideas) and write a thesis (not less than 35 pages, no more than 75 pages excluding your bibliography. Average theses are 40-50 pages excluding bibliography) supported by communication theory and philosophy. The thesis or project must meet all the requirements of content listed in the structure and format sections of this guide. In addition, your literature review must have a minimum of twenty-five sources, at least ten of which are from scholarly professional journals. Web sources should be carefully limited and must be based primarily on scholarly professional journals.

It is important to know the difference between **primary and secondary source** texts. A primary source is work written directly by a scholar (e.g., a journal article, book or book chapter.) A secondary source is another author synthesizing or summarizing another scholar’s work (e.g., a textbook.) Good scholarship prioritizes using original work over secondary sources. Thus, it is always best to go to the original primary source (Rubin, et al., p. 288-89).

We encourage you to pursue areas of communication that you are interested in and have been exposed to during your program. In COML 508, for example, you have been exposed to a number of **specific communication theories**. The Griffin text, a **secondary source**, provides an overview of a number of well-established communication theories and philosophical aspects as well. However, if you are utilizing a specific theory that you found in Griffin, it will be important that you **find and utilize the original primary source** as well. Both the thesis and project require grounding your research in communication theory (or theories) and a synthesis of the existing scholarship informing your area of interest.

Some of you may choose to write an ethnography. Ethnography grows out of fieldwork and theory emerges from the cultural description of what you are observing. Several qualitative approaches start without (too) many assumptions and work immediately with the “data” (mostly text material) – this is what the term “grounded” refers to (→ Qualitative Methodology). If you are doing ethnography, some of your theoretical material will emerge in the Discussion section of the thesis, where the focus in the Literature Review will be more on methodologies and philosophy. In any regard, this should all be worked out in consultation with your 680 Professor.
Examples of MA level Communication Projects are listed below and organized according to possible interest areas.

• **Interested in teaching?**

  Project: Demonstrate a thorough understanding of issues in communication pedagogy followed by an individually tailored portfolio of syllabi, readings, learning activities, and ethical questions for teaching communication courses at the college level. This project would be accomplished by completing an internship in teaching or Directed Study on Communication Education.

• **Interested in media literacy?**

  Project: Upon completion of COML 516, one might create and execute a media literacy promotional campaign to raise awareness of media and culture. Students would also take a directed readings course on media literacy or perhaps an internship with a media literacy organization such as the Northwest Alliance for Responsible Media or one in your community.

• **Interested in community organizing and social change?**

  Project: After reading the foundational literature, students could develop and implement a campaign to mobilize a community action program. Again, it would be advised that this be combined with an internship with an appropriate organization.

• **Interested in Training and Consulting?**

  Project: A developed portfolio of training materials and consulting strategies for working in organizational and adult learner settings. COML 511 would be required and an Internship recommended. The written part of the project would resemble a thesis with the omission of a research component.

Guidelines for writing and preparing thesis and projects are explained in Chapter Eleven of Rubin, et. al. (2005). *Communication research: Strategies and sources (6th ed.).*
DEVELOPING A THESIS

Thesis comes from an ancient Greek word that means stand or position. Your thesis is the stand or position you take on an issue. In a thesis you generally state your thesis at the beginning of the paper and then spend the remaining pages showing why the position is correct or reasonable. *Examples of previous theses and suggestions for topics are provided in this handbook and can be found on-line at: http://web02.gonzaga.edu/comlstudentresources/theses.html

*Please note that examples may not conform to current APA requirements.

Structure of the Thesis or Project
As mentioned earlier, a thesis or project is broken into a series of chapters. Each chapter leads directly to the following chapter. The project or thesis must be written with good transitions from chapter to chapter. An outline for either the Project or Thesis is provided in this Handbook.

Rough and Final Drafts
Through this process, you will be receiving feedback from your mentor and professor. Thus, you will likely have multiple drafts of each section.

We advise that you do not delay the writing process for fear that you are not a good writer. This can often lead to writer's block. Give yourself permission to write poorly. Just "crank things out." It is in revision that the work will be cleaned-up, and inconsistencies or gaps will be clarified.

That being said, your professor or mentor is not your line editor. All submissions for review must be as error free as possible. If your papers are grammatically incorrect, contain poor use of prose, incorrect spelling or use of APA citation requirements, they will be sent back to you for editing.

You may also be referred to a “Writing Tutor.” Some students have found it best to hire a local editor to help them with writing mechanics. Our advice to you if you struggle with composition is that you have made the necessary arrangements for an excellent proofreader or editor so your submissions do not delay your progress.
MENTORS

Mentoring: A deliberate pairing of a more skilled or experienced person with a lesser skilled or not as experienced one, with the agreed-upon goal of having the lesser skilled person grow and develop specific competencies.

The thesis/project will be written under the guidance of a faculty mentor. A unique aspect of the project or thesis requirement is the ability to work with an academic mentor to help guide your major MA work. Your mentor can be any member of the COML faculty; some ORGL and Communication Arts faculty have also served in this capacity. **It is crucial that your mentor be familiar with the area you would like to research, the methods and theories you would like to use, and the specific requirements of the Project or Thesis. It is your obligation to share all this with your mentor and to secure his or her signature on the Mentor Agreement Form. Additionally, once you have a signed Mentor agreement, you should set up a schedule of communication with your Mentor.**

Your mentor is not responsible for fully supervising you; that is the task of your 680 Professor. The mentor is to assist you with expertise on your topic, help you sort through your ideas, and suggest research strategies once you settle on a topic. Your mentor will also be asked to review the near completed draft of your work before it is submitted for final approval. You alone are responsible for completing your research and writing in a timely manner. Your mentor will be asked to apprise to what extent you met with him or her and completed your timelines.

A list of faculty mentors can be found on the COML website. Occasionally your mentor and your 680 Professor will be the same person. If so, a 2nd faculty reader will be assigned to read your thesis and recommend additional edits before it can be approved as completed.
In addition to the required texts for the COML 501 course, the following texts are recommended or required:


Another source you may find useful but is **not required:**


It is also recommended that you use and review the theory text used in COML 508, Theorizing Communication:


You will also be required to delve into original, peer-reviewed scholarly journal articles appropriate to your area. **The Communication and Mass Media Complete journal database** is an excellent place to search for peer-reviewed scholarly articles. From the Foley Library homepage, select “All Databases A-Z” for an alphabetical list of scholarly journal databases.
A SPECIAL NOTE ON PLAGIARISM

You would not want to be accused of stealing a car or a wallet, nor do your friends want theirs stolen. Similarly, you do not want to be accused of stealing someone's words or ideas, nor do writers want theirs stolen. To use someone's words or ideas in your writing without letting your readers know where they came from is a form of theft called plagiarism.

You can avoid plagiarizing if you are careful to do the following:
Put the words of an author in quotation marks, record them accurately, and follow the quotation with a citation that indicates your source. Also use quotation marks even when you borrow a phrase or a single, special word from another person. Follow the style of citation required by APA. Write a summary or paraphrase in your own words and sentence patterns, and follow it with a citation. Just changing some words does not make a paraphrase; the ideas must be digested, understood, and written in your own words. Please see the APA manual regarding paraphrasing and summarizing.

In addition, it is wise to lead into your quotation or paraphrase by using the author's name. For example, you can write, "According to Tannen (1997)," followed by a quotation from Tannen or your paraphrase or summary of Tannen's ideas. Be careful not to plagiarize your professor or colleagues, as well. If you borrow words or ideas from anyone — professors, students, best friends — be sure to give them credit by quoting and citing them, or paraphrasing and citing. They will thank you for it.

And a final note concerning plagiarism and the Internet:

To avoid plagiarism, cite the source of anything that you borrow from the Internet, including material from websites, e-mail, and newsgroups. These materials are the words and ideas of people who deserve to be given credit. Students who are found to have plagiarized on their 680 thesis or project Fail the course. A second plagiarism by a student in the MA Program in Communication and Leadership Studies is grounds for dismissal from the University. For more information on plagiarism, go to the following website where much of this material comes from:

http://www.bemidjistate.edu/students/wrc/plagiarism.html

WARNING: All COML 680 professors use the plagiarism detection software Turnitin to deter plagiarism.
OVERVIEW AND SEQUENCE OF REQUIREMENTS

1.) Select Topic
Select a possible thesis or project topic and a faculty mentor* who will provide guidance in your work. An approach to topic selection might grow out of your particular interests, or an assignment or topic area from a previous class (e.g., 501, Research Methods.)

*Remember, your mentor is not responsible for supervising you, but rather to assist you with some expertise about your topic. Your mentor will help you sort through your ideas and suggest research strategies once you settle on a topic. Your mentor will also be asked to review a draft of your work before you submit the final draft and to sign the thesis as a reader.

2. Write Proposal
You must first write a five-page proposal of your project or thesis idea, including what your proposed topic is, a clear statement of the problem and importance of your project or thesis, a description of the area of communication theory* from which this project or thesis emerges, the method you intend to use to collect your research, and a minimum of ten substantive bibliographic sources to support your ideas, all written in correct APA format (See Appendix for COML Citing Sources for APA Style). We suggest you confer with your mentor both before and as you write the proposal.

* Students who are choosing to write an ethnographic study will begin with a description of the culture they want to study and why this culture is important in connection to communication.

3. Submit Mentor Agreement
You must secure your mentor's signature on a Mentor Agreement form before you submit it to the COML 680 Professor for advancement to thesis. Without the signature of your mentor, you will not be able to proceed with your work.

4. Submit Previous Work (if applicable)
You may do a thesis or project based on a paper you have written for a previous course and we strongly encourage the COML 501 work as a base-point. Scholars often extend their ideas by stretching previous works. Should you wish to build upon a paper you completed in another course, you must submit a copy of that paper to your Professor and Mentor at the time of the proposal submission, including how you intend to build on that paper.
5. **Blackboard**
   The 680 thesis course is delivered through Blackboard and the thesis or project sections are broken down into different components. The discussion board forums provide a timeline and deadline dates for the various components of the process over the fifteen-week course.

The sequence is as follows:

I. Five-Page Proposal along with your Mentor Agreement  
II. Literature Review (See previous notes on ethnographic studies)  
III. Scope and Methodology  
IV. Draft of the Study with Analysis and Results Section  
V. Introductory and Final Discussion Sections  
VI. Once these sections are approved, the candidate moves to the oral report stage.

6.) **Choose Methodology**
   The above progression may lead one to infer that the process is a linear sequence of steps. However, one of the common mistakes that many students writing theses or projects make is not knowing the best method to use when answering their questions. Therefore, it is important to have a solid grasp of your methodology beforehand since methods influence how research questions are shaped and answered.

6. **Write, Submit and Resubmit**
   Writing your thesis or project is often a process of submission and resubmission, most often requiring multiple drafts of each chapter. While you may be working ahead on future material, it is crucial that you resubmit unapproved drafts until your professor does a final approval.
PLANNING SCHEDULE FOR WRITING YOUR THESIS OR PROJECT

Weeks 1 - 2: Planning your work

Review all your previous courses and essays, carry out preliminary readings, identify a mentor discuss and agree on topic. Mentor Agreements and Proposals Due. (Obviously, if you are carrying forward work that you developed in 501, Research Methods, the process will be greatly facilitated throughout the timeline, but particularly in the beginning stages.

Weeks 3 - 4: Collecting Literature and setting up study/ First Drafts

Study relevant literature underlying your work. Keep records and make good notes.
Submit Chapter Two Literature Review to your 680 professor and mentor and arrange for feedback. Follow-up leads from your reading and pursue suggestions from your mentor. For example, have you used ideas in the literature to draw together a clear theoretical framework for your own study?

Weeks 5 -6: Complete Chapter Three Scope and Methodology

Submit to your 680 Professor and Mentor and arrange for feedback.

Weeks 7 -8: Moving to Analysis and Writing Up of your study

Analyze your information and work on sustained writing of your project or thesis. Send preliminary work to mentor and professor and arrange for feedback.

Weeks 9-10: Writing up the remaining chapters of your Project or Thesis and Preparing Oral

Resist the temptation to continue reading. Draft your thesis.

Weeks 10 – 11: Deliver final version (not bound) to your mentor

Mentor will give a final check and provide feedback before submitting to your 680 professor.

Weeks 11 -12: Submit final edition to your 680 professor for review and any possible further editing.

Your professor will also arrange for a second faculty reader to provide you with feedback regarding the editing of the final work

Week 13: Oral Presentation Scheduling

Upon authorization from your instructor, the COML Program Assistant will contact you to schedule a date/time for your oral presentation

Week 14: Submit Thesis to Proquest for Publishing

After receiving your signature page and authorization from your instructor, begin the binding process. Instructions on the publishing process with Proquest will be included with your signature page.

NOW IT IS TIME FOR A CELEBRATION!
PROJECT or THESIS PROPOSAL

THE PROPOSAL

You are required to submit a written proposal (five page maximum) drafted in consultation with your Mentor and submitted with the Mentor Agreement to be accepted by your 680 professor before you start your project or thesis.

Your proposal must contain:

1. Working Title of Project or Thesis

2. A clear statement of the problem and the importance of your project or thesis.

3. A description of the area of communication theory (interpersonal, organizational, intercultural, rhetorical --- as well as 1 or 2 specific theories).

4. A clearly delineated method for collecting information from gathering primary and secondary source information regarding best practices, growing trends, etc. Here you can use what you learned in your 501 class, other ORGL and COML courses and your Communication research: Strategies and Sources book.

5. A bibliography of at least ten substantive sources (journal articles, books,) that would help to situate the project in the context of previous work. APA style (See Appendix) is required.

Note: All Projects and Theses will include a public presentation that elaborates on the work.

Gonzaga University Institutional Research Board Policy (IRB)

As part of Gonzaga University’s policy for conducting research using human participants, you are required to have IRB approval for any research project using human participants. The Communication and Leadership program has an exemption in place with the IRB at Gonzaga, which allows students to conduct studies that meet the requirements for minimal risk research. As you learned in Research Methods 501, using anyone under age 18 as a research participant, or investigating potentially invasive topics (e.g., sexual behaviors/orientations, drug use) require a full IRB review, which normally takes a number of months to complete. Thus, given the timeline for the requirements of the assignment, we encourage you to choose projects that meet the requirements for minimal risk. The link below explains IRB policies at Gonzaga in detail.


Note: Many students are under the impression that they are required to use human participants. This is NOT the case. Viable communication research takes other forms (as mentioned above), such as historical, content, and rhetorical analyses. (See the Rubin text p. 212 for examples of communication research not using human participants.)
LITERATURE REVIEW (CH. 2)

Both theses and projects require literature reviews. You should by now have written several literature reviews in both your undergraduate and graduate studies. This brief discussion cannot take the place of what you may have learned in your COML 501 class (Applied Research) or in your class textbook, but it may serve as a helpful reminder.

A literature review lets the reader of your material know that you have seriously reviewed any previous material written on your subject and any theoretical or philosophical arguments that need to be taken into consideration regarding your work. Academic works always builds upon previous research and it is your obligation to demonstrate that you have “mastered” this body of knowledge. Your own research work needs to be contextualized into what has already been done. Thus, your literature review becomes the major building block of your Thesis or Project and is presented in Chapter Two of the work.

The literature review must include a minimum of twenty-five sources, ten of which must come from Communication or Leadership scholarly professional journals. It may be necessary for you to use interlibrary loans, so leave yourself plenty of time. GET STARTED EARLY WITH INTERLIBRARY LOANS. Literature review information is available in our course text and discussed below under Writing Your Literature Review. Also, your Research Methods course should have prepared you for effectively writing a literature review. Your thesis should carefully follow the most current APA style manual (currently the 6th edition). APA Style Manuals are available in most bookstores.

Writing Your Literature Review

A literature review asks you to find specific information in the communication and leadership literature, to review the research and to write a review about it. A literature review summarizes previous research, highlights any disparate or contradicting perspectives, and demonstrates a gap or area of the body of research that warrants further exploration.

Unlike a term paper, literature reviews require as much as possible the review of primary sources -- a document or manuscript of an original published report or research. Secondary sources often write about primary sources but may leave out important details in the process of condensing. The Griffin text from COML 508 is a secondary source. Avoid relying too heavily on this text.
A literature review is a crucial part of the research process. First, it enables us to understand the current status of knowledge on the topic. Before you can conduct original research, you must know what scholarship already exists on the topic and evaluate the findings so that you can formulate new research questions to guide your study.

There are two basic types of literature reviews: exemplary and exhaustive. An **exemplary** or representative literature review presents only key references to the reader to acquaint him or her with the representative works that relate to the research study. Key references are those directly influencing the study or project being proposed or conducted.

An **exhaustive literature review** is comprehensive. The writer attempts to find all the information pertinent to a topic.

For your thesis you will be writing an **exemplary** review with a **minimum of twenty-five sources**. The sources must include at least ten from professional scholarly journals. You may use a balance of primary and secondary sources.

Many students make the mistake of framing their literature reviews as a series of “mini book reports” summarizing articles/books they have read. Actually, a well-crafted literature review should be **persuasive** and better viewed as a persuasive argument than a summarized report of relevant previous scholarly work. The point of the argument is to group relevant studies together, ground your research question/hypothesis in the previous research and make the case why the study is important. —If you are successful, by the end, the reader should be thinking, “Well of course, you need to do this study…” A great way to outline and structure your literature review is to pay close attention to one of the most influential articles you are reading. The authors are very purposive in how they strategically structure their work. Good luck as you THINK, reflect on, organize, revise and write your literature review.

In order to keep your revisions to a minimum, we suggest following the steps below:

1) Read a recent article about your topic area of interest. Then refer to the reference list at the end of the article/chapter to compile more sources. Pay special attention to the THEORY/S grounding this body of work. Thus, this process ends up being a lot of reading.
2) Formulate/refine your research question based on what you have read. Often very good research questions are suggested to you by the authors’ suggestions for future studies at the end of the article.
3) Pay close attention to how these journal article authors organize their literature reviews (e.g. Do they go from specific to general or general to specific; by topic order; problem/solution order?) Understanding these authors’ implicit organizational strategies goes a long way in helping you develop your own.

4) In your writing, once you have covered the area of scholarship with appropriate summary and examples, you should develop your rationale: (e.g. “We know about a, b, and c, but “d” remains under-researched. Understanding “d” is important because ______________. Therefore, the following research question/s are advanced:”

Overall: Follow APA Guidelines. Go to http://apastyle.org

Try using RefWorks through Foley. It saves time and formatting.

Theoretical and Philosophical Considerations

Your project or thesis should build upon existing or developing communication theories and certain philosophical or ethical considerations. These elements should be discussed in your Literature Review where you describe the theoretical underpinnings of your thesis or project. Draw upon those theories you studied in COML 508 class or any of the classes you’ve had. Pick those theories that are most appropriate to the area you are interested in or develop new theory to help explain the communication phenomena under consideration. At the same time, what philosophy does your thesis or project emerge from? What ethical concerns are present in your research or project that could be important?

Philosophy of Communication

In COML 508 you were asked to develop a philosophy of communication, rooted in a specific ontology, such as Aristotle’s Golden Mean or Christians’s Communitarian Ethics. This philosophy establishes the underlying ethical concerns when applied to work like your project or thesis.

Philosophy (n.). Love of, or the search for, wisdom or knowledge. 2. Theory or logical analysis of the principles underlying conduct, thought, knowledge, and the nature of the universe: included in philosophy are ethics, aesthetics, logics, epistemology, metaphysics, etc. 3. The general principles or laws of a field of knowledge or activity. 4. a) A particular system of principles for the conduct of life. b) A treatise covering such a system. 5. A study of human morals, character, and behavior.
Martin Buber talks about philosophical anthropology in which philosophy and human interaction co-inform one another. Communication, understood as a verb, connects the two nouns, philosophy, which is concerned with presuppositions, and anthropology, which examines the social practices of people. Communication brings philosophy into human action. Understanding communication as a verb relegates communication not to secondary status but to hermeneutic significance. Communication is akin to Hermes, the Greek messenger god. Hermes linked the wishes of the gods (philosophy) with the people (anthropology). The role of Hermes was to accomplish a “creative” doing task; he was a messenger who made a difference. In the *Odyssey* (Homer, trans. 1996), Hermes has three major roles: messenger god, the guide for souls to Hades, and giant killer. In addition, Hermes functions as the patron saint of herdsman. Hermes the messenger between the gods and the people, between philosophy and anthropology, makes a fundamental difference in lives, bringing divergent results, from death to security of protection.


Here is a sample section of philosophical underpinnings by Beena Gohil’s Fall 2012 thesis:

**Philosophical and Ethical Assumptions**

In social blogging, an individual creates a blog post and shares it with an audience, with the intention of beginning a discussion about the subject matter with readers—the members of the audience. This process is significant, because the resulting dialogue can be very different than a dialogue held face-to-face about the same subject. This method of online communication depends greatly on both the audience and the initial blogger’s willingness to be open and honest in their communication. Martin Buber, a Jewish philosopher and theologian, developed an ethical approach called *dialogic ethics*, which examines the relationships between individuals, particularly two relationships he called the *I-It* and *I-Thou* relationships (Buber, 1923/1958).

An I-It relationship is a one-sided relationship in which there is little to no dialogue. In these relationships, there is often a lack of real depth in the communication, and whatever communication
occurs can be manipulative or even false in nature, to benefit one member of the relationship (Buber, 1923/1958). In contrast, an I-Thou relationship is a two-sided relationship in which both participants strive to treat the other in the same manner that they wish to be treated. The communication in this type of relationship is a dialogue, with both individuals talking with one another to form an arena in which positive communication can occur (Buber, 1923/1958). To Buber, true dialogue is ethical communication because with dialogue, individuals are communicating with the sole objective of developing a mutual understanding of a subject and of one another as well (Buber, 1923/1958).

Dialogic ethics considers how the relationship that forms through dialogue can reflect an individual’s desire to be an ethical communicator. Dialogue allows individuals to speak openly and honestly, while steering communication away from extreme perspectives and communication methods. Through self-disclosure in dialogue, people are able to form a relationship based on a mutual understanding of a situation, by staying true to one’s own self while remaining open to another person simultaneously (Buber, 1923/1958). So dialogue—and in turn dialogic ethics—represents the objective of health communication on social blogging websites. Individuals who are complete strangers come together on the social blogging sites in order to form relationships with other people with whom they can have conversations—dialogue—about the subjects that matter to them. Understanding more about how women use social blogging to communicate about their health will result in a better understanding of the ways ethical communication occurs within online social blogging communities.
SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY (CH. 3)

It is very important that all theses and projects be narrowed down for the purpose of the study and reasonable chance at completion. That is, the way you structure and focus your literature review and your study rationale and research questions should be sufficiently narrow. Many students start out with very interesting, but overly broad questions. In Chapter 3 you will be asked to write your Scope and Methodology.

Scope

Your Scope answers the following questions: What are you including and excluding from this study? Is the breadth of the work narrow, moderate, or broad? This is usually determined by the amount of time allowed or length of the final copy. Although you may be doing a study based upon Interpersonal Deception Theory, are you limiting your work to one specific area, such as lying to get a date? Be as specific and focused as you can here, remembering you are deciding the parameters of your study in this modified thesis and the reader will want to know what they are. This section should be about 2 paragraphs.

Methodology

In this chapter, you will write an in-depth description of your method so that anyone reading it could duplicate your approach.

Your task will be to select the method(s) that best serve to answer the kind of research questions you have set. It is generally recommended that you use a method that you learned in COML 501 or in one of your other classes. Some students believe that the most viable approaches are quantitative (survey-type) methods. While this approach can be useful, there are many qualitative approaches (e.g., rhetorical criticism, histographic, ethnographic, and discursive analysis) that might be appropriate choices, depending on your research goals. See Rubin text, p. 212.

Certainly your methodological choice will be dictated by the type of research questions you have. Your 501 Professor, your 680 professor and your mentor should be helpful to you in this process.

Data Analysis

In this section you should discuss how you plan to analyze the data once it is collected. For example, if you conducted a survey of media use, you would describe the statistical analysis used to make sense of the responses (NOTE: students often use descriptive statistics). Or, if you conducted interviews about women’s YouTube addiction, you should discuss how you will look for themes in their responses based on the findings of your literature review. Look at sample theses for examples.
Describing how you plan to analyze the data helps you to better connect your data to your research questions and theory. It also helps those who want to replicate your study.

**Other Sections**

Chapter 3 should also include a discussion of validity, reliability, and ethical considerations (see p. 202-205 in Rubin). Note: qualitative research tends to discuss these concepts in different terms. Ask your 680 professor about this.

**THE STUDY ANALYSIS AND RESULTS (CH. 4)**

After you have your Chapter Two Literature Review and Chapter Three Scope and Methodology approved by your 680 professor or mentor, you should implement your method, collect the appropriate data, and analyze and report the results in accord with the requirements of the method and the standards of the field. Often a primary journal article using the same or a similar method provides a good example to follow as you formalize the content and structure of your own work. This section is very important in demonstrating your understanding of methods and your connections of the literature review, research questions, and method choices.

**INTRODUCTION (CH. 1) AND SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS (CH. 5)**

Much of what you wrote in your proposal can be used in Chapter 1, although you might add some information now that you have finished your study and remove information not required in Chapter 1. Closely follow the outline on p. 21 for project and p. 23 for thesis.

In Chapter 5, you demonstrate your mastery and synthesis of your study by discussing the meaning and implications of your findings, the limitations of your approach, and how future studies might be informed by the work you have completed. This chapter should be about 3-5 pages and is designed to leave a lasting impression on the reader.
COML Project Format:

TITLE PAGE (See sample)

SIGNATURE PAGE (will arrive in mail after orals. Leave a space in the final document)

ABSTRACT –write an indicative abstract (see p. 234 of Rubin).

TABLE OF CONTENTS (with page numbers)

Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION (page numbers begin here)

INTRODUCTION
IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY
STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED
ORGANIZATION OF REMAINING CHAPTERS

Chapter 2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

PHILOSOPHICAL ASSUMPTIONS
THEORETICAL BASIS
THE LITERATURE (previous research on your topic)
RATIONALE (This is an important sub-section that summarizes the main lines of the literature review and provides a justification for why this study is important (e.g. how it sheds new light on an unresearched question, or otherwise contributes to our understanding of the field.)
RESEARCH OR DESIGN QUESTIONS (that have emerged from the Lit. Review and rationale)
Chapter 3. SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

THE SCOPE OF THE PROJECT
METHODOLOGY OF THE PROJECT
DATA ANALYSIS
VALIDITY (for quantitative study)
RELIABILITY (for quantitative study)
ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Chapter 4. THE PROJECT

PROJECT DESCRIPTION
EXAMPLES OF THE WORK  (This may be displayed and discussed here and attached in an Appendix)

Chapter 5. SUMMARIES AND CONCLUSIONS

LIMITATIONS OF THE PROJECT
FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS
CONCLUSIONS

REFERENCES (Must meet APA guidelines)

APPENDIX
COML Thesis Format

TITLE PAGE (See sample)

ABSTRACT--write an indicative abstract (see p. 234 of Rubin)

SIGNATURE PAGE (will arrive in mail after orals. Leave a space in the final document)

TABLE OF CONTENTS (with page numbers)

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METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY
DATA ANALYSIS
VALIDITY (for quantitative study)
RELIABILITY (for quantitative study)
ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Chapter 4. THE STUDY (In this chapter you build upon your research and theory and explain your study and results)

INTRODUCTION
RESULTS OF THE STUDY
DISCUSSION (This section requires that you talk about the findings of the study, and the meaning and implications of these findings given the literature and theory/s that informed your work)

Chapter 5. SUMMARIES AND CONCLUSIONS

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY
FURTHER STUDY OR RECOMMENDATIONS
CONCLUSIONS

REFERENCES (Must meet APA guidelines)

APPENDIX
SCHEDULING OF ORALS

Oral Presentation

Upon authorization from your 680 instructor, the COML Program Assistant will contact you to set up a date/time for your oral presentation. You will receive more details as you complete the work in 680. Orals are generally planned as group sessions either on campus or by way of phone/video conference calls based on your preference/capability. Campus students often bring a guest.

Oral Presentation FAQs

- Each session is typically 2 hours in length. Every student is REQUIRED to stay engaged the entire time. Please arrange this in your personal/work schedule.
- Each presentation is scheduled in 15 minute time slots with 7-8 minutes for the student presentation and the remaining time for Q&A
- This is an informal discussion of your thesis. Each presentation should summarize your work, the theories utilized and result of the research or project.
- Eligibility: Your 680 instructor will notify the Program Assistant who then will contact each student to arrange a date/time for the oral presentation.

Signature Page

Following your Oral Presentation and 680 instructor authorization, you will be sent, via US Mail, a signature page which will include the signature of your professor, mentor and 2nd reader if applicable. **The receipt of your signature page is NOT your cue to upload your thesis to Proquest. You must receive final approval from your professor and mentor.**

Binding


The submission instructions are self-explanatory once on the ProQuest UMI website. The basic cost is approximately $36 for the “Traditional” Option. An additional $95 fee is charged for “Open Access Publishing”. The difference between “Traditional” and “Open Access Publishing” are explained in detail on the ProQuest website. Either option is acceptable.

Once you upload your thesis/project to ProQuest, the COML Program Assistant will “Approve” and “Deliver” your submission and it will move forward through the publishing process. Please note that it takes 8-12 weeks for processing and another 6-8 weeks to publish. You are able to check the status on the ProQuest website.
MENTOR AGREEMENT (To be submitted with Thesis or Project Proposal)

Mentoring: A deliberate pairing of a more skilled or experienced person with a lesser skilled or experienced one, with the agreed-upon goal of having the lesser skilled person grow and develop specific competencies.

You have been asked to serve as a Mentor for ____________________, who is completing the requirements for her/his Masters Degree in Communication and Leadership Studies. As a mentor you are asked to share ideas with this student and read the next to final draft of their thesis. You are not expected to directly supervise this student’s work but rather meet with them as a “young colleague.” If you are willing to serve as a Mentor for him/her, please sign this agreement. Your Mentee will provide you with full guidelines of their requirements.

I am willing to serve as a Mentor for ____________________ as she/he completes her/his thesis or project. As a Mentor I will provide help in the way of suggestions, ideas and resources and am willing to review drafts of their written work. I also agree to read the next to last draft of the student’s thesis or project and will sign my name on the signature page of their final draft. My signature on the thesis only indicates that I have read it and is no indication of the quality of the work. I will not be asked to assign a grade or make any evaluative comments to the course convener.

Signature__________________________
Title__________________________
Email and telephone number________________________________
Date__________________________
CITING SOURCES IN APA STYLE

The American Psychological Association (APA) specifies rules and conventions for a variety of aspects of writing mechanics. All written works students submit in COML courses must conform to APA rules. Your course instructors may ask you to follow unique (non-APA) rules in such areas as line spacing, running heads, and title and prefatory pages. Instructor-specific rules always supersede APA rules.

This short document summarizes some of the most frequently used forms of document sourcing in your written assignments including your thesis. For other aspects of APA rules, consult the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.).

Direct Quotation of Sources
Reproduce word for word material directly quoted from another author’s work or from your own previously published work. Always provide the author, year, and specific page citation or paragraph number for nonpaginated material in the text and include a complete reference in the reference list.

If the quotation comprises 40 or more words, display it as a freestanding block of text and omit the quotation marks. Start the block of text on a new line and indent the block about a half-inch from the left margin (in the same position as a new paragraph). If there are additional paragraphs, indent the first line of each and double-space the entire quotation. (See APA Manual for details).

In-Text Citations

Author’s name inside vs. outside parenthesis:
  a) Jenkins (2006) argues that…
  b) …remains inconclusive (Jenkins, 2006).

Work by two authors: Note the use of “and” and “&” in each case
  a) Golding and Murdock (1978) argue that…
  b) …remains inconclusive (Golding & Murdock, 1978).

Work by three to five authors:
  a) When citing the work for the first time in your text:
     a. Hanson, Mills, and Schellenberg (2005) argue that…
     b. …remains inconclusive (Hanson, Mills, & Schellenberg, 2005).
  b) In subsequent citations of the same work:
     a. Hanson et al. (2005) argue that…
     b. …remains inconclusive (Hanson et al., 2005).

Don’t forget to add a period after “al.”

Work by six or more authors:
  Cite the first author and add “et al.”
Citing multiple works at the same time: *Alphabetize the authors and use “;” to separate multiple works.*

...remains inconclusive (Bell, 1996; Golding & Murdock, 1978; Jenkins, 2006).

Citing with or without page number:

1. **Include page information:** When using a direct quotation or referring to a specific part of work
   
   Use “p.” to refer to a specific page and “pp.” for a range of pages:
   
   o “All forms of communication have spatial characteristics” (Castells, 1996, p. 1).
   
   o “Unless we click an off button or smash the screen, the images stream on, leaving traces in our minds” (Gitlin, 2002, pp. 20-21).
   
   o For online sources that do not have pages, identify direct quotations by referring to the paragraph. “Each individual is fixed in his place” (Gerrard, 2002, para. 2)

2. **Exclude page information:** For all other referencing

When citing works with no identified author:
Cite the first few words of the work (within double quotation marks) and the year, as in:

(“Speaking race,” 2008)

When citing works with no publication date:
Use “n.d.” in place of the data, as in: Smith (n.d.) argued….

List of References

General rules:

- Each reference entry should have a hanging indent and be single-spaced, with a double-space between entries.
- Arrange references in a reference list by the surname of the author, followed by initials of the author’s given name.
- Use initials for the author’s given and middle names.
- Use lower case in book and article titles except for:
  - First word of the title and sub-title
  - Proper nouns
- Co-authors are separated by commas and “&”
- Pay attention to the placement of commas, periods, and space.

Journal article:


Journal title and volume number are italicized. Issue number is not. Volume number + issue number vs. Volume number only
- Both volume and issue information is included in Shome (2003) and Kirn et al. (1990) because they are published in journals in which each issue begins with p. 1.
- Golding and Murdock (1978) (volume only) is from a journal in which page numbering continues from issue to issue (e.g., Vol 1 Issue 1 ends with p. 159, and Vol 1 Issue 2 begins with p. 160).

Online journal article:

Article in edited book:

- Note the way editors’ names are listed – First name (middle name) initial(s), then last name.
- If there’s only one editor, use “Ed.” in place of “Eds.”

Book: Standard format:

Book: 2nd or later edition:

Book: Translated work:

Book: Edited book:

Conference paper:
Magazine article:

- Give the date shown on the publication – month for monthlies, or month and day for weeklies. The example above is from a monthly publication.

Online magazine article:

Newspaper article:

Online newspaper article:

Reports:

Personal communication:
R. MacKinnon (personal communication, April 18, 2009).

Other online sources:
Direct readers as closely as possible to the information being cited – whenever possible, reference specific documents rather than home or menu pages. Online sources often lack author and publication date information. Use the following format:

Organization as author; no date:

If the author of a document is not identified, begin the reference with the title of the document:

COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE ARE INSEPARABLE

A Thesis
Presented to the Faculty in Communication and Leadership Studies
School of Professional Studies
Gonzaga University

Under the Supervision of (680 Professor)

Under the Mentorship of (Name of Mentor)

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Communication and Leadership Studies

By
Yagotta B. Smart
May 2011
SAMPLE SIGNATURE PAGE

We the undersigned, certify that we read this project or thesis and approve it as adequate in scope and quality for the degree Master of Arts.

____________________________________________________________
Thesis or Project Director

____________________________________________________________
Faculty Mentor

____________________________________________________________
Faculty Reader

Gonzaga University

MA Program in Communication and Leadership Studies
SAMPLE

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