

MDWF 584

Thesis Project

Student Syllabus

Karen Hertel, B.A., MLIS
Andrea Lythgoe, B.S., ICCE, CD(DONA), LCCE



1174 E 2700 S STE 2
SLC, UT 84106-2671
Phone: 801.649.5230
Toll-Free: 866.680.2756
Fax: 866.207.2024

office@midwifery.edu
distancedirector@midwifery.edu

Syllabus: MDWF 584

Thesis Project

CREDITS: 5(five).

PRE-REQUISITE: PROD 511

COURSE PURPOSE & OVERVIEW:

The student will complete a thesis project during this course. The student will interact on a regular basis with their Thesis Advisory Committee. An oral defense of the thesis project will be completed.

SPECIFIC LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

At the completion of this course, the students will be able to demonstrate knowledge and skills in the following areas:

1. Complete a substantial project related to midwifery
2. Write a scholarly background paper regarding their project
3. Present their project in a public venue
4. Successfully defend their project through the oral defense process

TEXTS & SUPPLIES:

Text(s) for this course:

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5th ed.

MCU Guide to the Preparation of Theses (available under the graduate student link in your student menu.)

Supplies for this course:

None required

GRADING:

This is a Pass/Fail course. You must complete your thesis course with a “Pass” grade in order to get your Master’s Degree.

MANA CORE COMPETENCIES:

Core competencies reflect the fundamental knowledge, skills and behaviors expected of an entry-level midwife. Midwives Alliance of North America (MANA) has developed a list of midwifery core competencies. The following core competencies are introduced/taught/or tested in this course

- Competencies will vary depending on thesis project

NARM VERIFICATION FORM

The following NARM Skills are introduced/taught/or tested in this course:

- Skills will vary depending on thesis project

SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS:

With a few exceptions (MATH 212 and some of the Labs), all classes must be completed online. If you have questions on how to complete your classes online, please contact the Director of Distance Studies through the internal messaging system.

When you complete coursework electronically online, it is NOT necessary to send a cover sheet when submitting

assignments. Please note that some assignments call for completion of tasks for which you will need to upload corresponding pictures, files, etc., as proof of completion. Typing legends such as “completed” or “finished” is not enough to fulfill the requirement.

You may submit more than one section at a time, however, you should complete (and submit) each section in order (e.g. section 3 may be sent with section 2 but not before it) unless you have special permission to do otherwise. Assignments will not be returned to you unless the instructor feels it necessary.

RESUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS:

Instructors require a high level of quality for student work. Please familiarize yourself with the expectations for each assignment as well as any accompanying rubric prior to submission. Instructors are available for support and clarification as needed. The option of resubmitting assignments due to poor quality is left to the discretion of each instructor.

TESTS

Once you have submitted all assignments covered by a test, you can request your test.

Exams will be sent directly to your selected proctor once he/she is approved. You will not be permitted to use *any* materials when taking these exams. In order to pass the class you will need to obtain a grade of at least 80% in both the sections and the exams.

If you fail a test, you may retake it within thirty days of notification of your score (unless other arrangements are made with the MCU office staff). Please pay the fee for the test retake before you request your test again. We recommend that you read the Proctor Certification Form you received in your acceptance package; select a proctor; ask him/her to sign the form and mail it as soon as possible to the school offices (attention: Director of Distance Studies) for approval. To expedite the process of sending the tests, we recommend that your proctor also provide us with an email address. Your completed and approved form must be on file before any exams are requested.

For more information regarding test taking and proctors, please refer to the Distance Studies Policies located in the current catalog.

TIME LIMITS/COURSE EXTENSIONS:

Please see the student catalog for a full description of course time limits, as well as Midwives College of Utah course extension policy.

Students are strongly encouraged (and receive a financial incentive) to complete classes within the semester they are activated. If a student does not submit at least one assignment during the semester a class is activated, it is possible that an updated syllabus will replace the current version of the syllabus. It is the student’s responsibility to make sure they are working from the most recent syllabus. MCU reserves the right to update syllabi on an annual basis.

RECORD KEEPING:

MCU suggests that you keep a file of all final grade notices, transcripts and communications to and from the college.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT:

If you have a disability for which you need accommodations for this class, please let your instructor know as soon as possible. You will be required to submit documentation of your disability from an appropriate care provider to the Registrar.

MIDWIVES COLLEGE OF UTAH POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

A high sense of personal honor and integrity is imperative in the completion of courses from the Midwives College of Utah. Although students can work in a study group, you must complete your own work. The syllabus should not be copied or given to other people without permission from the Midwives College of Utah. Distance education students must take examinations through a proctor who must certify that the exam was completed without the assistance of books, notes, or any other outside help unless otherwise stated on the exam. The exam itself must not be copied in any way.

It is the expectation of the Midwives College of Utah that all work turned in by a student is the product of her own

endeavors. Violations, which include but are not limited to, cheating, providing misleading or false information to staff or instructors and plagiarism, are cause for disciplinary action, including failure of assignment, conferences with MCU President and/or Academic Dean or expulsion from Midwives College of Utah.

PLAGIARISM POLICY

Failing to give credit where credit is due is known as plagiarism. Copying, distributing, modifying or displaying a copyrighted work is known as copyright infringement.

1. Students are required to use APA format to cite all specific sources both in-text and in a reference list.
2. Avoid writing papers that "cut and paste" beyond what is appropriate. Generally speaking, no more than 20% of your paper should be direct quotes. Your instructor is looking for papers with your thoughts and ideas as well as supporting references.
3. Did you know that if you paraphrase another person's written or spoken words, you are also plagiarizing? "You are guilty of the academic offense known as plagiarism if you half-copy the author's sentences - either by mixing the author's phrases with your own without using quotation marks or by plugging in your synonyms into the author's sentence structure." (Writer's Reference, Diana Hacker, 5th edition). This is not to say that you cannot use another person's ideas or words and put them into your own words. Just remember that when you do so, you acknowledge the source of information using the APA format.
4. MCU does not tolerate the submission of a paper that is written by another person or is "ghostwritten".
5. If you own a copyrighted audio or video recording, you must have permission from the copyright holder to copy, distribute, modify, display or perform their work. If you do not have this permission, you are infringing upon the copyright and could be subject to legal prosecution by the owner of the copyright.

Any time a teacher sees plagiarism, it will be reported to the Academic Dean and/or President and a log of the incident will be placed in the student's file. If offenses are taking place in more than one class, any offense after an initial warning from any or all class instructors will accrue towards a second or third offense.

- **First offense: Instructor will conference with the student and student will redo the assignment.**
- **Second offense: Automatic failure on the assignment and mandatory conference with MCU President and/or Academic Dean.**
- **Third offense: Failure of the course and possible expulsion from Midwives College of Utah.**

WITHDRAWAL/ REFUNDS:

An official withdrawal from MCU courses **requires a written request**. Please see the student catalog for a full description of the Refund Policy.

DISCLAIMER:

MCU does not take responsibility for the outcome of any activities suggested in this course or in any other MCU course. The students remain completely responsible for the consequences of their own behavior in regards to how they choose to implement the information contained herein.

Required Assignments for MDWF584

24 Update Forms due monthly. You can find the blank form in your class documents. The forms should be uploaded into the MCU system as an assignment and also e-mailed to your advisors. There are 24 assignments because it is expected you will complete this course in two years. Should you finish the course early, you will receive credit for these updates for months you did not need.

APA Assignment Before submitting your first draft of your thesis, you must complete the APA quiz. It is expected that you will have read the MCU Guide to the Preparation of Theses (found under the Graduate Student link in your student menu) and reviewed the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association before taking this quiz. Your prospectus **MUST** use APA formatting properly. The quiz is open book. If you score less than 90% on the quiz, you will need to have a conference call with your Committee Secretary to review the questions you missed. Your prospectus **MUST** use APA formatting properly. If you take the time to become familiar with APA format and do it right the first time, you will save yourself quite a bit of time and trouble!

Background Paper and Required Components Your prospectus listed the items you planned to include as part of your project. When you submit your first draft of the background paper and components, the Committee Secretary will schedule a GoToMeeting or conference call for your committee to review the draft as a group. With subsequent drafts, the secretary will distribute the drafts to your committee and collect their reviews via e-mail.

Oral Defense Students will present and defend their thesis project to their committee, the Graduate Dean, and the MCU President. Details on this can be found below.

Presentation of Results All graduate students are required to present their thesis project in some way. This can be done through either a presentation or poster session at a national midwifery conference like MANA or Midwifery Today, a local midwifery conference in your area, an MCU conference, or an online presentation to a group of MCU students.

Help sessions

Each semester, the Graduate Dean and Graduate Dean Assistant will hold at least one open help session online. Students may use this opportunity to ask any questions they might have, brainstorm ideas, discuss any obstacles, etc. The Graduate Dean and Graduate Dean Assistant are also available via MCU messaging at any time during the semester, and personal phone calls can be arranged as well.



Syllabus: MDWF 584 Thesis Project

Section 1. The Thesis Process

I. Introduction

You have completed PROD 511 and are ready to carry out the project planned and approved in your prospectus. The form *MDWF 584 Components* that you submitted in PROD 511 is the official checklist of the required components for your thesis project.

The purpose of this syllabus is to provide information on the remaining steps you need to take for successful completion of your thesis. As listed in the PROD 511 syllabus, the steps to creating a thesis are:

1. Idea generation and narrowing
2. Background research
3. Thesis Advisory Committee selected and commitment forms submitted
4. Submit idea(s) to PROD 511 instructor for suggestions and approval to proceed. Discuss ideas with Thesis Advisory Committee.
5. Write prospectus
6. Submit prospectus to Committee Secretary.
7. Prospectus approved by Thesis Advisory Committee
8. Begin thesis research, consulting with Thesis Advisory Committee regularly
9. Finish research and evaluate findings
10. Discuss findings with primary advisor, may need to revise plans for thesis and mode of thesis
11. Begin writing thesis
12. Review draft(s) with Thesis Advisory Committee and revise
13. Submit thesis for defense
14. Oral defense of the thesis
15. Revise thesis based on defense
16. Final submission of thesis

Steps 1-7 were completed in PROD 511. This syllabus covers steps 8-16. Some of the steps fit a traditional written thesis better than a project. Don't get too concerned about this—the differences will be outlined below.

II. Thesis Research (Steps 8-10)

The prospectus you completed in PROD 511 is a plan for your project. It also serves as the beginning of the background paper required as one component of your project. Your **literature review** should be fairly complete at this point. You should add to it as you discover additional pertinent literature. Your focus at this point will be the **methods** section. Your methodology details how you are going to carry out your project. If you have doubts

about your proposed methodology now is the time to clear those up. Use your Thesis Advisory Committee as a resource. You should be communicating with your committee monthly and submitting these updates to the MCU system.

Once you've clarified your methodology you are ready to begin the implementation of your project. For most students, this will be the part of the thesis project that requires the most time. If you find certain aspects of your planned project are not working for some reason you need to communicate with your Primary Advisor and Committee Secretary regarding the problems. It's important to remember that the requirements for your project were decided upon in PROD 511. If you want to change these you need to make sure you and your committee are in agreement. Keep records of these communications.

Helpful Hints:

- ✓ Set checkpoints
- ✓ Work consistently. Don't let long periods of time lapse with no work on your thesis.
- ✓ Communicate regularly with your committee
- ✓ Document any changes to the approved thesis project plan in your monthly updates.

III. Writing the Background Paper (Step 11)

Your prospectus provides the backbone of your background paper. For a thesis project, the written background paper is only one component of the required submissions. Unlike a written thesis, your research does not need to be original. However, the background paper should be a scholarly work with a minimum of 25 pages and is to be written in a formal style.

The **required** sections of the final thesis background paper are described in the MCU Guide to the Preparation of Theses found under the graduate student link in your student menu.

IV. Submit and Revise Drafts (Step 12)

You will submit each draft of your background paper and other required project components to the Committee Secretary who is responsible for scheduling the conferencing for your first draft, distributing the drafts to other committee members and determining the criteria by which each draft will be evaluated. The number of drafts will depend upon your committee's expectations and your quality of work.

V. Submit Thesis Project for Defense (Step 13)

The Committee Secretary will send you a communication authorizing you to schedule the Oral Defense of Thesis. Submit the form *Request for Oral Defense* (available in your class documents) to the MCU Administrative Assistant. Use the MCU messaging system and attach the form. It will be at least two weeks from the date you submit the form until the oral defense (see form *Request for Oral Defense* for more details).

VI. Oral Defense and Revisions (Steps 14 and 15)

On the scheduled date of the Oral Defense, the student meets with all members of the Thesis Advisory Committee, the Graduate Dean, and the MCU President through web conferencing or an approved alternative method (such as conducting the Oral Defense at an MCU conference). Other MCU students and faculty will receive an invitation to observe but will be required to RSVP. The student may request that an invitation be sent to any additional people

they would like to attend. The web conference will be **initiated** and **recorded** by the MCU office staff.

During the defense, the Committee Secretary will act as the moderator. The defense begins with a 20-30 minute description of the thesis work by the student. This presentation should be practiced, as it is considered formal. *GoToMeeting* web conferencing is the system currently being used by MCU. The Committee Secretary will arrange for someone to assist you in preparing your materials and becoming comfortable with the *GoToMeeting* interface. A PowerPoint presentation is an effective way to do your presentation; however, you may suggest other alternatives. The presentation is followed by formal and extensive questioning (focus questions) by each committee member. The entire process should last from 1 to 1 ½ hours.

Prior to the defense, the Committee Secretary will ask each committee member to submit two focus questions related to the thesis. Committee members are instructed to write questions that allow the student to share the knowledge they have acquired during their thesis work. Some questions might require the student to discuss their work in a broader context. The three questions below illustrate the kinds of questions you might expect to be asked.

SAMPLE FOCUS QUESTIONS
You state that prior to implementing this (or any) new program, it is important to acquire an intimate understanding of the local culture and involve the citizens. In the interviews you conducted, what are some of the things you took into consideration about the Balinese culture? Given your experience at Bumi Sehat, how do you see the problem of lack of cultural sensitivity and lack of humility in the clinic setting best addressed by the volunteer program? What would help prepare volunteers for this before ever getting to Bali?
How has this project effected how you will design, develop, and run your own practice?
You discuss the option of homeopathic remedies in labor and birth. Drawing on your background research, briefly summarize several of the major benefits and risks associated with homeopathic remedies in labor and birth.

The Committee Secretary will select a minimum of three focus questions to be asked at the defense. The student will not have prior knowledge of the questions. The student may take up to five minutes to answer each question. After the student answers the question, each committee member will have a chance to ask one follow-up question. The response to each of these should not take more than three minutes.

The student and guests are then excused, and the Thesis Advisory Committee, the Graduate Dean, and the MCU President will have a brief discussion. Within **one week** of the Oral Defense, each member of the Thesis Advisory Committee and the MCU President will prepare and submit written commentary on the students' performance, and send to the Committee Secretary by email. The form *Evaluation of Oral Defense* (available under class documents) is used by committee members to judge your defense; you may find it helpful to

review this form.

The Committee Secretary will provide the student and the committee with a Summary Statement of the comments from the evaluation forms. It is possible that the student will be asked to complete some corrective actions (see part 4 of the form *Evaluation of Oral Defense*) before the grade for your thesis course is assigned. The corrective actions might include changes to your thesis materials or redoing part(s) of your oral defense. The Committee Secretary will work closely with you to complete corrective actions in a timely manner. If any portion of the defense (the presentation or any of the focus questions) needs to be repeated, the Committee Secretary will arrange another defense time. Only the Graduate Dean, the Committee Secretary, and one other thesis committee member are required to be at this second defense.

VII. Final Submission of Thesis (Step 16)

After all corrective actions requested by the Thesis Advisory Committee have been made, the Committee Secretary collects signatures for the *Authorization to Submit Master's Thesis* pages. These pages are inserted into the background paper after the Cover Page. A digital copy of the final thesis project is sent to the student. A copy of the digitized thesis is included in the MCU Digital Library and a digital copy is archived at the MCU office.

The Graduate Dean assigns the final course grade.

Section 2. The Thesis Advisory Committee

I. Working With Your Committee

Your Thesis Advisory Committee is integral to the success of your thesis work at MCU, and you are expected to send (at minimum) monthly updates to all members of your committee, **and** upload these updates into the MCU system as they are required assignments. The Committee Secretary will assign a grade for these updates based on timeliness and the information contained. You have 24 assignments for the two years you may need to complete this course. Should you complete the course in less than two years, you will be given full credit for the months you did not need. Your thesis work is basically self-directed; yet at the same time, you need your committee to be involved. The dynamics of each committee will be different. The relationship each student establishes with her committee will be different. Some tips for successful communication with your Thesis Advisory Committee are:

- Use the MCU messaging system unless you have an advisor that is not MCU faculty.
- Treat this as a professional relationship. Your communications (including email) should be professional. Grammar and punctuation in your written correspondence should be professional.
- Develop a consistent format for communication. For example, a memo format works well for formal communication such as submitting a draft of your thesis.
- You will probably develop a preferred method of communication with each advisor. Don't get "stuck" in one mode. You may find the relationship with some advisors is more productive via telephone conversations.
- There may be times when you need to have a "real time" conference with your entire committee. Contact the MCU office for help in setting up a web conference.
- Be proactive. Your thesis advisors are interested in your work. They are committed to the midwifery profession. They want you to succeed. However, they are busy people and the thesis process is long. Ultimately, you're in charge.

II. Problems During the Thesis Process

Unfortunately, problems may arise during the thesis process. A thesis advisor may not be able to continue due to unforeseen circumstances, an advisor may consistently be late in corresponding, etc. If the problems cannot be satisfactorily resolved you should contact the Graduate Dean.

Once a semester, the Graduate Office will be sending you an evaluation form for your advisors. Please take the time to fill these out. Graduate advisory work is a serious responsibility and the Graduate Office needs to hear about both the outstanding work that the advisors are doing and any problems encountered. Thoughtful evaluations by students will help to make the thesis process better. MCU is committed to assisting you in your thesis work but we need your feedback.

CHECKLIST OF THESIS TASKS		
Description	Responsibility	Completed
Submit draft of background paper and other project materials to Committee Secretary	Student	
Send draft to committee members	Committee Secretary	
Schedule conference call or GoToMeeting with student and the entire committee to review draft. (Required on first drafts, revisions may be done via conferencing or e-mails.)	Committee Secretary	
Note: There is not a set number for draft revisions. It will depend on the quality of your work and the expectations of your committee. You should expect to go through the above three steps several times.		
Agree that thesis project materials are ready for defense	Thesis Advisory Committee	
Instruct student (in writing) to prepare for Oral Defense	Committee Secretary	
Submit <i>Request for Oral Defense</i> to MCU Administrative Assistant	Student	
Schedule Oral Defense with committee members, Graduate Dean, and MCU President	MCU Administrative Assistant	
Create pdf file of thesis materials. Send to Thesis Advisory Committee and student	Committee Secretary	
Send focus question instructions to Thesis Advisory Committee	Committee Secretary	
Attend Oral Defense	Student; all members of Thesis Advisory Committee; Graduate Dean; MCU President	
Send <i>Evaluation of Oral Defense</i> to Committee Secretary	All members of Thesis Advisory Committee; MCU President	
Send student Summary Sheet of commentary and detailed instructions of any necessary revisions to background paper and other project materials.	Committee Secretary	
If necessary, complete any Corrective Actions assigned	Student	
Send <i>Authorization to Submit Master's Thesis</i> to all committee members and Graduate Dean for signature	Committee Secretary	
Send final copy of thesis materials to MCU office and student	Committee Secretary	
Complete course evaluation	Student	
Assign final course grade	Graduate Dean	
OTHER:		
Complete evaluation (received from Committee Secretary) of committee members each semester enrolled in thesis class.	Student	