

996: Preliminary Essays and Examination (3 credits)

Revised January 2010

INSTRUCTOR: Chair of student's graduate committee is principal instructor, supported by three additional committee members

PREREQUISITES

Participants **must have completed all academic coursework** except 998 – Research and Dissertation, before enrolling in this next-to-the-last required course.

COURSE AUDIENCE

This course is open only to those students who have completed successfully all other academic coursework required for the ThD degree except for the dissertation research. Students may enroll concurrently in 996-Prelims and 998–Research and Dissertation. A final grade for Prelims is not official until grades for all other courses except 998–Research and Dissertation are officially recorded.

COURSE DELIVERY STYLE

Applicants maintain a close, one-to-one relationship with the Chair of their graduate committee. The Chair serves as the main contact to the students who also maintains a group relationship with the three other faculty members on the committee. The course delivery style is as varied as the personalities of the Chair and committee members. The Chair, in consultation with the Dean of Faculty, will resolve all apparent or perceived discrepancies. The students are asked to take initiative and develop a course of action together with their Chair and their committee, as appropriate. The Chair and the student are encouraged to engage the committee as much as possible which will aid in creating a smooth transition into the actual research and dissertation writing phase.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course involves three stages: a draft of a dissertation proposal and research protocol; written essays over the proposed dissertation topic and how it fits into the field of Spirituality and Health generally (and specifically how it fits into one of the specialty tracks if a Track is being pursued by the applicant); and an oral examination over the same material.

BRIEF NEED STATEMENT

This course provides the students with the opportunity to work independently for the first time, with support and guidance from their Chair and committee, a process that is intended as the formal preparation for the applicant for the dissertation research phase. During the course the Chair and the committee evaluate whether the applicant is ready to proceed with the actual research phase of the graduate work. After successful completion of the course, the applicant obtains the status of **Candidate** for the doctoral degree.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of 996, the student will be able to

- Devise an effective process of communication between applicant, Chair, and committee that supports future research phase.
- Carry out independent scholarly writing processes.
- Analyze and synthesize existing research – as opposed to providing only an overview.
- Conceptualize research and methodology.

- Demonstrate knowledge in a specific field through written and oral discourse.
- Engage in written and oral discourse on the connection between a specific area of research and the broader field of Integrative and Energetic Healthcare and Spiritual Healing.
- Formally launch the dissertation research stage of their program after receiving Candidacy status.
- Initiate and maintain discourse on subject matter with Chair and Committee throughout the dissertation process.

ASSIGNMENTS

Stage One—Basic Documents. The applicant sends the following documents – only after prior agreement with the Chair – to each member of the committee for approval.

1. A one-page statement describing the proposed dissertation topic;
2. A simulated abstract;
3. A proposed protocol for the research

The above documents are usually created in Capstone. However, if the student's topic of research has changed since completing Capstone, the above documents will need to be brought up to date.

Students are asked to also send the following documents created in Capstone – indicating whether or not they still relate to the current research topic. Even if the topic of research has changed since Capstone, the following documents demonstrate the student's ability to create an adequate Literature review and bibliography:

4. The sample literature review created in Capstone; and
5. The sample bibliography created in Capstone.

Building an Effective Dissertation Proposal

In some cases, the dissertation proposal has been under development since the original orientation course, and has been affected to some degree by each graduate course taken, particularly the Capstone course. Under the direction of the Chair –and referring carefully to the materials provided by the University, a style manual, any dissertation research guide or writing guide students may be using – students are asked to conceptualize their project and to identify their goal for research (or major project). The student should review research abstracts on the Holos website, the world-wide web, and at local graduate university libraries for dissertation manuscripts with similar topics and methods. With reference to the literature in research methods, students select a research methodology which is highly appropriate for the focus of their particular research. Literature that justifies the need for the project, as well as materials which effectively inform the work are to be identified. Students are asked to build a workable data-gathering plan and conceptualize techniques for evaluation of the data. Working with a statistician chosen for support on the research is **highly** recommended at this point in order to solidify the research questions, hypotheses, and appropriate research methodology. Outlining a structure of the dissertation manuscript follows. Maintaining journal notations of the salient points of all readings and reflections in preparation for the project proposal is highly recommended as well as a review of the dissertations that are posted to the Holos University website.

Applicants prepare a formal dissertation proposal and submit it to their Chair and committee for approval. This proposal outlines and clarifies the relationship between the applicant's

proposed research question and the conceptual framework in which the specific dissertation topic is situated. **It contains 1) the statement of the problem; 2) the research questions and the hypotheses; 3) a description of the suggested methodology; and 4) a suggestion for statistical analysis as well as a discussion of ethical issues in anticipation of the IRB review.** The draft of the dissertation proposal will be reviewed promptly by the committee and reworked until it is approved unanimously.

Stage Two—Preparing and Responding in Writing to Basic Questions. Once the three basic documents outlined in Stage One are approved tentatively by the committee,

- a. The applicant will submit to the Chair at least five questions, tackling three major and two to four minor topics, which, when answered, will give the committee a substantial knowledge of how the dissertation fits into the field of Spirituality and Health generally (and specifically how it fits into one of the specialty tracks if one is being pursued by the applicant); and
- b. The Chair edits and, if desired, amplifies the questions, and passes the edited version on to the committee. The committee further edits and, if desired, amplifies the questions, and passes the edited suggestions back to the Chair and the applicant. The applicant reconciles all suggestions in consultation with the Chair. The Chair then forwards the final five to seven questions to the committee. Subsequently, the applicant will write a **scholarly** paper from three to ten pages, appropriately formatted and edited, on each of these questions, citing the appropriate literature.

Stage Three—Oral Examination. The applicant submits the written responses a minimum of three weeks before the scheduled oral examination to the Chair. The Chair may request further edits to be carried out.

NOTE: The applicant and Chair are advised to provide ample time for the committee to agree on an appropriate date and time for the oral examination. **Check for exam deadlines on the website in the KEY DATES document and on the Calendar.**

The final version of the essays must be forwarded to committee members two weeks prior to the scheduled examination date. If the written responses are acceptable, the oral exam will be held as scheduled. If not, the orals will be postponed until the written responses are deemed acceptable by the committee. The oral exam will be held on a telephone conference call, and will last from 60 to 90 minutes in length. The scheduling of a telephone conference exam will be handled by the Chair of the graduate student's committee, who will include the Dean of Faculty on the notification for the exam date and time. With the Chair's permission, students are allowed to invite others to sit in on the oral exam at the applicants' own costs. Students will need to notify their Chair at least two weeks prior to the date of how many individuals will attend the call in order to reserve the required numbers of telephone lines. The scheduling is expected to be completed with at least ten days notice. It is the responsibility of the applicant to make sure that any and all materials necessary for the committee members to conduct the exam are on the computer of the faculty members in readable form at least *two weeks prior* to the exam. If a committee member requests a hard copy of the materials, it is the applicant's responsibility to see that it reaches that member within the same time frame. **It is the responsibility of the committee Chair to poll the committee and verify at least 48 hours before the exam that each member of the committee agrees that the necessary materials for the exam are acceptable, and the exam may proceed.** Otherwise the student will be informed of the necessity to postpone the

exam. Any exceptions must be approved by the Executive Committee. The Dean of Faculty or representative may sit in on the Oral Examination.

The Chair will submit the grade assigned for the Exam on the semester end grade form.

All exams are recorded. The Bursar will forward a copy of the exam recording to the Registrar for the University record. Because these exams have confidential data pertaining to grade assignment, they are not subject to dispersal. Once the applicant has attained candidacy status, the IRB protocol may be submitted for approval and work in the 998 – Research and Dissertation course can begin.

See the website to download Key Dates and check the web Calendar for deadlines.

FINAL ASSIGNMENT

Students will receive a course evaluation form the end of the last month of the semester. Complete and return the form within one week of the end of the semester. **Transcripts will be provided only to students who have, on file, an evaluation form for each course they have completed during their academic programs.**

FACULTY-STUDENT COMMUNICATIONS

Telephone Contacts. The applicant may work with the Chair to set up an optional initial telephone conference with all or part of the academic committee. The Chair clarifies a plan of action for the course. This initial contact will permit the transmission of clear expectations for completion of all requirements. Regular contact with the Chair must be maintained for the duration of the course, if not by telephone, then by E-mail. Communication is a two-way stream and a clear course of action between the applicant and the Chair/committee is of outmost importance as there is no pre-set time table for this course.

- Faculty and students are to keep one other informed if unable to communicate by E-mail or phone due to traveling or other extenuating circumstances.
- After the initial contact is made via an E-mail message, wait for three days for a response. If you have not received a response, retransmit your email and make telephone contact. Make sure to leave a voice message.
- If you have not received a response after two additional days, redirect your transmission to the Dean of Faculty. That means send the E-mail again and copy the Dean of Faculty on your E-mail. Make sure the transmission includes previous communication efforts.
- Any further action will be determined on an individual basis together with the Dean of Faculty.

E-mail Communications. Regular E-mail communications between applicant and Chair are expected to be initiated by the student and continued for the duration of the course. E-mail communication may, during active stages, require up to three or more exchanges per week. E-mail communications may also be initiated between applicant and committee members.

Alternative Communications. Students may send communications and materials via postal service and fax, as appropriate, with permission of the Chair.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

Participants are required to be familiar with relevant materials provided by Holos University on the official web site at www.HolosUniversity.org. Consult the scholarly paper guidelines available on the Holos site. If changes occur during the process of completing the dissertation work, participants may elect to complete their work under either the entire set of present regulations or the entire set of any regulations in place since they first enrolled. Mixing and matching from two or more sets of regulations is not permitted. Consult both the current version of the catalog and the current version of the present syllabus on-line. If in doubt, ask the Chair for clarification.

Required Style Manual: Participants are expected to have in their possession the latest version of *The Chicago Manual of Style: The Essential Guide for Writers, Editors, and Publishers*, 15th edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), which includes endnote and author/date style conventions. Consult with the Chair about details of format.

OR

The electronic version of the Chicago Manual of Style. Purchase and download from the internet: www.chicagomanualofstyle.org

COURSE COMPLETION TIMETABLE AND CONTINUOUS ENROLLMENT

Enrollment in 996-Prelims may be concurrent with enrollment in 998 – Dissertation Research, which commonly spreads over two or more semesters; however, the student must have completed all work required for 996 and must have attained candidacy status in order to obtain IRB approval for the protocol and to proceed with the work on 998 – Dissertation Research.

GRADE DETERMINATION

The Prelim Exam will be evaluated by the committee at the conclusion of the orals. The committee will go into private session. The grade requires approval by two of the three examining members (NOT INCLUDING THE CHAIR). A grade of B, A, or Honors will be decided upon but, in keeping with the general policy on announcement of final grades, **the applicant will be told only whether or not “Candidate” status has been achieved.** The specific grade will appear on the grade report once the student has submitted the course evaluation form, as in all other courses. See Catalog for further description.

The Chair should immediately notify the Registrar of the outcome of the Oral Exam.

CONTACT INFORMATION

The Chair of the student’s graduate committee is the principal contact.