

USC Marshall School of Business

BUAD 494 – Marshall Honors Research and Thesis

Syllabus – Fall 2021 – M – 8:00 – 10:00 am – 2.0 units

Professor: Vishal Gupta

Class Slack Channel: #fall21-buad-494-15124

Email: None. Use above Slack channel (#fall21-buad-494-15124) and Slack direct messages

Office Hours: By appointment.

Course Description

This class is a continuation of BUAD 493 (Honors Research Seminar). The primary purpose of the class is to support students in researching and writing their undergraduate thesis. This class and the completed thesis are both part of the Marshall's Honors requirement for graduation.* Moreover, although not required, students are **strongly** encouraged to use their thesis to apply for several other USC and Marshall prize competitions described below and the SCymposium in the spring.

Unlike other classes, BUAD 494 requires substantive independent work by students in close consultation with the class instructor. Self-discipline and motivation is a must! Class weeks roughly alternate between group meetings with the entire class to share progress and provide feedback, and 1-1 meetings with the instructor to discuss specific issues/challenges in writing.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the class, you will be able to

- Design and execute on a plan to research and write a research paper in the social sciences
- Critically assess peer research to provide constructive feedback
- Present your work in a compelling fashion across a variety of mediums (oral presentation, blog-post, academic journal article, job interview)

Required Materials

There are no required textbooks for this class, however, I will distribute articles and reading occasionally to be reviewed.

Students are required to install and use the class's Slack Channel. Slack is available for free from USC ITS here: <https://itservices.usc.edu/slack/> See the same link for some tutorials if you are new.

Prerequisites and/or Recommended Preparation:

BUAD 493

Course Notes:

Since this course is a seminar, a premium will be placed on discussion both in-class and on Slack. While there are certain "graded" elements to participation, I do hope we can cultivate a free-flowing discussion with the group that is supportive, constructive, and intellectually stimulating.

We will frequently have 1-1 meetings with the course instructor via Zoom. Sign-up for these meetings using the Calendly link on Slack. If you would like me to read something in preparation for our meeting (say a sample chapter of your thesis), please send to me at least 24 hours ahead of time via Slack.

* Specifically, the Marshall Honors requirement has 4 parts: 1) Pass BUAD 493 2) Pass BUAD 494 3) Graduate with at least a 3.5 GPA within the major. 4) Graduate with at least a 3.3 GPA overall.

Grading Detail

This course is graded Pass/Fail. Assignments must be turned in on the due date/time electronically via **Slack**. Late work will be penalized. Late or not, however, **you must complete all required assignments to pass this course.**

Your grade is computed by the following breakdown:

Class/Slack Participation	10%
Written Partner Feedback	20%
Reflective Essay for Library Award	10%
Blog Post	15%
In-Class Presentation	10%
Thesis	35%

Attendance, Covid and Remote Learning

As of writing, USC fully intends to continue with in-person learning in the fall. The provost has only authorized remote learning for two groups of students:

1. Students for whom it would be medically unsafe to attend classes. These students will be certified through the USC Office of Student Accessibility Services (the old DSP office).
2. Students who are overseas and unable to enter the United States prior to the start of the fall semester because of visa or other travel restrictions. These students will be certified through the Marshall Office for International Programs.

If you feel as though you fall into either group, please contact your Undergraduate Advisor for help getting certified for remote learning. I am not permitted to certify you or move the class online for any student that is not certified.

That said, keeping the community healthy is a joint responsibility. If you feel ill, please do not come to class. **Drop me a slack message and stay home.** If you're feeling capable, we will set up a zoom call for that session for you to join synchronously. If not, please focus on getting better, and we can coordinate catching you up on material once you are healthy.

Finally, keep in mind that the situation on the ground might change. If it does, we will adapt! Stay close to Slack, ask questions when you're confused, and don't forget to look after yourself and those around you.

Optional Distinctions (Not-Required)

Although not required, students are STRONGLY encouraged to use their thesis to apply to some of USC's distinctions and prizes for graduating seniors. In the past, our students have often been recognized with distinction, and, in some cases, won prize money. Since you will have already written your thesis and a reflection essay, the incremental work to submit to these competitions is often marginal. I am happy to write any of you a recommendation for these prizes. Here is a non-exhaustive list you should consider:

Commencement Honors

USC confers honors on graduating seniors who meet certain distinction criteria. The criteria and application process differ a little bit for each of the different types of honors. Winners are given a medallion at commencement and announced separately (which is cool!). You can browse the full list with details here: <https://ahf.usc.edu/commencement-honors/scholar-distinctions/>

Of these, I suggest you especially consider:

- Renaissance Scholars Distinction – This distinction honors undergraduates who complete either dual major, or a major and minor in two “disparate” fields of study and excel in both. There are some GPA requirements (3.5 overall and 3.5 in each of your two disciplines) and some other details. (Check the website for information on what counts as two “disparate” fields of study.) For those of you that are double-majoring, e.g., in computer science, this is a great opportunity and getting the minimal level of distinction is as simple as filling out a form!

Applicants are also eligible for (separate) prize competition for a \$10K prize to be put towards graduate study. This prize competition involves some more requirements (and a short personal statement). Check the website for details.

Deadline: To be considered for EITHER the distinction or the prize money, you must complete a certification step by Dec 31 2021.

- Discovery Scholars Distinction – This distinction is given to students who have made a meaningful contribution to their field of study through new scholarship. Your thesis will count! There are several eligibility requirements, some set by the school. See this document for details: <https://ahf.usc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2021/08/2020-2021-Discovery-Scholar-Final-Project-Requirements.pdf>

After submitting an application, students should closely review emails from Academic Honors and Fellowships for notifications regarding status of distinction, follow-up for prize nominations, and instructions for receiving a medallion at the beginning of May. The website is a little unclear, but it appears prizes include up to \$10,000 for graduate school funding.

This prize requires a letter of recommendation. Be sure to plan ahead and reach out to a faculty (me?) to write your letter that can reflect on the contribution of your thesis to the field. The deadlines on the website are a little hard to interpret, so I suggest you contact me and email AHF for more clarity as soon as possible (before mid September) if you are interested.

Remember, there are others listed here: <https://ahf.usc.edu/commencement-honors/scholar-distinctions/> I know that graduating seniors have about 1 million things to do, but if you can find the time, I strongly encourage you to apply. You will remember these awards for years to come.

USC Libraries Undergraduate Research Award

USC libraries hosts a two competitions (one for undergraduates and for for graduates) honoring scholarship and creative use of the library facilities. See <https://libguides.usc.edu/researchaward> for details. The application requires a reflective essay addressing how you became a better researcher by using the resources/services of the USC libraries. Note you’ll be writing such a reflective essay as part of this course, so applying is a no-brainer! There is some prize money associated to the award.

The deadline is 31 Jan 2021. If you are planning to apply, I strongly suggest 1) you mention the class we had with Christy Kane last fall, *and*, 2) I’d suggest reaching out again to her (or another librarian) at least one more time to discuss your thesis and any other sources you might be looking for/benefit from.

SCymposium

USC hosts a research symposium for undergraduates to present their work (in a variety of formats). The format of this event has changed this year. Details here: <https://ahf.usc.edu/signature-events/scympo-sium/>

Application is in February. There are a small number of small awards given (\$1,000 for first place). Nonetheless, even if you don't "win," it is a great honor and an opportunity to share your great work with a broader audience. I highly encourage you to apply.

Submit to an Academic Journal

Some of you have indicated an interest in publishing a (shorter) journal version of your thesis in an academic venue. That's great! If so, please let me know, so that I can tailor my feedback to you throughout the semester appropriately. Some well-recognized venues are here: <https://unl.lib-guides.com/c.php?g=51642&p=333911> and here <https://uncw.edu/honors/info/student-life/journals-that-publish-undergraduate-student-research.html> We can work together on identifying the best venue/outlet.

Why would you want to publish? You may just be very proud of your work and want to share it broadly. Alternatively, if you have any interest in going to graduate school in research, an undergraduate publication is one of the best way to make your application stand out. (I review PhD applications to our department at Marshall, and I can tell you that for our doctoral program, students without publications are rarely admitted.)

COURSE CALENDAR

The course calendar below is only tentative. I will do my best to shape the course to the interests and needs of the students in it, which may necessitate adjusting some dates. If for any reason the due-date of a deliverable poses a problem for you, please contact me as early as possible.

Date	Description	Deliverables
23-Aug-21	Welcome, Class Overview	Before Class: - Read through Syllabus and Slack
30-Aug-21	Thesis Proposals: Revisited	Before Class: - Post Partner Feedback on Proposal to Slack
6-Sep-21	NO CLASS - LABOR DAY	
13-Sep-21	Iteratively Framing your Thesis: Title, Outline, and Contributions	Before Class: - Outline your thesis by chapter (see slack for details) After Class: - Post partner feedback on outline to Slack
20-Sep-21	No-Class: Schedule a 1-1 Meetings	
27-Sep-21	Communicating Impactfully Across Mediums: Blog Posts, Podcasts and Journals	Before Class: - Complete required reading/podcasts
4-Oct-21	No-Class: Schedule a 1-1 Meetings	
11-Oct-21	Blog Post Feedback	Before Class: - Blog post on thesis topic and send to Slack
18-Oct-21	No-Class: Schedule a 1-1 Meetings	
25-Oct-21	First Sample of Thesis	Before Class: - Post a sample of your thesis (chapter, intro, etc.) After Class: - Partner Feedback on Sample
25 Oct 21	No-Class: Schedule a 1-1 Meetings	
1-Nov-21	No-Class: Schedule a 1-1 Meetings	

1-Nov-21	First Sample of Thesis	Before Class: - Post a sample of your thesis (chapter, intro, etc.) After Class: - Partner Feedback on Sample
8-Nov-21	No-Class: Schedule a 1-1 Meetings	
15-Nov-21	In-Class Presentations (3 students)	Before Class: —Submit Slides on BB
15-Nov-21	No-Class: Schedule a 1-1 Meetings	
22-Nov-21	In-Class Presentations (3 students)	Before Class: - Submit Slides on BB
29-Nov-21	Final Class Wrap-up	Before Class: - Reflective Essay due.
10-Dec-21	Thesis due on BB	

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Add/Drop Process

Most Marshall classes are open enrollment (R-clearance) through the Add deadline. If there is an open seat, you can add the class using Web Registration. If the class is full, you will need to continue checking Web Registration or the *Schedule of Classes* (classes.usc.edu) to see if a space becomes available. Students who do not attend the first two class sessions (for classes that meet twice per week) or the first class meeting (for classes that meet once per week) may be dropped from the course. There are no formal wait lists for Marshall undergraduate courses, and professors cannot add students or increase the course capacity. If all sections of the course are full, you can add your name to an interest list by contacting the Office of Undergraduate Advising & Student Affairs; if new seats or sections are added, students on the interest list will be notified.

- The last day to drop a class and receive a refund of tuition charges and to avoid a mark of “W” on student record and STARS report is Friday, September 4, 2020.
- The last day to drop a course without a mark of “W” on the transcript only is Friday, October 2, 2020. The mark of “W” will still appear on student record and STARS report and tuition charges still apply.
- Friday, October 2, 2020 is also the last day to change a Pass/No Pass course to letter grade.
- Last day to drop a class with a mark of “W” for Session 001 is Friday, November 6, 2020.

USC Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

Support Systems:

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355– 24/7 on call

<https://studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling/>

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call

suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours – 24/7 on call

<https://studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault/>

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)- (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298

equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

https://usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report/

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776

dsp.usc.edu

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC is committed to making reasonable accommodations to assist individuals with disabilities in reaching their academic potential. If you have a disability which may impact your performance, attendance, or grades in this course and require accommodations, you must first register with the Office of Disability Services and Programs (www.usc.edu/disability). DSP provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to your TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in GFS (Grace Ford Salvatori Hall) 120 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776. Email: ability@usc.edu.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 821-4710

<https://uscsa.usc.edu/>

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101

diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.