

# IDSVA SYLLABUS

## Dissertation Seminar II: Written Exam Documents

<b>Course Number:</b>	904
<b>Course Name:</b>	Dissertation Seminar II: Written Exam Documents
<b>Dates:</b>	January 25 – April 17, 2021 (Spring Break: March 1-7)
<b>Format:</b>	On-line and teleconference
<b>Instructors:</b>	Professor Simonetta Moro; Dr. Kathe Albrecht (IDSVA Post-Doc Fellow)
<b>Credits:</b>	4
<b>Oral Exam Credits:</b>	1

### **Course Description**

In Dissertation Preparation II we will generate a long-term work plan for dissertation research and writing. During the semester, students will complete the introduction of the proposed dissertation that they began in the Fall semester. Students will continue to work on their bibliography and annotate the titles on their list of fifteen texts (created in 901.2) for the Preliminary Oral Examination. During one-on-one calls and conference calls we will discuss techniques for efficient and sustainable research, and both instructors and classmates will offer feedback on each person's work-in-progress, which will be presented informally. In addition, the IDSVA librarian, Laura Graveline, will be available for additional research advice and assistance. The Post-Doc Fellow will also offer an extra session to discuss the process of the oral exam.

### **Learning Objectives**

Dissertation Preparation II will address how to plan for a long-term research project, helping students to create reasonable deadlines, conduct efficient research, and balance the simultaneous advancement of writing and scholarship.

By the end of the course, each student will have produced:

1. **Abstract** with thesis statement (1 page, summarized and revised from last semester's "Overview").
2. **Written Exam** consisting of Introduction to the dissertation project (between 6000-8000 words), half of which was written in the previous semester.
3. **Detailed Outline** of the dissertation as a whole (3-5 pages, revised from the previous semester). This outline will include the main argument and questions for each projected chapter (see example provided in Canvas).
4. **Table of Contents**.
5. **Bibliography** intended to act as a roadmap for ongoing dissertation research (15 titles). Half of these texts will have been annotated last semester. You will annotate the remainder of these texts during the course of this semester.<sup>1</sup> Books and essays from the

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<sup>1</sup> For basic information about annotated bibliography, see: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/01/>, and Umberto Eco's chapter on Index Cards (esp. "Reading Cards").

course of study may be part of your bibliography; in fact, you should make sure that at least 6 texts come from the core seminar lists.

## Course Requirements

Students should begin the semester by revising their thesis in the five-page overview, as well as the outline and bibliography submitted in the fall, as they produce a specific outline for their written exam. Each student will produce an introduction of the dissertation of between 6000 and 8000 words. *This written work will be considered the student's Preliminary Written Exam.* Due dates for specific amount of pages to be submitted are indicated in the schedule below. At the end of the semester students will provide a comprehensive, general outline of the whole dissertation project. All final documents for the course are due on **April 19, 2021** (see detailed schedule).

In addition, in preparation for the Qualifying Exams, students will make sure to submit to Canvas the required documents listed in the Qualifying Exams Checklist (available in the Dissertation Handbook, pp. 4-5, and in Canvas/Qualifying Exams) by **May 31, 2021**.

Professor Moro and Dr. Albrecht will conduct individual telephone calls as indicated in the schedule (see schedule overview below). During these calls we will discuss the progress of your papers. During conference weeks, selected students will present their new work to the cohort, also as ways to improve your writing in a more general sense. On OCF weeks students will post their most recent drafts in OCF for feedback from peers and in advance of videoconference discussions.

Submitted documents must be titled according to the following format:

**familyname, givenname\_904\_assignmentname\_yymmdd**

(e.g., "Jones, Sally\_904\_100223").

Late submissions will be accepted but not given credit unless prior arrangements have been made. Extensions are granted on a case-by-case basis in response to special circumstances.

## Assessment

Grades will be determined according to the following criteria:

Contributions to discussions on Canvas and seminar conference calls: 20%;

Individual calls: 10%;

Written introduction and accompanying materials: 70%.

Credits for 904: 4

Credit for Oral Exam: 1

**Total credits: 5**

## Required Text

Eco, Umberto. *How to Write a Thesis*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2015.  
<https://mitpress.mit.edu/books/how-write-thesis>

## Recommended Texts

- Bolker, Joan. *Writing Your Dissertation in Fifteen Minutes a Day: A Guide to Starting, Revising, and Finishing Your Doctoral Thesis*. New York: Owl Books, 1998.  
See also: <https://www.thedissertationcoach.com/learn/read/the-15-minute-rule/>
- Bottery, Mike, and Nigel Wright. *Writing a Watertight Thesis: A Guide to Successful Structure and Defence*. London: Bloomsbury, 2019. (Available as e-book).
- Examples of completed successful written exams in Canvas/Files.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Ed. Caryl Emerson, trans. Caryl Emerson. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.

## Writing and Presentation Schedule

*Remember: the Introduction you produce in this seminar will be submitted as your preliminary written examination. You must pass this examination to proceed to the fourth year and your dissertation.*

As the semester progresses, when presenting their work to the whole group and discussing it individually with Professor Moro and Dr. Albrecht, students will not only focus on the ideas, but also on the writing process itself; instructors will provide examples of good writing and ways to improve less successful ones. Each student will be able to present his/her work **twice** in the course of the semester (before and after spring break). Class will be divided in two groups, meeting for two hours on each session.

OCF postings are devoted to the most recent drafts produced, as a way to instill the practice of writing small chunks of text throughout the semester. Students are strongly encouraged to provide written feedback to one another using the OCF (selected students will be assigned to comment on each other's works by the instructors). During conferences, students are *required* to provide substantial, useful oral feedback to one another with informal written follow-up as appropriate in the OCF.

Students are expected to produce a specific number of pages of new writing throughout the semester, so as to ensure that they complete the second half of the written exam in a timely fashion (see the schedule below for specific due dates). Please use your time wisely and make a calendar for yourself taking into account your other demands from your work and studies. Remember that asking for extensions is often not the most productive move, since you have other due dates in the other seminar that may conflict with the new extension due date.

**Please use MLA style**, including end notes and a bibliography. You can access a short version of MLA through the IDSVA Library, or this link:  
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

As a rule of thumb, a paper of this length should include a minimum of 25 citations and a bibliography of no fewer than 8 titles.

## Course Schedule\*

Conferences will run approximately 2 hours. Please allow for 10 extra minutes before the start of the conferences to log in and troubleshoot. Please use the video function as default, and only rely on the phone line when you have connection issues. Let Molly know ahead of time if you are experiencing any issues with BBB or Canvas.

904 Dissertation Seminar II – 4 credits	
	Monday-Sunday
Class activity	
1. VC – Intro to the course + presentations <b>Group 1: Wed 1/27, 5-7pm EST</b> (4 students present)	1/25-31
<b>Group 2: Thu 1/28 , 7-9pm EST</b> (4 students present)	
2. OCF (submit latest pages by 2/7)	2/1-2/7
3. VC – <b>Group 1: Wed 2/10, 5-7pm EST</b> (5 students present)	2/8-14
<b>Group 2: Thu 2/11, 7-9pm EST</b> (5 students present)	
4. Calls (TBD) +	2/15-21
5. OCF (peer reviews)	2/22-28
<b>6. SPRING BREAK (March 1-7)</b>	
7. OCF (submit latest pages by 3/14) <b>VC: Wed 3/10, 5-7pm EST</b> (Extra session on oral exams) – whole class	3/8-14* (Daylight savings ends)
8. VC -- <b>Group 1: Wed 3/17, 5-7pm EST</b> (4 students present)	3/15-21
<b>Group 2: Thu 3/18, 7-9pm EST</b> (4 students present)	
9. Calls	3/22-28
10.	3/29-4*

<b>VC --</b> <b>Group 1: Wed 3/31, 5-7pm EST</b> (5 students present)  <b>Group 2: Thu 4/1, 7-9pm EST</b> (5 students present)  <span style="color: red;">(submit latest draft by 3/4)</span>	Easter Sunday
11. Calls (TBD)	4/5-11
12. Writing period <span style="color: red;">Final Papers due 4/19</span>	4/12-17

## Summary of final assignments:

**Final documents due 4/19 (submit as one document or upload all documents at once to Canvas):**

1. Abstract of written exam (1 page), including thesis statement (revised from last semester).
2. Written examination (approx. 6000-8000 words, or roughly 25 pp., excluding footnotes and Works Cited), including half written in the previous semester (revise as necessary).
3. Detailed outline of the dissertation as a whole (3-5 pages, revised from the previous semester), formatted as follows:
  - a) 3 -5 pages
  - b) Formatted like this document, with chapters, sections, and sub-sections. The outline should contain:
    - i) 5 – 6 chapters
      - (1) Each chapter broken into a minimum of three manageable sections, with anticipated number of pages or word count for each section (consider that the whole dissertation should comprise between 80.000 and 100.000 words, including notes and bibliography).
        - (a) Questions and prospective issues for each section should be dealt within sub-sections.
  4. Table of Contents.
  5. Annotated Bibliography (12-15 titles, all of which annotated).

**Note:** You will basically resubmit the same materials as part of your Qualifying Exams by **May 31**; however, you may revise the materials according to the feedback you received at the end of this class for the May submission.

**Note on images:** if your paper contains images, please place them at the end of the document, with a list of images and corresponding number in the text (Fig. 1, Fig. 2,

etc.). Please make sure the total size of the document does not exceed 1MB; resize images as needed if they are too large before placing them in the paper. Alternatively, you may provide links to the images or media online.

\**Course schedule may be subject to change.*