

ALS 3923 – Honors Orientation (1 credit)

Class Time & Location:

Wednesday 5:10-6:00pm McCarty Hall B 3096.

The class will meet live and in person. This course is offered to distance students via Zoom.

Students are expected to participate in the live class. Students should communicate with Dr. Goss prior to the start of the course and regarding any technical or logistical difficulties connecting to the course.

Instructor

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I typically respond to email within one day. If I don't respond within 2 days, I may have missed your email and you may email me again.

Office hours: Tuesday 3-4 pm, Friday noon-1pm in person or on [Zoom](#). Please make an [appointment](#) so I know to expect you.

Course Description: 1 Credit. Introduces the CALS honors program and the skills needed to complete an honors thesis on a creative, scholarly project. Activities in and out of class, discussion, guest-speakers, writing and oral presentation are used to accomplish the learning objectives.

Course Objectives. At the conclusion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Explain the requirements and expectations for an honors thesis
2. Find and critically evaluate scholarly literature
3. Begin to develop a thesis and/or a creative scholarly project
4. Complete a preliminary literature review and introduction for a thesis topic
5. Communicate the societal or scientific importance of their research

Text and resources: Course materials are on the Canvas E-Learning website. It contains the assignments, readings, links to resources, and more.

E-learning with Canvas: All students must use Canvas for this course. Syllabus, assignments, resources, grades, and other materials will be posted on the course Canvas page throughout the semester.

Attendance and Participation: Because this course relies heavily on classroom discussion and interaction, attendance is crucial to your success and that of your classmates. Only documented university excused absences will be honored. Students are expected to be present for all class meetings and actively participate in class and small group discussions. *Online students should contribute to class discussions by raising their hand, commenting in the Zoom chat, or speaking up.* If a student has an excusable absence, arrangements should be made prior to the class date for opportunities to make up the missed discussion topics and/or work. When you miss class, you will lose 2 points per class toward your final grade. Late arrival to class is also disruptive. If you arrive to class 10+ minutes late, you will lose 1 point.

Our class sessions may be audio visually recorded for enrolled students who have a university excused absence. I will verbally notify the class when I am recording. Students who participate on these days are agreeing to have their video, image, and/or voices recorded. Online students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments and other work are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

Software and technical skills required. This course requires use of a web browser, word processing program, and presentation software. Perusall is also used. Online students must connect by Zoom. I also require use of reference management software and encourage use of associated plugins for word processing. Endnote Web is the software taught for use with Microsoft Word, but alternatives are acceptable. Class presentations must be submitted in Microsoft PowerPoint or PDF format.

Use of AI tools. In this course, you will need to cite scholarly sources. You may use AI programs to help generate ideas and brainstorm. However, the material generated by these programs may be inaccurate, incomplete, or otherwise problematic (i.e., provide ideas that are way too ambitious for an undergraduate honors thesis). I encourage you to instead generate ideas for your thesis topic with your mentor, who will have a much better idea of what is feasible for you to complete. You may not submit any work generated by an AI program as your own. In our library session, we will discuss why AI chatbots should not be cited. In short, they are not reliable sources and there is no editorial or peer review of chatbot output.

Grading Scale [this course does not use the +/- grading system; if final score is less than 0.1 % from next grade, it will be rounded up.]

A = 90% to 100%

B = 80-89.9%

C = 70-79.9%

D = 60-69.9%

E = < 60%

For information on current UF policies and other academic policies and resources, see:

<https://go.ufl.edu/syllabuspolices>

Course Assignments & Grading Value

Assignment and point value	
Assignment	Points
Mentor Selection Sheet	10
Library Orientation	5
Peer Review of Thesis	10
Reference Management Exercise	5
Annotated Bibliography	5
Ten Relevant References	20
Introduction	30
Introduction Revision	15
Presentation	20
Attendance and Participation	30
TOTAL POINTS	150

Assignments are graded individually (listed above and in **bold** in the weekly schedule) or contribute to your attendance and participation grade.

Late Assignments Policy: Assignments due dates and times are as indicated on the course Canvas site. Some assignments are due prior to class time. An assignment submitted after the deadline will receive a **10% deduction per day, up to four days** for late assignments.

Feedback on assignments: Feedback and/or grades for assignments are typically posted within one week of due date. The Introduction assignment typically takes 2-3 weeks to provide personal feedback and release all grades. Presentation feedback and grades are returned after all presentations are completed.

Schedule: Dates are subject to change at instructor's discretion – monitor Canvas site

Course schedule

Week	Date	Topics	Class Preparation or Assignment Due
1	8/27	Introductions, overview of program, contacting mentors	
2	9/3	Q & A with Director of CALS Honors Program, Dr. Wysocki	Bring questions; Contact potential mentors
3	9/10	Mentor status update; Research expectations	Reading and 3 mentor exercise; Continue to talk to potential mentors
4	9/17	Searching for references with librarian Suzanne Stapleton	Library Orientation
5	9/24	Building a strong thesis	Mentor selection
6	10/1	Peer review of thesis	Peer review of thesis
7	10/8	Reading scholarly articles; Writing your introduction	Annotated Bibliography; Reference management; Reading the literature discussion
8	10/15	Writing your introduction; Communicating your research	Ten Relevant References
9	10/22	Introduction workshop	Introduction Workshop
10	10/29	Presenting your research	Thesis Introduction
11	11/5	Presentations	Presentation

12	11/12	Presentations	Presentation
13	11/19	Presentations	Presentation
	11/26	THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS	
14	12/3	Perspectives of finishing/past CALS Honors Students	Introduction Revision; Presentation self- critique