

# People Management and Organizational Development Master's Thesis Seminar (online)

## SYLLABUS

Spring, Period 3, 2023

Instructor's contact information	Course information
<u>Coordinator and contact person for the course:</u> Responsible teacher: Saija Katila E-mail: saija.katila@aalto.fi Course assistant:	Status of the course: Advanced Academic Year, Period: 2022-23 Location: Fully online Language of Instruction: English Course Website:

Please note that the Master's Thesis Seminar is not an independent course, but is connected to the student initiating their work on their Master's Thesis. Thus, do not register to the seminar unless you plan to start working on your Master's Thesis at the same time.

### 1. OVERVIEW

The Master's Thesis Seminar supports students in their thesis work during the advanced stages of their studies. The aim of the online seminar is to support the student in producing a Master's thesis of high academic standard by introducing her/him to the process and challenges of writing a Master's thesis. The seminar consists of the online materials and three assignments. Please go through the online materials fully before turning in assignment 2. After assignment two (short draft proposal for the thesis) a thesis supervisor will be appointed to each student and the thesis process will continue with the support of the supervisor. Please contact your named supervisor immediately after the supervisor has been appointed. The seminar is intended as a kick-off for the thesis writing process.

The course consists of two mandatory group tutoring meetings online where the thesis related concerns are discussed and students' topics and RQs are collected into one document based on which supervisors are allocated.

### 2. PREREQUISITES

Completed Bachelor's studies and thesis or equivalent. It is strongly recommended that students enrolling for the Master's thesis seminar have completed or are intending to participate in the methods courses (MNGT-E1011 Qualitative Methods & MNGT-E1003 Quantitative Methods) at the same time/directly after the seminar.

### 3. LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course introduces students to the Master's Thesis work by covering the fundamentals of the research process and requirements for a thesis. Upon successful completion of this course, you should:

- know what a good Master's thesis is;
- be able to conduct independent scientific research under supervision in a timely manner.

### 4. ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

The seminar will be graded based on the following assignments:

- Assignment #1: analysis and evaluation of existing thesis (pass/fail)
- Assignment #2: first draft of individual research proposal (pass/fail)
- Assignment #3: answer to the query/webropol survey regarding thesis topic and supervisor (pass/fail)
- Participation in the mandatory meeting online (pass/fail), no possibility to compensate.

All assignments need to be completed and returned in time, and all assignments need to be passed in order to pass the seminar.

Note that turning in the assignments is considered the acknowledgement of guidelines on scholastic honesty and academic integrity (see section 9).

### 5. ASSIGNMENTS

#### Assignment 1:

Analyse and evaluate an existing thesis relevant to your topic/methods/interests/ in terms of what was good and how could the thesis be improved. First, describe briefly the study and how it relates to your research interests. Then verbally evaluate (not grade) it, using the Master's Thesis Evaluation Rubric as your evaluation tool. Please produce one piece of text without subheadings. **Make sure you evaluate the thesis in concrete terms through the content so that reader can understand what was done in the thesis.** In the end reflect, what did you learn from reading this (and other) theses? The rubric can be found in the materials folder. The length of the assignment is max 800-1100 words excluding references.

#### Assignment 2:

Develop an individual research proposal. Make sure you follow academic writing standards in writing the text i.e. make sure that you do not make claims without references i.e. every concept you use/claim you make regarding literature needs to be supported by reference(s). The length of the proposal is **800-1000** words excluding references. **NOTE: Supervisors will be appointed after assignment 2 is turned in.** All students will be allocated a supervisor by the faculty in case the student does not have one. After you have been notified of your supervisor, contact your supervisor immediately to get the thesis writing process started.

#### Assignment 3:

Answer the query regarding your research topic / research question and possible supervisor request.

## Instructions for assignment 2

With the (first draft) of your research proposal your task is to answer the following questions 1) What do you plan to accomplish, 2) Why do you want to do it, (i.e. motivation/gap) 3) What are the research questions, 4) What is the scholarly discussion you are engaging with and 5) How are you going to do it, and 6) What is the timetable for your research project?

**Title of your study** (make it interesting)

**What you plan to accomplish?** Articulate clearly what is the research problem you intend to study.

- “In this thesis I examine strategizing in virtual worlds. That is, I study what people do when they work with strategy rather than examining which strategies as such lead to success or failure.” (Vesa, 2013).

**Why do you want to do it?**

- Describe briefly the background of your work. Why did you choose this topic? What problems will the research solve? Articulate clearly why the study is important and interesting to you, to practice and academically. Focus especially on articulating the academic relevance of the study by positioning your study within particular academic discussion(s). This is important! If you do not have a scholarly discussion to converse with you will have no thesis. You can start by identifying a particular conversation in the field that interests you (Careers, Mergers and Acquisitions, HR, Leadership). Within this broader field you can identify the specific area you will focus on (Career – Sustainable Career; Mergers and Acquisitions – culture conflicts in mergers and acquisitions; HR – Employee engagement, Leadership – relational leadership in self-organizing teams). Finally, your goal is to identify what is not yet known within this specific field. The final step demands substantial reading and is a hard task at this stage but you can give it a try.

**What are the research questions?**

- Based on the background of your study, formulate the exact research questions your study intends to solve. Focus on making the questions as specific as possible, and formulate them in an academic language (i.e. avoid consultant jargon such as “solving problem X for company Y”). You may have a general question which is then divided into several sub-questions.
- What, how?
- Make sure that the literature you refer to is relevant to your research questions. Make sure that you use the conceptual tools provided by the literature(s) in formulating your RQs.

**What is the scholarly discussion you are engaging with?**

- This is where you provide more detail about what others have done in the area, and what you propose to do. Give a brief description about prior research in your chosen area(s) that you consider relevant for your study. Consider especially research that is relevant for your chosen research questions. The literature should be up to date; try to report on the current understanding in the field. If you choose to only report on older studies, chances are you are missing something important. Acknowledge the work of others through referencing. Remember to include a complete list of citations at the end of your plan in academic format.

**How are you going to do it?**

- Report on the methods that you intend to use to conduct your fieldwork (i.e. interviews, case studies, surveys, ethnography, archival methods, mixed methods etc.). Justify the chosen method; how is it the best for answering your research questions? In case you do not know which methods, you will use, discuss the pros and cons of the ones you consider most relevant.

**What is the timetable of the study?**

- Present a REALISTIC plan of how you will execute your thesis research: literature review, collection of data, analysis of data and write-up process in general. Establish clear checkpoints and deadlines so that your supervisor will get a realistic picture of how you plan to work on your thesis.

**Other information**

- Report here on other relevant details regarding your study that your supervisor should be aware of.

**List of references**

**MAKE SURE THAT THE TITLE, OBJECTIVE AND RESEARCH QUESTION(S) ARE IN LINE AND MAKE SURE THE TEXT CONSTRUCTS A NARRATIVE**

**Technical instructions for all the assignments**

800-1000 words, excluding references

Please use:

- Times New Roman 12
- line spacing 1,5
- margins 2,5
- APA referencing style <https://apastyle.apa.org/>

Please provide

- your name, student number, assignment number and the word count on the first page of your assignments

**6. READINGS**

A master's thesis approved at Aalto Biz for the assignment 1. Articles relevant for your topic.

**7. SCHEDULE****ASSINGMENT DUE DATES**

Assignment	Due date
Assignment 1	16.1. at 16.00
Assignment 2	23.1. at 16.00

**SEMINAR MEETINGS (Mandatory, MyCourses, zoom)**

Tutoring meeting	Date
Meeting 1	9.1. at 16.00-17.30
Meeting 2	23.1. at 16.00-17.30

**8. ETHICAL RULES**

Aalto University Code of Academic Integrity and Handling Thereof

<https://into.aalto.fi/display/ensaannot/Aalto+University+Code+of+Academic+Integrity+and+Handling+Violations+Thereof>

In Finnish:

<https://into.aalto.fi/pages/viewpage.action?pagelid=1183861>