

MARKETING SEMINAR COURSE 23160 – STRUCTURE AND COMPONENTS

SEMINAR COURSE STRUCTURE

The course consists of several elements and supports the process of completing a thesis, which serves as the final project for the Master's degree.

SELF-CHECK

All course participants must complete and pass three tests in Moodle during the course, preferably at the beginning. The tests cover basic principles of referencing, what constitutes cheating and plagiarism and its consequences, and various aspects of data management. You may take the tests multiple times without a time limit. It is beneficial to read the linked web materials.

You must also perform a plagiarism check of your seminar materials in Moodle before submitting the final versions.

RESEARCH/THESIS PLAN

Each student submits a preliminary research plan and soon after a research plan in Moodle, based on and corresponding to Chapter Two in Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill's book 'Research Methods for Business Students', which discusses how to formulate and clarify a research topic. Read that chapter, other supporting literature, and materials from the Bachelor's thesis course and/or Research Skills.

The plan is the beginning of a draft for your thesis. Agree with your supervisor on a time (approx. 1 hour) to discuss the plan. A failed thesis plan may mean you cannot take the course. This must always be discussed with the examiner.

Note! Some topics or methods may require review by Hanken's Ethics Committee.

SEMINAR 1 AND 2

The seminars are designed to advance everyone's work and provide peer support from your seminar group and comments from your supervisor. All works are 'work in progress'. Each Seminar 1 and Seminar 2 includes your own presentation + opposition + participation in your group members' seminars. The presenter's seminar presentations are approx. 10–15 minutes long and should include the essentials from the material. See the document with assessment criteria for seminar presentations, applicable to all subjects at Hanken and available in Moodle. You must determine what is essential and how best to present your work. Plan what is essential and remember that seminar participants have read and analyzed your material. The aim is to hold the seminars within one week, but some sessions may fall outside that. Schedules are determined by supervisors' availability and coordinated by the course examiner, who announces the seminar times.

SEMINAR 1

Seminar 1 lasts 1 hour per student. Each student presents their work in writing and orally to a seminar group. The material should be approx. 20–30 pages, representing about 30–40% of a completed thesis. It is recommended to follow Hanken's guidelines for academic reports from the beginning: <https://libguides.hanken.fi/formattingguide/masters>

Typically, Seminar 1 includes Chapter 1 (Introduction) and Chapter 2 (Theory review) and the beginning of the methodology chapter. You are expected to revise the material based on comments and discussions before and during Seminar 1 and complete your methodology chapter shortly after Seminar 1 to begin data collection. Content depends on your thesis process. Some may focus on the empirical part, others on the theory. Your supervisor is there to discuss your progress. The grade for Seminar 1 is based on the quality of your seminar material, your presentation, and your progress in the thesis process, and is given by your supervisor. Before submitting the seminar material, you must perform a plagiarism check in Moodle. The supervisor evaluates Seminar 1 and its components.

OPPOSITION FOR SEMINAR 1 AND 2

An opponent is assigned for each Seminar 1 and Seminar 2 material. The material (PDF), presentation, and oral opposition are assessed. The opposition aims to help the writer identify strengths and areas for improvement and to highlight good examples and tips for others.

Opposition is a key part of the course. It must be well-prepared and address both strengths and weaknesses, offering suggestions for improvement. Important questions to consider include: Does the title reflect the content? How well are the problem area, purpose, theory, method, and results related (justify thoroughly)? Are all parts of the material relevant to the task/purpose? Can you suggest additional literature/perspectives? Are the writer's choices well-supported with references and logical arguments? Does the writer synthesize different authors' views into a suitable framework and draw their own conclusions? To what extent are recent research findings used? How well is the text written and does it follow academic conventions for referencing, bibliography, presentation of empirical material, etc.? What type of knowledge is the writer seeking and is the method appropriate?

Note that comments depend on the seminar material and the writer's thesis process. All statements must be well justified. The opposition is presented as a PowerPoint (or equivalent). Regardless of the material's scope and quality, a thoughtful, reflective, and constructive opposition can help fellow students move forward.

METHODOLOGY CHAPTER

After Seminar 1, revise the seminar material focusing on the methodology chapter and plans based on feedback from the seminar and your supervisor, and submit it. The supervisor assesses the material. Discuss methodology plans with your supervisor and begin data collection.

SEMINAR 2

The seminar material is expected to have the introduction and theory sections as well as the methodology chapter well developed, and data collection should be at least started, preferably in the analysis phase. Preliminary results are welcome. Typically, Seminar 2 material represents about 75% of a completed thesis. Evaluation of the material emphasizes preliminary results reporting.

If the thesis is completed and submitted for review in October (for the autumn course) or April (for the spring course), you may receive a grade for the seminar course without participating in Seminar 2.

The writer's presentation usually focuses on work done after Seminar 1, but the title and research questions must be included. Again, the purpose of the seminar sessions is to provide the presenter with as many useful comments and support as possible. It is important that the feedback you receive guides you toward completing your thesis. After Seminar 2, the thesis should typically be

finalized within a couple of months. Seminar 2 follows the same structure and components as Seminar 1. The grade for Seminar 2 is based on the quality of your seminar material, your presentation, and your progress in the thesis process, and is given by your supervisor.

PEER SUPPORT

Peer support is provided by fellow students in your seminar group through meetings and a written report of those meetings. The report is submitted via Moodle. Your assigned group i.e., which seminar drafts you are expected to analyze will be announced in the schedule.

The group organizes its own meetings and decides how to best benefit from the discussions. You may meet to discuss, for example, your thesis plan, research methods, academic writing, or other topics the group finds relevant for peer support. A group report must be submitted after the meeting. A template and further instructions are available in Moodle.

Your meetings may include discussions on:

- Formulating a research purpose and problem
- Aligning the problem area with the theoretical framework
- Thesis structure
- Requirements of the empirical study
- Data analysis
- How to present results and discuss the contribution of the thesis

The discussions and the report must also indicate how you have used or plan to use LLM-based AI tools such as ChatGPT. The group report is assessed by the course examiner and is an important part of the course.

HANKEN'S POLICY ON THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN STUDIES AND TEACHING

The course follows Hanken's guidelines for the use of artificial intelligence in education. Whether or not you use AI-based tools during your writing process, this must be described in a separate appendix attached to each submitted draft (or in the methodology chapter if more appropriate).

- If you have not used AI tools, write a brief reflection explaining why you chose not to and how this may have affected your writing process.
- If you have used AI tools, clearly explain how you used them.

Important reminders:

- You may never directly copy text generated by AI tools and claim it as your own.
- Responses from AI tools cannot be cited as sources.
- Document your writing process so you can demonstrate how your work progressed if misuse of AI tools is suspected.

For detailed instructions, read Hanken's AI guidelines:

Artificial Intelligence in Studies and Teaching: <https://www.hanken.fi/en/students/learning-lab/artificial-intelligence-studies-and-learning>

Failure to follow Hanken's AI guidelines constitutes academic misconduct and will be handled according to Hanken's procedures for such cases.

FINAL THESIS

The criteria for assessment differ between the seminar process and the final thesis. Often, the final effort in refining the work—and especially the ability to draw conclusions and highlight the research contribution—determines the thesis grade.

Note:

- A very strong Seminar 1 draft may result in a weaker Seminar 2 draft, or vice versa.
- The seminar course grade does not necessarily match the final thesis grade.

A completed thesis is submitted via Hanken's website.

Read the study office's instructions:

Final Stage of Studies: <https://www.hanken.fi/en/students/study-practicalities/graduation>

Instructions on the thesis, degree certificate, graduation schedule, maturity test, and graduation ceremony are available there. The maturity test is written as an e-exam.

To have your thesis approved by the Education Council (EC), the maturity test and plagiarism check must be passed, and your thesis must comply with Hanken's data management guidelines.