

Course Description

Course Name: Research Seminar in Marketing [23170]

Period: Periods 1-2 [31 August-18 December 2026]

Language of Instruction: English

Course Extent: 5 ECTS



Course Description

The purpose of the course is to support the work on your master's thesis. During the course, you will receive support and individual supervision for your thesis project from your assigned supervisor. You will also receive feedback and comments from fellow students when presenting your thesis project in your seminar group.

The course includes individual supervision sessions and group discussions. Throughout the course, you will work both on your own thesis project and on reviewing and commenting on the thesis projects of other students.

More detailed information about the master's thesis can be found on Hanken's website, as well as information about writing a thesis in English.

Certain research topics or methods may require review by Hanken's Ethics Committee.

Intended Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Identify and formulate a relevant research problem and research purpose.
- Identify, evaluate, and present relevant literature and research within the chosen research area.
- Justify the chosen scientific approach, research method, and data.
- Engage in scientific argumentation both orally and in writing.
- Analyze, discuss, and constructively comment on research plans and ongoing research projects.

Workload

The course includes a minimum of 25 contact hours, consisting of 2 hours of course introduction, a minimum of 3 hours of supervision with the supervisor, and at least 20 hours of seminars. The remaining 135 hours of the total workload consist of collaboration with fellow students and independent work involving analysis and thesis development.

The master's thesis itself comprises 30 ECTS credits and approximately 810 hours of work.

Prerequisites: Completed bachelor's degree; at least 5 of the 10 ECTS of compulsory methods studies completed; and at least 20 ECTS of advanced studies completed in the major subject.

Information about the Instructor. The course examiner is Maria Holmlund-Rytkönen, e-mail: maria.holmlund-rytkonen@hanken.fi. Each student will also be assigned a thesis supervisor.

Teaching Format and Participation

Participation in the course consists of:

- Preparing and submitting a research/thesis plan.
- Participating in Seminar 1 and Seminar 2.
- Acting as an opponent for fellow students' seminar papers.
- Participating in peer-support activities.
- Completing compulsory Moodle self-tests.
- Revising and developing the thesis throughout the seminar process.

The seminar process is designed to support progress toward completion of the master's thesis while developing the student's academic writing, critical thinking, and research skills.

Research/Thesis Plan

Each student must submit a preliminary research plan and, shortly thereafter, a more developed research plan in Moodle. The research plan should build on and correspond to Chapter 2 of Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill's *Research Methods for Business Students*, which focuses on formulating and clarifying a research topic. Students are expected to read this chapter as well as other supporting literature and material from the bachelor's thesis course and/or Doing Relevant Research in Marketing/Research Skills.

The research plan constitutes the beginning of a draft of the master's thesis. Students should agree with their supervisor on a suitable time (approximately one hour) to discuss the plan.

A weak thesis plan may result in the student not being permitted to continue the course. Such situations will always be discussed with the course examiner.

Please note: Certain research topics or methods may require review by Hanken's Ethics Committee.

Seminars

The purpose of the seminars is to help all participants move their thesis projects forward and to provide peer support from fellow seminar group members as well as feedback from supervisors. All submitted seminar papers are considered *work in progress*.

Students must participate in both Seminar 1 and Seminar 2.

Seminar 1 and Seminar 2 each consist of:

- Presentation of one's own work
- Acting as an opponent for another student's work

- Active, informed participation in fellow students' seminars after having reviewed their seminar papers beforehand

The thesis writer's seminar presentation should be approximately 10-15 minutes long and should focus on the most essential aspects of the submitted material.

Students should consult the document containing Hanken's seminar presentation assessment criteria, available in Moodle. It is the student's responsibility to determine which aspects are most important to emphasize and how to best present the work.

Participants attending a seminar are expected to have read and analyzed the seminar paper in advance. The purpose is therefore not to summarize the entire paper but rather to discuss key aspects and receive constructive feedback.

The intention is to organize seminars within one designated seminar week, although some seminar sessions may take place outside that week. Seminar schedules depend on supervisors' availability and are coordinated by the course examiner, who will communicate the final seminar timetable.

Seminar 1

Each Seminar 1 session lasts approximately one hour per thesis writer.

During Seminar 1, each student presents their work both in writing and orally to a seminar group.

The seminar paper should normally comprise approximately 20-30 pages, corresponding to about 30-40% of a completed master's thesis.

Students are strongly encouraged to follow Hanken's formatting guidelines for academic reports from the outset.

Typically, the Seminar 1 paper includes:

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: Literature Review/Theoretical Framework
- The beginning of the Methodology Chapter
- AI report

Students are expected to revise their paper based on comments received before and during Seminar 1. The methodology chapter should normally be finalized within a relatively short period after Seminar 1 so that data collection can begin.

The exact content depends on the stage of the individual thesis process. Some students may have progressed further with the empirical part of the study, while others may have focused more heavily on theory development.

Students should continuously discuss progress with their supervisor.

The Seminar 1 grade is based on:

- The quality of the seminar paper
- The seminar presentation
- Progress made in the thesis process

The assessment is conducted by the supervisor.

Before submitting the seminar paper, students must run a Turnitin plagiarism check through Moodle. The supervisor evaluates both Seminar 1 and its associated components.

Revised Methodology Chapter

Following Seminar 1, students must revise their seminar paper with particular attention to the methodology chapter and methodological plans, based on feedback received from both the seminar discussion and the supervisor.

The revised version must be submitted via Moodle.

The supervisor evaluates the revised material.

Students should continue discussing methodological decisions with their supervisor and begin collecting empirical data.

Seminar 2

For Seminar 2, the seminar paper is expected to contain:

- A substantially developed introduction
- A substantially developed literature review/theoretical framework
- A largely completed methodology chapter
- Data collection that has at least begun and preferably reached the analysis stage
- AI report

Preliminary results may also be reported.

As a guideline, the Seminar 2 paper should correspond to approximately **75% of a completed master's thesis**.

The assessment of the Seminar 2 paper places particular emphasis on the preliminary reporting of findings and results.

Exception for completed theses

If the thesis has been completed and submitted for official examination by:

- October (for the autumn course), or

- March (for the spring course),

the student may receive a grade for the seminar course without participating in Seminar 2.

Presentation in Seminar 2

The Seminar 2 presentation usually focuses on work completed after Seminar 1, but the thesis title and research questions should also be included.

As with Seminar 1, the purpose of Seminar 2 is to provide constructive feedback and support. The comments received should help students complete and finalize their theses.

Following Seminar 2, it is generally expected that only a few months of additional work will be required to complete the thesis.

Seminar 2 follows the same structure and consists of the same components as Seminar 1:

- Submission of a seminar paper
- Oral presentation
- Opponent's review
- Peer discussion

The Seminar 2 grade is determined by:

- The quality of the seminar paper
- The quality of the presentation
- Progress made in the thesis process

The assessment is conducted by the supervisor.

Self-Checks

All course participants must complete and pass three Moodle self-tests during the course, preferably at the beginning of the seminar process. The tests cover:

- The basic principles of referencing and citations.
- Academic misconduct and plagiarism, including their consequences.
- Various aspects of research data management.

Students may attempt the tests multiple times, and there is no time limit. It is recommended that students study the linked online materials before completing the tests.

In addition, students must independently run a Turnitin plagiarism check on all seminar papers before submitting the final versions in Moodle.

Opponent Assignments for Seminar 1 and Seminar 2

For every Seminar 1 and Seminar 2 paper, an opponent is assigned.

The following components are assessed:

- The seminar paper itself
- The presentation
- The oral opposition/review

The purpose of the opposition is:

1. To help the thesis writer identify strengths and areas for improvement.
2. To highlight good practices, examples, and ideas from which other students can learn.

The opponent assignment is an important part of the seminar course and should be thoroughly prepared.

The opposition should:

- Identify both strengths and weaknesses.
- Provide constructive suggestions for improvement.
- Demonstrate critical reflection and academic reasoning.

Questions to Consider as an Opponent

Examples of issues that should be addressed include:

- How well does the title reflect the content of the thesis?
- How closely connected are the research problem, purpose, theory, methodology, and results?
- Are all sections relevant to the research purpose?
- Are there important literature sources or perspectives that should be included?
- Are methodological choices and decisions supported by references and logical arguments?
- Has the student synthesized different authors' perspectives into an appropriate conceptual framework?
- Does the student formulate independent conclusions?
- To what extent does the thesis make use of recent research?
- Is the writing academically appropriate and linguistically clear?
- Does the thesis follow accepted academic conventions concerning citations, references, and presentation of empirical material?
- What type of knowledge is the student seeking, and is the chosen methodology suitable for that purpose? Comments should always be adapted to the current stage of the thesis process and seminar paper.

All evaluations and criticisms must be justified.

The opposition should be presented in PowerPoint (or a similar presentation format).

Regardless of the quality or stage of the paper, it is always possible to provide thoughtful, reflective, and constructive feedback that helps a fellow student develop their work further.

Peer Support

Peer support is provided through small groups consisting of students working on related seminar assignments.

These groups meet independently and are expected to discuss each other's work. After each meeting, one joint report must be submitted through Moodle.

Information about group membership and which seminar papers students are expected to analyze will be communicated in the seminar timetable.

Groups are free to organize their meetings as they wish and determine the most effective format for their discussions.

Topics may include:

- Thesis plans
- Research methods
- Academic writing
- Development of research problems and purposes
- Theoretical frameworks
- Thesis structure
- Empirical study design
- Data analysis
- Presentation of findings
- Discussion of contributions and implications

A written group report must be submitted after each peer-support meeting.

A report template and additional instructions are available in Moodle.

AI Use in Peer Support Work

The discussions and reports must also include information about how Large Language Models (LLMs) and generative AI systems (e.g., ChatGPT) have been used or are planned to be used in the thesis process.

The peer-support group report is assessed by the course examiner and constitutes an important component of the course grade.

A Completed Master's Thesis

The criteria used to assess the seminar process differ from those used to assess the final thesis.

Assessment during the seminar course focuses on:

- Progress in the thesis process
- Development of the research project
- Quality of seminar submissions
- Ability to engage in academic discussion and

Assessment of the final thesis, on the other hand, focuses on the completed scholarly product.

In many cases, the final grade depends heavily on:

- The quality of final revisions and polishing
- The student's ability to formulate conclusions
- The clarity of the research contribution and theoretical implications

Students should note that:

- An excellent Seminar 1 paper may only constitute a satisfactory Seminar 2 paper if insufficient progress has been made.
- Conversely, substantial development between Seminar 1 and Seminar 2 may significantly improve the overall evaluation.
- The grade for the seminar course does not necessarily correspond to the final thesis grade.

Submission of the Final Thesis

The completed thesis must be submitted through Hanken's official thesis submission system.

Students should carefully review the Study Affairs Office instructions concerning:

- Thesis submission
- Degree certificates
- Graduation schedules
- Maturity tests
- Graduation ceremonies

The maturity test is completed as an electronic examination.

For a thesis to be approved by the Academic Council, all of the following must be approved:

- The maturity test
 - The plagiarism review
 - Compliance with Hanken guidelines concerning data management and AI usage
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Course Literature: Students are expected to select and use literature that supports their individual thesis projects.

External Partners: External collaboration partners, if any, depend on the individual thesis project.

Examination and Assessment

Assessment Component	Evaluation	Purpose / Content
Course Introduction	Compulsory	To learn how the course is structured and to begin the thesis process. Before the introduction, students submit a registration form and a preliminary research plan and complete course registration in SISU.
Three Moodle Self-Tests	Pass/Fail	Designed to develop and reinforce fundamental academic skills shared across Hanken programmes.
Research Plan	0-5 points (5%)	The purpose is to develop a feasible and well-designed thesis plan. The plan is evaluated based on its quality and feasibility. A weak research plan may result in discussions regarding whether the student should postpone participation in the seminar course.
Seminar 1	0-15 points (15%)	Approximately 30 pages. Usually consists of the Introduction, Literature Review/Theory Chapter, and the beginning of the Methodology Chapter. The grade also reflects progress made in the thesis process and the quality of the Seminar 1 presentation.
Opponent Assignment (Seminar 1 and Seminar 2)	0-5 points each (5% + 5%)	To provide and receive constructive feedback that helps fellow students advance their thesis work.
Peer-Support Group Meetings and Reports (Seminar 1 and Seminar 2)	0-25 points each (25% + 25%)	Peer-support meetings are conducted in small groups among students analysing the same seminar papers. AI use is also discussed and reported. The analyses must be of high quality and submitted before the seminar. Reports not meeting the requirements must be revised and resubmitted.
Attendance	Compulsory	Attendance is required at one's own presentation, one's opponent session, and selected other seminar sessions.

Revised Methodology Chapter	0-5 points (5%)	The goal is to finalize the methodology chapter and prepare for data collection. The submission must also include revisions based on feedback received during Seminar 1.
Seminar 2	0-15 points (15%)	Approximately 50 pages. Normally includes Introduction, Theory, Methodology, and Preliminary Results. The assessment also includes progress made in the thesis process and the Seminar 2 presentation.

Requirements for Passing the Course: A minimum of **50% of the total points** is required to pass the course.

Distribution of Assessment:

40% based on the student's own thesis work

- Research Plan: 5%
- Seminar 1: 15%
- Revised Methodology Chapter: 5%
- Seminar 2: 15%

60% based on contributions to others' work

- Peer-Support Report 1: 25%
- Peer-Support Report 2: 25%
- Opponent Assignment 1: 5%
- Opponent Assignment 2: 5%

Grades are rounded mathematically. For example: 1.5 = 2, 1.4 = 1.

Plagiarism and AI Policy

Hanken's Policy on the Use of Artificial Intelligence in Studies and Teaching

This course follows Hanken's guidelines regarding the use of artificial intelligence in teaching and learning.

Regardless of whether AI-based tools are used during the writing process, students must clearly and accurately describe any use of AI in accordance with Hanken's guidelines. Failure to comply with these guidelines constitutes academic misconduct and will be handled according to Hanken's procedures for dealing with cheating and plagiarism.

In an approved master's thesis, the student must demonstrate that they have followed and properly documented the application of Hanken's guidelines and instructions concerning AI use.

Students should carefully review Hanken's AI guidelines for studies before submitting any work.

Mandatory AI Disclosure

An updated AI-use statement must be attached to all submitted course assignments, including:

- Research Plan
- Seminar 1 Paper
- Seminar 2 Paper
- Revised Methodology Chapter

This requirement applies in addition to the AI-use declaration provided in the final master's thesis.

Traffic Light Model for AI Use in the Course

Red Category: AI Prohibited

AI may **not** be used when:

- Reviewing fellow students' seminar papers in the role of opponent.
- Conducting peer-support analyses.
- Writing peer-support reports.

These tasks must be based entirely on the student's own analytical and critical thinking.

Rainbow Category: AI Use Permitted With Careful Reporting

The master's thesis is an independent academic project requiring critical reflection and scholarly judgement.

Within this category, AI may be used as support in certain parts of the thesis process, but it must never replace the student's own:

- Analysis
- Reflection
- Interpretation
- Conclusions

All AI use must be explicitly documented in every submitted report, from the research plan onwards and including the final thesis.

Green Category: AI as a Presentation Support Tool

AI may be used as an assistant when preparing presentation materials and supporting materials for seminar presentations and opponent assignments.

However, AI may not be used to perform the academic analysis itself. Analytical work must be based on the student's own critical thinking and judgement.

All AI use must be clearly reported.

Course Schedule and Deadlines

Task	Deadline	Description
Register for the course in SISU and submit the Registration Form and Preliminary Research Plan in Moodle	SISU: 30 August, 12:00 noon Moodle: 30 August, 12:00 noon	The registration form includes information about the student and prior qualifications. By completing the form, the student commits to reserving the seminar weeks to ensure participation in the relevant seminar sessions. Seminars are held exclusively on campus at Hanken. The preliminary research plan outlines the student's intended thesis topic. Students may express wishes regarding supervisor allocation, although such requests cannot always be accommodated.
Participate in the Course Introduction and review Moodle course materials	Monday, 31 August 10:15-11:45	Attendance is mandatory . The session takes place in room A306.
Supervisors announced	Week 36	The aim is to appoint and announce supervisors during the first week of the course via Moodle.
Contact your supervisor	Week 36	Students should immediately contact their assigned supervisor to arrange a meeting to discuss the preliminary research plan.
Research Plan submission in Moodle	Sunday, 13 September, 16:00	Before or upon submission, students should agree with their supervisor on a time and format for discussing the research plan.
Mandatory Self-Tests: Students must complete and pass the three Moodle self-tests before submitting Seminar 1.		
Seminar 1 Submission in Moodle	Monday, 12 October, 12:00 noon	Run the paper through Turnitin, make revisions if necessary, and submit the seminar paper in Moodle. The supervisor assesses the submission.
Peer-Support Analysis and Report (Seminar 1)	Friday, 16 October, 16:00	Meet with other members of the peer-support group and discuss seminar papers. Submit one joint report summarizing strengths,

		suggested improvements, and experiences related to AI use during the seminar process. The report is assessed and constitutes an important course component (25% of course points).
Participate in Seminar 1 Week and submit presentation and opposition materials in Moodle	Preliminary dates: 19-23 October, 08:00-17:30	Students must participate in: - Their own seminar session - The seminar where they act as an opponent – At least three additional seminar sessions The timetable will be published as soon as possible.
Submit Revised Methodology Chapter and updated text in Moodle	Friday, 6 November, 12:00 noon	Revise the seminar paper with particular emphasis on methodology based on feedback received during Seminar 1 and from the supervisor. Begin data collection after discussing methodological issues with the supervisor.
Seminar 2 Submission in Moodle	Monday, 7 December, 12:00 noon	Conduct a Turnitin review, revise if necessary, and submit the seminar paper. Also submit the Seminar 2 presentation (e.g., PowerPoint slides) in Moodle.
Peer-Support Analysis and Report (Seminar 2)	Friday, 11 December, 16:00	Discuss all Seminar 2 papers within the peer-support group. Submit one joint report including strengths, suggested improvements, and experiences of AI use. The report is assessed and accounts for 25% of total course points.
Participate in Seminar 2 Week and submit presentation and opposition materials in Moodle	Preliminary dates: 14-18 December, 08:00-17:30	Students must participate in: - Their own seminar session - The seminar where they act as an opponent – At least three additional seminar sessions The timetable will be published as soon as possible.