



Graduate Student Handbook 2024–2025

Department of
Family Studies and Gerontology

Updated: September 2024

**FSGN Graduate Student Handbook
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PLEASE NOTE: The following forms for Master of Arts students, referred to in this document, are available from the graduate studies webpage:

- Appointment of Thesis Supervisor Form**
- Appointment of External Thesis Supervisor Form**
- Appointment of Thesis Co-supervisor Form**
- Notification of Thesis Proposal Presentation**
- Thesis Proposal Presentation Report**
- Notification of Thesis Defence**
- Thesis Defence Report Form**
- Thesis Release Form**

(The graduate studies web page also has forms related to external courses, research assistance funding, conference funding assistance, leaves of absence, extensions, and reactivation.)

The following additional form for Master of Arts students is available from the Department or your advisor:

Student-Thesis Supervisor Expectations Form

COMMUNICATION NOTICE

About this handbook: A link to a copy of this handbook is available at the department's web page, at:

<http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/programsdepartments/graduatestudiesatthemount/familystudiesandgerontology/default.aspx>. If any significant changes are made to the handbook, all students will be provided with a new copy. For small revisions, students will be notified and referred to an updated copy on the web.

Every effort is made to communicate information to students on an ongoing basis, with much of this communication taking place through a department email distribution list for graduate students. **Students must ensure that they have access to their MSVU student email account as this is the main email used to communicate with students.** Students should check their email regularly (every couple of days at minimum) so that they do not miss important announcements regarding events such as seminars and funding workshops.

Announcements are also posted on the FSGN Facebook page, which you can view even if you do not have a Facebook profile, at: <https://www.facebook.com/FSGNstudies>. All students with a Facebook profile are invited to “like” the department page so they can see announcements on their newsfeed.

Our administrative assistant is located in Evaristus 331.

GRADUATE STUDIES - FAMILY STUDIES AND GERONTOLOGY

1.0 The University

Mount Saint Vincent University is a beautiful campus located in suburban Halifax Regional Municipality just minutes from downtown. The park-like campus with its well-treed grounds is situated on a hill, overlooking the waters of the Bedford Basin. Mount Saint Vincent University is concerned primarily with the education of women. It provides a strong liberal arts and science core and selected professional disciplines. It is dedicated to promoting academic excellence, a high degree of personalized education, and an environment characterized by values of its founders, the Sisters of Charity—equity, ethical concern, social responsibility, and service to the community. The Mount considers the educational needs of women to be paramount. Programs, class times, facilities, and services are specifically tailored to provide maximum accessibility for women.

1.1 Services to Students

Some specific links and services are described below, but students are strongly encouraged to thoroughly explore the Mount's webpage to learn more about the university and its specific services, policies, and procedures. The address is: www.msvu.ca

Information about web access (user names and passwords) computer labs, and technical support may be accessed at the Information Services webpage:

<http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/studentservices/itservices/default.aspx>

For graduate school information:

<http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/programsdepartments/graduatecalendar/default.aspx>

In particular, students should also be familiar with the graduate studies webpage:

<http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/programsdepartments/graduatestudiesgeneralinformation/default.aspx> (important information and **forms** related to grad studies policies such as continuous registration, leave of absence, extensions, etc.)

Financial information, such as parking and tuition fees, is available at:

<http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/beamountstudent/money/default.aspx>

The university provides a number of services to students (**see Appendix F for phone numbers of selected services**). For example, the *E. Margaret Fulton Communications Centre* provides library holdings, advanced on-line computer information systems, and Information and Technology Services (IT&S). Our Novanet catalogue consists of a

consortium of Nova Scotian post-secondary library holdings, which means that you can borrow materials from other NS libraries. Students are encouraged to attend library information sessions at the beginning of each term to become familiar with the library and all its services. Individual sessions also may be booked with university librarians. More information on services such as corral rental, hours of operation, and length of book loans may be found at: <http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/library/default.aspx>

The Alexa McDonough *Institute for Women, Gender and Social Justice* (AMI) aims to achieve equity and improve lives through feminist initiatives that extend knowledge and understanding of issues related to women, girls, gender, and social justice for the Mount community and beyond.

The *Nancy Rowell Jackman Chair in Women's Studies* brings distinguished visiting scholars in women's studies or persons in public life who have contributed to the advancement of women, to the university for specified periods of time.

Other special facilities of interest to graduate students are *The Child Study Centre* day care facilities (part-time and full-time day care for ages 2 - 5) and *The Fountain Play Centre* (day care facilities for Mount students only during class times), *The Athletics/Recreation Facilities*, *The Centre for Women in Business*, *The Nova Scotia Centre on Aging* (see section 1.2), *The Global Health and Community Project* (see section 1.3) and *The Maritime Data Centre for Aging Research and Policy Analysis* (see section 1.4). A number of courses are available through *DLCE (Distance Learning and Continuing Education)*, which allow students to complete courses away from campus on the student's own schedule. Links to these facilities and more may be found at: <http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/programsdepartments/default.aspx>

1.2 The Nova Scotia Centre on Aging (NSCA)

The NSCA, is affiliated with the Department of Family Studies and Gerontology and located in the Margaret Norrie McCain Centre, 2nd Floor, Room 202. Established at the Mount in 1992, it is one of longest running of the 12 university-based centres on aging in Canada. The centre works in partnership with the academic community, government, the private sector, voluntary and professional organizations, and seniors on initiatives that benefit older people, their families, and the community. For more information on the NSCA, please refer to the following links: <http://www.msvu.ca/nsca> and consider friending NSCA on Facebook.

1.3 Global Health and Community Project

Led by our incoming Tier I Canada Research Chair, Dr. Zachary Zimmer, the Global Health and Community project aims to provide an international perspective on population aging and advance scholarship on the health and well-being of older persons around the world. This Project builds on Dr Zimmer's extensive networks and research in gerontological demography in developing countries including China, Thailand, Cambodia, and in various sub-Saharan African countries. The project is located in the Rosemarie Sampson Centre on Aging located on 2nd Floor of the Margaret Norrie McCain Centre.

1.4 Maritime Data Centre for Aging Research and Policy Analysis (MDC)

Mount Saint Vincent University received funding through the Canada Research Chair Program to establish the *Maritime Data Centre for Aging Research and Policy Analysis* in 2002. This centre is located in the Margaret Norrie McCain Centre, 2nd Floor, Room 201, also located in the Rosemarie Sampson Centre on Aging. Its research focuses on home care, caregivers, and the health care system, and the analysis of this information is shared with researchers and policy makers across the country. The lab is outfitted with advanced computer systems, quantitative and qualitative software, cameras and microphones to record focus groups and interviews, and equipment used in data collection, analysis, and dissemination of research findings. The centre offers occasional training sessions on developing scientific posters and accessing large data files, and its facilities may be used as a classroom setting. Some printing and equipment may be available to faculty and students. For example, it may be possible for graduate students to book the conference room to tape focus groups associated with their research. Contact Dr. Janice Keefe at 902-457-6466 for further information, or visit

<http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/programsdepartments/professionalstudies/familystudiesgerontology/research/maritimedatacentre/default.aspx>

2.0 Our Graduate Programs

Graduate study in Family Studies and Gerontology focuses on issues that impact societal concerns such as population aging, public policy, as well as on individual family members and families. Our programs prepare you for or enhance your career in aging, community or family services, family life education, and community development.

Two Masters Degrees are offered:

- The thesis-based **Master of Arts in Family Studies and Gerontology MA(FSGN)**, **requires** 3.5 units of coursework and a 1.5-unit thesis. The thesis

must demonstrate that the candidate has critical judgment, mature scholarship, and familiarity with research methods. The thesis contributes to knowledge in the candidate's chosen field. Each student's program is planned individually between the student and graduate advisor.

- The course-based **Master of Family Studies and Gerontology** (MFSG) requires five units of coursework and is aimed at individuals working in the fields of family studies and/or gerontology (or those who plan to work in such fields) who require broad-based professional knowledge rather than in-depth research knowledge. Consistent with other professional masters programs, this program is oriented more toward direct application of knowledge in practice and policy settings.
- The **Graduate Certificate in Health Communication and Aging** is offered jointly through the Department of Family Studies and Gerontology and the Department of Communication Studies. This program provides students with an understanding of the interplay between human communication, aging and health. This program will: (a) encourage students to develop a broad understanding of communication and aging theories; (b) contribute to the advancement of health communication and aging as an emerging field of study; (c) provide enhanced opportunities for students to study the contextual nature of health communication and aging in its various forms; (d) develop in students an appreciation of the processes that define human communication and aging; and, (e) develop within students an appreciation for and awareness of ethical communication.

Further information on program requirements may be accessed through this link: <https://www.msvu.ca/academics/graduate-studies-at-the-mount/public-relations-and-communication-studies/program-requirements/>

In addition to graduate courses offered by the FSGN Department, students may, with permission of the department, choose up to 0.5 unit of external graduate electives that will enhance their program of study. The number of these external electives will not normally exceed 0.5 unit of course work. Requests for exceptions to this policy will be assessed by the Departmental Graduate Studies Committee on a case-by-case basis. These electives may be taken from other graduate programs at the Mount or by letter of permission from other universities (e.g., Health Services Administration at Dalhousie).

Students can apply to transfer between the two programs.

Students requesting a transfer from the Master of Arts in Family Studies and Gerontology (MA in FSGN; thesis-based) to the Master of Family Studies and Gerontology (MFSGS; course-based) will submit a reasoned argument, in writing, to their thesis supervisor. Normally, students will not be allowed to transfer into the MFSG after they have received ethics approval and started data collection for their thesis. All requests will be reviewed by the department. If approved, the student will then need to submit a **Change of Program** form to the Registrar's Office.

Students requesting a transfer from the Master of Family Studies and Gerontology (MFGS; course-based) to the Master of Arts in Family Studies and Gerontology (MA in FSGN; thesis-based) will submit the following to the Graduate Program Coordinator: (a) a new “Statement of intent”, which includes information about their thesis interests, (b) a sample of writing (e.g., at least a 10-page paper from a university course, with research citations) that demonstrates their research potential, and (c) provide evidence that a faculty member has agreed to supervise their thesis topic. It is recommended that students apply for this transfer no later than their second term in the program. All requests will be reviewed by the department. If approved, the student will then need to submit a **Change of Program** form to the Registrar’s Office.

Master of Arts in Family Studies and Gerontology MA(FSGN):

This program requires the completion of 3.5 units of coursework and a 1.5 unit thesis.

<i>Required Courses (4.0 units)</i>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	GFSG 6606	0.5 unit
<input type="checkbox"/>	GEPY 6608 or GEDU 6107 or GAHN 6675	0.5 unit
<input type="checkbox"/>	GFSG 6609 or GFSG 6612*	0.5 unit
<input type="checkbox"/>	GFSG 6613	0.5 unit
<input type="checkbox"/>	GFSG 6633	0.5 unit
<input type="checkbox"/>	GFSG 6691	1.5 units
<i>Electives (1.0 unit)</i>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	1.0 unit of electives selected from the following:	
	GFSG 6610	0.5 unit
	GFSG 6611	0.5 unit
	GFSG 6614	0.5 unit
	GFSG 6616	0.5 unit
	GFSG 6644	0.5 unit
	GFSG 6650	0.5 unit
	GFSG 6658	0.5 unit

* If GFSG 6609 is chosen as a required course, GFSG 6612 may be taken as an elective, and vice versa.

Depending on the field of interest, students may take up to 0.5 unit of graduate coursework in other graduate programs at the Mount (e.g., Child and Youth Study,

Education, Applied Human Nutrition, Women and Gender Studies) or from other universities (e.g., Dalhousie University's programs in Health Administration, Community Health and Epidemiology or Social Work).

Elective courses should be selected in consultation with the graduate studies advisor in accordance with the student's field of interest. Selected courses may be completed via online learning.

Master of Family Studies and Gerontology (MFSG):

This program requires 5 units of coursework.

<i>Required Courses (2.0 units)</i>			
<input type="checkbox"/>	GFSG 6606		0.5 unit
<input type="checkbox"/>	GFSG 6613		0.5 unit
<input type="checkbox"/>	GFSG 6633		0.5 unit
<input type="checkbox"/>	GFSG 6680		0.5 unit
<i>Family Studies or Gerontology Stream (1.0 unit)</i>			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Family Studies Courses</i> GFSG 6610 and GFSG 6612 OR <i>Gerontology Courses</i> GFSG 6609 and GFSG 6611		
<i>Electives (2.0 units)</i>			
<input type="checkbox"/>	2.0 unit of electives selected from the following:		
	GFSG 6609 ^a	0.5 unit	
	GFSG 6610 ^b	0.5 unit	
	GFSG 6611 ^a	0.5 unit	
	GFSG 6612 ^b	0.5 unit	
	GFSG 6614	0.5 unit	
	GFSG 6616	0.5 unit	
	GFSG 6644	0.5 unit	
	GFSG 6650	0.5 unit	
	GFSG 6658	0.5 unit	
	GEPY 6608	0.5 unit	

^a Elective for students in the Family Studies stream

^b Elective for students in the Gerontology stream

To provide students with flexibility, 0.5 unit of electives may be taken outside of the program from MSVU graduate programs such as Lifelong Learning, Child and Youth Study, Education, Applied Human Nutrition, Women and Gender Studies, or from other universities' programs, for example Dalhousie University's programs in Health Administration, Community Health and Epidemiology, and Social Work. Elective courses must be selected in consultation with the graduate studies advisor in accordance with the student's field of practice

Graduate Certificate in Health Communication and Aging

This program is offered jointly through the Department of Family Studies and Gerontology and the Department of Communication Studies. Students must complete 2.0 units (1.0 unit from each department) with the following requirements:

- GPRL 6102 0.5 unit
- GPRL 6511 0.5 unit
- GFSG 6611 0.5 unit
- GFSG 6633 0.5 unit

2.1 Admission Requirements

To be admitted to the **Master of Arts in Family Studies and Gerontology (thesis-based) program**, students will normally have completed a four-year baccalaureate degree from an accredited university in a social science area (e.g., psychology, sociology, family studies, gerontology, child and youth study, social work, education) with a minimum of a B average (GPA 3.0). Undergraduate courses in statistics, research methods, and at least five courses (2.5 units) in family studies or gerontology are required by all applicants. Where there are deficiencies, students may be required to complete additional undergraduate and/or graduate coursework and obtain a minimum of B in these courses prior to acceptance. Applicants must complete the *Graduate Studies Application Package* by **February 15 for fall admission**. Applicants are required to submit a sample of writing that demonstrates their research potential as a graduate student in the Department of Family Studies and Gerontology.

To be admitted to the **Master of Family Studies and Gerontology (course-based) program**, students will normally have completed an undergraduate degree in family studies, gerontology, sociology, psychology, or related health profession (e.g., social work, nursing, health education, pharmacy) with a minimum of a B average (3.0 GPA) in the last 10.0 units of study. An undergraduate research methods course and an undergraduate statistics course is also required as background preparation for graduate

courses in research methods (GFSG 6606- required) and statistics (GEPY 6608- an elective). Where there are deficiencies, students may be required to complete additional undergraduate and/or graduate coursework and obtain a minimum of B in these courses prior to acceptance. Applicants must complete the [Graduate Studies Application Package](#) by **February 15 for fall admission**.

Application forms are available from the [Admissions office](#). Completed applications should be submitted by the deadlines noted above for September or December admission. A sample of writing that demonstrates the student's research potential is also required for individuals applying to the Master of Arts program. Applications received after the deadlines will be considered only if space and time permit. **(PLEASE NOTE:** Due to the short time frame in which January admission decisions are made, international students who require visas are strongly recommended to apply for September admission rather than January admission).

The Family Studies and Gerontology Graduate Committee reviews applications for the MA program, and the university's Graduate Admissions Officer reviews applications for the MFSG program. Applicants who do not meet admission requirements with regard to FSGN/FSGN-related content may be asked to complete selected prerequisite/preparatory courses (and obtain a minimum of B grade) or meet other conditions prior to their acceptance into the program. Short-listed candidates who are under consideration for admittance into the program may be called for an interview.

For application materials, please contact:

Admissions Office, Mount Saint Vincent University

Halifax, Nova Scotia B3M 2J6

Telephone: 902-457-6128

Fax: 902-457-6455

Email: graduate@msvu.ca

Please see Section 2.0 for procedures for switching between the two programs.

2.2 Other Programs

The Department offers undergraduate minors, concentrations, and combined majors in Family Studies or Gerontology. Additionally, a post-baccalaureate Bachelor of Education in Family Studies is offered through the Department of Education. Please refer to the University Undergraduate Calendar for a detailed description of these programs.

2.3 Financial Assistance

Scholarships and grants are available for application by students from many different sources. It is the student's responsibility to apply for these scholarships and meet the appropriate deadlines. When possible, the department provides support and assistance with scholarship and grant writing. Some funding sources include:

Research Nova Scotia

<https://researchns.ca/>

Canadian Institutes for Health Research

www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca

Canadian Federation of University Women

administers two Canadian Home Economics fellowships, as well as other awards

<https://cfuw.org/fellowships-awards/>

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council

www.sshrc.ca

Canadian Association of Gerontology

<http://cagacg.ca/>

Canadian Institute of Military and Veteran Health Research (CIMVHR)

<https://cimvhr.ca/funding/scholarships/>

Please note: Other funding sources are available on a regular basis. These generally come from larger grants that have been awarded to the university. These will be posted regularly within the department. The Dean's office provides up to \$200 to MA students to assist with research related costs such as printing, mailing, and minor items of equipment, and up to \$250 for costs of presenting thesis research at a conference (application forms are available here:

<http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/programsdepartments/graduatestudiesatthemount/graduatestudentfundingassistance.aspx>).

As well, a limited number of department graduate assistantships are available each academic year. **Both incoming and returning students may apply for these assistantships** - application forms are available from the department office, and **must be received by March 1st** to be considered for assistantships in the upcoming year.

A limited number of scholarships and bursaries are available through the university

(please see the graduate academic calendar- <https://www.msvu.ca/academics/university-academic-calendars/graduate-academic-calendar/>). Students are encouraged to explore various sources of financial assistance, including scholarships available through professional associations and other organizations.

2.4 Other Assistance

A digital tape recorder, transcription foot pedal, laptop computer, and MAXQDA software (on USB drive) is available to students on a sign-out basis.

MA students completing data collection, data analysis, or thesis writing will have first priority for borrowing this equipment. All graduate students completing course assignments and who may need temporary access (for more than 24 hours) because of an unexpected emergency will have second priority for borrowing. The equipment may not be used for any other purpose. Files may not be permanently stored on the laptop hard drive and no external programs are to be downloaded to the laptop.

Students may borrow the equipment for a maximum period of three weeks. Extensions may be granted, however, borrowers must request the extension 4-5 days prior to the end of the borrowing period.

Equipment will be stored in the departmental office in a locked cabinet. The administrative assistant will maintain a waitlist of students interested in borrowing the laptop. The laptop must be able to be returned to the University within a 24-hour period if necessary (eg out-of-province use will be very rare to non-existent).

SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, for quantitative data analysis) is available on all campus computers. MAXQDA (for qualitative data analysis) is available on computers in the Seton 315 computer lab. Training on MAXQDA software is typically offered twice a year to the Mount Community (October and May) by Dr. Áine Humble.

Office 365 is available to all students, and this allows students to download the Office Suite for free on up to 5 personal devices. As part of Office 365, you can save your work online in “OneDrive” (1 TB of space available). Students also have 200 MB of storage space on the MSVU server (h:/drive). Students are strongly encouraged to use Office 365 or the MSVU server space to back up all of their coursework and thesis work (e.g., thesis drafts, digital interviews, transcripts, SPSS data files and output, MAXQDA data files, etc.) OneDrive can be accessed off campus by signing into “myMount/email”, whereas the MSVU server is only accessible on campus. For more information, visit: <https://www.msvu.ca/campus-life/campus-services/it-services/office-365-at-the-mount/>

3.0 Use of AI (Artificial Intelligence) in Assignments (including Thesis)*

The use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Dall-e, etc.) is PERMITTED in assignments for the following activities:

- brainstorming and refining your ideas
- fine tuning your research questions
- finding information on your topic
- drafting an outline to organize your thoughts
- checking grammar and style

The use of generative AI tools is NOT PERMITTED in assignments for the following activities:

- impersonating you in classroom contexts, such as using the tool to compose a discussion board response or content that you put into a Teams chat
- writing a draft of a writing assignment.
- writing entire sentences, paragraphs, or papers to complete course assignments.

You are responsible for the information you submit based on an AI query (for instance, that it does not violate intellectual property laws, or contain misinformation or unethical content). Your use of AI tools must be properly documented and cited in order to stay within university policies on academic honesty (APA is [developing guidelines](#) regarding citing ChatGPT and other AI generative tools). Any assignment found to have used generative AI tools in unauthorized ways may receive a penalty (please see [section 2.2.18](#) in the Academic Calendar). When in doubt about permitted usage, please ask your instructor or supervisor for clarification.

* Adapted from Temple University, Center for the Advancement of Teaching, with permission

4.0 Family Studies and Gerontology Graduate Courses

GFSG 6606 Research Methods/0.5 unit

An examination of the elements of the research process. Emphasis will be given to various methodologies, that are used for research in family studies and gerontology, and attention will be given to the philosophies underlying quantitative and qualitative research methodologies.

GFSG 6609 Fundamentals of Social Gerontology/0.5 unit

An examination of theoretical perspectives affecting individual and societal aging and an overview of contemporary issues affecting older adults. Students will analyse scholarly literature on family relationships, economic security, retirement, health and other issues of

specific interest to class registrants.

GFSG 6610 Family Life Education/0.5 unit

An examination of the theoretical principles and methodological approaches employed in planning and implementing family life education programs within the variety of disciplines focusing on families and individuals across the life course. Students will have the opportunity to reflect upon the philosophies underpinning their practice. A critical perspective will be employed.

GFSG 6611 Aging, Health and Community/0.5 unit

An examination of issues regarding individual, community and population health and aging. Health promotion, chronic disease management and social determinants affecting physical and mental health of older people are considered. Policies and practices to improve health outcomes of older population are evaluated.

GFSG 6612 Family Relations across the Life Course/0.5 unit

An examination of the social and psychological factors affecting contemporary family life with particular emphasis on roles, dynamics, and pathways across the life course. Students will analyse scholarly literature as a foundation for critique of interactional and societal dynamics.

GFSG 6613 Critical Theories in Family Studies and Gerontology/0.5 unit

An advanced theory course designed to develop analytical skills and critical thinking. The focus is on current social scientific theories and their implications for family studies and gerontology.

GFSG 6614 Family Violence across the Life Course/0.5 unit

An analysis of family violence across the life course, covering intimate partner violence, child abuse, sibling, parent, and adolescent violence, and the abuse of older adults. Theoretical and practical perspectives will be developed through the course. An understanding of family violence from a critical ecological perspective will serve as a recurring theme throughout all discussions and analysis. *Note: Students who received credit for FSGN 3314 may not take this course for credit.*

GFSG 6616 Global Aging and Health/0.5 unit

The course examines the current state of global population aging and aspects that associate with well-being of older persons worldwide. Attention is paid to social life, social change, economic systems, health care demands, and family forms and functions. Focus is comparative across countries, regions and cultures.

GFSG 6633 Social Policies on Family and Aging/0.5 unit

This is an advanced course in the analysis and development of social policies relating to the family and the elderly. The focus is on how policy is developed, the relationship between research and policy, and how to critically analyse existing policies.

GFSG 6644 Military and Veteran Families/0.5 unit

An analysis of research, theory, and practice focusing on military and veteran families across the life course. Informed by critical-ecological theory, emphasis in the course will be on military and veteran family resiliency. Note: Students who have received credit for FSGN 3344 may not take this course for credit.

GFSG 6650 Special Topics/0.5 unit

These courses are designed to allow students to study in greater depth a topic in family studies and gerontology that is treated only briefly in another graduate course or not covered in another graduate course. *Note: No more than 0.5 unit towards a graduate degree may be acquired through special topics.*

(Note: this course cycles between a family studies focus and a gerontology focus every second year)

GFSG 6658 Directed Study/0.5 unit

Independent examination of the research literature designed to meet the special needs of individual graduate students. The graduate student will make arrangements with the faculty member in advance of registration. *Note: No more than 0.5 unit of credit towards a graduate degree may be acquired through independent study.*

Prerequisite: Permission of the department Chair and the faculty member involved

GFSG 6680 Seminar in Family Studies and Gerontology/0.5 unit

A synthesis of research and practice in Family Studies and Gerontology. Students will reflect upon their learning throughout the degree and apply their research/theoretical ideas to practical contexts in Family Studies and Gerontology through the development of a project planned in consultation with a faculty member.

GFSG 6691 Thesis/1.5 units

Required for completion of the MA (FSG) degree. Registration involves working with individual faculty members on the conceptualization, production, and defence of the thesis. Enrolment in this course occurs when the candidates are preparing their thesis. The **Appointment of Thesis Advisor Form** must be completed before enrolling in this course.

GEDU 6107 Qualitative Research Methods/0.5 unit

This seminar course will explore various qualitative research techniques and the underlying theoretical assumptions which inform qualitative research. The course will also involve evaluation of sample qualitative studies in education and field testing of particular techniques. Prerequisite: Permission of the instructor.

GEPY 6608 Intermediate Statistics and Research Design/0.5 unit

This course examines more advanced topics in analysis of variance such as repeated measures in one-way and factorial designs. It also includes multiple regression and multivariate statistics such as discriminate analysis and factor analysis. The use of data analysis by computer is emphasized.

Prerequisite: GEPY 6601 or equivalent

GAHN 6675 Qualitative Methods of Nutrition Research/0.5 unit

An examination of various qualitative methods and underlying methodological approaches in food, nutrition, and dietetics. Attention will be given to study design, sampling, recruitment, data collection and analysis, knowledge translation and ethical considerations. Prerequisite: Permission of the instructor.

5.0 Faculty Research Interests

Aine Humble, Ph.D., CFLE (Oregon State) Social construction of gender division of unpaid family work, family-work interface, women and healthy aging, family rituals, intimate relationships, qualitative data analysis software, LGBTQ+ families/aging individuals

Contact: EV 321, 457-6109, aine.humble@msvu.ca

Janice Keefe, Ph.D. (Guelph) Chair: Family/friend caregiving- including assessment, employment and caregiving and analyses of policy to support caregivers, quality of life in long term care facilities, home and continuing care policy and human resource issues, rural Aging, and the contributions of older people

Contact: McCain 201F, 457-6466, janice.keefe@msvu.ca

Deborah Norris, Ph.D. (Dalhousie): Mental health and well-being of military and veteran families, military family resilience and post-traumatic growth, family psychoeducation, critical theories, family relations and social support, qualitative research methodologies, family violence

Contact: EV 325, 457-6376, deborah.norris@msvu.ca

Zachary Zimmer, Ph.D. (Michigan): Canada Research Chair in Global Aging and Community, Graduate Program Coordinator: Intergenerational relations, disablement, global population aging, migration, demographic change, health disparities
Contact: McCain 201C, 902-457-5541, zachary.zimmer@msvu.ca

6.0 Graduate Advisor

Every student admitted to the Family Studies and Gerontology Program is assigned an academic advisor. The advisor will be a full-time faculty within the department. Together, the academic advisor and student plan a program designed to meet the student's career goals and help develop the student's strengths. Students are encouraged to have regular contact with their advisor, especially before registering for courses, and to help clarify any concerns or questions they might have regarding policies, time lines, etc. For those in the Master of Arts program, the academic advisor assigned does not necessarily become the student's thesis advisor.

7.0 Graduate Committees

Students may be interested in serving on either of the following two committees. For the Family Studies and Gerontology Graduate Committee, a student representative is either selected by the dept graduate student body or hired by the department (through the Student Works program). A student representative is elected by the general study body to serve on the Graduate Studies Program and Policy Committee.

a) Departmental Graduate Committee

The Family Studies and Gerontology or University Graduate Committees are responsible for addressing any concerns or suggestions the student may have. The graduate program in Family Studies and Gerontology Graduate Studies is coordinated through a committee comprised of department faculty and a student representative, and this committee is chaired by the Graduate Program Coordinator. The committee monitors the functioning of the program, develops and evaluates program policy, and addresses issues as they arise. The faculty who serve on this committee review MA applications, admit students, approve proposals, and approve thesis committees. The Graduate Program Coordinator (Chair of the committee) often serves on the University Graduate Studies committee and provides regular reports on the work of that group.

Students can communicate with the committee by speaking to their advisor or their student representative. Students are also encouraged to meet together to discuss their

respective experiences. The Family Studies and Gerontology Graduate Committee organizes orientation and updating sessions periodically, and encourages graduate students to meet outside of class sessions or departmentally organised events.

b) University Graduate Committees

Two university-level committees administer the graduate studies program: (a) The Graduate Studies Scholarships, Assistantships, and Awards Committee, and (b) The Graduate Studies Program and Policy Committee (GSPPC). Faculty are appointed from all departments with graduate programs to represent their programs in discussions of graduate policies and practices and in review of scholarship applications. The Student's Union names a student representative to the Graduate Studies Program and Policy Committee.

8.0 Graduate Seminars

Graduate seminars are held several times during each fall and winter term in the Department of Family Studies and Gerontology and all students and faculty are expected to attend. Participation in graduate seminars is a normal part of the graduate student experience. Seminar notices are normally distributed throughout the university and any interested person external to the department is welcome to attend. These sessions provide an opportunity for graduate students and faculty to share their research or other scholarly activities and ideas. The graduate seminar schedule will be made available shortly after the beginning of each semester and/or posted as seminars are confirmed. Students must document their participation in these seminars in their annual report to the Family Studies and Gerontology Graduate Committee. Full-time students are expected to attend a minimum of 2 departmental seminars per term (Fall and Winter). **Students who are in their first two semesters of the program (Fall and Winter) will have their attendance at these seminars evaluated in one required course being offered each term, such as GFSGN 6613 (Critical Theories) and GFSG 6606 (Research Methods). Part-time students should consult with their advisor regarding attendance requirements.**

9.0 Annual Report

Every student will be required to complete an annual report that documents their progress in the program during the previous academic year. This report will be submitted to the Department Chair for review. The deadline for submission is **June 1st** of each year. The report can typed in point form and should be approximately 3 pages in

length, with details provided. Please only report on work that has been accomplished in the previous year, and **see Appendix A for an outline of what to include.**

10.0 The Thesis (Master of Arts)

The thesis component of the Master of Arts in Family Studies and Gerontology degree program requires a student to undertake a major independent research study in a selected area of Family Studies and Gerontology. Although the format and content of a thesis will vary in accordance with the nature of the study, a thesis will normally include a comprehensive review of the published writings of related aspects, an articulation of the research question(s), a theoretical framework, a detailed methodological plan, ethical considerations and safeguards, and a report and analysis of the findings, implications, and recommendations. Assessment of the thesis is based on the quality of both the (a) data and analysis and (b) interpretation and conclusions drawn from the data.

The expectations of the thesis outcome are sufficiently flexible to enable diversity in methodologies, theories, and processes. Students may choose from a number of methodological and data analyses approaches. These approaches may include but are not limited to: archival analysis of documents, program evaluation, primary data collection that lends itself to either qualitative or quantitative analysis, or secondary data analysis (again qualitative or quantitative or both) of existing data sources. Students work with their thesis advisor to choose the most appropriate methodology to answer their research question. The interdisciplinary nature of the field of Family Studies and Gerontology also enables students to draw on a wide range of theoretical perspectives.

The thesis must demonstrate students' competencies in methods of research and critical appraisal of previous research and scholarship. The thesis should be of such a length as to constitute a significant contribution to the field of Family Studies and Gerontology. In evaluating the thesis it is important to note that significance, conciseness, and quality of the document and the defence are of greater weight than the number of pages in the document.

Suggested reading:

Locke, L. F., & Spirduso, W. W., & Silverman, S. J. (2013). *Proposals that work: A guide for planning dissertations and grant proposals* (6th ed.). Sage.

Rudestam, K. E., & Newton, R. R. (2014). *Surviving your dissertation: A comprehensive guide to content and process* (4th ed.). Sage.

10.1 Thesis Advisor and Thesis Advisory Committee

The thesis will be written under the direction of a full-time faculty member of the Department of Family Studies and Gerontology, referred to as the thesis advisor, and a thesis advisory committee. The **Appointment of Thesis Supervisor Form** needs to be completed for approval of both thesis advisors and thesis advisory committee members. All forms are available on the Graduate Studies webpage unless otherwise noted. This form is sent by the thesis advisor to the Graduate Program Coordinator, who then approves it and sends it to the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Please note: The thesis advisor must be approved prior to registering in the thesis course.

The thesis advisor also recommends to the Graduate Program Coordinator two persons to serve on the advisory committee. One of these individuals will normally be from within the department and one will normally be from outside the department. The thesis committee will review and approve the thesis proposal, be available to advise the student in all stages of the research project, and approve the examination copy. Normally, students work more closely with the thesis advisor than with other thesis committee members.

In some circumstances, the thesis advisor may be external to the department. In such cases, the student get the **Appointment of External Thesis Supervisor Form** completed. When the thesis advisor is external to the department, at least one of the other two members of the thesis committee must be from the department. There is also a form for **Appointment of Thesis Co-Supervisor** if applicable.

10.2 Responsibilities of Thesis Advisor

When a faculty member agrees to serve as a “thesis advisor,” he/she assumes several responsibilities:

- a) to be accessible to students and to be available for consultation within a reasonable time frame;
- b) to be as helpful as possible in suggesting research topics and in assisting students to define their theses;
- c) to work with the student to identify appropriate thesis committee members;
- d) to inform students approximately how long it will be before written work, such as drafts of chapters, can be returned with comments;
- e) to be thorough in their examination of thesis chapters, supplying, where appropriate, detailed comments on such matters as literary form, structure, use of evidence, relation

of the thesis to published work on the subject, citation of references, and making constructive suggestions for rewriting and improving the draft;

- f) to indicate clearly when a draft is in a satisfactory final form, or, if it is clear to the advisor that the thesis cannot be successfully completed, to so advise the student;
- g) to know the departmental and university regulations and standards to which the writer of a thesis is expected to conform, and to make sure that the student is aware of them;
- h) to arrange for alternate supervision while on sabbatical leave;
- i) to advise and help the student to approach other faculty members for assistance with specific problems or even to request the reading of a chapter or section of the thesis.

10.3 Responsibilities of Student

When a graduate student undertakes the writing of a thesis, he/she also assumes several responsibilities:

- a) to obtain a thesis supervisor (may be done in consultation with the academic advisor, Graduate Program Coordinator, and/or departmental chairperson)
- b) to choose a topic (often with advisor's help) and to produce a thesis that is essentially their own work;
- c) to submit copies in the format requested (paper or electronic) of all thesis proposal drafts and thesis drafts to advisors and/or committee members;
- d) to produce a thesis that meets the standards of scholarship required by the university and the department, including demonstration of their capacity for independent scholarship and research in their field;
- e) to acknowledge direct assistance or borrowed material from other scholars or researchers;
- f) to realize that the advisor has undergraduate or other duties that may at times delay the student's access to the advisor on short notice;
- g) to give serious and considered attention to advice and direction from the advisor;

- h) to submit their work to the judgement of the department and to abide by its decision when any rights of appeal, if exercised, have been exhausted;
- i) to be familiar with information in the graduate student handbook and various dates, timelines, and required outputs (i.e., electronic and bound copies of theses) related to thesis and convocation;
- j) to know the departmental and university regulations and standards to which the writer of a thesis is required to conform.

10.4 Rights of Advisor

The advisor has the following rights:

- a) to expect the student to give serious and considered attention to advice concerning what he/she regards as essential changes in the thesis;
- b) to terminate supervision and advise the student to find another advisor if the student does not heed advice and ignores recommendations for changes in the thesis, or if the student is not putting forth a reasonable effort;
- c) to have their thesis supervision properly credited by the department as an intrinsic part of their workload so that, in the assignment of duties, they are not overburdened to the point of having their effectiveness impaired as advisors.

10.5 Rights of Student

The student has the following rights:

- a) to have a clear understanding of what is expected in thesis-writing;
- b) to expect help from their advisor in establishing a feasible topic and in solving problems and assessing progress as the thesis is being written;
- c) to receive a fair assessment of the completed thesis and explanations of negative criticism;
- d) to be allowed to have a new advisor when he/she can offer convincing reasons to the department for the change;

- e) to be protected from exploitation by their advisor or other faculty members if the latter should
 - a. intrude upon the student's right of authorship or
 - b. constrain the student's research efforts for purposes not directly related to the advancement of the thesis project;
- f) to submit a thesis even if the advisor is not satisfied, although such action should be taken only in extreme cases and after full consultation with the department.

10.6 Responsibilities of the Department

- a) to uphold a good standard for theses;
- b) to provide adequate advising at all times so that when an advisor leaves the university for another permanent position, substitute arrangements are made as soon as possible;
- c) to allow students to change advisors if their research interests shift or develop in a new direction;
- d) to provide procedures that assist and encourage students to complete the thesis, such as early review and approval of topic and methodology, guidelines on access and appeals, oversight of the student's schedule, and a clearly stated system of thesis review and evaluation;
- e) to provide a fair evaluation of the thesis, normally by giving considerable responsibility to the committee and the thesis advisor.

10.7 Thesis Registration (GFSG 6691 or GFSG 6691.CN)

Students will typically enrol in this course once substantial work on the thesis has begun and once the majority of their coursework has been completed. As already noted, the thesis advisor must be approved before enrolling in this course. When students enrol in GFSG 6691 (section 01 if starting in fall term, section 02 if starting in winter term), the fee they pay for that course covers a full calendar year of thesis registration. It is not until 12 months after this initial registration that they need to enrol in the **thesis continuation (GFSG 6691.CN)** should they still be working on their thesis. Enrolment in GFSG 6691.CN lasts for 4 months, so must be renewed on a term basis. Please note that summer session for GFSG 6691.CN occurs only in May and covers the full four summer months.

Students who successfully complete their thesis requirements within the first month of any of those 4-month periods (i.e., the first month of the Fall, Winter, or SSI semester) will not be required to pay the thesis continuation fee.

Registration involves working with the thesis advisor and the thesis committee on the conceptualization, production, and defence of the thesis. Students who are enrolled for thesis credit present two seminars: the thesis proposal and the defence of thesis results.

AGAIN, PLEASE NOTE: Once a student starts working on their thesis, enrolment must be continuous. The first enrolment lasts for one year. After that, students must enrol in GFSG 6691.CN every 4 months.

10.8 Thesis Proposal

Students typically complete one semester or two units of course work before formulating a research proposal. The academic advisor assigned to the student upon admission does not necessarily become the thesis advisor. The thesis advisor may be selected in consultation with the academic advisor, Graduate Program Coordinator, and/or departmental chairperson. It is advised that substantial review of relevant research literature be carried out before the thesis committee is finalized. A proposal developed as part of a course, such as “Research Methods”, does not necessarily become the thesis proposal.

By far, the greatest amount of time for conducting the research and for writing the thesis needs to be devoted to reviewing related literature, refining the problem statement or hypothesis, developing the methodology, procedures, and instruments. Data collection and analysis typically require less time if the review of literature and proposal have been thorough. The department has copies of previous theses that students may want to view within the department office (Evaristus 331). Students can view and/or download pdf copies of recent theses (2008 and onward) at the library’s “E-Commons” website (<https://ec.msvu.ca/home>)

The purpose of the proposal is to communicate precisely the nature of the inquiry that is to be carried out. The proposal typically includes:

- a statement of the problem or research focus,
- an explanation of the theoretical and practical importance of the study,
- the research questions or hypotheses,
- definitions of key terms,
- a review and critique of related research,
- the theoretical framework,
- the method (techniques for data collection),
- a review of ethical considerations and safeguards,
- a plan for data analysis,
- a budget for data collection, analysis and thesis preparation,

- a discussion of the limitations of the inquiry, and
- references.

Although the degree of explicitness required in a proposal may vary from study to study, the student should be aware of the benefits associated with a careful, precise proposal. Provocative research questions usually arise out of a familiarity with the literature of a particular area of study. Moreover, a clear understanding of theoretical frameworks will also facilitate the research and writing process. Therefore, at the time of writing the proposal, the student should be able to demonstrate familiarity with the literature and a sound understanding of the theoretical framework(s) that will inform the research. The critical review of related research and the presentation and application of an appropriate theoretical framework(s) contained in the proposal can form the basis of the literature review chapter and theoretical framework chapter in the final thesis. Therefore, the thesis proposal can and should be viewed as a means to an end, rather than an end in itself.

When the thesis proposal is ready to present, the thesis advisor will forward the completed **Notification of Thesis Proposal Presentation Form** to the Dean of Graduate Studies and copied to the Graduate Program Coordinator at least two weeks in advance of the proposed date of presentation.

Upon conclusion of the proposal defence, the thesis committee will meet *in camera* (privately) and conclude that:

- the proposal is approved;
- the proposal is approved subject to revisions;
- the proposal is not approved, and it must be resubmitted for a second defence; or
- the resubmitted proposal is not approved, a grade of “F” is submitted. There is no opportunity for another resubmission.

The thesis advisor will then forward the completed **Thesis Proposal Presentation Report Form** to the Dean of Graduate Studies, copied to the Graduate Program Coordinator and the student.

10.9 Stylistic Matters

“What you put on paper, and how you put it there, reveals your standards of excellence, your knowledge, and the quality of your thinking more eloquently than anything else about you” (Leedy, 1993, p. 331).

The Department of Family Studies and Gerontology **requires** that students follow the style guidelines set out in the most recent edition (currently 7th edition) of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (2020). The department has a copy of

this manual in the main office (EV 331), and copies are available in the library. Copies can also be purchased from the book store. It is strongly encouraged that students purchase their own copy early on in their program, as this style guide provides information on a number of stylistic considerations, such as use of appropriate language, citing references, creating a reference list, headings and subheadings, reporting statistics, and creating tables.

Correct citation procedures are very important. **Please see Appendix B for helpful information on avoiding plagiarism.**

References

Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (2022). *Tri-council policy statement: Ethical conduct for research involving humans – TCPS 2 (2022)*. https://ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique_tcps2-epc2_2022.html

Leedy, P. D. (1992). *Practical research: Planning and design* (5th ed.). Don Mills, ON: Maxwell MacMillan Canada.

10.10 Procedure for Submitting Applications to the University Research Ethics Board

When human subjects are used in research, the question of ethical standards must be addressed. Students are required to adhere to the Tri-Council Ethics Policy and obtain approval for research involving human subjects from the University Ethics Review Board (UREB). Copies of the Tri-Council Ethics Policy and other Mount research policies are available through the University website at <http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/research/researchethics/policies.aspx> or from the office of the Associate Vice-President Research.

The UREB provides an ethics application form that encourages the development of succinct and relevant submissions, which will expedite the review process. The form (including appendices such as copies of instruments, surveys, interview guides, questionnaires, letters to potential research subjects, consent forms, and signed Thesis Proposal Presentation Report) is submitted by email to ethic@msvu.ca. can find out more information at: <http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/research/researchethics/ethicsreviewprocess.aspx>.

Succinct, ethics applications require careful attention and detail, therefore they take time to complete, and several drafts may be necessary to develop a thorough ethics application. Examples of previous ethics applications (by students and faculty) can be viewed in the department administrative assistant's office (EV 331).

Please note: The thesis committee must approve the research proposal before an application is submitted to the UREB. Approval consists of a defence of the proposal held in accordance with departmental regulations and a signed approval form (Thesis Proposal Presentation Report), which must be included with the application to the UREB.

Before students can proceed with their research, they also are required by the university to complete the **Tri-Council's Course on Research Ethics (CORE) Tutorial**, and submit proof of their completion of the course to the Research Office (accomplished by using their Mount email address to register for the tutorial). Information about this policy can be found at:

https://www.msvu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/REB.POL_.001-2020-Research-Ethics-Policy-for-Research-Involving-Human-Participants.pdf

The tutorial can be accessed at: <https://tcps2core.ca/welcome>

Additional key points:

- Research ethics clearance is effective for one year. A mandatory **Annual Report** is due on the anniversary date of the original ethics approval. If this report is not received, the student's research activity may be suspended.
- A **Final Report** is also required from the Research Office. A student's thesis cannot be approved without the completion of this mandatory form. [Policy.REB.SOP.406](#) (Completion of Research) states: "A final report allows the REB to close its files in addition to providing the REB with information that may be used in the evaluation any approval of related studies". This final report is submitted after all data collection is completed, and it is not necessary to wait until the thesis defence to submit the report.
- The **Annual Report (Renewal Request)** Form and **Final Report** Form and all other ethics-related forms can be found at:
<http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/research/researchethics/forms.aspx>.
- Standard Operating Procedure documents related to "Continuing Review" (REB.SOP.405), "Completion of Research" (REB.SOP.406), and "Suspension or Termination of REB Clearance" (REB.SOP.407) are located here:
<https://www.msvu.ca/research-at-the-mount/research-ethics/policies-procedures-guidelines/>

10.11 Organization of the Thesis

1. Title page (see **Appendix C**)
2. Copyright Notice
3. Signed approval page (see **Appendix D**)
4. Dedication (*if any*)
5. Abstract (see **Appendix E**) (*not more than 500 words*)
6. Preface (*if any*)
7. Acknowledgement (*if any*)
8. Table of contents (*listing chapter heads and subheads, references and appendix*)
9. List of tables (*if any*)
10. List of figures or illustrations (*if any*)
11. List of plates (*if any*)
12. Body of text
13. Endnotes (*if any*)
14. References
15. Appendices (*if any*)

10.12 Thesis Defence

Upon approval of the thesis for defence by the thesis committee, a date for the defence is selected. The thesis advisor will forward the completed **Notification of Thesis Defence Form** to the Dean of Graduate Studies, copied to the Graduate Program Coordinator, thesis committee members, and student at least two weeks ahead of the proposed defence date. The thesis defence is chaired by the Dean or a faculty member designated by the Dean.

Upon conclusion of the defence, the thesis defence committee will meet *in camera* (privately) and conclude either:

- the student successfully defended the thesis, passing grade awarded;
- the thesis is approved with minor revisions;
- the thesis required major revisions, it is revised and resubmitted for a second defence; or
- the thesis is not approved, there is no opportunity for resubmission. A grade of F is submitted.

The outcome of the thesis defence is noted on the **Thesis Defence Report Form**, which is sent to the Dean of Graduate Studies by the thesis supervisor. All members of the committee are required to sign this form.

Once any minor changes have been made satisfactorily, and once the student has completed the **Ethics Final Report Form** (see section 9.15 on time sequence; although this can be completed earlier), the thesis supervisor will forward the completed **Thesis Release Form** to the Dean of Graduate Studies, copied to the Registrar and the Graduate Program Coordinator.

10.13 Thesis Printing and Distribution

Once final editing is completed and approved, the student is responsible for making electronic (pdf) and hard copies of the final thesis. **Please note:** the electronic copy must be identical to the hard copy (except that your signature page on the electronic copy will be blank). Please see the <https://www.msvu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Policy20on20Personal20Information20Contained20in20Theses.pdf>

A pdf copy of the thesis must be submitted to the library. Information on how to do this is located at: <http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/library/universityarchives/thesisdeposit.aspx> Please note that the **Thesis Non-Exclusive License Form** also needs to be completed as part of this process.

Historically, students also got a hard bound copy for themselves, their advisor, and sometimes other committee members. Please consult with your advisor and committee members in advance regarding what format they would like to receive the thesis- e.g., pdf copy, hard bound, coil bound, etc..

The Mount library does not offer binding services. Information on companies that provide this service can be found at:

<http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/library/universityarchives/thesisdeposit.aspx>

All theses will have a standard cover, blue in colour with the university logo, the title, degree, the student's name and year embossed in gold on the cover and an abbreviated title, degree, student surname and year on the spine.

10.14 Instructions to be Followed in Preparing the Thesis for Printing (hard bound copies) and Electronic Submission

- **LEGIBILITY**

- An **original** or **superior copy** should be provided for printing.

- If supplying a **computer print-out**, please do not photo-reduce it.
 - The ideal paper for printing purposes has a hard, bright, even surface. Thick, opaque, **bond paper** (with paper mark) should be used.
 - The following **font** is preferred: Times New Roman 12-size font
 - Ensure that a **running head** is on all your pages (except the title page- see APA manual)
 - **Margins** need to be as follows: left margin: 1.5 inch, all other margins (right, top, bottom): 1 inch.
 - Ensure that **illustrated materials** such as graphs, charts, maps, etc. are sharp and clear.
 - Theses should be submitted **unbound** and should be placed individually into file folders, cardboard boxes or envelopes. File folders are preferred.
 - Do not print on reverse side of leaves.
- **COMPLETENESS**
 - Ensure that each thesis is complete with **no missing pages**
 - Other points to be checked include:
 - a) the date on which the degree was conferred, and
 - b) pages correctly identified.
- **COPYRIGHT**
 - The University Copyright notice © must appear on the thesis. It must be added to the title page or failing that on the succeeding page, as indicated in the example below:

© John Robert Smith, 2015
 - Completion of **Thesis Non-Exclusive License Form**
 - Please ensure that written authorization from authors of **previously copyrighted material** is included: articles, maps, published tests, etc. The material cannot be added to the MSVU E-Commons unless written authorization from the copyright holder is provided. Written authorization may

take weeks or months to obtain, so students should procure copyright authorization as far in advance as possible.

- **Major Reasons for Rejecting a Thesis for Electronic Submission or Printing**
 - missing or unsigned authorization forms (Thesis Non-Exclusive License Form)
 - the date (on which degree was conferred) missing in either thesis or on the Thesis Non-Exclusive License Form
 - missing pages (leaves)
 - poor legibility of any thesis that will not produce a quality image
 - the presence of unauthorized previously copyrighted material
 - in more than one file (for electronic copy)
 - file is not in pdf format (for electronic copy)

10.15 GSPPC Policy on Personal Information Contained in a Thesis

Canadian privacy legislation mandates the removal of any personal information from theses/dissertations that are forwarded to the National Library of Canada Thesis Deposit Program. According to the Privacy Act, personal information is any information, however recorded, that could be used to identify an individual. This does not include information that indicates an individual's professional identity. The candidate and the thesis supervisor are responsible for ensuring all personal information is removed or concealed before the thesis is submitted. For more information on examples of personal information, sections that commonly contain personal information, or how to remove personal information please view the policy at: <https://www.msvu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Policy20on20Personal20Information20Contained20in20Theses.pdf>

If personal information is found in a thesis, the thesis will be returned to the thesis supervisor for action.

10.16 Sequence of Events for Thesis (Master of Arts)

Normally, the sequence of events for students in the Master of Arts program will be as follows (see Table 1 for estimated time lines related to convocation):

- Student discusses general topic with academic advisor.
- Academic advisor suggests readings, journals, etc., and/or suggests another faculty

member for consultation.

- Student conducts initial review of literature and formulates a specific research problem.
- Student prepares research plan that answers the following questions:
 - What is the general area in which you wish to study?
 - What specific question do you propose to answer?
 - Why do we need answers to this question?
 - What does current research say about this question?
 - How do you propose to answer this question?
- Student seeks thesis advisor interested in topic. This will involve discussion with any of the following people: academic advisor, faculty advisors, Graduate Program Coordinator, and/or Department Chair.
- Student presents choice of thesis advisor to the Graduate Program Coordinator with the **Appointment of Thesis Supervisor Form**, **Appointment of External Thesis Supervisor Form**, or **Appointment of Thesis Co-Supervisor Form** signed by the thesis advisor.
- Student registers in GFSG 6691 (Thesis) (and then enrolls in GFSG 6691.CN each term—fall, winter, and summer session I—if not completed within one year).
- Student meets with the thesis advisor to complete the **Student-Thesis Supervisor Expectations Form** (available from Thesis Supervisor). This form should be reviewed (and revised if necessary) on a regular basis.
- Student prepares complete proposal. NOTE: It will likely take several drafts to develop a complete and final proposal. As the student proceeds with review of relevant literature and development of methodology, the student may, in consultation with advisor, seek the advice of other faculty members who have expertise relevant to aspects of the proposed study. These faculty members may or may not become members of the thesis committee. Usually the student works closely with their advisor, only meeting with the committee once the proposal is substantially developed and close to being ready to present.
- If not already done, student and thesis advisor discuss make-up of thesis committee. NOTE: This is also documented on the **Appointment of Thesis Supervisor Form**, **Appointment of External Thesis Supervisor Form**, or **Appointment of Thesis Co-Supervisor Form**.

- When the final proposal is approved by the committee for presentation, the advisor calls a proposal meeting. At least two weeks ahead of this meeting, all of the following should be completed: (a) the **Notification of Thesis Proposal Presentation Form** is completed; (b) a copy of the approved proposal is made available to each committee member and one copy of the proposal (for file) should be left with the Family Studies and Gerontology Department for review by other faculty and students; and (c) an abstract (**see Appendix D for example**) and invitation to the thesis proposal defence should be submitted electronically to the department administrative assistant which will then be forwarded to the graduate student distribution list.
- Proposal seminar is held with the thesis advisor chairing the presentation.
 - Suggested format:
 - Introduction by thesis advisor
 - Half hour presentation by student
 - Questioning by committee members followed by questions from others present
 - Committee members meet privately.
 - Committee meets with student.
- The **Thesis Proposal Presentation Report Form** is completed.
- Student submits an **Ethics Application** to University Research Ethics Board, including the signed Thesis Proposal Presentation Report Form.
- Study in progress. Student works mainly with the thesis advisor, and consults committee members as needed. In consultation with thesis advisor, student submits approved copies to committee members. Reasonable turn-around time, a minimum of two weeks, should be agreed upon by committee members and student. NOTE: It is typical for several drafts of a thesis to be written before it is determined to be ready for final defence. This is a natural part of the thesis process.
- The following must be completed at least two weeks prior to the intended defence date: (a) the completed thesis (final draft, ready for defending) is submitted to the thesis advisor and the committee (in our department, this should be in hard copy rather than electronic copy as suggested in the university policies); (b) an electronic copy sent to the Dean of Graduate Studies and to the Graduate Program Coordinator; (c) an electronic copy sent to the Family Studies and Gerontology office; (d) a Public Thesis Seminar announced through the department distribution list (abstract, date and time of defence); and (e) the **Notification of Thesis Defence Form** is submitted to all appropriate people.

- The Dean or a designate appointed by the Dean will chair the defence.
Suggested format:
 - Student presents summary of research focus, methodology, method, findings and recommendations (30 minutes).
 - Committee members question the student, one at a time, in a “round robin” format starting with the external reviewer. Upon completion of one cycle of questioning by all committee members, the chair of the thesis defence invites committee members, one at a time, to participate in a subsequent round of questions, should they so choose. The Chair of the thesis defence then invites all others present to ask questions.
- The **Thesis Defence Report Form** is completed.
- The student makes any required revisions to their thesis and submits an **Ethics Final Report Form** (this form can be downloaded at the Ethics section of the Research Office webpage) to the Research Office, copied to the thesis advisor.
- Following completion of any revisions and the submission of the ethics report, the thesis (with revisions, if required) is accepted. The thesis advisor completes the **Thesis Release Form**.
- The student submits a pdf version of the thesis to the library and gets at least one hard copy bound.

Table 1. ESTIMATED THESIS TIME LINE FOR CONVOCATION^a

<i>TIME LINE</i>	<i>SPRING CONVOCATION</i>	<i>FALL CONVOCATION</i>
<i>Committee Received</i>	2 weeks prior	2 weeks prior
<i>Last Date for Oral Defence</i>	March 30	September 9
<i>Final Editing Complete</i>	April 10	September 15
<i>Final Copy sent to Library</i>	last Friday in April	third Friday in September
<i>Graduation</i>	May 17-18	November 5 th

^a Note, the dates for oral defence, final editing, final copy, and graduation are estimates- please check the academic calendar for the exact date, and then work backwards to estimate the other deadlines. Consult with your thesis advisor if you have any questions about these estimated timelines.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Outline for Annual Report (report only on work *in the preceding year*)

1. **General Information**
 - Student name
 - Current year of report
 - Type of program (MA or MFSG)
 - Name of academic or thesis advisor
 - Year admitted into the program, Year in program (e.g., 1st, 2nd)
2. **Progress on course work**
 - Courses taken in the previous year, grades in completed courses
 - Grades and titles of term papers
 - Progress on course requirements
 - Incomplete grades
3. **Progress on thesis (if applicable)**
 - Thesis title
 - Brief description
 - Advisor
 - Committee members
 - Expected completion date
 - Progress to date (in the previous year)
4. **Teaching experience**
 - Teaching experience (teaching assistantships, supervision, etc.)
 - Other relevant activities (seminars, lectures, etc.)
5. **Research experience**
 - Research seminar participation- as presenter or attendee (please list the titles, presenters' names, and dates of all department and non-department seminars attended)
 - Research assistantships
 - Other research activities (ongoing research outside of thesis)
 - Research awards (applied for and/or received)
 - Publications (provide full references in APA format)
 - Conference papers (including invited colloquia- provide full references in APA format)
6. **Practical experience**
 - Practicum experience, internships, etc.
7. **Service**
 - University service committees, relevant community service, etc.
8. **Computer literacy progress**
 - Skills attained, seminars
9. **Academic financial support**
 - Scholarships, fellowships, graduate teaching/research assistantships (amounts received and dates)
10. **Additional information**
11. **Overall assessment of previous year's work and progress to date in the program**
 - Compare to "Plans for upcoming year" from previous year's report, if applicable.
12. **Plans for upcoming year**

APPENDIX B
Tips on Avoiding Plagiarism

The MSVU library provides resources on APA style, and occasionally conducts tutorials on how to find, use, and cite references. One-on-one meetings with a librarian are also possible.

Great tips for “safe writing” can be found at Purdue University’s Online Writing Lab (OWL): <https://owl.purdue.edu/>, which we strongly recommend you read carefully. There are tips on topics such as (a) reading and note taking, (b) writing paraphrases and summaries, and (c) writing direct quotations (https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/avoiding_plagiarism/best_practices.html).

Please visit the broader section of Purdue’s OWL for more information about plagiarism, including exercises.

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/avoiding_plagiarism/index.html

APPENDIX C
Sample Title Page

Mount Saint Vincent University
Department of Family Studies and Gerontology

Dynamics of an Aging Family

by

Lesley Dale Doe

A Thesis

submitted in partial fulfilment

of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in Family Studies and Gerontology

October, 2015

Halifax, Nova Scotia

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APPENDIX D
Sample Signature Page

Mount Saint Vincent University
Department of Family Studies and Gerontology

Dynamics of an Aging Family

by

Lesley Dale Doe

Approved:

Tracey White, Ph.D.
Thesis Advisor
Associate Professor of Family Studies and Gerontology

Pat Black, Ed.D.
Assistant Professor of Family Studies and Gerontology

Shawn Green, M.A.
Associate Professor of History

APPENDIX E
Sample Abstract Page

ABSTRACT
Causes and Consequences:
The Histories of Home Care Policies in Three Provinces, 1985 – 2000

Publicly-funded home care programs have received increasing attention from policy-makers in the last decade, not only because they are considered to be cost-effective substitutes to medical care provided in hospitals, but as well because of the ever-increasing numbers of elderly persons who need assistance to live in their homes and so avoid the more costly and less popular alternative of facility-based care.

In this study, the population of interest is the frail elderly. The particular concern is how the evolutionary shifts in publicly-funded home care policies have had impact on them and those who are their caregiver networks. Have there been patterns and directions over the life courses of home care programs? If so, what are the factors that determine those patterns and directions? There are consequences to those who need the service. The research goal is to contribute to the strategic thinking of policy-makers. To that end, the histories of publicly-funded programs in three jurisdictions from 1985 to 2000 are analyzed and compared. Using a neo-institutional framework to structure the comparative analysis, the study identifies that policy shifts are usually incremental. When more than incremental, the shift occurs in time periods defined by influences beyond the boundaries of the home care system, and only then, when certain factors interact. Those four factors are (1) the commitment by a cadre of influential and competent government actors within

the jurisdiction (2) to a larger agenda of change, (3) of which home care programming is one aspect, and (4) while ensuring that the policy changes satisfy groups who are influential in health care policy design. In Canada, these influential groups have been government (provincial and Federal), physician groups and hospitals administrators.

Using the analytic framework for explanation, it is forecasted that a national home care strategy will not be implemented based on the Health Accord of 2003, because it does not meet the conditions necessary for more than incremental change to occur. Most specifically, it does not meet the interests of some First Ministers. Optional strategies are introduced, again using the framework to forecast the consequences of one that initiates without acknowledgement of long term social support services, as well as a strategy that does. Finally, anticipated shifts in three arenas relevant to home care policy are introduced - the foundation for social policy creation, the accommodationist relationship between governments and physician groups, and the ways which policy is constructed - and the impact of these shifts on the findings.

Despite the incrementalist approach to policy development uncovered in this research, it is difficult not to advocate for a shift in focus towards a more social model of care for Canada's elderly with assurance that some resources are dedicated to the care of the frail elderly in their homes. The alternative puts at risk the values of collective responsibility and protection of society's marginalized, devalues the social aspects of the meaning of health, and leaves caregivers vulnerable to the continuity of insufficient acknowledgement, support and compensation.

APPENDIX F
General Directory

Admissions Office.....	902-457-6117
Art Gallery.....	902-457-6160
Assisi Front Desk.....	902-457-6412
Athletics/Rec (general info).....	902-457-6420
Audio Visual.....	902-457-6538
Bookstore.....	902-457-6157
Campus Ministry.....	902-457-6446
Career Placement Centre.....	902-457-6567
Counseling.....	902-457-6567
Curriculum Resource Centre.....	902-457-6426
Dean's Office/Graduate Studies.....	902-457-6400
DLCE (Distance Education).....	902-457-6437
EMERGENCIES.....	902-457-6111
Fax number for FSGN.....	902-457-6134
Financial Aid.....	902-457-6356
Financial Services.....	902-457-6277
Health Office.....	902-457-6354
Health and Dental Plan Manager.....	902-457-6532
Housing.....	902-457-6356
Information & Technology Services Help Desk.....	902-457-6538
Institute for the Study of Women.....	902-457-6568
International Student Advising.....	902-457-6488
Library.....	902-457-6250
Nova Scotia Centre on Aging.....	902-457-6546
Parking- general information.....	902-457-6286
Registrar Office – general info.....	902-457-6117
Security – general info.....	902-457-6111
Student Affairs.....	902-457-6359
Switchboard.....	902-457-6788
Dr. Áine Humble (Graduate Coordinator).....	902-457-6109
Dr. Janice Keefe.....	902-457-6466
Dr. Deborah Norris.....	902-457-6376
Dr. Zachary Zimmer.....	902-457-5541
FSGN Administrative Assistant.....	902-457-6321
Maritime Data Centre.....	902-457-6780/1/2/3