

# Effective thesis writing

## Lecturers

Massimo Ballerini (SEDIN)  
Library staff  
Michael Thompson (Language Center)

## Language

English

## Course description and objectives

The course is aimed at giving students the tools and tips to write their thesis. It is divided in three sections, each one covering specific topics that, integrated one to the other, will provide students with the knowledge needed to successfully write their thesis:

- The first section (lessons 1-4) deals with linguistic and structural topics of your thesis. It will teach you how to structure your thesis, which style to use, and how to build a literature review and an abstract
- The second section (lessons 5-6) explains how to cite properly, prepare your bibliography, and use the RefWorks bibliographic management tool
- The third section (lessons 7-12) covers the advanced features of Microsoft Word, valuable in the creation of structured documents, with specific orientation to your thesis. In particular, this section will explain how to effectively use format styles, integrate data from different applications, and insert graphic objects, tables, equations, footnotes, indexes, tables of contents, cross-references

## Audience

The course is open exclusively to students of the Master of Science Programs at Università Bocconi and is part of the Enhancing Experience activities that are worth 2 credits (subject to 75% attendance and to passing the final test).

It is specifically targeted at students who are about to start the drafting of their thesis, but it can also be useful to those who want to learn how to create academic and professional documents effectively and quickly.

## Prerequisites

It is recommended that students:

- have at least a CEFR B2 level of English
- know the General Bocconi guidelines for thesis writing
- have solid skills of the basic use of Microsoft Word

## Duration

24 academic hours

## Calendar

Lecture	Date	Time	Room
1	Mon 04/11/2019	18.00 - 19.30	N04
2	Fri 08/11/2019	14.30 - 16.00	N05
3	Fri 08/11/2019	16.00 - 17.45	N05
4	Wed 13/11/2019	18.00 - 19.30	N04
5	Thu 14/11/2019	18.00 - 19.30	N04
6	Mon 18/11/2019	18.00 - 19.30	Info 6
7	Fri 22/11/2019	14.30 - 16.00	Info AS05
8	Fri 22/11/2019	16.15 - 17.45	Info AS05
9	Mon 25/11/2019	18.00 - 19.30	Info AS05
10	Wed 27/11/2019	18.00 - 19.30	Info AS05
11	Mon 02/12/2019	18.00 - 19.30	Info AS05
12	Wed 04/12/2019	18.00 - 19.30	Info AS05

For the first five lectures, students are invited to **bring their own laptop**. The final seven lectures will be taught in computer labs, thus every student will have a PC available.

## Syllabus

### Lecture Topics

#### 1 Introduction:

- Course introduction
- General Bocconi guidelines for thesis writing

#### Overview:

- Constructing your thesis
- The keys to academic style

#### 2 The heart of your thesis. The literature review:

- Constructing your Literature Review
- Exploring academic vocabulary

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**3 The heart of your thesis. Discussion and analysis:**

- Organizing your Discussion and Analysis
- Using signals and transitions

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**4 Beginning and ending your thesis:**

- Writing your Abstract
- Constructing your Introduction & Conclusion
- Employing an Academic Tone

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**5 How to cite and organize a bibliography:**

- Why should I cite my sources? Avoiding plagiarism
- Citation vs Bibliography
- Which citation style should I use? The author-date system
- How should I organize a bibliography?

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**6 RefWorks:**

- What is a bibliographic management tool?
- How to create your account and use RefWorks:
  - Add/import citations for articles and other resources you find in your research
  - Manage and organize your citations (editing, folders etc.)
  - Create bibliographies in all major styles (Chicago, Harvard etc.)

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**7 Introduction to advanced text editing:**

- Review of some Microsoft Word basics
- Importing and adjusting texts from other sources
- Paragraph and font formatting
- Page layout and text distribution options

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**8 Organizing and structuring a document:**

- Even/odd pages and first page options
- Managing sections in a document
- Creating and using format styles
- Using multilevel lists

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**9 Managing page layouts and text fields:**

- Creating indexes and tables of contents
  - Managing fields in a document
  - Numbering pages
  - Managing headers and footers
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**10 Inserting and managing graphics and other objects:**

- Inserting pictures, graphic objects and diagrams
- Creating mathematical equations
- Using tabular structures
- Inserting footnotes and numbered captions

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**11 Using references and proofing tools:**

- AutoCorrect options and Thesaurus
- Language settings and spelling check
- Using cross-references
- RefWorks Write-N-Cite tool in Word: adding citations and formatting your bibliography while writing your thesis

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**12 Finalizing the document ready for printing:**

- Creating and using Word templates
- Saving, converting and printing options

**Final test**

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**Software**

Microsoft Word 2016; RefWorks

**Suggested bibliography**

- CiA Training Ltd (2016). *ECDL Advanced Word Processing Software* (BCS ITQ L3), *Word 2016/365 - syllabus 3.0*. Sunderland: CiA Training Ltd  
(Check availability at the Library: <http://lib.unibocconi.it/record=b1612952~S8>)
- Craswell, Gail & Poore, Megan (2012). *Writing for academic success*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Los Angeles: SAGE  
(Check availability at the Library: <https://lib.unibocconi.it/record=b1492228~S8>)
- Wang, Gabe T. & Park, Keumjae (2016). *Student research and report writing: from topic selection to the complete paper*. Chichester: Wiley Blackwell  
(Check availability at the Library: <http://lib.unibocconi.it/record=b1614326~S8>)
- Wallwork, Adrian (2016). *English for writing research papers*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Cham: Springer (digital copy available through Bocconi library on & off-campus: <http://0-doi.org.lib.unibocconi.it/10.1007/978-3-319-26094-5>)

**Available seats**

100, reserved to students of the Master of Science Programs.