



BA 480

Ross School Senior Thesis Seminar

Course Coordinators

Prof. Burcu Tasoluk

Prof. Cathy Shakespeare

Course Overview

March, 2026

Course Overview and Objectives

- An honors-type seminar open to BBA seniors who want to write a research thesis.
- Students register for 3 credits of BA 480 in Fall and 3 credits of BA 480 in Winter.
- Each student will
 - Choose a broad area of research interest,
 - Approach faculty member(s) at the Ross School of Business to gauge their interest in supervising their work and serving as their thesis advisor,
 - Narrow the topic for a feasible research project,
 - Develop central ideas and analyses and communicate findings and conclusions in the form of a presentation, a poster, and a final written thesis report.

By the end of the two semesters, you'll...

- Learn to better understand the important role of research in business
- Develop specific knowledge in your broad area of interest
- Develop important communications and analytical skills that will serve you well in your business and/or academic career

Key Components of the Course

- Senior Thesis as an **independent** endeavor in a **collaborative** environment
- Discipline-Specific Research Presentations by Faculty in each discipline (first 6 or so weeks of the semester)
- Intro to: library resources for research, methodology support and research integrity policies and support
- Student Interest Groups
- Peer Reviews
- Poster Session

BA 480 Enrollment

Class Hours and Location

Thursdays, 2:30 pm – 4 pm (Fall 2025, Winter 2026)

Instructor consent required for registration. BA 480 is reserved for BBA Seniors. If you are eligible and interested in enrolling, please send the following documents to Prof. Burcu Tasoluk (btasoluk@umich.edu):

- 1) Your current resume,
- 2) A “Statement of Interest” outlining your broad research area and explaining why you would like to fulfill your Capstone requirement by enrolling in this course and writing a senior thesis.

Senior Thesis summarized in Five Questions

- 1) What is the problem that you are trying to address? (Define the context)
- 2) Why is that an important problem? (Define its potential impact)
- 3) What is your approach to solving the problem? (Define the method)
- 4) What have you found? (Define the results)
- 5) What difference does this make? (Define the contribution of your work)

Types of Research Projects

- Conceptual / Theoretical vs. Empirical
- **A key step is to identify and explore a topic of particular interest to oneself and approved by the thesis advisor as having promise as a piece of independent research**
- Ideally, an intersection between 1) Student's interest, 2) Thesis advisor's interest, and 3) Interesting gap in the literature/knowledge base

Sources for Thesis Topic Ideas

- Your own personal interests and passion
- Ideas from everyday discussion of business topics
- “Suggestions for Future Research”
- Ask a Professor
- Ask a Librarian
- Ask Internet
- Take an idea from a field outside of business and apply it to a business problem
- “The Conversation”

Resources

- Developing your idea and knowledge of the literature
 - Kresge Library – Ross School of Business
 - University of Michigan Libraries
- Analyzing your data
 - Your thesis advisor
 - CSCAR
- Communicating your ideas and findings
 - Sweetland Writing Center

Fall Semester Grade Components (40%)

Class Participation	10%
Student Interest Group Reflection Papers	20%
Peer Review of Thesis Proposal Draft	15%
Thesis Proposal Presentation	15%
Thesis Proposal Written Report	40%

Winter Semester Grade Components (60%)

Class Participation	10%
Peer Review of Final Thesis Draft	15%
Final Thesis Presentation	15%
Final Thesis Poster	20%
Final Thesis Written Report	40%