

# EGR 993, Section 001: Engineering Research Writing Fall 2020

- **Semester Dates:** September 2, 2020 – December 11, 2020, followed by final exam week
- **Course Time:** Thursdays from 9-10am Eastern Time Zone (GMT -5). Please note that Daylight Savings Time ends on November 1, 2020, so there will be a one-hour shift at that time.
- **Course Location:** All seminars will be broadcast live via Zoom, with an option to meet in person as physical distancing restrictions allow. Physical meeting locations and restrictions will be announced by email.
- **Course Materials:** Students are not required to purchase textbooks or other materials for this course. Students are responsible for obtaining appropriate access to research literature in order to complete their dissertations; many items can be obtained at no cost to students via the MSU Library.
- **Instructor:** Dr. Katy Luchini Colbry ([colbryka@msu.edu](mailto:colbryka@msu.edu))
- **Email:** Email to [colbryka@msu.edu](mailto:colbryka@msu.edu) is the best method to contact the instructor. Please note that the instructor strives to answer all student emails in a timely manner during the work week (Monday-Friday); however, it can occasionally take a few days to response to non-urgent matters.
- **Office Hours:** Tuesdays from 9-10am Eastern Time Zone (GMT -5), starting September 8 and continuing weekly through December 15. Office hours will be held remotely via zoom; students may log in at <https://msu.zoom.us/j/98925901507> (no passcode required, but the waiting room feature has been enabled, so if there is another student in the office hours you will be asked to wait until they are done).
- **Appointments:** Schedule online at <http://bookkaty.colbry.com>; the appointment scheduling system automatically generates a Microsoft Teams meeting session, but students may request either a phone call or zoom video meeting instead by contacting [colbryka@msu.edu](mailto:colbryka@msu.edu).

## Course Overview

This seminar course supports engineering graduate students in completing their thesis or dissertation and includes structured time for writing and peer-review. This seminar includes weekly discussions of topics such as publication timelines; creating outlines; research support resources; receiving/providing feedback about academic writing; and MSU Graduate School formatting requirements. The class is designed primarily for on-campus graduate students in their final 1-2 semesters who will devote substantial time to writing the thesis/dissertation during the term. PhD students ideally will have already passed the comprehensive exam, but may also enroll if they intend to spend substantial time writing in preparation for their comprehensive.

**Please note:** this course is designed as a supportive “writing lab” environment for students who are spending substantial time on their own thesis/dissertation during the semester. The weekly seminars are primarily time for individual writing and peer review/feedback. This is not an English-language or grammar course, and does not provide instruction in technical writing. Students will receive general feedback from their peers and instructor, but not detailed document editing.

EGR 993 is part of a series of professional development courses in the College of Engineering, and is specially coded by MSU such that **enrolling in 1 credit of EGR 993 provides students with “full time” enrollment status for the semester.**

## Course Enrollment Process and Tuition Scholarship

EGR 993 is a limited-enrollment course restricted to graduate students in the College of Engineering. The instructor's permission is required to enroll in the course. To obtain permission, please complete the EGR 993 Application Form and return it to [colbryka@msu.edu](mailto:colbryka@msu.edu). These forms are processed in batches 1-2 times per week, so it may take a few days to receive a response to your request. If approved, we will attempt to enroll you in the course directly; if there is a hold on your account that prevents enrollment, we will let you know and add an override to your student record so that you can enroll yourself in the course once you have resolved the account hold.

**For graduate students who do NOT have an appointment as a TA or RA in Fall 2020**, a tuition scholarship is available to cover the 1 credit of tuition for EGR 993; students are still responsible for paying applicable fees (typically \$25 or less per semester). The scholarships are applied to students' accounts in batches approximately once per week, so it may take up to 2 weeks for you to see the scholarship on your account. **Please note that the scholarship does NOT automatically change the bill you see in STUINFO.** Bills are generated every 1-4 weeks according to the university's calendar and do not change based on account activity; to see whether the EGR 993 scholarship has been applied to your account you need to look at the account details section of STUINFO.

## Learning Objectives

By participating in this course, students will:

- Gain an understanding of the structure of an engineering thesis/dissertation and develop skills for developing and implementing writing timelines
- Be able to articulate the value of citation management systems for supporting research writing and apply appropriate citation techniques to their thesis/dissertation
- Learn about ethical practices for research writing, and be able to articulate key principles for disseminating research responsibly within their own domain
- Gain an understanding of the process of peer review in engineering and be able to provide and receive constructive feedback about academic writing
- Learn about various strategies for structuring writing time effectively, overcoming common challenges to writing, and developing a sustainable writing practice
- Gain experience in working in teams and communicating with individuals from different backgrounds, cultures, and research disciplines

## Grading

EGR 993 is graded Pass/Fail based on an accumulation of points as follows:

Points Earned	Grade
100 or higher	Pass
99 or below	Fail

Points are accumulated based on the following activities:

**Seminar Participation:** 5 points per seminar. Seminars are held weekly on Thursdays from 9:00am-10:00am, September 3 through December 10, 2020 (no seminar on November 26 due to Thanksgiving).

All seminars will be broadcast live via zoom, with an option to meet in person as physical distancing restrictions allow. Physical meeting locations and restrictions will be announced by email. **Maximum of 70 points** for participating in all 14 seminars. Please note that the seminars are designed primarily as “writing labs” when students will work on their own thesis/dissertation for a substantial portion of time; the learning value is in the live, real-time participation thus the seminars will NOT be recorded.

**Writing Assignments:** 15 points per assignment. All assignments must be submitted by email to [colbryka@msu.edu](mailto:colbryka@msu.edu) by 11:59pm Eastern Time Zone (GMT -5) on the due date, **with a cc to your research advisor**. The subject line of the email should begin with “EGR 993.” Extensions to the assignment deadlines may be requested by email ([colbryka@msu.edu](mailto:colbryka@msu.edu)) at any time prior to the due date. **Maximum of 60 points** for submitting all 4 assignments.

- **Due September 15:** a timeline of writing tasks and goals for the fall semester, based on your individual thesis/dissertation.
- **Due October 15:** a progress report reviewing the activities completed to date, and revising your timeline for the remainder of the semester as appropriate.
- **Due November 15:** a progress report reviewing the activities completed to date, and revising your timeline for the remainder of the semester as appropriate.
- **Due December 15:** a final progress report reviewing the activities completed during the semester, and summarizing tasks and focus areas for the following semester. **This progress report serves as the final exam for EGR 993.**

**Final Thesis/Dissertation Defense:** 100 points for successfully completing the final oral defense of your thesis or dissertation. Points are earned by sending an email to [colbryka@msu.edu](mailto:colbryka@msu.edu) after the defense, with a CC to your research advisor, indicating the date that you passed the final defense.

**Final Thesis/Dissertation Document:** 100 points for having your final thesis/dissertation **accepted** by the MSU Graduate School prior to the end of the semester. Please note that submission is not sufficient; the final document must be accepted by the Graduate School, indicating that it has met all requirements (including formatting) and that the student has submitted the other forms/tasks required as part of the thesis/dissertation process. Points are earned by forwarding by email to [colbryka@msu.edu](mailto:colbryka@msu.edu) the notification from the Graduate School that your final document has been accepted.

**Extra Credit:** students who find themselves in need of additional point-earning opportunities for this course should schedule an appointment with Dr. Colbry at <http://bookkaty.colbry.com> to discuss options. While it is expected that all students will be able to earn a passing grade in this course by participating in seminars, submitting writing assignments, and/or completing their final defense or thesis/dissertation document, in extenuating circumstances students may work with Dr. Colbry to identify alternative assessments for this course.

## Special Policies and Considerations for Fall 2020

Students must follow all MSU guidelines related to health and safety during Fall 2020. Please see <https://msu.edu/together-we-will/> for details. Guidelines include, but are not limited to:

1. Students are expected to stay home if they are ill or if they are waiting for results from a COVID-19 screening test; accommodations will be made for students who miss a seminar or assignment due to illness and it will not negatively impact your performance in the course. Please contact your health care provider and follow their advice regarding self-isolation if you have been sick with COVID-19 symptoms, tested positive for COVID-19, or have been potentially exposed to someone with COVID-19. When you are able, please email [colbryka@msu.edu](mailto:colbryka@msu.edu) to discuss appropriate accommodations for any work or activities you may have missed.

2. Cloth Face Coverings On Campus:
  - Face coverings must be worn by everyone (including all faculty, staff, students, vendors, and visitors) indoors and outdoors while on property owned or governed by MSU and while participating in MSU-related or MSU-sponsored activities. If you have a medical condition that may prevent you from safely wearing a face covering, you should contact MSU's Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (<https://www.rcpd.msu.edu/>) to begin the accommodation process.
  - Face coverings should (a) be non-medical grade to maintain supplies for health care use, (b) fit snugly against the side of your face, (c) cover your nose and mouth, (d) be secured with ties or ear loops, and (e) allow for breathing without restriction. Cloth face coverings should only be worn for one day at a time, and they must be properly hand washed or laundered before subsequent use. Face coverings may vary (for example, disposable non-medical face coverings or neck gaiters are acceptable).
  - Failure to wear a face covering for those without an accommodation will result in the following: (1) a reminder of the requirement, the reason for it (to minimize spread), and a request to comply. (2) a request to leave the classroom if no compliance. (3) if no face covering compliance and the student refuses to leave the classroom, class will be dismissed. (4) emergency services may be contacted should an emergency develop that cannot be resolved by classroom dismissal. Non-compliance with MSU policies regarding face coverings will result in consequences based on MSU guidelines.
3. Students must follow visual cues in classrooms and other meeting spaces to maintain appropriate physical distance during in-person activities (e.g., furniture should not be rearranged, blocked areas should be avoided, etc.).
4. Students must wear appropriate face coverings, wash hands frequently, and sanitize surfaces frequently.
5. Students should minimize or eliminate shared communal objects (e.g., lab equipment, computer equipment, desks) whenever possible and take responsibility for cleaning them between uses.
6. Students are encouraged to keep their personal items (e.g., cell phones, other electronics) to themselves and clean.
7. Students are encouraged to use disinfectant wipes to wipe down shared desks, lab equipment, and other shared objects and surfaces between uses and disposing of these cleaning materials in the nearest trash bin. Cleaning supplies will be available near or inside classrooms.
8. Students are asked to bring their own closed top water container to minimize the use of water fountains.
9. We will consider hosting class sessions outdoors if and when feasible.

## Course Policies, Syllabus Statements, and Additional Resources

1. If you have a documented medical or personal emergency, please inform the instructor by email ([colbryka@msu.edu](mailto:colbryka@msu.edu)) as soon as possible (generally within a week of the emergency), and we will make appropriate accommodations.
2. Extensions are available for written assignment deadlines, and should be requested in advance whenever feasible. Failure to submit written assignments by the specified deadlines may result in a reduction of points for that assignment.
3. **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** Michigan State University is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Requests for accommodations by persons with disabilities may be made by contacting the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities at 517-884-RCPD or <https://www.rcpd.msu.edu>. Once your eligibility

for an accommodation has been determined, you will be issued a Verified Individual Services Accommodation ("VISA") form. Please present this form to the instructor at the start of the term and/or two weeks prior to the accommodation date (test, project, etc.). Requests received after this date may not be honored.

4. **Academic Honesty and Research Integrity:** Article 2.III.B.2 of the [Student Rights and Responsibilities \(SRR\)](#) states that "The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards." In addition, the College of Engineering adheres to the policies on academic honesty as specified in [General Student Regulations](#) 1.0, Protection of Scholarship and Grades; the all-University Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades; and Ordinance 17.00, Examinations. Therefore, you are expected to develop original work for this course and appropriately cite all research sources. Students who violate MSU academic integrity rules may receive a penalty grade, including a failing grade on the assignment or in the course. Contact your instructor if you are unsure about the appropriateness of your course work. (See also the website of the [MSU Research Integrity Officer](#) and the [Spartan Code of Honor](#).)
5. **Limits to confidentiality.** Essays, journals, and other materials submitted for this class are generally considered confidential pursuant to the University's student record policies. However, students should be aware that University employees, including instructors, may not be able to maintain confidentiality when it conflicts with their responsibility to report certain issues to protect the health and safety of MSU community members and others. As the instructor, I must report the following information to other University offices (including the Department of Police and Public Safety) if you share it with me: suspected child abuse/neglect, even if this maltreatment happened when you were a child, allegations of sexual assault or sexual harassment when they involve MSU students, faculty, or staff, and credible threats of harm to oneself or to others. These reports may trigger contact from a campus official who will want to talk with you about the incident that you have shared. In almost all cases, it will be your decision whether you wish to speak with that individual. If you would like to talk about these events in a more confidential setting you are encouraged to make an appointment with the MSU Counseling Center.
6. **Drops and Adds:** Please check the MSU Schedule of Courses ([schedule.msu.edu](http://schedule.msu.edu)) to determine the last day to add this course; the last day to drop this course with a 100% refund and no grade reported; and the last day to drop this course with no refund and no grade reported. You should immediately make a copy of your amended schedule to verify you have added or dropped this course.
7. **Commercialized Lecture Notes:** Commercialization of lecture notes and university-provided course materials is not permitted in this course.
8. **Disruptive Behavior:** Article 2.III.B.4 of the [Student Rights and Responsibilities \(SRR\)](#) for students at Michigan State University states: "The student's behavior in the classroom shall be conducive to the teaching and learning process for all concerned." Article 2.III.B.10 of the [SRR](#) states that "The student and the faculty share the responsibility for maintaining professional relationships based on mutual trust and civility." [General Student Regulation 5.02](#) states: "No student shall . . . interfere with the functions and services of the University (for example, but not limited to, classes . . .) such that the function or service is obstructed or disrupted. Students whose conduct adversely affects the learning environment in this classroom may be subject to disciplinary action through the Student Judicial Affairs office.
9. **Grief Absence Policy:** <https://reg.msu.edu/ROInfo/Notices/GriefAbsence.aspx>
10. **Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities:** <http://splife.studentlife.msu.edu/graduate-student-rights-and-responsibilities>
11. **Medical Withdrawal:** <https://www.deanofstudents.msu.edu/medical-withdrawal>
12. **Integrity of Scholarship and Grades:**  
<https://reg.msu.edu/AcademicPrograms/Text.aspx?Section=112#s534>

13. **Anti-Discrimination Policy:** <https://civilrights.msu.edu/policies/index.html>
14. **Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct Policy:**  
<https://civilrights.msu.edu/policies/index.html>
15. **Religious Observance Policy:** <https://reg.msu.edu/ROInfo/Notices/ReligiousPolicy.aspx>
16. **MSU Ombudsperson:** <https://ombud.msu.edu/>
17. **MSU College of Engineering Graduate Program Contacts:**  
<https://www.egr.msu.edu/graduate/contacts>
18. **MSU Graduate School:** <https://grad.msu.edu/>