

**48731 MSSD Synthesis Prep**  
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**Course Description**

Synthesis prep is the 12-unit course that ensures a delineated, focused scope, with refined timeline and deliverables for the Fall Synthesis effort. It is expected that the students will have established all precedent work in their area of study, with critical excerpts organized and professionally cited. New contributions through field work, simulation and analysis will have been initiated in spring semester to ensure that the Synthesis methods, timeline and deliverables are feasible within the 16 weeks. Unlike courses with paced assignments and faculty set deliverables, students will demonstrate their ability to complete thesis level work independently. Where appropriate, students will have secured an external “client” as advisor and reviewer. Students are expected to make timely submissions and presentations of their progress, to fully take advantage of, and engage in, group discussions on methods, findings, documentation and presentation techniques. A first draft of the synthesis deliverable, with updated table of contents, comprehensive literature review, a body of data collection and first round analysis, as well as a timeline and deliverables will be expected by the end of the semester.

MSSD students will meet weekly for 2-3 hours to discuss their progress, and to share best practices for literature, field, experimental and simulation research including data base development, metrics, analyses and communication vehicles. Each student or student team will be expected to present weekly for effective input from the faculty and peers.