

WRIT 3234A: Research Methods for Technical and Professional Writers.

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contact info

My office is located in Newton (1119D). The best way to get a hold of me is by e-mail, or to stop by during office hours. Office hours are tentatively scheduled for Monday and Wednesday between 10 to 12 and 1 to 2. Some of these may be virtual office hours, held on-line, and some of these office hours may be designated as group work times. I strongly recommend that you make an appointment if you don't want to wait through various other scheduled student appointments/work times.

texts and other budgetary concerns

We'll work between the two required texts for the course and also a ton of on-line research examples/information.

- *Statistics Explained* 2nd edition Perry R. Hinton
 - *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design* John Cresswell.
 - Some way to save information (i.e., a jump drive, a disk, etc). Bring a storage device every time class meets.
 - On-line Texts -- I'll give you links to on-line resources. You'll be required to read extensively on-line and from the printed books. If you want other kinds of resources, please don't hesitate to ask; I can sometimes lend you helpful texts, or point you in the direction of texts that may help with your projects.
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course objectives (learning outcomes)

This is a course about research methods, about how to ask the right questions, and then find and use the best methodology to answer those questions. The challenge is not only to be comfortable with designing a research study but also to be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of various methodologies in the articles that you read.

- **Ability to Design a Research Study** ñ Through an initial proposal and an annotated bibliography, you'll gather the necessary background information to write up a formal

proposal for a research design. You'll introduce and review the literature, address potential concerns, and outline the actual research gathering strategies.

ï **Ability to Assessing Methodology in Research:** You will have the opportunity to review two articles, one that employs qualitative data analysis and one that draws on quantitative data.

ï **Clear Understanding of the Overviews of Methodology presented in the textbooks:** Two times during the semester, you'll be asked to play the resident expert role, leading the class as it works to understand the textbooks. In addition, once through each textbook, you'll have quizzes to measure your comprehension.

grading

expert in class (100 points)

quizzes (100 points)

evaluation of quantitative and qualitative research (100 points)

Research Study Design (500 points ñ broken down as follows):

Proposal: 50 points

Annotated Bibliography: 100 points

Introduction/review of literature: 50 points

Methodological decision (compared to others) 50 points

Discussion of ethical considerations/bias, etc 50 points

Research study for submission/oral presentation: 200 points

Class Participation/any listserv discussion/class revision workshops: 200

1000 - 900 A; 899 - 800 B; 799 - 700 C; 699 - 600 D

Assessment of course objectives/learning outcomes:

ï Ability to Design a Research Study ñ You will create a initial proposal, an annotated bibliography, a literature review/introduction, a discussion of potential concerns, a justification for the methodological approach, and the actual proposed study.

ï Ability to Assessing Methodology in Research: You will have the opportunity to review two articles, one that employs qualitative data analysis and one that draws on quantitative data.

ï Clear Understanding of the Overviews of Methodology presented in the textbooks assessed through quizzes and resident expert roles

policies

attendance: You must come to class. If you don't, you'll be penalized twice, maybe thrice. First, you probably will have difficulty understanding the assignments/completing tasks which will result in lower grades. Second, you can't earn the points that are assigned to in-class work. Finally, I will deduct points from your final grade if you miss more than 3 class periods. At the end of the semester, when I tally final grades, I will subtract 50 points off your final grade for every class you missed over the three allowed. Don't miss class, and come to class ready to work. If your body is in a chair, but your mind is on vacation (i.e., sleeping or otherwise trying to recover), you will be counted absent. If you don't bring the assignments to class, you will be counted absent (you need to have hard copies of assignments before class starts. If you're interrupting us by using the printer, I'll mark you as absent). In addition, you should be in class on-time. Two lates equals one absence (late

= no later than 15 minutes; after 15 minutes you're considered absent).

IM/cell phones, etc: When class starts, I expect your attention. You need to sign out of instant messaging programs, turn off your phones (turning them to vibrating options is not enough), and resist any temptations to turn on games, or games on the internet. If you distract me or others during class with your promiscuous use of the computers/your cell phones, I'll mark you as absent for that day.

disabilities:

Georgia Southern complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). If you have a disability that could affect your performance in this class or that requires an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act, please contact the Student Disability

Schedule (subject to change:

Date	
Week One	
Mon 8/14	Ryan documentary Handout
Wed 8/16	Discussion of Ryan Documentary; questions you have/methodologies you choose. handout Reading Assignments FOR NEXT CLASS: 1 ñ 45 Cresswell
Week Two	
Mon 8/21	Overview of types of methodological study Reading Assignments FOR NEXT CLASS: 47 - 91 Cresswell Handout over research focus/questions
Wed 8/23	Critical/theoretical concerns, questions about bias. Reading Assignments FOR NEXT CLASS: Appendix B, 93 - 137 Cresswell
Week Three	
Mon 8/28	Overview methodologies Reading Assignments FOR NEXT CLASS: Appendix C, 139 - 165 Cresswell Working with Ideology--Handout Experts: Ideological position; theory
Wed 8/30	Overview Methodologies: Reading Assignments FOR NEXT CLASS: Appendix D, 167 - 191 Cresswell Experts: Ideological position; theory
Week Four	

Mon 9/4 labor day	Labor Day-----no class!
Wed 9/6	Questions to the class from Biography/Phenomenological experts by Friday Noon.
Week Five	
Mon 9/11	Reading Assignments FOR NEXT CLASS: Appendix E, 193 - 218 Cresswell Expert Led discussionó Biography, Phenomenological Questions to the class from grounded theory study/ethnographical study experts by Monday 5 PM.
Wed 9/13	Reading Assignments FOR NEXT CLASS: Appendix F, 219 - 229 Cresswell Expert led Discussionó Grounded Theory Study, Ethnographical; Questions to the class from case Study Experts by Friday Noon.
Week Six	
Mon 9/18	Wrap up of first text book; playing with research possibilities. Developing projects, reading examples on-line. Gathering Research directions
Wed 9/20	Developing projects, reading examples on-line. Gathering Research directions. Overviewing Institutional Research Boards and current requirements for research.
Week Seven	
Mon 9/25	Wrap up of first text book; playing with research possibilities. Developing projects, reading examples on-line. Gathering Research directions
Wed 9/27	Quiz over the book. FOR MONDAY: Developing projects, reading examples on-line. Gathering Research directions. Overviewing Institutional Research Boards and current requirements for research.
Week Eight	
Mon 10/2	Revised proposal due. Proposal should include the following information (under these headers if you wish): What you want to study (a short overview) Why this study is useful (for your career/interests) The problem (that you want to study), Type of Study , (and rationale for choosing) The central research question(s) Early forecasting of who would be studied, what kinds of data you would collect. One Research Article that is relevant to your study.

	Overview of experts for the next book--first up, Katherine and Miriam
Wed 10/4	<p>Research Proposal due for class presentations</p> <p>Qualitative versus Quantitative Reading Assignments FOR NEXT CLASS: Intro and Descriptive Statistics. 1 ñ 25 Hinton (experts: Katherine and Miriam)</p>
Week Nine	
Mon 10/9	<p>DUE FOR CLASS: Qualitative article that you review in terms of methodology.</p> <p>In Class Discussion: The differences between qualitative and quantitative; Intro and Descriptive Statistics. 1 ñ 25 Hinton (experts: Katherine and Miriam)</p> <p>Reading Assignments FOR NEXT CLASS: Standard Scores, hypothesis testing 25 - 42 Hinton. (experts: Matt and Tabori)</p>
Wed 10/11	<p>In Class Discussion: Standard Scores, hypothesis testing Matt and Tabori</p> <p>Reading Assignments FOR NEXT CLASS: Sampling, hypothesis testing with one sample. 47 - 72 Hinton (experts: Alicia and Monica)</p>
Week Ten	
Mon 10/16	<p>In Class Discussion: Sampling, hypothesis testing with one sample (Alicia and Monica)</p> <p>Annotated Bibliography: First Five Entries DUE</p> <p>Reading Assignments FOR NEXT CLASS: Selecting Samples; hypothesis testing with two samples. 73 - 93 Hinton (experts: Kami and Brandon)</p>
Wed 10/18	<p>In Class Discussion: Selecting Samples; hypothesis testing with two samples. (experts Kami and Brandon)</p> <p>Reading Assignments FOR NEXT CLASS: Significance, error and power, Introduction to the analysis of variance. (Sam and Keith) 95 - 123 Hinton</p>
Week Eleven	
Mon 10/23	<p>In Class Discussion: Significance, error and power, Introduction to the analysis of variance (experts Sam and Keith)</p> <p>Annotated Bibliography: Entries 6 ñ 10 DUE</p> <p>Reading Assignments FOR NEXT CLASS: one factor independent</p>

	measures ANOVA. 125 - 137 Hinton (experts Kami and Lindsay)
Wed 10/25	In Class Discussion: one factor independent measures ANOVA
Week Twelve	
Mon 10/30	TEST over Statistics explained (through 137) DUE FOR CLASS: Quantitative article that you review in terms of methodology.
Wed 11/1	Bring Test to class; Read for class: Overviews of Usability Testing: http://www.usability.gov/methods/ http://www.infodesign.com.au/usabilityresources/evaluation/usabilitytesting.asp (make sure to read all the links on the left hand side as well) Usability toolkit: http://www.stcsig.org/usability/resources/toolkit/toolkit.html
Week Thirteen	
Mon 11/6	We'll be looking this week at Information Design; read through this page (and the accompanying links): http://www.infodesign.com.au/usabilityresources/indexofresources.asp In Class Discussion of Research Examples User-centered redesign: http://steptwo.com.au/papers/kmc_facscasestudy/index.html Web site design practice study: http://guir.berkeley.edu/projects/denim/pubs/iwd-DIS-2000-revised.htm A study of student practices on facebook: http://chimprawk.blogspot.com/2006/01/student-life-on-facebook.html Review of Literature Draft DUE Research question(s) and methology justification DUE
Wed 11/8	Inclass, continued discussion of the week's research examples Discussion of potential problems/bias/ethics DUE along with your proposal for research.
Week Fourteen	
Mon 11/13	Research Examples: Bloggers and privacy: http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol10/issue3/viegas.html Social Network fragments (link to the paper once you read through the info on this page: http://alumni.media.mit.edu/~fviegas/posthistory/ Poker on-line http://web.media.mit.edu/~golder/projects/poker/n119-golder.pdf Complete Draft of Proposed Research DUE for in-class workshops
Wed 11/15	Revised draft of Proposed Research DUE
Week Fifteen	
Mon 11/20	Have a look at a thesis http://smg.media.mit.edu/papers/Viegas/viegas_thesis.pdf remembering and story telling:

	http://smg.media.mit.edu/papers/Viegas/PostHistory/posthistory_snf.pdf
Wed 11/22	
Week Sixteen	
Mon 11/27	Presentations to class of proposed research project
Wed 11/29	Presentations to class of proposed research project.
Week Seventeen	
Wed 12/6	3 ñ 5 Final