

JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION J880
Practicum in Communication Research
Spring 2004 - Thursdays, 12 p.m. to 2 p.m.

PROFESSORS:

Dhavan V. Shah
Office: 5162 Vilas Hall
Telephone: 262-0388
Email: dshah@wisc.edu
Office hours: T, 12:00 - 2:00

Douglas M. McLeod
Office: 5158 Vilas Hall
Telephone: 263-4365
Email: dmmcleod@wisc.edu
Office hours: F, 10:00 -12:00

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will provide a detailed practicum on conducting and publishing empirical research in mass communication. It is intended for doctoral-track students in mass communication and related disciplines. During the first phase of the class, we will examine issues involved in the development of research questions, the analysis of relevant literature, the construction of theoretical arguments, and the evaluation of the reliability and validity of measurement approaches. In the second phase, the focus of the class will shift to the processes of data analyses, the writing of research reports, and the programmatic development of theoretical arguments. In the process, we will discuss the pragmatics of conference presentations, manuscript preparation, and journal selection. Throughout the class, we will delve deeply into reviewing journal submissions and responding to journal reviews. It is strongly suggested that students have a project in development that they can refine over the course of the semester as they apply aspects of the practicum to their own research.

GRADING:

Grades for this course will be based on the following criteria:

	Pct. of final grade
Effort on assignments:	20%
Participation in class:	20%
Final Journal Submission Draft:	60%

COURSE OUTLINE:

WEEK 1 (1-20) COURSE OVERVIEW

- Overview of course
- Discussion of research interests
- Discussion of practicum goals
- Discussion of personal project development
- Discussion of potential data sets
- Assignment: Research Proposal (two pages)
 - POSTED by Tuesday at Midnight the following week

WEEK 2 (1-27) RESEARCH PROPOSALS

- ! Prepare: Read posted proposals
- Presentation and discussion of research proposals
 - + Discussion of significance
 - + Identifying relevant theory and literature
 - + Refining and expanding questions
- Discussion of manuscript reviewing guidelines
- Assignment: First manuscript review assignment - manuscript TBD
 - DUE in class on the following week

WEEK 3 (2-3) LITERATURE REVIEW WRITING

- Presentation and discussion of reviews
 - + Discussion of limits of the study in current form
 - + Responding to validity and reliability issues
 - + Receive actual reviews from submission
- Discussion of writing research reports
 - + Abstracts and Introductions
 - + Literature reviews
 - + Hypotheses
- Discussion of literature search strategies - Web of Science, Journal Search
- Assignment: Brief abstract of 10 studies relevant to project (three pages)
 - POSTED by Tuesday at Midnight the following week

WEEK 4 (2-10) THEORETICAL RATIONALE

- ! Prepare: Read selected article summaries (provide feedback on at least four)
- Presentation and Discussion of article summaries
 - + Suggestions of additional pieces/directions
 - + Development of theoretical argument
 - + Models and Hypotheses Generation
- Discussion of response to reviewers' comments - article revision letter
 - Assignment: Write a response letter to the actual reviews of manuscript
 - DUE in class the following week

WEEK 5 (2-17) CONCEPTUAL AND OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

- Presentation and discussion of response
 - + Discussion of appropriate changes the study
 - + Clarifying theoretical and methodological issues
 - + Receive actual response letter and revised paper
- Discussion of conceptual and operation definitions
 - Assignment: Conceptual and operational definitions – two pages
 - POSTED by Tuesday at Midnight the following week

WEEK 6 (2-24) ANALYTICAL STRATEGIES

- ! Prepare: Read posted conceptual and operational definitions (critique at least four)
- Presentation and discussion of conceptual and operational definitions
 - + Discussion of reliability and validity issues
 - + Proposing alternative measurement approaches
 - + Refining and expanding measurement approaches
 - + Discussion of possible analytic strategies
- Discussion of second round manuscript reviewing guidelines
 - Assignment: Second manuscript review - Review revision of manuscript X
 - DUE in class on the following week

WEEK 7 (3-3) RESEARCH REPORT WRITING

- Presentation and discussion of reviews
 - + Discussion of improvements to the study
 - + Persistent limitations of the study
 - + Responding to validity and reliability issues
 - + Receive actual second round reviews of revision
- Discussion of writing research reports
 - + Methods
 - + Results
 - + Discussion
- Discussion of data analysis techniques
- Formulate data analysis plan
 - Assignment: Preparation of data analysis report (three pages)
 - POSTED by Tuesday at Midnight the following week

WEEK 8 (3-10) DATA ANALYSIS REPORTS

- ! Prepare: Read posted data analysis reports (provide feedback on at least four)
- Presentation and discussion of data reports
 - + Discussion of findings
 - + Proposing alternative analytic approaches
 - + interpretation of findings
 - + Implications of findings
- Discussion of preparing manuscripts for conferences
- Discussion of response to second round comments - revision response letter
 - Assignment: Write response letter to the second round reviews of manuscript
 - DUE in class the following week

WEEK 9 (3-17) CONFERENCE PAPERS

- Presentation and discussion of response
 - + Discussion of final changes to the study
 - + Clarifying theoretical and methodological issues
 - + Receive actual response letter and final paper
- Guidelines for conference paper completion - logistics and pragmatics
 - Assignment: Initial Conference Draft
 - POSTED by Wednesday at Midnight the following week

WEEK 10 (3-24) SPRING BREAK

WEEK 11 (3-31) CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- ! Prepare: Read initial conference drafts (read and critique at least two)
- Discussion of conference presentations
 - + Distilling the argument, results, and implications
 - + Use of audio-visuals (overheads, powerpoint, handouts)
 - + Presentation style and scripting
- Assignment: Final Conference Draft
 - DUE in class and SUBMITTED to AEJMC on April 1

WEEK 12 (4-7) JOURNAL SELECTION

- Discussion of journal submission process
 - + Logistics of journal selection
 - + Style guides and formatting for submission
 - + Letter of submission - Iowa Guide and submission guidelines

WEEKS 13 - 15 (4-14, 4-21, 4-28) PRESENTATIONS

- Final presentations (Four presentations per session)
 - + Three Reviewers assigned to each paper - one faculty and two students
 - + 12 minute presentation (timed) followed by 12 minute question and answer
 - + Reviewers lead questioning and provide written feedback on paper

WEEK 16 (5-5) CLASS SOCIAL

- ! Prepare: High quality food and beverages
- Discussion of the role of schmoozing in the research process ;-)
- Assignment: Eat, Drink and Discuss the Papers

FINAL EXAM WEEK

- Assignment: Journal Submission Draft
 - With separate paragraph rationale for choice of journal for submission
 - POSTED BY Thursday