

**JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION - J813**  
**Practicum in Communication Research**

5013 Vilas Hall

Spring 2019 – Thursday 10:00-12:30

Dhavan V. Shah

Maier-Bascom Professor

Office: 5162 Vilas Hall

Telephone: 262-0388

Email: dshah@wisc.edu

Office hours: Friday 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 who have research at advanced stages of development and want to move that research toward conference presentation and journal publication. The course will center on your development of an individual project and your constant critique and feedback to other participants. During the first phase of the class, we will examine issues involved in refining research questions, honing relevant literature, specifying theoretical arguments, and critically evaluating the reliability and validity of measurement approaches. In the second phase, the focus will shift to the processes of data analyses, the writing of research reports, and the programmatic development of theoretical arguments across projects. In the process, we will discuss the pragmatics of conference presentations, manuscript preparation, and journal selection. Throughout the class, we will delve deeply into the dynamic underlying reviewing journal submissions and responding to journal reviews. All students must have data collected from an empirical project (quantitative, qualitative, computational, or mixed-methods) that they can refine over the course of the semester by applying ideas from the practicum. The goal: A journal submission.

**LEARNING GOALS:**

- Develop an individual project for journal submission
- Learn to refine research questions, hone relevant literature and evaluate measurement approaches
- Enhance students' ability to analyze data and develop theoretical arguments
- Come to understand the practicalities of presenting at conferences, preparing a manuscript and selecting an appropriate journal

## REQUIRED TEXTS:

+ Assigned Weekly Readings

## SUGGESTED TEXT:

\* Swales, J. M., & Feak, C. B. (2012). *Academic Writing for Graduate Students: Essential Tasks and Skills* (Third Edition). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

## GRADING:

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

	Pct. of final grade
Peer Evaluation Assignments:	20%
Review/Response Reports:	20%
Seminar Participation:	10%
Final Journal Submission Draft:	50%

A = 93-100; AB = 88-92; B = 83-87; BC = 78-82; C = 71-77; D = 60-70; F = <60

**Peer Evaluation Assignments** will be written reviews of one of more fellow students' prospectus (week 1), definitions/hypotheses (week 4), data report (week 7), final paper submission (week 10), and final paper and presentation (week 12).

**Review/Response Reports** will be reviews of the mystery manuscript, including revisions of the manuscript (week 2, week 6 and week 11), and response letters to the reviews, reacting and proposing revisions to the manuscript (week 4, week 8).

**Seminar Participation** will be based on contributions to the seminar discussion and to online interactions via the class email list or "Slack" space.

**Final Journal Submission Draft** will include a cover letter indicating the journal selected for the manuscript, rationale for fit with the journal, and the 20 page, double-spaced (not including references, tables or figures) manuscript with abstract. An initial, ungraded, draft of this manuscript is week 12 and a final draft week 15.

Total writing across assignments, including the final paper, will range from 50-60 pages.

## WEEK 1 (1/24) COURSE OVERVIEW

- Overview of course
- Discussion of research interests
- Discussion of practicum goals
- Discussion of personal project development
- Discussion of data set requirements
- Assignment: Research prospectus (two-three pages)  
Review of another student's prospectus (one page)
  - POST to class list by Monday at 11:59 PM (1/28)
  - PREPARE review of assigned prospectus by class (1/31)

## WEEK 2 (1/31) RESEARCH 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 round manuscript review (three pages)
    - PREPARE review of mystery manuscript by class (2/7)

### **Reading:**

Baker, M. J. (2000). Writing a research proposal. *The Marketing Review*, 1(1), 61-78.

Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (1997). Writing a Research Proposal: The Role of Library Anxiety, Statistics Anxiety, and Composition Anxiety. *Library & Information Science Research*, 19 (1), 5-33.

\* Swales, J. M., & Feak, C. B. (2004). UNIT ONE: An Approach to Academic Writing, *Academic Writing for Graduate Students: Essential Tasks and Skills*.

## WEEK 3 (2/7) 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 review and theoretical claims
  
- Discussion of literature search strategies - Web of Science, Journal Search
  - Assignment: One paragraph abstracts of 10 previous overlooked studies relevant to project (four pages) and integration of them into introduction/literature review section for the paper (four-page).
  
- POST to class list by Wednesday at 11:59 PM (2/13)

### **Readings:**

Bem, D. (1987). Writing the Empirical Journal Article. *The Compleat Academic: A Practical Guide for the Beginning Social Scientist*, 171.

Neuman, W. R., Davidson, R., Joo, S. H., Park, Y. J., & Williams, A. E. (2008). The Seven Deadly Sins of Communication Research. *Journal of Communication*, 58(2), 220-237.

Cho, K., & MacArthur, C. (2011). Learning by Reviewing. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 103(1), 73.

## WEEK 4 (2/14) THEORETICAL RATIONALE

- Presentation and discussion of article summaries/literature reviews
  - + Suggestions of additional pieces/directions
  - + Development of theoretical argument
  - + Models and hypotheses generation
  
- Discussion of response to editor/reviewers' comments - article revision letter
  - Assignment: Write a response letter to actual reviews (three pages)
  
- PREPARE response letter for mystery manuscript by class (2/21)

### **Readings:**

Green, B. N., Johnson, C. D., & Adams, A. (2006). Writing Narrative Literature Reviews for Peer-Reviewed Journals: Secrets of the Trade. *Journal of Chiropractic Medicine*, 5(3), 101-117.

Torraco, R. J. (2005). Writing integrative literature reviews: Guidelines and examples. *Human Resource Development Review*, 4(3), 356-367.

\* Swales, J. M., & Feak, C. B. (2004). UNIT TWO: General-Specific and Specific-General Texts, *Academic Writing for Graduate Students: Essential Tasks and Skills*.

## WEEK 5 (2/21) CONCEPTUAL AND OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

- Presentation and discussion of response
  - + Discussion of appropriate changes to the study
  - + Clarifying theoretical and methodological issues
  - + Receive actual response letter and revised paper
  
- Discussion of conceptual and operation definitions
  - Assignment: Write conceptual and operational definitions of variables / define relation among them in a model or set of hypotheses (four pages).  
Review of two students' definitions/hypotheses (one page each)
    - POST to class list by Monday at 11:59 PM (2/25)
    - PREPARE reactions to definitions/hypotheses by class (2/28)

### **Readings:**

McLeod, J. M., & Pan, Z. (2005). Concept Explication and Theory Construction. *The Evolution of Key Mass Communication Concepts: Honoring Jack M. McLeod*, 13-76.

\* Swales, J. M., & Feak, C. B. (2004). UNIT THREE: Problem, Process, and Solution, *Academic Writing for Graduate Students: Essential Tasks and Skills*.

## WEEK 6 (2/28) MEASUREMENT STRATEGIES

- Presentation and discussion of definitions and hypotheses
  - + Connection to presentation of methods section
  - + Discussion of reliability and validity issues
  - + Refining and expanding measurement approaches
  - + Discussion of possible analytic strategies
  
- Discussion of second round manuscript reviewing guidelines
  - Assignment: Second round manuscript review (three pages)
    - PREPARE second review of mystery manuscript by class (3/7)

### **Reading:**

Himmelfarb, S. (1993). The Measurement of Attitudes. *The Psychology of Attitudes*,

23-87.

Bhattacharjee, A. (2012). *Social Science Research: Principles, Methods, and Practices. Textbooks Collection. Chapters 5 - 8.*

#### WEEK 7 (3/7) RESEARCH REPORT WRITING

- Presentation and discussion of reviews
  - + Discussion of improvements to the study
  - + Persistent limitations of the study
  - + Responding to conceptual and operational issues
  - + Responding to validity and reliability issues
  - + Receive actual second round reviews of revision
  
- Discussion of writing “back-end” of research reports
  - + Methods
  - + Results
  - + Discussion
  
- Discussion of data analysis techniques
  - + Formulate data analysis plan
    - Assignment: Preparation of data analysis report (three pages)  
Review of three students’ data reports (one page each)
      - POST to class list by Monday at 11:59 PM (3/11)
      - PREPARE reactions to assigned data reports (3/14)

#### **Reading:**

Bhattacharjee, A. (2012). *Social Science Research: Principles, Methods, and Practices. Textbooks Collection. Chapters 13 – 14.*

#### WEEK 8 (3/14) DATA ANALYSIS REPORTS

- 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

- + When to compromise and when to remain firm
- + Acknowledging limitations of the study

- Assignment: Write response letter to the second-round reviews (three pages)
  - PREPARE second round response letter for manuscript by 3/20

**Reading:**

Bhattacharjee, A. (2012). Social Science Research: Principles, Methods, and Practices. Textbooks Collection. Chapter 15.

\* Swales, J. M., & Feak, C. B. (2004). UNIT FOUR: Data Commentary, *Academic Writing for Graduate Students: Essential Tasks and Skills*.

**--- SPRING BREAK ---**

**WEEK 9 (3/28) FINALIZING AND SUBMITTING MANUSCRIPTS**

Guidelines for paper completion - logistics and pragmatics

- Assignment: Assemble Rough Conference Draft
  - EMAIL draft copy to me by Tuesday at 11:59 PM (3/26)
  - I will respond individually to each student with suggestions by Thursday
- Assignment: Finalize Conference Submission in 4 days
  - POST to class list by Monday 4/1 at 11:59 PM
  - You may also choose to submit to AEJMC - (4/1)

**Reading:**

\* Swales, J. M., & Feak, C. B. (2004). UNIT FIVE: Writing Summaries, *Academic Writing for Graduate Students: Essential Tasks and Skills*.

**WEEK 10 (4/4) CONFERENCE PAPERS**

- Presentation and discussion of second round response
  - + Discussion of changes to the study
  - + Clarifying theoretical and methodological issues
  - + Modifying conceptual, operational, and analytical issues
  - + Receive actual second round response letter and revised paper

- Discussion of conference papers finalization and submission
  - + Lingering theoretical and methodological issues
  - + Possible conceptual, operational, and analytical responses
  - + PREPARE: One-page review of four assigned papers (4/11)

Readings:

\* Swales, J. M., & Feak, C. B. (2004). UNIT SEVEN: Constructing a Research Paper I, *Academic Writing for Graduate Students: Essential Tasks and Skills*.

WEEK 11 (4/11) CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- Discussion of conference presentations
  - + Distilling the argument, results, and implications
  - + Use of audio-visuals (PowerPoint, handouts)
  - + Presentation style and scripting
- Assignment: Develop Conference Presentation - 12 PowerPoint Slides
  - POST to class list by Monday at 11:59 PM (4/15)
- Assignment: Review of second revision of mystery manuscript (three pages)
  - PREPARE third review of manuscript by class (4/18)

Readings:

\* Swales, J. M., & Feak, C. B. (2004). UNIT EIGHT: Constructing a Research Paper II, *Academic Writing for Graduate Students: Essential Tasks and Skills*.

WEEK 12 (4/18) JOURNAL SELECTION

- Discussion of third round reviews
  - + Managing lingering conceptual and technical issues
  - + Challenges of switching editors in long review process
  - + Receive actual third round reviews and final revision/publication
- Discussion of presentation slides
  - + Grabbing attention
  - + Summarizing key point
  - + General pointers for presentation style
  - + Use of visuals and data visualization

- Discussion of journal submission process
  - + Logistics of journal selection
  - + Style guides and formatting for submission
  - + Letter of submission - submission guidelines
- Assignment: Post current research paper to class list
  - POST current draft to class list by Wednesday at 11:59 PM (4/24)
  - PREPARE paper reviews for week you are not presenting (4/25 & 5/2)

Readings:

Martín, E. (2015). Letters of Rejection. *Current Sociology*, 63(7): 937–942

\* Swales, J. M., & Feak, C. B. (2004). UNIT SIX: Writing Critiques, *Academic Writing for Graduate Students: Essential Tasks and Skills*.

WEEKS 13 - 14 (4/25, 5/2) PRESENTATIONS

- Final presentations (five presentations per session)
  - + Two reviewers assigned to each paper
    - One for week you are not presenting; one for week you are presenting
  - + 12-minute presentation (timed) followed by 12-minute question and answer
    - Presentation, including timing, evaluated as part of final paper grade
  - + Reviewers lead questioning/provide two-page review of paper/presentation

FINAL EXAM WEEK

- Assignment: Journal Submission Draft
  - With cover letter indicating rationale for choice of journal
  - EMAIL to me by Friday at 11:59 PM (5/10)