

JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION - J813
Practicum in Communication Research
Spring 2021 – Wednesday 9:30 – 12:00

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Office hours: Monday 12:00 – 2:00
Seminar link: <https://uwmadison.zoom.us/j/6760341192>

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, explicating concepts, and critically evaluating the reliability and validity of measurement approaches. In the second phase, the focus will shift to the processes of quantitative and qualitative 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 into the dynamic underlying reviewing journal submissions and responding to journal reviews. For a successful experience in the class, participating students must have data from an empirical project (quantitative, qualitative, computational, or mixed methods) available to them that they can refine over the course of the semester by applying ideas from the practicum. I am able to make data available but bringing your own existing project for development works best. The goal: A journal submission.

LEARNING GOALS:

- Discover how to develop an individual project for journal submission
- Hone theoretical arguments and refine research questions
- Sharpen concept explication and reevaluate measurement approaches
- Enhance ability to analyze data, interpret findings, and discuss implications
- Learn to prepare a manuscript, submit to conferences, select and prepare journal submissions, and write reviews and respond to reviewers.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

+ Assigned Weekly Readings (download zipped files from [class webpage](#))

SUGGESTED TEXT:

Belcher, Wendy L. (2019). *Writing your journal article in twelve weeks: A guide to academic publishing success*. University of Chicago Press. (Amazon [link](#))

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 Assignments + Participation:	20%
Final Journal Submission + Presentation:	40%

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' proposal (due week 2), concept explication/hypotheses (due week 6), data report (due week 9), conference submission (due week 11), and final paper and presentation (due week 13 or 14). These grades are based on your reviews, not your submissions.

Review/Response Reports will be reviews of a "mystery manuscript," including revisions of the manuscript (due week 3 and week 7 with additional extra credit options).

Seminar Assignments and Participation will be based on completion of assignments and contributions to seminar discussion and online interactions via the class email list.

Final Journal Submission and Presentation 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 (1/27) COURSE OVERVIEW

- Overview of course
- Discussion of research interests
- Discussion of practicum goals
- Discussion of personal project development
- Discussion of data set requirements
- Assignment: Your research proposal (two-three pages)
Feedback on other students' proposals (one page)
 - POST to class list by Sunday at 11:59 PM (1/31)
 - PREPARE feedback for two assigned proposals by class (2/3)

Readings:

Heath, M. T. & Tynan, C. (2010). Crafting a research proposal. *The Marketing Review*, 10(2), 147-168.

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.

WEEK 2 (2/3) RESEARCH PROPOSALS AND REVIEWING

- Presentation and discussion of research proposals
 - + Discussion of significance – academics, grants, fellowships
 - + Identifying relevant theory and literature
 - + Refining and expanding questions
- Discussion of “mystery manuscript” and manuscript reviewing guidelines
 - Critical but kind; manuscripts only improve through accepted feedback
 - Assignment: First round manuscript review (three pages)
 - PREPARE review of mystery manuscript by class (2/10)

Readings:

Benos, D. J., Kirk, K. L., & Hall, J. E. (2003). How to review a paper. *Advances in Physiology Education*, 27(2), 47-52.

Cormode, G. (2009). How not to review a paper: The tools and techniques of the adversarial reviewer. *ACM SIGMOD Record*, 37(4), 100-104.

Optional: Rowland, F. (2002). The peer-review process. *Learned publishing*, 15(4), 247-58.

WEEK 3 (2/10) LITERATURE REVIEW WRITING

- Presentation and discussion of reviews
 - + Discussion of limits of the theorizing 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, Google Scholar
 - **Assignment:** One paragraph abstract of 10 previously overlooked studies relevant to your project (four pages)

Optional: integrate articles into introduction/literature review section for your proposed paper (four pages) – **extra credit**
- POST to class list by Tuesday at 11:59 PM (2/16)

Readings:

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

Jensenius, F. R., Htun, M., Samuels, D. J., Singer, D. A., Lawrence, A., & Chwe, M. (2018). Benefits and Pitfalls of Google Scholar. *PS: Political Science and Politics*.

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.

WEEK 4 (2/17) THEORETICAL INTEGRATION

- 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
 - **Optional:** Write response letter to reviews of mystery manuscript (three pages)
- PREPARE response letter by class (2/24) for **extra credit**

Readings:

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

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

WEEK 5 (2/24) CONCEPTUAL AND OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

- Discussion of response to reviews of mystery manuscript
 - + 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 – Concept explication
 - 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)

Optional: integrate elements into hypotheses/research questions and methods section of your paper (four-pages) – **extra credit**

- POST to class list by Sunday at 11:59 PM (2/28)
- PREPARE two reactions to definitions/hypotheses by class (3/3)

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.

WEEK 6 (3/3) MEASUREMENT STRATEGIES

- Presentation of concept explication, variable definition and hypotheses
 - + Discussion of reliability and validity issues
 - + Refining and expanding measurement approaches
 - + Connection to possible analytic strategies

- Discussion of second round reviewing guidelines for “mystery manuscript”
 - Assignment: Second review of manuscript (three pages) by class (3/10)
 - PREPARE second review with attention to prior reviews

Readings:

Adcock, R., & Collier, D. (2001). Measurement validity: A shared standard for qualitative and quantitative research. *American political science review*, 529-546.

Himmelfarb, S. (1993). The Measurement of Attitudes. *Psychology of Attitudes*, 23-87.

WEEK 7 (3/10) ANALYTIC STRATEGY

- Presentation and discussion of reviews
 - + Discussion of improvements and persistent limitations to the study
 - + Responding to conceptual and operational issues
 - + Addressing validity and reliability issues
 - + Receive actual second round reviews of revision

- Discussion of writing “back-end” of research reports
 - + Analytic Strategy
 - + Results
 - + Discussion

- Discussion of data analysis techniques
 - + Formulate data analysis plan and start data analysis
 - Assignment: Preparation of analytic strategy (two pages)
 - POST to class list by Tuesday at 11:59 PM (3/16)
 - Optional: Assemble initial draft: introduction, literature review, theoretical rationale, methods, and analytic strategy, next leading to the results

Readings:

Knell, R. J. (2014). *Introductory R: A Beginner's Guide to Data Visualisation, Statistical Analysis and Programming in R*. Robert Knell.

WEEK 8 (3/17) DATA ANALYSIS REPORTS

- Presentation and discussion of data analysis plan
 - + Discussion of expected findings
 - + Proposing alternative analytic approaches
 - + Interpretation of findings
 - + Implications of findings

- Discuss preparing manuscripts for conferences. Assemble full paper, but now include the actual analysis (not the plan) and post draft to the class list by 3/21
 - POST to class list by Sunday at 11:59 PM (3/21)
 - PREPARE two reviews by class (3/24) - two pages each
- Discussion of response to second round comments
 - + When to compromise and when to remain firm
 - + Acknowledging limitations of the study

WEEK 9 (3/24) FINALIZING MANUSCRIPTS

Guidelines for paper completion - logistics and pragmatics: formatting, copy editing, checking references, honing charts and figures

- Assignment: Assemble Full Conference Draft
 - EMAIL draft copy to me by Sunday at 11:59 PM (3/28)
 - I will respond individually to each student with suggestions by Tuesday
- Assignment: Finalize Conference Submission in 2 days
 - POST to class list by Thursday 4/1 at 11:59 PM
 - You may also choose to submit to AEJMC - (4/1)

WEEK 10 (3/31) CONFERENCE PAPERS

- Discussion of second round response for “mystery manuscript”
 - + Lingering 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 (4/7)

WEEK 11 (4/7) CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- Discussion of conference presentations
 - + Distilling argument, results, and implications

- + Data visualization and readability
- + Presentation style, introduction and conclusion scripting
- Assignment: Develop Conference Presentation - 12 PowerPoint Slides
 - POST to class list by Tuesday at 11:59 PM (4/13)

WEEK 12 (4/14) 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
 - + Use of images 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 Sunday at 11:59 PM (4/18)
 - PREPARE two paper reviews for week you are not presenting (4/21 & 4/28)

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

- Final presentations (five presentations per session)
 - + Two reviewers assigned to each paper
 - Two reviews for week you are not 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 (5/7)

Summary of Assignments, Reviewing Responsibilities, and Optional Exercises

Week 1 - **Proposal** + 2 Reviews (due week 2)

Week 2 - **Write Critique of MM** (due week 3)

Week 3 - **Article Summaries** + Optional: *Intro/Lit Review* (due week 4)

Week 4 - Optional: *Response Letter* (due week 5)

Week 5 - **Definitions** + 2 Reviews (due week 6)

Week 6 - **Write Critique of MM** (due week 7)

Week 7 - **Analytic Strategy** + Optional: *Assemble Draft* (due week 8)

Week 8 - **Data Report** + **Full Draft** + 2 Reviews (due week 9)

Week 9 - **Conference Version - Initial** + **Submission** (due week 10)

Week 10 - 4 Reviews of Submissions (due week 11)

Week 11 - **Draft Presentation** (due week 12)

Week 12 - **Journal Draft** + 2 Reviews (due week 13 - 14)

Week 13 - Presentations

Week 14 - Presentations