

ARGOSY UNIVERSITY SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Title Dissertation I

Course Number C 7935 BLA

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Office Hours by Appointment

Required Texts The required reading for the course is an Argosy University prepared **Dissertation Manual** that will be distributed to students in either hardcopy or electronic form at the beginning of the course. There may be additional reading material required throughout the semester. As the instructor, I recognize that students in Dissertation 1 are at different levels of readiness, with different levels of knowledge and experience of the academic process and research skills necessary to complete a dissertation. Therefore, specific reading recommendations may be given to individual students to guide them in acquiring the specific information that will be most useful to them. There is no required text, although recommended readings are provided and listed below.

Recommended Readings:

(All on reserve in our library; or you can order from MBS)

Dissertations and Theses from Start to Finish: Psychology and Related Fields

John D. Cone & Sharon L. Foster

American Psychological Association, 1993 (paper, \$29.95)

ISBN: 1-55798-194-9

Surviving Your Dissertation: A Comprehensive Guide to Content and Process,
2nd. Ed.

Kjell Erik Rudestam & Rae R. Newton

Sage Publications, Inc., 2001

ISBN0-7619-1961 ©) ISBN 0-7619-1962-7 (p)

How to Complete and Survive a Doctoral Dissertation

David Sternberg

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St. Martin's Press, 1981
ISBN: 0-312-39605

Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches, 2nd ed.

John W. Creswell
Sage Publications, 2003 (paper, \$34.95)
ISBN: 0-7619-2442-6

Qualitative Research in Psychology

Paul Camic 2003
ISBN# 1557989796

Doing a Literature Review: Releasing the Social Science Research Imagination

Chris Hart
Sage Publications, 2000
ISBN: 0-7619-5975-0

Preparing Literature Reviews: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches

M. Ling Pan
Pyrzczak Publishing, 2003
P.O. Box 39731
Los Angeles, CA 90039
ISBN: 1-884585-27-2

Writing Literature Reviews: A Guide for Students of the Social and Behavioral Sciences, 2nd ed.

Jose L. Galvan
P.O. Box 250430
Glendale, CA 91225
ISBN: 1-884585-50-7

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5th ed.

American Psychological Association, 2001 (paper)

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Course Description

This course is designed to guide students to begin their dissertation process by preparing their dissertation proposal, or a “preliminary dissertation proposal” that meets the course requirements. In a group format, students are given learning support, guidelines, and specific strategies to do the following:

- Become familiar with the steps needed to complete a dissertation.
- Determine a workable topic.
- Identify the most appropriate research methods for the dissertation research hypothesis/question(s).
- Learn to do a thorough literature search.
- Understand and be able to complete the necessary sections of the proposal.
- Identify suitable committee members and invite them to either be a Chair/Reader.
- Develop a time-line and other strategies to complete the dissertation.
- Improve writing skills, including utilizing APA format.
- Anticipate and deal with personal psychological issues that can arise during the process.
- Meet other requirements of the dissertation process.

This course is designed to be highly responsive to the individual needs of the students enrolled in Dissertation I. There may also be students who are in Dissertation II, who wish to participate in this class for additional information and support. Their presence and recent experience with Dissertation I adds to helping new students familiarize themselves with the process and reinforces the learning for both the Dissertation I and the Dissertation II students. Although a schedule of topics is given in this syllabus, these may vary at the discretion of the instructor and the needs of the students.

Course Requirements

Students will receive a “pass or fail” designation for this class. Throughout the class, students will need to complete and turn in various written assignments that pertain to sections of the dissertation proposal. This will allow students to write, receive feedback from the instructor and other students, and revise sections of the proposal, as they become familiar with the requirements and develop their own interests.

Course Attendance:

Class participation is extremely important, including keeping up

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with homework assignments, which are considered as part of class participation. Students are expected to participate in all on-campus meetings, telephone conferences, email and online discussions, unless the instructor has given prior permission for absence.

Final Dissertation Proposal or Completed Preliminary Proposal

The quality of the final proposal that is submitted at the end of the course is the primary determinant for passing the class. It is understood that this proposal may not be the final dissertation proposal but it needs to cover all of the areas and requirements of a basic proposal. A preliminary proposal, for example, may not represent a full and complete literature search but demonstrates a sufficient review of the literature to indicate that a student has become informed about research related to the proposed dissertation. The methodology description may be lacking in some details but is sufficient to provide an understanding of the plan and parameters of the project. The preliminary proposal may also not represent the student's final choice of topic for the dissertation but it needs to be a clearly written, researched, well-presented version of a dissertation proposal that includes all of the sections required. Requirements will be clarified throughout the course.

Preliminary Dissertation Proposals for this class will need to include:

- Chapter One: Introduction, Problem Statement, Purpose Statement, Significance of the Study
- Chapter Two: Literature Search: A descriptive outline of the areas that will be surveyed as part of the Literature Search
- Chapter Three: Methodology: Introduction, Participants, Procedures and Instrumentation, Limitations, Delimitations

Proposals are due on Monday, August 7th by 12.00PM and must be submitted electronically as a word document.

Methods of Instruction

The course is delivered by weekly online modules, on campus meetings, teleconferences, email, and other online activities. There will be recommended reading assignments and visits to the library, and other activities that may be directly linked to students' learning needs.

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Schedule

Week (Mondays)	Date	Module	Assignments
1	05/08/06	Online Module 1. Introduction. Overview of Writing a Dissertation.	Read Guidelines to the Dissertation. Post questions/comments on discussion board.
2	05/15/06	Online Module 2. Problem Statements.	Post sample 'problem statements' on discussion board.
3	05/22/06	Online Module 3. Writing Ch.1	Online discussion topic: Writing 'problem statements' and working title. See module content.
4	05/29/06	Online Module 4. Writing the Introduction. June 3 ON CAMPUS MEETING 9:00 am –1:00 pm	Discussion topic: The 'Introduction'.
5	06/05/06	Online Module 5. Writing Ch. 1. Revising Problem Statements.	Discussion topic: Study purpose.
6	06/12/06	June 15 Module 6 TELECONFERENCE 5.45-7.00PM	Questions/comments.
7	06/19/06	Online Module 7. Continuing Ch. 1. Significance of the Study.	Discussion topic: Study significance.
8	06/26/06	Online Module 8. Literature Review. Outline Ch. 2. Timeline.	Discussion topic: Planning a timeline.
9	07/03/06	Literature Review, Outline Ch. 2. Timeline.	See module content.
10	07/10/06	Online Module 9. Finalize Ch. 1. Literature Review. July 15 ON CAMPUS MEETING 9.00-1.00PM	Discussion topic: The literature review. Bring drafts of Ch. 1. & literature review.
11	07/17/06	Online Module 10. Research Methodology. Literature Review. July 20 TELECONFERENCE 5.45-7.00PM	Discussion topic: Developing a research based rationale for using specific methods.
12	07/24/06	Online Module 11. Human Subjects Review	Discussion topic: The protection of research participants.
13	07/31/06	Aug 3 Module 12. TELECONFERENCE 5.45-7.00PM	Teleconference Discussion.
14	08/07/06	Online Module 13. Finalizing the Proposals.	FINAL PROPOSALS DUE Aug 7 12.00PM

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15	08/14/06	Online Module 14. Course Summary.	Discussion topic: Where to from here?
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Content

This schedule is subject to change, depending on the needs of students and the discretion of the instructor.

For online modules students can post seven days a week. The instructor will post the week’s module discussion topic by Monday of each week. Student postings will be checked and responded to Monday-Fridays. Always email or call the instructor if there are any immediate concerns.

Online Module (1) May 8-12

In week 1 students and the instructor introduce themselves to one another, and address immediate questions about starting the dissertation process. An overview of the course and requirements is described. An online discussion will be held regarding such topics as, “What ideas do you have for the topic of your dissertation?” “As you embark on this journey, are you filled with fear and loathing or elevated by joy and anticipation?” In other words, where are you and where do you want to go? An overview of the steps to complete a dissertation will be provided.

The Assigned reading for the next two weeks will be the Argosy University Guidelines to the Dissertation which will be sent electronically to students.

Online Module (2) May 15-19

Focused discussion on “What is Your Problem?” The joys and pitfalls of selecting a topic for your dissertation and determining what “problem” in the field of psychology your dissertation is going to address. Sample “problem statements.”

Online Module (3) May 22-26

Writing Chapter One: Introduction to the Proposal. Focused discussion on writing problem statements and working title.

Online Module (4) May 29-June 2

Writing the Introduction to the Proposal. Developing Problem Statements.

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On Campus Meeting Saturday June 3, 9.00AM-1.00PM Check with the instructor to verify the dates and times of on-campus meetings.

1. We'll meet as a group, share write-ups of "What is your problem?"—proposed topics for your dissertation. Addressing "resistance," and other personal issues related to starting and following through on completing your dissertation, such as, "Find something you are interested in but don't make this your life's work!"
2. **Orientation to the AU library and instruction on accessing library materials, doing online searches, and related information.**
3. Dealing with Chapter Two: Review of the Literature. How to find "what's out there" without losing your enthusiasm.

Online Module (5) June 5-9

Continuation of Chapter One: Revising Problem Statement. Purpose of your Study, and other sections for the introduction.

Module (6) TELECONFERENCE: Thursday, June 15 , 5:45-7:00 pm. Phone number and code will be posted and emailed to students. *Date and time may be changed depending on needs of students and instructor availability.*

Teleconference calls are a time for students to check-in, get advice, ask questions and get group support.

Online Module (7) June 12-16

Continuation of Chapter One: Significance of your Study.

Online Module (8) June 26-30

Literature Review, continued. Drawing on outline for Chapter Two. Establishing a time-line.

Online Module (9) July 3-7

Finalizing your draft of Chapter One. Working on your Literature Review.

Online Module (10) July 10-14

Research Methodology and Literature Review. Examining the methods of research used in previous studies related to your topic, and determining your own approach. Pros and cons of qualitative and quantitative research. Rationale for your choice of design. Distribution of list of tutors available to teach SPSS. *It is recommended that any student intending to use SPSS for any part of their analysis should take*

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steps to receive a minimum of 2 hours professional instruction in this statistical package. Limitations of the research.

ON CAMPUS MEETING: Saturday, July 15 9.00AM -1.00PM

Check with instructor to confirm date and time.

Bring drafts of Chapter One with *copies* for all students and instructor!

1. Review of the Literature: Part Two: Structuring your literature review to fit your problem statement.
2. Mastering APA style for citations and references.
3. Sharing your joys and sorrows of your literature search with other students.

TELECONFERENCE: Thursday, July 20, 5:45-7:00 PM. Phone number and code will be posted and emailed to students. *Date and time may be changed depending on needs of students and instructor availability.* Teleconference calls are a time for students to check-in, receive advice, ask questions and receive group support.

Online Module (11) July 24-28

Research Methodology: Subjects and participants, “How to find participants and what your responsibilities are when you do.” Ethical and practical concerns. Human Research Review Committees

Module (12) TELECONFERENCE: Thursday, August 3, 5:45-7:00 PM.
Date and time may be changed depending on needs of students and instructor availability.

Online Module (13) August 7-11

Final Proposals or Preliminary Proposals Due!

Submit electronically to the instructor and post online by 12.00PM on Monday, August 7th. Class review of proposals.

Online Module (14) August 14-18

Course summary, “Where do you go from here?” Reviewing and revising your time-line for your project and how to manage your time and energy to insure completion of your dissertation.

Developing and maintaining a support system.

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Student Performance Evaluation Criteria and Procedures

Percentage Criteria:

- 80% Final Proposal
- 20% Class Participation

These percentages are used to form a point system. Students can earn a maximum of 80

points for the proposal and a total of 20 points on class participation, which includes doing written assignments. All students must achieve a minimum of 70 points to pass the class.

Criteria for Class Participation

The following is a guide to the criteria used to assign students points for class participation.

20-19 points

Student actively participated in discussions in all discussion; nearly all comments were thought provoking and incorporated material from reading material. Student completed assignments in a timely fashion. Homework assignments were presented well, demonstrating sufficient skills in meeting the requirements, and making improvements over the semester.

18-17 points

Student actively participated in all discussions; most of the comments were thought provoking and incorporated reading material. Homework assignments demonstrated sufficient skills in meeting the requirements and were completed on time and showed improvement over the semester.

16-15 points

Student participated in discussions in more than 70% of class sessions; comments/questions demonstrate a surface level understanding of course topics. Homework assignments did not demonstrate full understanding or application of course information and/or did not show much improvement over the semester.. Not all homework assignments were completed on time.

14-13 points

Student participated in less than 70% of class sessions; comments/questions did not demonstrate an understanding of course topics. Homework assignments showed deficiencies in content, did not show improvement, and/or were not completed on

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time.

Below 13 points, no credit

Student did not participate in class discussions, was absent, did not complete homework assignments or submitted sub-standard work.

Final Dissertation Proposal or Completed “Preliminary Proposal”

The following outlines the point system for the Dissertation Proposal or Preliminary Proposal. Eighty points represent the highest score. Late papers may not be accepted or points will be deducted, depending on circumstances and instructor’s discretion.

80-72 points

Paper shows original thought, incorporates all the proposal guidelines and requirements; provides excellent coverage of the material; contains a thorough literature review (even if it is not the completed version needed for the final dissertation proposal); is well written, and is in appropriate APA format, including required number of references.

71-69 points

Paper is well thought out; uses the required number of references; contains a well covered literature review; is organized, provides excellent coverage of material but has missed a minor aspect of APA format or is not as well written in a way that slightly interferes with comprehension of minor points of the paper. For example, paper lacks a good summary and ends abruptly.

63-56 points

Paper is well thought out, but is missing one component of APA format OR coverage of material is only adequate. Range of points depends on the degree to which writing style promotes—or interferes with—the reader’s comprehension; the degree to which APA format has been missed; and/or the degree to which the coverage of the material is adequate.

55 - 48 points

Insufficient number of references provided and/or limited coverage and/or disorganized, difficult to understand paper.

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47-O points

Paper is disorganized AND coverage is not adequate AND does not conform to APA format. Zero points if paper is not submitted.

Evidence of plagiarism will result in zero points for the proposal and the student will not pass the class and face academic review (see below).

Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism

In an effort to foster a spirit of honesty and integrity during the learning process, Argosy University requires that the submission of all course assignments represent the original work produced by that student. All sources must be documented through normal scholarly references/citations and all work must be submitted using the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5th Edition* (2001). Washington DC: American Psychological Association (APA) format. Please refer to Appendix A in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5th Edition* for thesis and paper format. Students are encouraged to purchase this manual (required in some courses) and become familiar with its content as well as consult the Argosy University catalog for further information regarding academic dishonesty and plagiarism.

Additionally, Argosy University considers resubmission of a work produced for one course in a subsequent course or the submission of work done partially or entirely by another to be academic dishonesty. It is the student's responsibility to seek clarification from the instructor regarding how much help may be received in completing an assignment, exam or project and what sources may be used.

Scholarly writing: The faculty at Argosy University is dedicated to providing a learning environment that supports scholarly and ethical writing free from academic dishonesty and plagiarism. This includes the proper and appropriate referencing of all sources. You are responsible for maintaining an electronic copy of any work submitted, because you may be asked to submit your course assignments through "Turnitin," (www.turnitin.com), an online resource established to help educators develop writing/research skills and detect potential cases of academic dishonesty. Turnitin compares submitted papers to billions of pages of content and provides a comparison report to your instructor. This comparison detects papers that share common information and duplicative language.

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ADA Policy

It is AU/San Francisco Bay Area Campus policy not to discriminate against qualified students with a documented disability in its educational programs, activities or services. If you have a disability-related need for accommodations in this class, contact the Campus Director of Student Services at 510-215-0277.

Your instructor is responsible for delivering this curriculum in a format that will ensure the objectives are met and measured. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways depending upon the experience, orientation, technological acumen, emphasis and preferences of the instructor as well as the resources available. Your instructor is also required to ensure that the course Outline include details regarding assignments and method of instruction.