School of Social Work
Challenging Minds, Leading Change, Transforming Lives

SW 9430 Dissertation Seminar   1 credit

Instructor: Dr. Arlene N. Weisz
Office: 335 Thompson Home
Telephone: 313-577-4420
Office Hours: by appointment
Email: aa4495@wayne.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION
Offered for S and U grades only. Prereq: candidate status or consent of Ph.D. program director. Development, presentation and critique of dissertation research questions, in context of social work practice or social welfare policy.

COURSE COMPETENCIES FOR THIS COURSE: [These are for the doctoral program in general and should be reflected in each student's dissertation prospectus.]

Theory
  • *Understand and apply theory for research design and social work practice*

Research Methods
  • *Employ mastery of qualitative/quantitative and mixed methods research designs, including scientific theory supporting the design, to be ready to conduct research using these designs*
  • *Distinguish between observational vs. intervention/evaluation research designs*
  • *Critique the ethical issues related to all designs and their application in urban practice and communities*

Data Analysis [if relevant to study methodology]
  • *Apply appropriate statistical tests and interpretation of results*
  • *Appraise types of qualitative data analysis and be prepared to apply to appropriate research situations*

Integration of Knowledge
  • Review and synthesize research and practice literature that is relevant to a social work domain of knowledge
  • Identify historical changes in practice and policy for a social work field, including the trends in the fit with social work ethics and values
  • Apply relevant theoretical frameworks to a domain of knowledge in social work

TEXTS AND REQUIRED MATERIAL
Roberts, C. M. (2010). *The Dissertation journey: A practical and comprehensive guide to planning, writing, and defending your dissertation.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

WSU Dissertation Guidelines: Please download a copy of the Graduate School's *Thesis and Dissertation Format Guidelines*
http://gradschool.wayne.edu/phd-info/complete_format_guidelines.pdf

Other materials are available on Blackboard.

INTRODUCTION:

The primary purpose of this course is to write the dissertation prospectus. Topics include the relationship between theory and data, research design, sampling, measurement, data analysis, and dissertation policies and procedures. The seminar is designed to help participants build on and integrate their previous coursework to develop a dissertation prospectus (with feedback from professor, class and guidance from dissertation chair and committee).

Accordingly, the following knowledge and skills are assumed:

1. The ability to critically analyze individual research studies and to evaluate the state-of-the-literature in a particular research area.

2. An advanced understanding of statistics (including statistical and substantive significance and statistical power) or of qualitative research methods.

3. An understanding of basic research designs, sampling theory, and measurement theory.

Because students will be using a variety of research designs in their dissertation research, this course does not emphasize one design over another.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA:

Assignments will be linked to the development of the dissertation prospectus. Students are expected to produce a draft of each section of the prospectus by the dates listed below (before each session so the professor and class members can review the drafts before class). Achieving a "satisfactory" grade for this course means the student has completed a prospectus that satisfies course requirements. It does not mean that the prospectus is approved by the student's dissertation committee.

GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS

There are seven course requirements. Due dates are noted on session schedule:

Course Requirement
Draft Introductory Chapter
Draft Literature Review Chapter
Draft Theory Chapter
Draft Methodology Chapter
Final version of the dissertation prospectus
Present the dissertation prospectus
Serve as a primary reviewer (along with instructor) of one colleague's chapter during sessions II, III, and IV

ORGANIZATION OF THE COURSE

The course will meet 5 times for about 3 hours. The first session is an overview, including a review of concept papers that students will have prepared in advance. After that, each class will include review of students' drafts of prospectus chapters, as well as plans for the next chapters. The final class enables students to do a practice defense of their prospectus.

ROLE OF THE STUDENT AND INSTRUCTOR

See University Statement of Obligation of Students and Faculty Members of the teaching - learning process
http://www.bulletins.wayne.edu/fib/fib2d.html

POLICIES FOR THIS COURSE

Attendance policy
Students are expected to arrive for class on time and stay until the end of the class session. Students are expected to be prepared at class time for review of their own work and of others' work. Drafts should be sent to the professor and peer reviewer by the dates listed on the syllabus.

In order to be courteous to classmates, we ask that cell phones use be restricted to vibrations—no rings. Please limit beeper use to emergencies only. Please use your laptop only to take notes during class.

Electronic communication policy: The professor may take up to 48 hours to return an email.

Inclement weather: Please check with the professor and the Blackboard site in case of weather that might require cancellation of class.

For further details, see the University Statement of Obligations of Students and Faculty Members of the teaching-learning process.

Please run all chapter drafts through SafeAssign on our class BB site. **Run them drafts** so your prospectus and dissertation do not appear to be plagiarizing your draft. The Graduate School requires that all final dissertations must be checked against SafeAssign.

VII.   RESOURCES FOR ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE

1. Instructor and Dissertation Chair

Consult with the instructor or dissertation chair about any aspect of your research or the seminar during scheduled consultation hours, via email or by appointment.

2. The School of Social Work

The School provides support and assistance to students who, for a variety of reasons, may be experiencing academic problems with writing, statistics, and/or research. Such students should speak with the Ph.D. Director to arrange for special support services.

3. Wayne State University

Research Design and Analysis Consulting

This unit (part of Psychology Department) provides assistance with the design of research projects and the statistical analysis of data. The service is available free of charge to Wayne State University faculty, staff, post-doctoral students, and graduate students. This service is not designed as a substitute for formal coursework on topics in research design and statistical analysis or for mentoring of graduate students by their thesis or dissertation advisors, and our consultants do not function as tutors or supplemental instructors for individuals enrolled in courses. Rather, the service is designed to augment a researcher's own education and training in research design and statistical analysis. We can suggest methodological and analytical approaches and provide guidance for addressing issues that arise in the research process. In addition, we can provide assistance in the use of SPSS, SAS, and LISREL. The service is staffed by and housed in the Department of Psychology. Consultation is available by appointment. *Consult your faculty mentor before contacting this service for assistance.* The service is staffed by and housed in the Department of Psychology. The office is located at 5057 Woodward Ave, Room 8402.3. Consultation is available by appointment. To schedule an appointment, contact the service by telephone at (313) 577-9992 or e-mail at RDAUnit@wayne.edu. For general inquries, Dr. Sebastiano Fisicaro, the director of the unit, can be reached at (313) 577-2812 or fisicaro@wayne.edu.

- **Writing Skills**

The Graduate School supports a writing tutor for graduate writing projects (see Graduate School website) and a writing website
(www.gradschool.wayne.edu/GradWriting/index.htm)
This Graduate Writing Resources webpage is designed to help graduate students in the process of writing dissertations, articles, theses, grant proposals, and prospectuses. The site also provides links to resources that will assist with citations, grammar and punctuation, style, and ways to avoid plagiarism.

- **Dissertation Funding**

Download materials available from the PhD Office in the Graduate School relative to internal dissertation research grants
(http://www.gradschool.wayne.edu/funding/ThesisDissertationApplication.pdf) Grants and fellowships may be available in your specific field of research, so discuss these with your dissertation chair.

- **Institutional Review Board (formerly HIC)**

Contact the School's Research Coordinator, Neva Nahan at 577-4498 to arrange for a consultation as you prepare your IRB Protocol.   She should review all protocols before you submit them to the IRB.

- **Counseling and Supportive Services**

If you are feeling overwhelmed, consider talking to me or call WSU's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), 5221 Gullen Mall, Room 552 Student Center Building. Phone: 313-577-3398. Website: http://www.caps.wayne.edu/.

Other Resources

You may find the following online resources to be of support while engaged in the dissertation process:

Discussion and Support for Dissertation Writers (http://www.phinished.org/).
Association for Support of Graduate Students (http://www.asgs.org/).

Lærd Dissertation   http://dissertation.laerd.com/

WSU STUDENT RESOURCES

Students with disabilities
http://studentdisability.wayne.edu/rights.php.

Academic integrity and student code of conduct
http://www.doso.wayne.edu

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at Wayne State:
http://www.caps.wayne.edu/

Course Learning Units
> Written assignments should be emailed to instructor and other class members by the dates listed below. Blackboard should enable you to email everything to all of us at one time.
>
> Reading for each session should be completed before that session.

Unit	Content	Assignment
I	**Session I.** Sept. 13 **Introduction to Course and Dissertation Process September 13** **Topics:** Overview of the class and the dissertation process Selection of peer review partners Structure, composition and function of the dissertation committee Choosing dissertation topics and research questions Finding dissertation support Evaluating sample research proposal or prospectus Giving constructive and facilitative feedback Writing the introductory chapter Outline of the introductory chapter (background of problem,	**Assignment Due: 2 days before class session I.** Prepare 2 page draft concept paper that includes: purpose, research questions, and possible hypotheses, if applicable. Email to instructor and fellow students 2 days before class session. Review each other's concept papers (all of them) in order to provide helpful suggestions. **Readings:** Chapters from Roberts book: 1.Do You Have What It Takes? pp.2-17 2. What Exactly Is a Dissertation? pp.18-30 4.Choosing a Dissertation Topic pp.46-52

	purpose/aims, research questions, statement of relevance)	5. Creating Your Dissertation Team pp.53-62 6. Dissertation Support Groups pp.63-66 7. Organizing Yourself 67-74 Lyons, P. & Doueck, H. J. (2010). *The dissertation: From beginning to end.* NY: Oxford University Press. pp.12-52 (on Blackboard) **Giving Facilitative Feedback** (on Blackboard)
II	**Session II.** October 4 **Topics:** Progress update and discussion of students' drafts Outlining the literature review Organizational the extant literature Evaluating the extant literature Developing a critical review of the extant literature	**Assignments for Session II:** Draft introductory chapter due 4 days before class session II. Email to instructor and fellow students Serve as a primary reviewer (along with instructor) of designated colleague's chapter **Readings:** Roberts book 8. Using the Internet and Technology to Conduct Research, pp. 76-84 9. Reviewing the Literature, pp. 85-110 10. Mastering the Academic Style, pp.111-121 11. Writing the Introduction Chapter, pp. 123-140 Patten, M. L. (2010). *Proposing empirical research: A guide to the fundamentals.* Glendale, CA: Pyrczak. Topic 21 (Considering the history of a topic) pp. 49-50 (on Blackboard) Lyons, P. & Doueck, H. J. (2010). The literature review. *The dissertation: From beginning to end.* NY: Oxford University Press. pp.55-68 (on Blackboard)

		Evaluate sample dissertations (first three chapters). Look online for dissertations that are somewhat related to your topic. Note how they organize their literature review, their attention to theory, and their discussion of their methodology.
III	**Session III.** October 22 Progress update and discussion of students' drafts • Theoretical frameworks • Testing theories • Using grounded theory • Conceptualizing your research • Outlining the theory chapter	**Outline of literature review** <u>chapter due 2 weeks</u> before class session III <u>Draft literature review chapter</u> due 4 days before class session III. Email to instructor and fellow students Serve as a primary reviewer (along with instructor) of designated colleague's chapter **Readings:** Patten, M. L. (2010). *Proposing empirical research: A guide to the fundamentals.* Glendale, CA: Pyrczak. Topic 10 (theory) pp. 23-24 (on Blackboard) Lyons, P. & Doueck, H. J. (2010). Theory. *The dissertation: From beginning to end.* NY: Oxford University Press. pp.68-79 (on Blackboard) Jaccard, J. & Jacoby, J. (2012) *Theory construction and model building skills: A practical guide for social scientists.* NY: Guilford Press. Ch 2. The nature of understanding, (pp.6-21). Jaccard, J. & Jacoby, J. (2012) *Theory construction and model building skills: A practical guide for social scientists.* NY: Guilford Press. Ch 3. Science as an approach to understanding, (pp.22-36).

IV	**Session IV** November 15 Progress update and discussion of students' drafts Research questions (and hypotheses if relevant) Conceptualization (and measurement if relevant) Study population and sampling design Research design Data collection protocol Data analysis procedures and (data measures if relevant) Limitations of the proposed research Human subjects protocol Timeline Abstract of proposal	**Assignments for Session IV:** 　○ Outline of Theory Chapter **due 2 weeks before class session III** 　○ Draft of Theory Chapter **due 4 days before class session IV.** Email to instructor and fellow students 　○ Serve as a primary reviewer (along with instructor) of designated colleague's chapter Roberts book: Ch. 3 What are Ethical Considerations in Research?, pp.31-44 Ch. 12. Selecting and Describing the Methodology pp.141-165 Ch.14. Analyzing and Presenting the Results, pp.171-176 Ch. 16. The Oral Defense: D-Day, pp.184-191 Peters, R. L. (1997). *Getting what you came for: The smart student's guide to earning an M.A. or a Ph.D. Revised Ed.* NY: Farrar, Straus & Giroux. Pp.236-265. On Blackboard.
V	**Session V** December 13 Mock prospectus defenses Facilitative feedback and peer review	Final draft of dissertation prospectus due 12/5/2011 . Email to instructor and fellow students 12/5/2011 Prepare mock prospectus defense for presentation on December 13

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Davis, G. B.  (1997) *Writing the doctoral dissertation: A systematic approach.* New York: Barrons Educational Series.

Garratt, D. (2003) *My qualitative dissertation journey: Researching against the rules.* New Jersey: Hampton Press.

Glatthorn, A. A. (2005). *Writing the winning dissertation: A step-by-step guide.2ⁿᵈ ed.* Thousand Oaks CA: Corwin Press.

Heppner, P., &. Heppner, M. (2004). *Writing and publishing your thesis, dissertation, and research: A guide for students in the helping professions.* Belmont, CA: Thompson/Brooks/Cole.

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Locke, L. F. (2007).  *Proposals that work: A guide for planning dissertations and grant proposals.*  Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Mauch, J. E., & Park, N. (2003). *Guide to the successful thesis and dissertation: A handbook for students and faculty.* Monticello NY: Marcel Dekker Inc.

Ogden, E. H. (2007). *Completing your doctoral dissertation or master's thesis in two semesters or Less*, 5ᵗʰ  ed.  Landham MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers Inc.

Patten, M. L. (2010). *Proposing empirical research: A guide to the fundamentals.* Glendale, CA: Pyrczak.

Pan, M. L. (2004). *Preparing literature reviews: Qualitative and quantitative approaches.* Los     Angeles, CA: Pyrczak.

Peters, R. (1997). *Getting what you came for: The smart student's guide to earning a MA or PhD. Revised ed.*  New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

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Rudestam, K. E., & Newton, R. R. (2007). *Surviving your dissertation: A comprehensive guide to content and process, 3rd ed.*  Newbury Park CA: Sage Publications.

Peg Boyle Single, P. B. (2010*).  Demystifying dissertation writing: A streamlined process from choice of topic to final text.*  Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.

## Constructing, Evaluating and Testing Theory

Browne, M. N., & Keeley, S. M. (2001). *Asking the right questions: A guide to critical thinking*
(4th Ed.) (pp. 147-164). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.  (See Chapter 10: Are there        rival hypotheses?).

Damer, T. E. (2005). *Attacking faulty reasoning* (5th Ed.) (pp. 4-10). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.    (See Chapter 1: A code of intellectual conduct).

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## Academic Writing: Social Work

### *Families in Society* Writing Series

Fischer, R. (2000). Reading and reviewing research: Tips for the informed consumer. *Families in Society, 81,* 211-213.

Goldstein, H. (1998). On writing for publication. *Families in Society*, *79*(5), 451-454.

Gray, M. (1999). Writing for a journal: Blood, sweat, and tears. *Families in Society, 80,* 305-307.

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Malekoff, A. (1999). A practitioner's journey to becoming a writer. *Families in Society, 80*, 190-194.

Sherman, E. (1999). Research and practice do not make perfect . . . writing. *Families in Society, 80,* 91-93.

Tasker, M. (1999). "Tell me about it": The agony and ecstasy of writing for publication. *Families in Society, 80,* 649-651.

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*figures, posters, and presentations.* Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

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Williams, J. M. (1999). *Style: Ten lessons in clarity and grace,* (6th ed.). Reading, MA: Addison Wesley.

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*Publication Process*

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List of Journals in the Human Services Field:

http://www3.uta.edu/sswtech/publish/journals/

Rowland, F. (undated). *Report to the JISC Scholarly Communications Group.* Peer Review Process: http://www.alpsp.org/htp_peer.htm

Peer Review in the Internet Age: www.public.iastate.edu/~gerrymck/DraftFive.doc

Copyright: http://www.utsystem.edu/OGC/IntellectualProperty/cprtindx.htm

Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals: Writing and Editing for Biomedical Publication: http://www.icmje.org/#editor

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