ENVS 632 Research Methodology -- Winter Term 2013

Grading: P/N, 2 credits
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COURSE OBJECTIVES

This is the second in a three-course sequence for first-year ENVS graduate students. A common theme among these courses is to help you develop a research project and to write a thesis/project proposal that is due at the end of the spring term.

The major objectives of this course are (1) to teach you how to do original research, and (2) to help you develop a thesis/project that will not only get you your master’s degrees but will also result in a significant product that you can be proud of and that may even be noticed by others outside of the ENVS program.

The focus of this class is on writing a clear and concise statement of your research problem, developing the methodology to successfully address that research problem, and to begin the process of developing a thorough knowledge of the literature relevant to your thesis/project. My goal is to have you prepared to begin actually working on your thesis/project research this coming summer and next year.

For the purposes of this course, research means formal, systematic inquiry intended to explore or resolve specific questions. In a broader context, *research is usually designed to test or revise our understanding of some phenomena, process, or problem, and in so doing, to contribute toward theory and, maybe, even help solve the problem.* This is a cross-disciplinary definition, and the procedures for defining a research problem and defining a course to tackle that problem are also largely cross-disciplinary.

COURSE FRAMEWORK

This class has an informal seminar mode, and discussion of readings will be student led. Additionally, we will do (i) several written and oral exercises to help you develop your research problem and methodology, (ii) a number of readings in the craft of doing research and writing a successful thesis, and (iii) an annotated bibliography of material relevant to your thesis/proposal. The culmination of the course will be a public presentation using PowerPoint of your thesis/proposal topics to interested students and faculty on the last day of class. On the prior class period, students will give a practice PowerPoint presentation.

*By the end of the course, students will have:*

1) Developed a researchable topic and expressed it in an initial problem statement that concisely frames and delimits one or more key questions to be investigated,

2) Performed an advanced literature search that explores the topic and issues put forth in the problem statement,
3) Refined the problem statement based on the literature search,

4) Explored a methodology to critically investigate the question(s) posed so as to contribute new perspectives and knowledge to the field,

5) Made significant progress in preparation to write a thesis/project proposal.

**Annotated Bibliography**

You must complete an annotated bibliography of at least 15 items relevant to your thesis or project. In most cases, these items will be peer-reviewed journal articles or chapters of books (each chapter counts as one reference), but if other formats are appropriate for your topic, discuss them with me. Each item will be from ½ to 1 single-spaced page and will include a summary of the main points and how it is relevant to your thesis or project. Include a brief (~ 1 page) introduction of what your probable thesis/project topic will be and how the theme(s) of the readings relate to your topic. It is due on the last day of class.

**DISABILITIES**

It is my goal to create an inclusive learning environment. Please notify me if there are aspects of this course that result in barriers to your participation. You may also wish to contact Disability Services in 164 Oregon Hall at 346-1155 or disabsrv@uoregon.edu.

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

**Plagiarism** is a major academic offense and will be dealt with accordingly according to university policy.

> Plagiarism is the inclusion of someone else's product, words, ideas, or data as one's own work. When a student submits work for credit that includes the product, words, ideas, or data of others, the source must be acknowledged by the use of complete, accurate, and specific references, such as footnotes. Expectations may vary slightly among disciplines. By placing one's name on work submitted for credit, the student certifies the originality of all work not otherwise identified by appropriate acknowledgements. On written assignments, if verbatim statements are included, the statements must be enclosed by quotation marks or set off from regular text as indented extracts.

A student will avoid being charged with plagiarism if there is an acknowledgement of indebtedness. Indebtedness must be acknowledged whenever:

1. one quotes another person's actual words or replicates all or part of another's product;
2. one uses another person's ideas, opinions, work, data, or theories, even if they are completely paraphrased in one's own words;
3. one borrows facts, statistics, or other illustrative materials--unless the information is common knowledge. (UO Policy on Academic Dishonesty, http://tep.uoregon.edu/workshops/teachertraining/learnercentered/syllabus/academicdishonesty.html)
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<td>Course Introduction</td>
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<td>1/21</td>
<td>No class – MLK Day</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>1/28</td>
<td>Developing a Research Question</td>
<td>Leedy and Ormrod, Ch. 2. The Problem: The Heart of the Research Project Booth et al., Ch. 3. From Topics to Questions; Ch. 4. From Questions to a Problem</td>
<td>Preliminary Research Statement (Group 1)</td>
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<td>Developing a Research Question (cont.), Literature Searching and Planning</td>
<td>Leedy and Ormrod, Ch. 4. Planning your Research Project Ch. 5. Writing the Research Proposal</td>
<td>Preliminary Research Statement (Group 2)</td>
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<td>Qualitative Research Methodologies</td>
<td>Leedy and Ormrod, Ch. 6. Qualitative Research Ch. 7. Historical Research</td>
<td>One-Page Research Synopsis (Group 1)</td>
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<td>Quantitative Research Methodologies</td>
<td>Leedy and Ormrod, Ch. 8. Descriptive Research Ch. 9. Experimental, Quasi-Experimental, and Ex Post Facto Designs Ch. 10. Mixed Methods Research Ch. 11. Strategies for Analyzing Quantitative Data</td>
<td>One-Page Research Synopsis (Group 2)</td>
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<td>Review past ENVS theses and projects</td>
<td>Each student will summarize 1 past thesis or project from prior ENVS graduate students</td>
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<td>Practice PowerPoint presentation of thesis/project topics Second meeting TBA or longer class</td>
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<td>Public presentation of thesis/project topics</td>
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