

CONF 998
Doctoral Dissertation Research Proposal

Fall 2006
Wed. 7:20 – 10:00 pm
Truland Building Room 555
Instructor: Howon Jeong (hwjeong@gmu.edu)

Course Objectives

Reflecting on the students' need to prepare for their dissertation research and writing, this course will organize discussion about issues and strategies which students need to think about. These include decisions involving choice of dissertation topics, time management, literature review, data collection, selection of appropriate methodologies, and logistics for forming committees. Toward the end of the semester, students will have an opportunity to present their proposals in class and get feedback.

Requirement and Assignments

Since this class will be used as a springboard for students to initiate their dissertation projects, the collective learning process will be important. This requires active class participation, and interaction with other class members. At the beginning of the semester, there will be some recommended reading assignments that will serve as input for class discussion. Each student will be required to choose some of the chapters in Cone and Foster, *Dissertations and Thesis* published by American Psychological Association (1995) and to provide summaries of the chapters they cover. Even though they are not required, other books students may wish to review are as follows: *Theses and Dissertations: A guide to planning, research, and writing* (Thomas & Brubaker, 2000); and *Writing up Qualitative Research* (Wolcott, 2001).

For those who choose to use interviews for data collection and research, the GMU Human Subjects Research must review and approve their research prior to conducting any interviews. Detailed information is available at <http://www.gmu.edu/pubs/osp/humansubjects.htm>

The class schedule is tailored to different activities each week. Accordingly students need to pay close attention to each week's schedule. In some weeks, we will have a combined session for both doctoral and masters students. In other weeks, we will meet at 8:40 to 10 pm for doctoral students only. Students also need to be alert to individual and group sessions detailed in the schedule section of this syllabus.

Schedule

Week 1: 7:20 – 10:00 pm

Introduction and review of the course objectives as well as discussion regarding the logistics of dissertation and thesis writing

Week 2: 7:20 – 10:00 pm

The overall review of dissertation and thesis writing

Each student will be asked to choose one of the past ICAR dissertations and theses completed within the past seven years, and provide a short class report.

Students will be asked to provide his/her own evaluation of how the dissertation/thesis was organized; their reviews about strength and weakness of the product. More detailed information about the assignment will be provided in class.

Week 3: 7:20 – 10:00 pm

Planning your project and checklist for research readiness

Reading: Cone and Foster, *Dissertations and Thesis*, Chapter 1 (pp. 1-10) and Chapter 2 (pp. 11-26)

Week 4: 7:20 – 10:00 pm

Preparation for proposal development: selection of topics and organization of committees

Reading: Cone and Foster, *Dissertations and Thesis*, Chapters 3 and 4 (pp. 27-60); Chapters 5 and 6 (pp. 81-92)

Week 5: 7:20 – 10:00 pm

Reviews of theories and methodologies

Reading: Cone and Foster, *Dissertations and Thesis*, Chapter 7 (pp. 93-118); Chapter 8 (pp. 119-146); Chapter 9 (pp. 147-172); Chapter 10 (pp. 173-200)

Week 6: 7:20 – 10:00 pm

Requirement for Human Subject Review

Presentations by a guest

Reading: Cone and Foster, *Dissertations and Thesis*, Chapter 11 (pp. 201-218)

Week 7: Preparation for an Individual Proposal

Week 8: Preparation for an Individual Proposal

Week 9: Sessions for Doctoral Students: 8:40 to 10:00 pm

Presentations of proposals and comments

Week 10: Sessions for Doctoral Students: 8:40 to 10:00 pm

Presentations of proposals and comments

Week 11: Sessions for Doctoral Students: 8:40 to 10:00 pm

Presentations of proposals and comments

Week 12: Sessions for Doctoral Students: 8:40 to 10:00 pm

Presentations of proposals and comments

Week 13: Sessions for Doctoral Students: 8:40 to 10:00 pm

Presentations of proposals and comments

Week 14: Thanksgiving

Week 15: Sessions for Doctoral Students: 8:40 to 10:00 pm

Logistics of proposal approval and time management