EDCP 772
Dissertation Proposal Writing Seminar
Fall 2016
Thurs 9-11:45
JMZ 1123

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Benjamin 3214 Suite
Office #: 301-405-7998
parkjj@umd.edu
Office hours: Tues or Fridays generally, or by appt (http://bit.ly/Ppz1XB)

Course Overview

The aim of this class is to help you to conceptualize and conduct research for the common good: research that will contribute to human understanding of social problems, particularly those within the contexts of student affairs and higher education. You will be accomplishing this goal through the platform of your dissertation proposal, which you will be completing through this class. Starting the dissertation can seem like an intimidating project, but all writing is very much a process. This class provides a support structure and community to help you get on your way, breaking your proposal into (relatively) manageable chunks.

This course is not a substitute for the advisor/chair and student relationship, and students should understand that the advisor/chair is the primary and ultimate source of assistance for students’ dissertation proposal. Therefore, students are expected to meet regularly with their advisors or chairs on the development of their research proposals. You will also likely need to supplement course content with content related to specific methods and/or research design components that you wish to incorporate into your dissertation projects (i.e., this is not a class for learning statistics!).

Text

Creswell, J. (2008). *Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks: Sage. [Older or newer version is fine, just make sure your chapters line up with the week’s content]

See ELMS or listed links for all other readings

Expectations and Other Considerations

- The underlying framework for my teaching style is based on Baxter-Magolda’s Learning Partnerships Model. The LPM poses three challenges to learners, along with three principals that help educators initiate productive learning experiences. The three challenges are: that knowledge is complex and socially constructed, that students should bring themselves into how they construct and understand knowledge, and peers (both students and the instructors) have a mutual responsibility to share authority and expertise in constructing knowledge. In this class, we will seek to create an optimal learning environment by validating one another’s capacity to know, situating learning in our own experiences, and co-constructing meaning with one another. Instead of seeing the classroom as a space where I (the expert) deposit knowledge into passive student recipients, I see the classroom as a learning community where students will take ownership of their own learning experience and I wear multiple hats including guide, facilitator, honest critic, and even occasionally but certainly not exclusively—expert.
• You will work hard in this class, but take advantage of the structure of the class to keep you on track. More work now = less work later!

• Because we’ll view learning as a co-constructed process, it is critical that everyone come to class ready to participate, which includes active listening, dialogue, and engagement with the readings and your peers. Readings should be completed prior to the start of class. Out of respect for everyone, please come on time. Participation also includes completion of any in-class and out-of-class assignments/exercises.

• As a community of learners, we have expectations for respectful discourse and consideration for others. Use respectful language, listen to your peers, and avoid interrupting. Treat others as you would wish to be treated.

• Attendance policy: You are expected to attend class every week. Your participation grade will be adversely affected at three non-medically related absences, and you will be dropped from the class at five non-medically related absences. If you are repeatedly late, it will affect your participation grade negatively. Per university policy, you are allowed one non-documentated medical-related absence. Future medically-related absences need a health professional’s documentation to count as excused. After four medically-related absences, the student and Dr. Park will discuss alternative arrangements for completing the class.

• If you know that you are going to be absent the day of an assignment, it is expected that you will either turn it in earlier via email or that you will give a copy to a classmate to turn in. If you are gone due to an emergency, please contact me to make arrangements to turn your assignment in. If you need to request an extension (1 per semester, if that), you must contact me in advance. I will not accept late assignments under other circumstances.

• Cell/smart phones. Turn them off during class. If there’s a reason you need to keep it on (e.g., pending emergency) please let me know in advance. No laptops, get re-acquainted with your handwriting. Inspired by: http://www.newyorker.com/tech/elements/the-case-for-banning-laptops-in-the-classroom

• Guidelines about academic integrity are at: http://umd.edu/honorpledge Simply put: Do. Not. Cheat. Or plagiarize! Please attribute all sources used to the proper authors and consult the APA Manuel for citation guidelines.

• If you have a disability that affects your participation in the course and/or need accommodations, please let me know. If you will need to miss class due to a religious holiday, please let me know by the second week of class.

**Breakdown of Grading**

Small assignments/Drafts—Completion credit unless consistently unsatisfactory: 15%

Peer review of Chapter 3: 10%

Final proposal: 40%

Proposal presentation: 15%

Additional, active participation: 20%
Contingent on Julie’s approval, Week 3, 6-8 CAN be optional for those who are working on a highly accelerated timeline (i.e., advisor’s approval for proposal defense in November or December), use the time to WORK

Criteria

• An "A" proposal includes all three (or four, if you choose to have a separate theory chapter) chapters. While the chair/advisor and instructor recognize that these chapters are still "drafts," they are nonetheless logically clear, organized, and well reasoned. "A" grades also demonstrate that the student has grappled with the issues raised in the course. An "A" grade for discussion participation involves attendance at most or every class meeting, with active engagement in the discussion topics. "A" students also have turned in all of their weekly assignments.

• A "B" proposal includes all three/four chapters, but they require several additions or revisions that make them less than reasonably clear, organized, and well reasoned. A "B" grade for participation and weekly assignments would be characterized by sporadic attendance and/or tardiness and only some of the assignments turned in on time.

• A "C" proposal includes all three/four chapters, but they are in rough form and require significant additions or revisions. (This includes but is not limited to: numerous spelling and/or grammatical errors, incomplete sentences or thoughts, poor organization or non-cohesive paragraphs, and/or large sections of missing information.) Students who frequently miss class and do not turn in a significant number of weekly assignments will receive a "C" grade for class participation and writing assignments, respectively.

• Factors that warrant a grade lower than a "C" include: turning in very few or none of the weekly assignments and turning in fewer than three proposal chapters or chapters that are deemed unacceptable for evaluation.

Other Assignments

Peer review: You will be responsible for providing feedback to a partner on a rough (but complete) draft of the Chapter 3. You need to provide at least 1 page of typed notes, critiques, and offered recommendations + detailed editing for writing/stylistic/grammar. You may use the guiding questions at the end of the Kilbourn article to guide your critique if you wish. If you make suggestions via track changes, email file to Julie so she can consider it as part of your grade. If you use pen, scan the feedback as a PDF and email to Julie along with your critique notes. More detail on key points that you should cover in your critique will be handed out later in the semester.

Proposal presentation: The last week of class we’ll have a (slightly truncated) mock oral proposal defense. Prepare a 15-20 minute presentation. Give most attention/detail to methods, but prepare to wow us overall with your thoughtful conceptualization of this ground-breaking research that you’ve spent all semester planning.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Have read BEFORE class</th>
<th>Assignment due in class</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1,</td>
<td>Introduction to course and syllabus, discuss research interests/topics, why do you want to do this dissertation?!</td>
<td>Kilbourn, The Qualitative Dissertation Proposal (Be ready to discuss what dimensions might vary for a quant dissertation, things that made you think or questions)</td>
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<td>Sept 1</td>
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<td>Creswell Chapter 1 overview of research design (Be ready to talk about what type of design—qual, quant, mixed—and research paradigm is appropriate for your study)</td>
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<td>Research Questions: Creswell 7, Maxwell Chapter 4</td>
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<td>Optional: Guba and Lincoln, Paradigms (if you need more on paradigms). Also optional: Jump ahead to Maxwell Chap 7 for a short write-up of the structure of a proposal and some nice examples of proposal outlines, the PDF is also under the Week 10 files)</td>
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<td>Week 2,</td>
<td>What goes in a dissertation? Research Questions, Take 1</td>
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<td>Bring in a draft of your research questions</td>
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<td>Sept 8</td>
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<td>Week 3,</td>
<td>Elements of chapter 2: Is there really a gap in the research and what is it? (And why should I care?—Crafting a lit review as an argument)</td>
<td>Creswell Chap 2</td>
<td>IF you have not already done serious work on your lit review: Bring lit review map (or bedaggled daisy) AND 3-5 pg outline with list of studies that inform your conceptualization of topic (or other format if appropriate, discuss with Julie), include an analysis the gap that exists in the literature re: your research question/topic.</td>
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<td>Sept 15</td>
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<td>Salsa Dancing chapter 5</td>
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<td>Karen PPT 2</td>
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Creswell Chap 5, 6  
Grounded theory research questions  
Karen on Intro Chapter PPT  
Maxwell Chap 7 if you haven’t already read it, to help you understand how the structure of a proposal fits together | Pick a dissertation (Julie’s examples under “sample dissertations” or one directly related to your topic—try to screen for quality) and read its introduction/Chapter 1, think about how the problem/so what factors are addressed  
Write and bring draft of intro, research problem, significance statement, purpose statement, and research questions—the bulk of Chapter 1—be ready to share with each other and give feedback |
| Week 5, Sept 29 | Theory and sensitizing concepts: To use or not to use?  
IRB and Ethics | Creswell Chap 3 and 4, Maxwell Chap 3  
Bowen, Grounded theory and sensitizing concepts  
Brandt, Racism and Research  
Optional if you want more on theory: Henstrand article | Complete CITI Training if you haven’t already and bring copy of certification to class.  
Pick an article related to your topic that has a distinct theoretical/conceptual framework section. Think of an alternate theoretical perspective and jot down |
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<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings and Notes</th>
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| Week 6, Oct 6 | Quant research design and methods          | (Theory as research guide), Julie’s chapter 3  
  some thoughts on how the theory shaped the framing of the article and article would be different if a different theory/lens were used. Come prepared to share, and also to discuss the role that theory will play in your project. Don’t forget next week’s deadline! |
| Week 7, Oct 13 | Quant research design and methods          | Everyone: Find a quant article using methods similar to those you’re thinking of using—should use similar methods, research focus doesn’t have to be the same. (For qual people, find an article using quant methods that is related to your research topic/question) Read it, make some notes, and be ready to share thoughts.  
Write draft of theory/sensitizing concepts section, bring for group feedback.  
Quant people should bring in some rough notes/questions on how they’re thinking of |
|            |                                            | Deadline 1 Due: Chapter 1 (or greatest need chapter) to Julie for feedback, double sided printing okay  
What sorts of questions do Stage/Astin/Lee/Bowman raise for quant research on college students? |
conducting their studies, be ready to share and give feedback. In your notes, address dataset, type of analyses and how they relate to research questions, description of survey instrument, plans for data collection if any, sample, key variables, plans for recoding, concerns related to missing data, reliability/validity, etc.

| Week 8, Oct 20 | Qualitative research design and methods | Creswell Chap 9  
|                |                                    | Maxwell Chap 5  
|                |                                    | Freeman Standards of Evidence  
|                |                                    | Go to sample dissertations folder on 772 and read Chapter 4 of Julie’s dissertation  
|                |                                    | **Deadline 2: Chapter 2** (or highest need chapter if Chap 2 is already in good shape), **email to Julie by Tuesday Oct 25 at 12 PM** |

| Week 9, Oct 27 | Coding, qual continued | Auerbach Chap 4-7  
|                |                        | Lareau, Appendix for example of detailed research design decisions  
|                |                        | Optional: Auerbach 8 (On transferability vs. generalizability in qualitative work)  
|                |                        | *Find a qualitative article using methods similar to those you’re thinking of using—should use similar methods, research focus doesn’t have to be the same. (For quant people, find an article using qual methods that is related to your research topic/question)*  
|                |                        | Read it, make some notes on the qualitative research methods you will likely use, including design, sample, recruitment procedures, limitations, etc. and be prepared to share.  
|                |                        | Quant people, you should be getting to know your dataset, doing any data cleaning, etc. |
notes, and be ready to share thoughts.
Optional but highly suggested for qual folks: Grounded theory data analysis chapter

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<tr>
<th>Week 10, Nov 3</th>
<th>Work on your own</th>
<th>Work work! Maxwell Chap 7 [Note—there’s a nice example of an outline for a proposal that may be helpful to you earlier in the semester as you’re outlining and re-outlining the structure of your proposal] if you haven’t already read it!</th>
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<tr>
<td>Week 11, Nov 10</td>
<td>No class because of ASHE conference</td>
<td>Work work! Chapter 3 draft deadline is coming up!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 12, Nov 17</td>
<td>Beyond chapter 3: Deadlines/procedures, Forming/writing conclusions, thinking about IRB, etc., talking about committees, etc. Sharing work, workshop, peer feedback time</td>
<td>Draft of chapter 3 due to peer partner by email at 6 PM today (Send partner feedback by Nov 22 PM and CC-Julie)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 13, Nov 24</td>
<td>Thanksgiving, keep working on your proposals!</td>
<td>Work work!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 14, Dec 1</td>
<td>Work work work keep it up, option to schedule a meeting with Julie</td>
<td>Work work! Your final proposal presentation is due Dec 8, final written proposal Dec 12!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 15, Dec 8</td>
<td>Presentations and celebrating</td>
<td>PROPOSAL DUE by 12 PM on Monday Dec 12 in Julie’s Box</td>
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(double-sided printing preferred) and also sent via email
SUGGESTED ELEMENTS OF A QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

(Compliments of Karen Inkelas)

I. Introduction to and statement of the problem your research addresses
   A. Background and context of the problem
   B. Statement of the problem (including the research question)
   C. Definitions of key terms in the statement
   D. Rationale: why is this study important, significant?
      • Expectations/anticipations about results and their usefulness

II. Review of related literature and research
   A. Brief roadmap of literature review
      • Overview of why specific literature was chosen and how it will be organized
   B. What is known about this topic?
   C. What is not well understood about this topic? (i.e., what are the gaps in the literature?)
   D. Critique and methodological limitations of prior work
   E. If appropriate, incorporation of conceptual framework
      • Summary of literature review as it relates to your problem statement and hypotheses
      • Conceptualization of study, either in words or illustrated as a model

III. Description of study methods/procedures
   A. Restate study purpose (i.e., research question) and state hypotheses
      • Note: hypotheses can be null or alternative
      • Note: hypotheses should be stated in a way that is testable
   B. Design of study
      • State design choice (e.g., experimental, correlational, comparative, ex post facto) and why this choice
      • Identify potential threats to internal validity (esp. for experimental designs)
   C. Sample or population to be studied
      • Describe sampling strategy chosen and rationale for choosing this strategy
      • Describe population sample is generalizing to and how researcher plans to test for representativeness of sample to population
      • State sample size chosen, and give rationale for this choice (acceptable sample error, statistical power considerations, etc.)
      • Describe how sample will be obtained (will it require assistance?)
   D. Instrumentation
      • Rationale for using instrument

Note: The above are suggested formats for quantitative and qualitative research proposals. However, all proposals are unique, and thus can vary from these formats.
• Reliability and validity of instrument (as well as how you plan to re-establish reliability for your study)
• How are variables scored?
• Plans for pilot-test?

E. Plan for data collection

• How, when, and for how long will you collect your data?
• How will you solicit participation?
• How will you handle non-response?
• Will you use incentives?
• If applicable, how and when will you follow-up with participants?

F. Plan for analysis of data

• Describe initial “treatment” of data (e.g., data entry, clean up, scale construction, etc.)
• Describe statistical analytical method chosen to address research question(s)/hypothes(es)
• Rationale for analytical choice and how it addresses your research question(s)/hypothes(es)

G. Limitations of study

• Describe possible limitations of the study as conceived thus far

Note: The above are suggested formats for quantitative and qualitative research proposals. However, all proposals are unique, and thus can vary from these formats.
SUGGESTED ELEMENTS OF A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

I. Introduction to and statement of the problem your research addresses
   A. General introduction and background of topic
   B. Statement of the problem (including the research question(s))
   C. Initial (but malleable) definitions of key terms
   D. Rationale: why is this study important, significant?
   E. Disclose paradigmatic worldview, philosophical assumptions that make this paradigm choice appropriate for your study, and how it shapes your thinking on this topic

II. Review of related literature and research
    A. Brief roadmap of literature review
       Include overview of why specific literature was chosen and how it will be organized
    B. What is known about this topic?
    C. What is not well understood about this topic? (i.e., what are the gaps in the literature?)
    D. Critique and methodological limitations of prior work
    E. If appropriate, acknowledgement the study may uncover other areas of literature as research progresses

III. Description of study methods/procedures
    A. Present initial questions and objectives for study
       • Initial questions should frame initial procedures for collecting & analyzing data
    B. Design of study
       • Describe design choice and rationale for choice in light of initial research question identified
    C. Sample
       • Discuss criteria for selection of participants and setting

1 Breadth and depth of literature review in qualitative research proposals may vary.
Note: The above are suggested formats for quantitative and qualitative research proposals. However, all proposals are unique, and thus can vary from these formats.
• Articulate rationale for initial choice of sampling

D. Instrumentation

• Since researcher is the instrument, describe researcher’s background, closeness to topic, values, etc.

E. Plan for data collection

• Discuss access to site and participants (including roles of gatekeepers, informants)
• Describe degree of participation in which researcher will engage
• Describe types of data researcher will collect (e.g., observations, interviews, documents, etc.) and HOW (provide detail on data collection will take place, e.g. give examples of interview questions or interview guide, the nature of participant observation, use of incentives, recruitment strategies, etc. don’t skimp on detail! If you are plan to use interviews, you should include an interview guide/protocol as an Appendix, its nature will depend on the type of interviews you plan to use)
• Describe how researcher will record information (fieldnotes, memos, tape recordings, transcriptions, etc.)
• Frame initial speculation on time frame for data collection
• Reflect on possible changes in data collected, samples selected, strategies used based on initial speculations
• Describe pilot study, if appropriate, and how pilot informed initial questions and methodological choices

F. Plan for analysis of data

• Describe data analysis procedure you plan to utilize (e.g., constant comparative method)
• Discuss credibility, trustworthiness, transferability, dependability, confirmability, or other methods used to ensure quality of data collected and analyzed
• Make provisions for audit trail (for reader and/or peer debriefer)

G. Limitations of study

• Describe possible limitations of the study as conceived thus far

Note: The above are suggested formats for quantitative and qualitative research proposals. However, all proposals are unique, and thus can vary from these formats.