9704 Research Methods [2017-2018]
Fall and Winter: Tuesdays, 9 am – 12 pm
First Meeting: Sept. 12

Professor: Matt Thomson
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The schedule may be juggled (e.g. to accommodate changes to guests’ availability etc...)

“...data analysis alone does not enable researchers to achieve their main goal, namely, to answer questions. To reach that goal, researchers must concentrate on their design: it must be as sound as possible, and it must be appropriate for the questions they want answered... Though there are numerous techniques of data analysis, no techniques, regardless of its elegance, sophistication, and power can save the research when the design is poor, improper, confounded, or misguided. As we have stated, and will state again, sound inferences and generalizations from a piece of research are a function of design and not statistical analysis...”
(Keppel & Zedeck, 1991, pg. 12)

This course will introduce different ways of conducting research. The focus is on methodological and philosophy of science issues – it is not a statistics class. It will help you develop skills to conduct and evaluate research. By the end of the course, you will have some appreciation of the research process. But, this course will not make you an expert and it only marks the beginning of your methodological training.

Evaluation: Performance will be assessed as follows:

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<th>Component</th>
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<tr>
<td>Contribution</td>
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<td>Critiques</td>
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<td>December paper</td>
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<td>Final Exam - Poster</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
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The final average in this class will likely be in the 80% to 85% range, though there is no policy specifying it cannot be higher or lower. 90%+ = A+ (= truly exceptional); 80-90% = A (doing just fine); 70-80% = B (“we should talk”).

Materials:

1. A. F. Chalmers, What is this thing called science? (3rd edition please)
3. Sudhir Venkatesh, Gang Leader for a Day (any paperback version is fine)
4. Ben Goldacre, Bad Science (get most recent version please)
5. Various readings (articles, book chapters) available on a network folder
PDFs of the remaining readings (i.e. excluding those above) can be found at:

Network > biz-info > phd > shared > Research Methods Course

**Contribution:** The course is a seminar, a format which requires you to speak. If you have not carefully prepared the readings for the week, it’s better not to talk. To paraphrase Bausell (1994, p. 18), I will not accept intellectual bullshitting and neither should you. I evaluate your contribution daily on the basis of the quality and quantity of your contributions. Do all the readings carefully. Be thoughtful. Make well-substantiated and logical arguments. Be critical. Take risks. Listen. There are three ways to contribute:

1. **Talk,** ask questions, answer questions, respond to comments, wonder aloud, further discussion etc… regularly during classes. On many days, you will not have a specific reading assigned to you (see below) and on those days, this type of contributing is your primary job.

2. You will also do two types of presentations:
   - **Research Presentation:** You present a research paper that I assign as if it were your own (i.e. you are one of its authors) and other students will ask questions etc… (i.e. offer their own critique) of ‘your’ paper. Use powerpoint as if it’s a normal talk at a conference. 20 minutes maximum. Your job will be to get through the presentation, control its flow even while answering questions, responding to comments etc… These are labelled P1 – P11 in the reading list.
   - **Reading Presentation:** You present the important content of an assigned reading. You have to make the determination of what is important*. Take as much time as you need but I’ll rarely let you go over 15 minutes. Your job is to ‘teach’ the content in whatever manner you think will be most clear and effective (but no powerpoint, no handouts; you sit at the table or use the whiteboard and may employ a single piece of paper to help you remember content) making sure to pull out of the assigned reading key insights, theories, ideas, facts etc… You goal is to help the class reach a superior understanding of the topics and ideas in a given reading. These are labelled RP1-RP11 in the reading list.

*yes, this means you may have to ignore content. It is better to be deep than broad, to focus on a few important things in a thorough manner than cover many things in a cursory manner.

If you are presenting during a class (either P1-P11 or RP1-RP11), you do not have to (but are free to) hand in a critique for that class – EXCEPT for Gang Leader for a Day, which all students must critique.

**Critiquing:** This is an individual assignment. Throughout the year, I will assign articles for which you write a critique (see How to Write a Critique below). All students will also write a critique of the Venkatesh book (which counts double a normal critique). You may throw out your two worst critique grades of the year; the remaining will comprise your grade (i.e. if you hand in a critique late or miss one, you get 0% on it, but that presumably would be one of the two you’d opt to throw out).

Please email me a copy of your critique no later than one hour before the start of class in which we will discuss the related paper. That means for regularly scheduled classes, the deadline is 8 am Wednesday (based on the time stamp on my email). I will not accept late papers. Use the table above the reading list to figure out which article to critique (I vary using (A)/(B) and (1)/(2)).

**December Paper:** Write a paper on a management topic that interests you. The paper must be de novo (e.g. independent of other current or past coursework or workplace efforts). You may use an idea given to you by a professor, or even work with that person to develop your ideas, but you must be the ‘primary’ on the paper (e.g. first author) and be the major force driving the ideas and paper forward. Make it a small enough idea that you can get it done, but a big enough one that if you collected data on it, you could see yourself presenting it next
year at a conference.

The papers you submit should be aimed at a quality that would generate interest and attention from reviewers at top journals in your field. Do not propose a meta-analysis or conceptual paper. The paper must be hypothesis driven (present no less than two and no more than four hypotheses) and it must demonstrate a good grasp of the literature; it must attempt to make an explicit and significant contribution; it must be logical, persuasive and put theory front and centre. The paper includes everything you’d typically see in a top journal article up to (but not including) the “Study 1” section. That is:

- Introduction section (e.g. Position paper. Why is it important? What is the contribution? What is the general approach of the paper? What is the paper’s goal?). This section must include a succinct and precise representation of your research question.

- Literature Review: Literature review that is derived from and supports your research question. This section should include hypotheses generation.

- Figures, tables etc… You must include a theoretical model.

- References: must be accurate and complete.

Due: 5 pm, Friday, December 29, 2017. I am limiting you to 10 pages of text (not including references, tables and figures, abstract/title page). The title page should include the title, authorship and abstract. It is vital that you keep a good length/contribution ratio. You must develop your ideas logically and clearly. I value depth over breadth in this endeavour. Please make a PDF copy of the paper and email it to me (CC’ing yourself in the same email) by the deadline. You are free to hand the paper in early but you are only permitted to hand it in once (I tend to grade these as I receive them).

**Formatting:** typed, 1.5 spaced, 1-inch margins, 12-point font, Times New Roman. For other formatting issues (e.g. references, tables/figures…), adopt the style used by the top research journal in your respective field.

**Final Exam – Poster:** Your final exam will be in the form of a poster presented at the annual Faculty Retreat (schedule to be determined but it is tentatively end of April). Many students present the updated version of their December paper while others present other research they have been working on since starting at Ivey, but the same rules apply – it must be original research (e.g. independent of other current or past coursework or workplace efforts). It must be in the form of a high-quality poster presented at any top conference, including explicit statement of research question(s), moderately detailed description of studies/methods, clear summary of results and contributions etc… It has to be able to ‘stand on its own’ (that is, be clear and comprehensive without your having to explain it – imagine you are at a conference; for every one person you talk to about your poster, many others will look at it and not be able to talk to you). You should make yourself familiar with the expectations of a poster as well as talk to senior students about their formatting ideas. I will seek input from all faculty about their impression of the posters (though I alone remain responsible for grading). It will also cost something in the neighborhood of $60 to have the poster printed (Western University has the facilities to do it) but you have funding from your PhD general fund to pay for it (keep your receipt!).

Here is the hard part. **You must present actual data.** You have ~8 months (from September to the presentation date) to obtain ethics approval (if necessary - see NOTE below), conduct a study and analyze the data. Remember, the research idea must be de novo (not building on Master’s data or previous workplace efforts etc…). It does not have to be an enormous study, but it must be tight, defensible, thoughtful etc…

Keep in mind that it will take about a month to have your ethics/IRB application approved. It will take time to collect and analyze the data. You should start moving with the paper/presentation components of this course early. One reasonable goal you should expect of yourself is to submit this paper to one of your area’s major conferences. You will be in much better shape if you submit your ethics application by early December.

**NOTE:** If your study involves human-subjects, you will have to obtain ethics approval (i.e. see Western’s office of Human Research Ethics for details). To do this, you’ll have to be sponsored by a
professor and have your actual study designed (e.g. know how you plan to recruit, what measures you’ll collect, etc… It is very specific). It also takes approximately a month to get approval. **Because of this, you must send me proof that you have submitted your human-subjects protocol to the ethics board by Friday January 12, 2018.** A failure to submit this document in time will result in a 25% penalty on your paper grade (i.e. up to 5% overall penalty).

**Course Rules:**

- I will not accept late papers or assignments except by prior written arrangement or unless I receive what I judge to be unambiguous evidence of extenuating circumstances in which case it is at my discretion how to handle grading. Otherwise, late papers, assignments etc… will earn an automatic grade of zero. Assignments that exceed page limits will be treated as late (i.e. 0%).

- I expect you to attend all classes and I expect you to be on time. If you plan to be absent or late, email me ahead of time. If you miss 5 or more classes, you may not do the final exam. In any event, if you miss a class, you are responsible for completing the assignment and readings on time.

- Pay attention to the quality of your writing/arguments (well organized and articulated; specific and clear meanings; perfect formatting etc…). **COMMUNICATE IN SUCH A MANNER THAT YOU CANNOT POSSIBLY BE MISUNDERSTOOD.** If you can’t communicate your amazing ideas, they’re bad ideas. I tend to be hard on poorly written assignments.

- No Wikipedia. You are a doctoral student now.

- I use Turn It In.com for all written assignments. Sometime in the beginning of the semester, you’ll receive an email to register at this site. Please do so and submit all your course work to me through it. However, here is some official language on the matter: “**All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism-detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com** (http://www.turnitin.com).” See also **https://www.lib.uwo.ca/tutorials/plagiarism/ and https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf**.

**Academic integrity:** Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will be dealt with consistent with the official policies of the university. This concept applies with equal force to all assignments and is considered a major Scholastic Offence. I want to be very clear: If I find you to be cheating, plagiarizing, working together when you are not permitted to etc…, I will do everything in my power to have you removed from the class, the program and the university. I will be holding you, as a PHD student, to a high standard of integrity and professional conduct. If you have concerns, queries etc…, talk to me immediately. Here is some language that the university requires: “Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf)

**Mental Health:** As part of a successful graduate student experience at Western, we encourage students to make their health and wellness a priority. Western provides several on campus health-related services to help you achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing your graduate degree. For example, to support physical activity, all students, as part of their registration, receive membership in Western’s Campus Recreation Centre. Numerous cultural events are offered throughout the year. Please check out the Faculty of Music web page [http://www.music.uwo.ca/](http://www.music.uwo.ca/), and our own McIntosh Gallery [http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca/](http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca/). Information regarding health- and wellness-related services available to students may be found at [http://www.health.uwo.ca/](http://www.health.uwo.ca/)
Students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone they feel comfortable confiding in, such as their faculty supervisor, their program director (graduate chair), or other relevant administrators in their unit. Campus mental health resources may be found at http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/resources.html

To help you learn more about mental health, Western has developed an interactive mental health learning module, found here: http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/module.html. This module is 30 minutes in length and provides participants with a basic understanding of mental health issues and of available campus and community resources. Topics include stress, anxiety, depression, suicide and eating disorders. After successful completion of the module, participants receive a certificate confirming their participation.

How to Write a Critique

Summarize briefly – in your own words, not cut and paste from the abstract for example – and then in detail assess the reading. You cannot do an effective job at critiquing an article if you have not read the other assigned readings for a session. Here are some guidelines1 (things to think about when preparing critiques). You won’t have room to talk about all these things in any given critique, but this is a good set of questions etc… to get you focused. Remember, only focus on important aspects of the paper.

1. Briefly summarize the question the author is trying to answer. Is this question interesting and important? Why or why not? In evaluating the importance of the question, you should consider whether the author’s review of the literature suggests a logical need for this research. Some issues you might want to think about are: Is this research the first empirical test of an important theoretical prediction? Does it extend existing theory? Does it test competing theoretical predictions? Does it remedy important flaws in past empirical research?

2. Briefly describe the model the author uses to answer the research question. What are the key concepts in the model and what are the relationships between those concepts? Try to be as specific as possible in describing the model (e.g., do not say “this paper tests a transactions costs theory of the employment relationship,” rather say that “this paper examines the idea that the firm specificity of employees’ skills affects the mechanisms a firm uses to govern the employment relationship”). Your summary of the model should be brief; it should indicate that you understand that author’s model without describing it in detail. If you are able, you may wish to comment on how well the model fits with existing literature in the area. How well does the model represent what we already know about the author’s research question?

3. Discuss the appropriateness of the author’s methodology. Does the methodology appear to be able to answer the author’s research question? Some issues to consider are: Is the sample appropriate (e.g., if the author wants to study factors that affect the death of firms, does the sample include both firms that died and comparable firms that did not die?) Are the measures reasonable representations of the constructs in the author’s model (e.g., in the study just described, how does the author measure organizational death? Is this measure consistent with the author’s theoretical description of the construct?).

4. Include some evaluation of the appropriateness of the statistical tests. Are the tests reasonable, given the author’s research question? Does the author explore alternative explanations for the results and test them where possible? How well does the author explain anomalous or unexpected results? Are the author’s explanations for these results tested, where possible? Be careful not to get bogged down in detail. Do not criticize the statistical tests unless you can offer some reasonable explanation for why the test is inappropriate or for why an alternative test would be more appropriate. For example, do not say “the author should have used a regression analysis instead of comparing means across organizations” unless you can explain why a simple comparison of means is not appropriate and how a regression analysis would have improved the author’s results.

1 I have pulled most of this content from Prof. Jay Anand’s (Ohio State University) syllabus on Research Methods.
5. Evaluate the author’s conclusions. Do the conclusions address the author’s research question? Are the conclusions consistent with the results? Are there any untested alternative explanations for the author’s results? If these alternative explanations cannot be tested in this research, does the author suggest ways in which these explanations might be tested in future research? Does the author discuss the limitations of the research and describe ways of remedying those limitations in future research?

6. Provide suggestions for improvement (this can be done in conjunction with each of the items listed above or as a separate section of the critique). For each major criticism of the work, suggest ways in which the work could be improved. For example, if you feel that the research question is not important, suggest a related, but more important, research question. If you believe that the sample is flawed, suggest a more appropriate, but still reasonable sample. You should refrain from making suggestions that are correct theoretically but infeasible practically. For example, you could criticize most research by saying “the author should have selected a random sample of organizations.” While this is true in theory, it is typically impossible in practice and thus is not a very useful criticism. Your suggestions for improvement should focus on practical, reasonable steps that the author could take to improve the research. If you are one of the fortunate few who reviews a study that, like Mary Poppins, is “practically perfect in every way,” you should have several ideas for expanding the research.

7. It is much better to focus your critique on ideas, concepts, contributions, constructs, measurement, arguments, interpretations, hypotheses, evidence, conclusions, etc… It’s tempting (because it’s easy) to focus on surface things like writing style, writing quality, diction, spelling, organization but that’s not going to push your brain very hard. If these cursory things are a devastatingly major issue, note them BRIEFLY (one sentence) and move on.

8. Your critique of the Venkatesh book may be 3 pages long. All others may not exceed 2 pages. Formatting: typed, single spaced, 1-inch margins, 12-point font, Times New Roman. Please make sure your name appears prominently somewhere on the critique. Also, at various times during the year, I may ask for a version of your critique that is anonymized – this is so I can distribute a version to the class without giving away your identity (so other students can learn from your work).

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USE THE FOLLOWING TO FIGURE OUT YOUR CRITIQUES (SEE READING LIST)

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<tr>
<td>Julian</td>
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<td>Dan</td>
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READING LIST:

Note: If you are presenting during a class (either research or reading presentation), you do not have to (but are free to) hand in a critique for that class – EXCEPT for Gang Leader for a Day, which all students must critique.

Session 1: Bad Science (Sept. 12)

Session 2: Writing and Reviewing (Sept. 19)
- Cochrane (2005), “Writing Tips for Ph.D. Students” RP1
(B) Golder and Tellis (1993) “Pioneer Advantage: Marketing Logic or Marketing Legend” P2

Note: critique your article by applying the ideas advanced in the other papers and in light of the day’s topic. I don’t expect you to be a marketing or OB expert.

Session 3: Ethics (Sept. 26)
- Bickman and Rog, Chapter 4 RP6
(1) Milgram (1969) “Obedience to Authority”, Chapters 1, 2 and 14 P4
(2) Haney et al. (1973), “A Study of Prisoners and Guards…” P5

Note: your critiques of either Haney et al. or Milgram should be based on applying the principles laid out in the Tri-Council Statement.

Session 4: Graduate School (Oct. 3)
(A) Williamson and Cable (2003) “Predicting Early Career Research Productivity: The Case of Management Faculty” P6
(B) Long et al. (1998) “Research Productivity of Graduates in Management: Effects of Academic Origin and Academic Affiliation” P7

Session 5: Ideas and Writing (Oct. 10)
- Scan: Davis (1971) “That’s Interesting!”

Session 6: Scientific Method (Oct. 17)
- Chalmers, Chapter 1 RP8
- Chalmers, Chapter 5 RP9
- Chalmers, Chapter 6 RP11

• Chalmers, Chapter 7 RP1
• Kerlinger (1973) “Science and the Scientific Approach” (note this is PDF contains three chapters as below)
  o Chapter 1: Science and the Scientific Approach RP2
  o Chapter 2: Problems and Hypotheses RP4
  o Chapter 3: Constructs, Variables, and Definitions RP5
• Flexner, 1939 – everyone read please. I will chose someone to lead discussion on it.

Session 7: Theory (Oct. 24)
• Chalmers, Chapter 8 RP6
• Chalmers, Chapter 9 RP7
(A) Ghasemizad et al. (2012), “A Study of the Relationship between Teachers and Principals’ Spiritual Leadership, Quality of Work Life, Job Satisfaction and Productivity” P11
(B) Ring and van de Ven (1992), “Structuring Cooperation Relationships between Organizations” P3

Session 8: Grounded Theory/Humanistic Inquiry (Oct. 31)
• Chalmers, Chapter 2 RP1
• Chalmers, Chapter 4 RP2
• Corbin and Strauss (1990) “Grounded Theory Research: Procedures, Canons and Evaluative Criteria” RP4
• Hirschman (1986) “Humanistic Inquiry in Marketing Research: Philosophy, Method and Criteria” RP5
• Suddaby (2006), “From the Editors: What Grounded Theory is Not” RP6
(2) Schouten and McAlexander (1995) “Subcultures of Consumption: An Ethnography of the New Bikers” *

Session 9: Qualitative Summary (Nov. 7)
• Bickman and Rog, Chapter 8 RP8
• Bickman and Rog, Chapter 9 RP9
• Bickman and Rog, Chapter 17 RP11
  (A) and (B) Venkatesh, Gang Leader for a Day

Session 10: Models I (Guest: Mehmet Begen)³ (Nov. 14)
⇒ TBD

Session 11: Models II (Guest: Mehmet Begen) (Nov. 21)
⇒ TBD

Session 12: Scale Development, Measurement (Nov. 28)
• Churchill (1979) “A Paradigm for Developing Better Measures of Marketing Constructs” RP1
(1) Bennett and Robinson (2000) “Development of a Measure of Workplace Deviance” *
(2) Thomson et al. (2005), “The Ties That Bind…” *

Session 13: Self-Report Measures (Dec. 5)
• Podsakoff and Organ (1986) “Self-reports in Organizational Research: Problems and Prospects” RP6
• Podsakoff et al. (2003) “The Mismeasure of Manage(ment) and its Implications for Leadership Research” RP7
• Schwarz (1999) “Self Reports: How the Questions Shape the Answers” RP9

³ You will receive instructions on how to prepare for the sessions with Mehmet Begen in advance.
Session 14: Surveys I (Jan. 9)
- Bickman and Rog, Chapter 3 RP1
- Bickman and Rog, Chapter 12 RP2
- Dillman et al., “From Questions to a Questionnaire” RP4
- Groves et al (1992), “Understanding the Decision to Participate in a Survey” RP6
- Holbrook et al. (2003), “Telephone Versus face-to Face Interviewing…” RP7

Session 15: Surveys II (Jan. 16)
- Fowler (1992), “How Unclear Terms Affect Survey Data” RP8
- Blair et al. (1977), “How to Ask Questions about Drinking and Sex…” RP9
- Bishop et al. (1986), “Opinions on Fictitious Issues…” RP2

Session 16: Surveys III (Jan. 23)

Session 17: Guests: Martin Persson on Archival Methods (Jan. 30)
→ TBD

Session 18: Validity, Reliability and Generalizability (Feb. 6)
- Bachrach et al. (2001) “Attributions of the “Causes” of Group Performance as an Alternative Explanation of the Relationship between Organizational Citizenship Behavior and Organizational Performance” RP9
- Peter (1979) “Reliability: A Review of Psychometric Basics and Recent Marketing Practices” (ignore marketing practices section) RP2

Session 19: Experiments (Feb. 13)
- Chalmers, Chapter 3 RP5
- Bickman and Rog, Chapter 2 RP6
- Bickman and Rog, Chapter 5 RP7
- Bickman and Rog, Chapter 6 RP8
- Birnbaum (1999) “How to Show that 9 > 221: Collect Judgments in a Between Subjects Design” RP9
- Greenwald (1976) “Within-Subjects Designs: To Use or Not To Use?” RP1
- Prentice and Miller (1992) “When Small Effects are Impressive” RP2

Session 20: Guests: Adam Fremeth on natural, quasi-experiments (Feb. 27)
→ TBD

Session 21: Mediation, Moderation etc… (March 6)
- Zhao, Lynch and Chen “Reconsidering Baron and Kenny…” RP3
- Krishna, “A Clearer Spotlight on Spotlight…” RP4
- Carlson and Wu, “The Illusion of Statistical Control…” RP5
- Spector and Brannick, “Methodological Urban Legends…” RP6
Session 22: Biases etc. (March 13)
- Greenberg (1987) “The College Sophomore as Guinea Pig: Setting the Record Straight” RP7
- Sawyer (1975) “Demand Artifacts in Laboratory Experiments in Consumer Research” RP11
- Weber and Cook (1972) “Subject Effects in Laboratory Research” RP1

Session 23: Controversies in Research (March 20)
- Simmons et al. (2011), “False-Positive Psychology: Undisclosed Flexibility in Data Collection and Analysis Allows Presenting Anything as Significant” RP2
  (1) and (2) Gould (1991), “The Self-Manipulation of my Pervasive…”

Session 24: People’s Choice (RP 1 – 11 → all students prepare) (March 27)
Each student must bring in a copy of what he or she views as an important RM-related paper that we have not covered in this class. After Session 23 (but not before I have approved the article during Session 23), each student must email an electronic copy of his or her chosen paper to the class. During Session 24, each student will present and talk about their chosen paper, explaining its significance etc…

Final exam (i.e. Posters) will be scheduled towards the end of April (“Final Exam Period” is April 14-30, 2018)

*anyone who is not happy with their “P” presentation grade may volunteer to do another presentation with one of these papers. First come, first served…