
Business 9704 – Research Methods Part 1

Fall 2024

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Date and Time: Tuesdays, 9:30 – 12:30

Location: TBA
(12 Sessions)

“...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)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

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. The course will help you develop skills to conduct and evaluate research. While many of the topics are about conducting research in general, we will also focus on addressing issues related to quantitative data. By the end of Part 1 of the course, you will have some appreciation of the research process and be ready for quantitative analysis of a specific research idea for Part 2 of the course. But this course will not make you an expert and it only marks the beginning of your methodological training. Enrollment in this course is restricted to graduate students in the Ivey PhD Program, as well as any student that has obtained special permission to enroll in this course from the course instructor as well as the Graduate Chair (or equivalent) from the student’s home program.

The course will be divided into two related sections. The second term will be taught by Professor Bob Andersen. The material covered in the second term will build from ideas discussed in the first term. As such, your first term paper must be built on research ideas that will involve quantitative analysis. That is, you cannot submit a qualitative term paper.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Provide a foundation for understanding the research process, including its philosophical basis.
2. Provide exposure and ignite interest in classic and emerging research methodologies, and research design decisions.
3. Introduce commonly used methods and tools in organizational, management, and broader social science research.
4. Provide training and competencies in critically evaluating research and research design.
5. Increase competency in identifying “real world” applications and extensions of theory.
6. To achieve these objectives, learning by doing is the key component of this course. We will do so through your class contributions, idea papers, critiques, as well as your Term Papers and presentations.

METHODS OF EVALUATION

Class Contribution	30%	Throughout the term
Idea Papers and Critiques	20%	9:30 am on the date assigned
Midterm Paper Presentation	10%	
Final Paper Presentation	15%	November 28
Term 1 Research Paper	25%	9:30 am December 5
	100%	

MATERIALS

- (1) A. F. Chalmers, What Is This Thing Called Science? (4th edition please)
- (2) Leonard Bickman and Debra J. Rog, Applied Social Research Methods (a good reference book – I’m assigning readings based on 2nd edition. You can find the digital version in UWO library)
- (3) Jesse Singal: The Quick Fix: Why Fad Psychology Can’t Cure Our Social Ills
- (4) Various readings (articles, book chapters) available on Learn

CLASS CONTRIBUTION (30%)

The course is a seminar, a format that requires you to speak. I evaluate your contribution on the quality and quantity of your verbal contributions. Do all the readings carefully. Be thoughtful. Make well-substantiated and logical arguments. Be critical. Take risks. Listen. Ask questions, answer questions, respond to comments, wonder aloud, provoke discussion etc... regularly during classes. Comments that are unambiguously based on a thorough reading of the assigned readings are especially appreciated. There are two ways to contribute:

Ask questions, answer questions, respond to comments, wonder aloud, provoke discussion etc... regularly during classes. Comments that are unambiguously based on a thorough reading of the assigned readings are especially appreciated.

You will present ideas. Most of these will involve presenting assigned readings, while a few others are different kinds of assignments or exercises that I explain in the reading list below. For the assigned readings, you determine what is important. Yes, that means you will have to ignore content. **You will be responsible for preparing at least 2 discussion questions (you can have more if the questions are**

relevant) that are related to your assigned reading (i.e., each individual article, book chapter, etc.) and leading a (AT MOST) 40-minute discussion for each reading (this includes your presentation and Q&A). Note that the maximum amount of time for each paper may differ depending on the number of readings we have that week. If you need less time to do an effective job, take less time. Your job is to teach the important content in whatever manner you think will be clear and effective. Do not read your notes and do not regurgitate lists of facts. Remember that all students are responsible for reading all assigned readings, so you are not summarizing them. Your job is to pull out of the assigned reading key insights, theories, ideas, facts etc... in order to reach a superior understanding of the topics and ideas in a given reading.

You will work in teams: One team is responsible for a specific week of readings. You can decide what to do from there: an individual presents an individual paper, a group presentation on an individual paper, etc. You will be evaluated individually and your teamwork. What I am looking for is a coherent discussion for that session. Each person is expected to be in 3 teams (i.e., you will present in 3 sessions).

IDEA PAPERS and CRITIQUES (20%)

Idea papers: In addition to in-class work, students are expected to complete two idea papers (5% for each idea paper). The idea papers are intended to allow students to develop research ideas that may prove useful for future research activity in their area of interest.

Each of the short idea papers should be based on an interesting/novel idea that integrates your research interests and the seminar readings. In the idea paper you will need to identify the basic problem/phenomenon of interest, identify the research question and explain why it is important/relevant, outline a set of hypotheses, and *briefly* discuss how you would collect and analyze the data. Each idea paper should include a short literature review and should be no more than 3 pages long in total (typed, single spaced, 1-inch margins, 12-point font, Times New Roman). You must upload the idea papers via LEARN (which will be submitted to Turn It In then be sent to me).

Critique: Throughout the fall, I have assigned two sets of articles for which you must write a critique (5% for each critique). To help you prepare, read the How to Write a Critique in Supplement 1 of this outline. You must upload the critique via LEARN (which will be submitted to Turn It In then be sent to me).

Critiques may not exceed 2 pages, typed, single spaced, 1-inch margins, 12-point font, Times New Roman. Please make sure your name appears prominently somewhere on the critique. However, you are allowed an additional page if you would like to compare/contrast with AI (see next paragraph).

Deadline: upload your idea papers/critiques no later than the start of class in which we discuss the related paper. Don't leave it too close - I will not accept late papers and whatever the time stamp on Turn It In says, that's the time stamp I'm using. Class starts at 9:30 – strive to submit no later than 9:00. If you hand in your work late or miss one, you get 0% on it.

NOTE ON GENERATIVE AI (e.g., ChatGPT4). This is a task that it may be tempting to allow AI to do for you. **Let me be very clear that this is NOT allowed.** However, you may get creative. For example, as part of your critique (after you write yours), you could run one on AI, and compare and contrast your work

with the AI's work (you could use an additional page for this). Note that this is not required, but I suspect many of you are interested. AI makes many, many mistakes (called "hallucinations") so you may find this an interesting add-on.

MIDTERM (10%) and FINAL PAPER PRESENTATION (15%)

Presentation skills can make the difference in landing the job you want. Being able to condense your research into an informative and enthusiastic "talk" is an invaluable skill to develop. Please see Supplement II: Guidelines for Preparing an Academic Presentation.

Your Term 1 Final Paper can be based on Session 3, your idea paper 1 or 2, or something that is completely new. You will present your Term 1 Final Paper in Session 7 (midterm presentation) and Session 12 (final paper presentation). Ideally, your midterm and final presentations are based on the same research idea/project. This will allow you to get valuable feedback from your classmates before the final due date for your final paper. If you plan to change your project/topic after receiving feedback from the midterm presentation, please come to talk to me before Session 8.

TERM 1 RESEARCH PAPER (25%)

Over the year in this course you should be able to develop a foundation for a quantitative research proposal on a topic related to business, management or organizations that interests you. Proposals that are only qualitative or theoretical—including theoretical models that are not tested with real world data—in approach are not acceptable for this assignment. The topic may emerge from or be related to what you present in Session 3 or idea paper 1 or 2, or it may be something else. In any event, the paper must be *de novo* (e.g., independent of other current or past coursework or workplace efforts). The topic can be related to something you became interested in before (e.g., master's thesis), but the paper and the theoretical model must be original. Also, you may use an idea given to you by a professor at Ivey, 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.** Though you may work with a professor on the conceptualizing of the paper, it is not permissible to have them read or provide feedback on a draft of the manuscript prior to handing it in and it is not permissible to use any form of copy editor or assistance, either human or generative AI, in writing the paper. **It must represent your own work.**

Term 1 paper (this fall)

You will write a paper that, in essence, would be the first part of an extensive research proposal. The first term paper will include everything up to, but not including, the 'Data and Methods' section.

The paper you submit should be aimed at a quality that would generate interest from reviewers at good journals in your field. You must do original research. Meta-analysis or conceptual papers are not allowed. The paper must be hypothesis (2-4 hypotheses) or research question driven. The paper 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 Term 1 paper must include everything you would typically see in a top journal article up to (but not including) the Data and

Methods section (though you should briefly state where your data will come from). After taking the second part of the course, you will be able to include detailed descriptions of the data and methods you would use to carry out the project. The first term paper must have five sections:

- 1) **Title page and abstract** (title, your name + abstract of <150 words)
- 2) **Statement of contribution** (For an example see “Consumer Relevance and Contribution Statement” <https://consumerresearcher.com/manuscript-preparation#consumer-relevance-and-contribution-statement>). One page. This is different from an abstract. It forces you to state and explain each of your intended contributions (theoretical, practical, methodological etc...).
- 3) **Introduction section.** This section should briefly layout the general topic and direction of the paper, the area of research that it ties into, and the importance of the paper. What do you intend to contribute to the academic literature? What is your general approach?). In general, you should emulate an empirical paper from a top journal in your field. You should also very briefly—one or two sentences—mention the data that you will employ.
- 4) **Literature review.** Derived from and supports your research question. This section should include hypotheses (or research question) generation. This should not be merely an annotated bibliography. Instead, you should make sure to tie research together under themes, making sure to demonstrate how they are related and build on each other. Your goal should be to clearly demonstrate where there are gaps in our knowledge, why those gaps are there, why the gaps are important, and how you will attempt to fill them. The literature review should clearly demonstrate the importance of the research you propose to do. In short, the literature review should be much more than simply an annotated bibliography.
- 5) **Research questions** Clearly state the research questions or hypotheses that you will test. Be sure to briefly explain how they build on existing research (i.e., how do they tie into the literature review above?). You will be required to explain the data and methods you would use to evaluate these research questions for the paper in the second term of the course. This can be done in the form of a path diagram that demonstrates how you conceptualize your core variables and the relationships among them.
- 6) **Data.** This section should indicate only which type of data you will use. For this paper, you are not expected to provide details on measurement. However, you should be clear about how access to the data will be obtained. Moreover, if you are collecting new data on human subjects, you should provide evidence that Ethics approval has been requested.
- 7) **References.** Your list must be accurate and complete. Also, while you should list everything that you have cited, you should not list anything that has not been cited.

DUE DATE: 9:30 am, December 5.

Submit via LEARN (which will submit the papers to Turn It In), but also email me (CC'ing yourself) a PDF copy as a backup. I am limiting you to 3000 words of text (not including references, tables and figures, contribution statement, abstract/title page). It is vital that you keep a good length/contribution ratio – let me say this another way: if you only have 2500 words of content, don't use the remaining 500 words because you feel compelled to get to 3000. High quality is better than high quantity. You must develop your ideas logically and clearly. I value depth over breadth in this endeavour. 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).

Text 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 a top research journal in your respective field. Please place your figures and tables in the text of the paper (not at the end).

REQUIRED READING / COURSE SCHEDULE

See the Detailed Session Schedule Section below for a list of the required readings and accompanying articles. The readings for each session are listed below and will be available on Learn. Sometimes I assign a video or two to watch as well. Assignment deadlines are listed under Methods of Evaluation section.

COURSE RULES

I will not accept late assignments except by prior written arrangement or unless I receive what I judge to be unambiguous evidence of extenuating circumstances in which cases it is at my discretion how to handle grading. Otherwise, late assignments will earn an automatic grade of zero.

I expect you to attend all classes and I expect you to be on time and prepared. If you plan to be absent or late, email me ahead of time. You are responsible for consulting your classmates to determine what you missed. I will not meet to provide an overview of the missing session. If you miss three or more classes, you may not hand in the final paper.

Pay attention to the quality of your writing/arguments (well-organized and articulated; specific and clear meanings; perfect formatting etc...). I tend to be hard on poorly written assignments.

I use Turn It In.com for all written assignments: *"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.

ENROLLMENT RESTRICTIONS

Enrollment in this course is restricted to graduate students in the Ivey PhD Program, as well as any student that has obtained special permission to enroll in this course from the course instructor as well as the Graduate Chair (or equivalent) from the student's home program.

ACADEMIC OFFENCES: PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf.

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>).

HEALTH AND WELLNESS SERVICES

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. See <https://www.uwo.ca/health>.

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health Support at <https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. Additionally, 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 or program coordinator.

ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION WESTERN

Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program.

Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are strongly encouraged to register with [Accessible Education Western \(AEW\)](#), a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both AEW and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction.

DETAILED SESSION SCHEDULE

Session 1: It Begins...(September 12)

READ (2 ppl):

SSHRC Application 1: Nickname Branding Impairs Brand Performance
SSHRC Application 2: Economic Conditions and Democratic Values

Session 2: Interesting Research (September 19)

READ (2-3 ppl):

Davis (1971), "That's Interesting!"
Tellis (2017), "Interesting and Impactful Research: on Phenomena, Theory, and Writing"
Goyanes (2020), "Against Dullness: On What it Means to be Interesting in Communication Research"
The Quick Fix: Why Fad Psychology Can't Cure Our Social Ills - Chapter 3

CRITIQUE 1 due:

Ghasemizad et al. (2012), "A Study of the Relationship between Teachers and Principals' Spiritual Leadership, Quality of Work Life, Job Satisfaction and Productivity".

Session 3: Ideas and Research Questions (September 26)

READ (1-2 ppl):

Wicker (1985) "Getting Out of Our Conceptual Ruts"
The Quick Fix: Why Fad Psychology Can't Cure Our Social Ills - Chapter 8

DO:

Find an interesting problem or phenomenon that exists in the world but that is relatively new, meaning it's unlikely to have been extensively addressed in the literature. Prepare a 5-10 minute presentation where you address four issues: (1) What is the problem or phenomenon? Assume we are smart people who know little about it. Teach us. (2) Why do you think it is interesting? (3) In what specific ways would solving the problem or obtaining a better understanding the phenomenon make the world a better place? Who and how will this help? (4) Based on what you know about this problem or phenomenon, give us the broad strokes of a potential research question. Do not do a deep dive into the academic literature. Focus on the problem or phenomenon as it exists in the world. You can (not must) use up to 3 powerpoint slides in your presentation. The idea should be different from your idea papers 1 and 2.

Session 4: Writing (October 3)

READ (2-3 ppl):

Cochrane (2005), "Writing Tips for Ph.D. Students"
Bem (2003), "Writing the Empirical Journal Article"
Webster and Watson (2002) "Analyzing the Past to Prepare for the Future: Writing a Literature Review"

Paul and Criado (2020), "The Art of Writing Literature Review"

Warren, Farmer, Gu and Warren (2021), "Marketing Ideas: How to Write Research Articles that Readers Understand and Cite", *Journal of Marketing*.

IDEA PAPER 1 Due

Session 5: Retractions, Reviewing, and Ethics (October 10)

Retractions

BROWSE:

Peruse the Retraction Watch website (<https://retractionwatch.com>). Generate a list of the common reasons that papers are retracted. It would be helpful if you focused on retractions that occur in business or social sciences journals, especially good ones. Also, please look there the global initiative on replications here: <https://mgto.org/core-team/> There are excellent resources on that site. We will discuss your findings in class.

READ (2-3 ppl):

Reviewing

Bagchi et al (2017) "A Field Guide for the Review Process: Writing and Responding to Peer Reviews"
Houston and Hulland (2021) "Reviewers as Developmental Coaches"

Ethics

Tri-Council Policy Statement (2018), "Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans" ¹ Chapter 1
Tri-Council Policy Statement (2018), "Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans" Chapter 2
Tri-Council Policy Statement (2018), "Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans" Chapter 3
Tri-Council Policy Statement (2018), "Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans" Chapter 4
Tri-Council Policy Statement (2018), "Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans" Chapter 5

Replication

The Quick Fix: Why Fad Psychology Can't Cure Our Social Ills - Chapter 7

Background Reading: Bickman and Rog, Chapter 4

CRITIQUE 2 due:

Haney et al. (1973), "A Study of Prisoners and Guards..."

Note: your critiques of Haney et al. should be based on applying the principles laid out in the Tri-Council Statement. That is, before you write a critique, you need to read the materials.

¹ <https://ethics.gc.ca/eng/documents/tcps2-2018-en-interactive-final.pdf>

Session 6: Research Productivity (October 17)

READ (2-3 ppl):

Lord (2003) "A Guide to PhD Graduate School: How They Keep Score in the Big Leagues."
Williamson and Cable (2003) "Predicting Early Career Research Productivity: The Case of Management Faculty"
Stack (2004) "Gender, Children, and Research Productivity"
Mitra and Golder (2008), "Does Academic Research..."

IDEA PAPER 2 due

Session 7: Midterm Presentation (October 24)

This presentation should focus on selling the idea. What is the context? What are the research questions? Why are they interesting and important? You should have reviewed the literature and articulated the intended managerial and theoretical contributions you intend to make.

You have 15 minutes and may use up to 10 Powerpoint slides. Each paper will also be allocated 10 minutes for a question and answer period.

Session 8: Theory (October 31)

READ (2-3 ppl):

Klein and Zedeck (2004) "Theory in Applied Psychology: Lessons (Re)learned"
Bacharach (1989) "Organizational Theories: Some Criteria for Evaluation"
Sutton and Staw (1995) "What Theory is Not"
Flexner, "The Usefulness of Useless Knowledge"
The Quick Fix: Why Fad Psychology Can't Cure Our Social Ills - Chapter 1

Background Reading: Chalmers, Chapter 8, 9

Session 9: Scientific Method (November 7)

WATCH:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EYPapE-3FRw>
https://www.ted.com/talks/michael_shermer_why_people_believe_weird_things?language=en

READ (2-3 ppl):

Chalmers, Chapter 1
Chalmers, Chapter 5
Chalmers, Chapter 6
Chalmers, Chapter 7
The Quick Fix: Why Fad Psychology Can't Cure Our Social Ills - Chapter 6

Session 10: Secondary Data, Experiments and Data Quality (November 14)

READ (2-3ppl):

Boegershausen, J., Datta, H., Borah, A. and Stephen, A.T., 2022. Fields of gold: Scraping web data for marketing insights. *Journal of Marketing*, 86(5), pp.1-20.

Morales, A. C., Amir, O., & Lee, L. (2017). Keeping it real in experimental research—Understanding when, where, and how to enhance realism and measure consumer behavior. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 44(2), 465-476.

Hoyer, Wayne D., Echo Wen Wan, and Keith Wilcox. "Practical Relevance in Consumer Research." *Journal of Consumer Research* (2024): ucae023.

Zhang, Zhe et al (2024). "BMW is Powerful, BEEMER is NOT: Nickname Branding Impairs Brand Performance," *Journal of Marketing*.

Session 11: Big Data (November 21)

WATCH:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=irP5RCdpilc>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fZuDwiM1XBQ>

READ (3-4 ppl):

Tausczik and Pennebaker (2010), "The Psychological Meaning of Words..."

Albert and Thomson (2018), "A Synthesis of the..."

Packard and Berger (2020), "Thinking of You..."

Li, Shi and Wang (2019), "Video Mining..."

Zhang et al (2022), "What Makes a Good Image? Airbnb Demand Analytics Leveraging Interpretable Image Features"

Sessions 12: Final Paper Presentations (November 28)

You will have been working on your problem/phenomenon and developed your ideas to the point you have a specific research question. You should be able to clearly articulate the intended (managerial and/or theoretical) contributions of addressing the research question. You should have reviewed the literature, developed hypotheses (at least 2, no more than 4), drawn a theoretical model and identified how you will go about studying (i.e. empirically) the question. All of this is the topic of your presentation. In other words, this is a presentation of your paper, in advance of handing it in. You have 15 minutes and may use up to 10 Powerpoint slides. Each paper will also be allocated 10 minutes for a question and answer period.

Supplement I HOW TO WRITE A CRITIQUE

Summarize (4-5 lines and not more) – 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 guidelines² (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.

My guess is that most people will write better critiques working from an outline, which itself is based on notes that you take while reading the article. Writing a critique and figuring out your ideas for a critique are two different skills that are probably not best attempted at the same time.

- 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

² I have pulled most of this content from Prof. Jay Anand's (Ohio State University) syllabus on Research Methods.

comparison of means is not appropriate and how a regression analysis would have improved the author's results.

- 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.

NOTE: 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.

Supplement II

Guidelines for Preparing an Academic Presentation

(Adapted from Cait Poynor Lamberton, University of Pennsylvania and Rebecca Reczek, Ohio State University)

The main thing to keep in mind as you prepare to present your work at an academic conference is that you have a limited amount of time (typically 15-20 minutes) in which to convey the main ideas. So be succinct! You cannot discuss all of the details of your work. The most common mistake at conferences is poor time management – specifically, overkill on the literature review and hypotheses. It is important that you embed your work in the relevant theoretical network, but it is critical that you leave sufficient time to convince the audience that your work makes a contribution to the field’s body of knowledge. This is done by presenting your empirical work. The key aspects of your presentation and ballpark estimates for time allocation are below:

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 1-2 minutes | The Problem – What is the phenomenon and why is it interesting? Use real world examples as much as possible. |
| 3-5 minutes | Literature review/hypothesis development – Focus only on the most relevant literature. |
| 8-10 minutes | Empirical work – avoid text heavy slides. Walk the audience through KEY studies from the point of view of a study participant. Use simple figures and graphs to share results. Be prepared to offer more detail or to reference non-focal studies when the opportunity presents itself, for example, in response to a question from the audience. Hidden slides may be useful. Take your time. Be clear. Practicing aloud on your own will help you to be succinct. |
| 2-3 minutes | Conclusions/Implications – Clearly articulate the theoretical and practical contributions. Also, go beyond what’s written to CONNECT this work to other papers we’ve read in class. Does it converge with prior work? Diverge? Challenge? Explain? Extend? |
| 1-2 minutes | Next steps – How would you follow up on this work? |
| Questions | Anticipate these in advance. This is where hidden slides or examples may be handy. |

As an Audience Member: Asking Questions and Providing Suggestions

We will be able to discuss our research together in our final class. You are expected to fully engage with your classmates’ presentations. Remember that questions should be phrased in constructive ways. Also, remember, if you get a bad answer, is it because your question was unclear, or is it because the speaker was not able to answer your question? At what point is it time to accept the answer as provided or move the discussion off-line? Understanding these dynamics is crucial in being a good audience member and departmental citizen.