



AG 595: Research Literature Techniques/AG 532: Scientific Methods of Ag Research

COURSE SYLLABUS: Spring 2014

Instructor: Douglas D. LaVergne, Ph.D. Assistant Professor

Office Location: Ag/IT 229

Office Hours: Monday: 9am-12pm, 2-3:30pm and Friday: 9am-12pm; or by appointment

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COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings:

Textbook (Required): Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches*. 4th edition, Sage publications.

Supplemental readings are embedded throughout the course.

Student Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes are what you are able to do as a result of the activities, readings, and instruction that have occurred in this course. Assignments/activities related to these outcomes are described in the assignments and assessments portion of the syllabus.

Learning Outcome #1: The learner will active and engaged team member within their learning community by analyzing, constructing/creating, and evaluating information presented within the textbook, external readings/resources, student research, and class activities in order to contribute to and develop a research proposal.

Learning Outcome #2: The learner will compare and contrast different research designs and distinguish between quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods approaches.

Learning Outcome #3: The learner will prepare a written research proposal that includes:

- A learner- developed literature review
- A learner-identified problem for research.
- A learner-developed purpose and research questions to address the problem.
- A learner-developed research design to collect data.
- A properly formatted (APA) research proposal

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Instructional Methods / Activities/ Assessments

This course is made up of a series of assignments and assessments to assist you in achieving the course learning outcomes. Each week you will work on various combinations of assignments, activities, discussions, readings, research, etc. which will be made available to you on each Friday and close on the following Sunday - allowing for 10 days total to complete the activities.

Discussion Forums: 10 total @ 10 points each

Learning Outcome #1: The learner will be an active and engaged participant in discussion forums within his/her learning community by analyzing, constructing/creating, and evaluating information presented within the textbook, external readings/resources, student research, and class activities.

Learning Outcome #2: The learner will compare and contrast different research designs and distinguish between quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods approaches.

Description: The discussion forums are related to the chapter readings, external resources and activities. Upon completion or near completion of the assigned readings and activities, you are expected to engage in an **ongoing** discussion/debate with your learning community peers. Your contributions to the discussion forums will be graded for **quality** not quantity, **timeliness** of your contributions, and a **detailed analysis** of linking together theory (readings) to application (activities).

One major piece of advice for this assignment....To avoid point deduction, you should have an original post (response to the question) by Friday and interact with your peers over the weekend.

Assessment Method

5=Excellent; 4=Good; 3=Meets Expectations; 2=Needs Work; 1=Below Expectations

Quality and thoroughness of response in original post. Must be posted on or before Friday

5 4 3 2 1

Quality and level of interaction with others in forum providing more than "I agree" statements

5 4 3 2 1

Proposal Development Activities: 3 total @ 10 points each

Learning Outcome #3: The learner will prepare a written formal research proposal that includes the following criteria:

- Problem for research
- Literature review
- Purpose and research questions to address the problem
- Appropriate research design to collect data
- Properly cited research via the APA publication style

Description: We will conduct a series of activities to assist you in designing a formal written research proposal. Through the analysis of appropriate research literature, you will identify a problem you wish to further investigate. This problem needs to be one that is "researchable." On occasion, we will conduct an activity to further assist you in developing your research proposal. This research proposal in its entirety is due at the end of the semester; however, you will be graded on the development of the components via the proposal development activities as you progress through the semester.

Assessment Method

5=Excellent; 4=Good; 3=Meets Expectations; 2=Needs Work; 1=Below Expectations

Quality of activity produced	5	4	3	2	1
Addressed all of the components to the activity	5	4	3	2	1

Research Proposal: 100 points (FOR AG 532 GRADUATE STUDENTS ONLY)

Learning Outcome #3: The learner will prepare a formal research proposal that addresses the criteria set in the proposal development activities. The final proposal should be grammatically sound and use appropriate APA formatting/citations.

Description: The formal research proposal will consist of the following sections and should be formatted per graduate school guidelines. This will be accomplished via the proposal development activities.

- Title page
- Review of Related Literature
- Statement of the Problem
- Purpose of the Study
- Research Questions
- Significance of the Study
- Methods (selection of participants, instrumentation; collection/analysis of data)
- References
- Appendices

Assessment method: The rubric will be made available midway through the semester.

**Critiquing Research Reports: 100 points (5 @ 20pts each)
(FOR AG 595 GRADUATE STUDENTS ONLY)**

Learning Outcome #2: The learner will compare and contrast different research designs and distinguish between quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods approaches.

As a student , you will submit 5 critiques based on a topic in your selected field of study.

Step 1. Locate a “research report” (e.g., an article from the *Journal of Agricultural Education* or from the *North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture—NACTA* or another appropriate source). REMEMBER, the report should relate to your knowledge base or your contextual setting.

Step 2. Provide APA style citation so that others (and you later) may locate the report AND you could use the citation subsequently in your future profession. This will go on the TOP of your submitted critique.

Step 3. Critique the article/report using the following criteria:

1. Is there an appropriate and systematic literature base to introduce the study?
2. Is a research problem and/or purpose stated explicitly and succinctly?
3. Are research objectives and/or hypotheses specified and stated clearly to lead in solving the problem/accomplishing the purpose of the research?

FOR YOUR 1ST CRITIQUE, you may stop here — or you may add the items below

4. If applicable, are the target population, accessible population, sampling frame, responding sample, & treatment of non-respondents stated carefully & accurately?
5. Were important variables defined conceptually (theory) & operationally (practical)?
6. Are measurement instruments/data collection tools selected, designed, & used properly? Are instruments valid & reliable? Is evidence provided to ensure they are?
7. Are data collection procedures employed correctly?
8. Is the research design described & appropriate to achieve the research objectives? Does the design of the study ensure internal & (if appropriate) external validity?
9. Are appropriate statistical analyses employed and reported?
10. Are findings consistent with purposes/objectives, research design, & data analysis?
11. Are conclusion based on findings from the research and implications drawn and recommendations made as appropriate?
12. Is the paper well written, using proper grammar, punctuation, and APA style?
13. Does the research contribute to theory or practice? Is a significant problem solved and/or additional important research questions raised?

Grading

Grades will be determined via a simple point system and grading rubrics. Rubrics are posted in the course syllabus under each assignment description. **You** are responsible for reviewing them prior to submitting an assignment - they tell you all you need to know in order to earn a passing grade in this course.

Total Points Possible: 230

230-207=A

206-184=B

183-161=C

160-138=D

137-0=F

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

This is an online course and some obvious technological resources will be required.

Access to a computer with

- o Internet access (high-speed preferred)
- o Microphone for any class live sessions throughout the semester
- o Speakers (for live sessions or other audio enhanced assignments).
- o Word processing software (Microsoft Word preferred)

As a student enrolled at Texas A&M University-Commerce, you have access to an email account via myLeo - all my emails sent from eCollege (and all other university emails) will go to this account, so please be sure to check it regularly. Conversely, you are to email me through the eCollege email system or your myLeo email as our spam filters will catch yahoo, hotmail, etc. and I will not check for your email in spam.

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

eCollege Technical Concerns: Please contact the eCollege Help Desk, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week by sending an email directly to helpdesk@online.tamuc.org. You may also reach the Help Desk by calling (toll-free)-1-866-656-5511 or through the Online Chat by clicking on the "Live Support" tab within your eCollege course.

Course Concerns: If you have questions pertaining to the content of this course (e.g., questions about an exam, about course due dates, etc.), please contact me via email, through the Q&A Forums or during office hours.

Other Questions/Concerns: Contact the appropriate TAMU-C department relating to your questions/concern. If you are unable to reach the appropriate department with questions regarding your course enrollment, billing, advising, or financial aid, please call 903-886-5511 between the hours of 8:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Interaction with Instructor Statement:

Participation & Communication: I expect each of you to be active and thoughtful participants within the learning environment (eCollege) and your learning community. This includes completing the extensive readings related to course topics.

1. Email is the best way to reach me. A reply will be sent immediately depending upon the time your message was received. Please do not send me last minute emails with the word HELP!! in the subject line. Also, in order to avoid duplication of questions and answers, I prefer that you post all class related questions in the Q&A forum provided each week. It is likely that your peers will have the same question. Emails of a personal nature should be sent to my email address.

2. If you want to talk via the "phone" You may call me on my cell phone.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures:

Citizenship: All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See Student 92s Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct).

Late work: Not accepted.

Plagiarism: WILL NOT be tolerated and will result in an automatic F in the course.

Attendance: This is an online class. The quality of your contributions and regular participation activities will be considered attendance. It is encouraged that you attempt to log into the course everyday and/or check your email for messages!

Scholarly Expectations: All works submitted for credit must be original works created by YOU. It is considered inappropriate and unethical to make duplicate submissions of a single work for credit in multiple classes.

UNIVERSITY SPECIFIC PROCEDURES:

ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services
Texas A&M University-Commerce
Gee Library 132
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu
Student Disability Resources & Services

TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR SPRING 2014

WK	Activities	What's due
1	Course introduction - Read Ch.1 - Identify a researchable topic - Online discussion1	Conclude Ch. 1 discussion
2	- Read Ch. 2 - Online discussion#2 - Begin proposal development activity #1	Conclude Ch. 2 discussion
3	- Read Ch. 3 - Online discussion 3	Conclude Ch. 3 discussion
4	- Read Ch. 4 - Online discussion 4	Conclude Ch. 4 discussion <u>AG 532</u> : Proposal development activity #1 <u>AG 595</u> : Critique #1
5	- Read Ch. 5 - Online discussion 5	Conclude Ch. 5 discussion
6	- Read Ch. 6 - Online discussion 6 - Begin proposal activity #2	Conclude Ch. 6 discussion
7	- Read Ch. 7 - Online discussion 7	Conclude Ch. 7 discussion <u>AG 532</u> : Proposal development activity #2 <u>AG 595</u> : Critique #2
8	- Read Ch. 8 - Online discussion 8 - Begin proposal development activity #3	Conclude Ch. 8 discussion
9	- Read chapter 9 - Online discussion 9	Conclude Ch. 9 discussion
10	- Read Ch.10 - Online discussion 10	Conclude Ch. 10 discussion <u>AG 532</u> : Proposal development activity #3 <u>AG 595</u> : Critique #3
11	- Continue study/discussion of mixed methods & proposal development #3	
12	- Begin preparation of proposals - Work due at the end of week	<u>AG 532</u> : Final proposal due <u>AG 595</u> : Critique (#4 & #5) due