**JOMC 691H**

**Honors in Journalism and Mass Communication**

Fall 2013-Spring 2014

Tuesday, 2:00-4:45 Fall

Spring, by Individual Appointment

Carroll Hall 340

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 10am -11am Wednesday

 & by appointment

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Welcome!

JOMC 691H starts you on the path to completing a senior honors thesis in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication. Working on this project should be one of the most intellectually and personally rewarding experiences of your undergraduate education at the University. The process also is demanding and, at times, exasperating. You will be called upon to combine creative thinking, original research and an extensive piece of serious writing over a long and intense period. Fulfilling the requirements of the honors program is a mark of exceptional undergraduate academic achievement.

Your honors thesis will be a polished, formal piece of writing that relies heavily on research to make a point relevant to journalism and mass communication. Subject matter and format have varied in the past, and that’s fine. The primary requirement is that the topic should be something relevant to journalism and mass communication. Remember, you’ll be spending an entire academic year on this project, so it should be a topic that fundamentally interests you.

This semester you will produce a thesis proposal that includes the first two chapters: (1) introduction and review of previous research and writing about the topic, and relevant research question; and (2) methods (how you will study your topic and/or test hypotheses) (see attached detailed description). You may begin collecting and analyzing data this semester, but the bulk of that will be done in early spring semester. You will revise the first two chapters and write the remaining chapters of the thesis by the end of March and defend the completed thesis by mid April 2012. Then you’ll graduate with honors or highest honors in May 2013!

**The Honor Code**

The Honor Code is, as always, in effect at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. You are expected to uphold all aspects of the Honor Code. If you have questions about the Honor Code, please see me. Read more at <http://honor.unc.edu>.

**Textbooks:**

(These are on reserve in the Park Library. I am happy to put other books of interest on reserve as the semester progresses.)

* **Creswell, J. W.** (2007). *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

*This is a good overview of several qualitative methods and includes information on how you would analyze and write up the information you obtain through qualitative methods.*

* **Krueger, R. A., & Casey, M.A.** (2000).  *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research.*  Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

*An excellent step-by-step discussion of how to conduct good focus groups.*

* **Lomicky, C.S., & Goede, T.C.** (2005). *Handbook for Research in Media Law*, Ames, Iowa: Blackwell Publishing.

*This is the book our legal scholars will need to pursue their research on a legal topic. Prof. Cathy Packer recommends this for her graduate students, so if it’s good enough for them, it’s good enough for us.*

* **Pan, M.L.** (2008). *Preparing Literature Reviews****:*** *Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (3rd Ed.). Glendale, CA: Pyrczak Publishing.

*This is a good step-by-step how to prepare a literature review regardless of methodological perspective. You might want to own a copy of this book.*

* **Riffe, D., Lacy, S., & Fico, F.** (1998).  *Analyzing Media Messages: Using Quantitative Content Analysis in Research.* Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

*This is an excellent, comprehensive discussion of what you need to know to do good quantitative content analysis.*

* **Rosenberry, J., & Vicker, L.** (2008). *Applied Mass Communication Theory: A Guide for Media* *Practitioners*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon. (I refer to this as R&V in the course schedule)

*This is a good overview of mass communication research and theory. We’ll start with this and then use some other readings for specific topics, methods, theories.*

* **Wimmer, R. D., & Dominick, J. R.** (2011). *Mass Media Research*(9th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

*This is an excellent and readable overview of the various methods available for studying research questions in journalism and mass communication primarily from a social scientific perspective. Part 1 is helpful for understanding how theory can guide research and how to get to a good research question and testable hypotheses. Part 4 may help stimulate your research ideas depending on which sequence you are coming from (e.g., print, electronic, advertising, public relations or new media). It has the best chapter I’ve seen on how to conduct content analysis.*

*THE FOLLOWING RESOURCE IS NOT ON RESERVE. LET ME KNOW IF YOU WANT TO DO HISTORICAL ANALYSIS.*

* **Sloan, W. D., & Stamm, M.** (2010). *Historical Methods in Communication.* Northport, AL: Vision Press.

*This is good basic guide if you want to use historical methods in your research.*

**Other Readings:**

* Depending upon the interests of the class, I may put other books, chapters, or articles on reserve or on the course Sakai site.
* You will need to become familiar with an **academic style manual** that you will use throughout your Honors thesis. You need to pick a style and apply it to all the writing you do for this class. The specific reference style you choose will depend on the kind of research you are doing (history scholars typically use Chicago style; behavioral scientists typically use the American Psychological Association’s [APA] style manual). If you are doing legal research, you will need a copy of the *Blue Book* and will need to work with a journalism law professor (Drs. Packer, Ekstrand, or Hoefges) or a graduate student to learn it. The Purdue Online Writing Lab has some guides for APA, Chicago, and MLA. Here’s the link: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

**Grades:**

Your grade in JOMC 691H will reflect your class participation and progress in defining your project and writing your proposal. I will assign your grade after consultation with your adviser and reader. An "**A**" will indicate that all parties believe that you have made substantial progress in determining your subject matter and that you are well prepared to continue work in Spring semester. A “**B**” indicates that you are in the right direction but the project will need some more thinking before you should proceed. A “**C**” would suggest that you should not continue the project in the spring semester. You do need to receive a positive evaluation on your work from your adviser, reader and me before continuing into the second semester. Students who complete the first semester of the program but do not continue in the spring will receive course credit for JOMC 691H.

In planning your spring semester, please keep in mind that honors projects take a lot of time to complete. For your own peace of mind and physical health, do not schedule other classes in the spring that require an extraordinary amount of out-of-class work.

**Fall Semester Requirements**

**Maintain a minimum overall grade point average of 3.5**

**Decide on a research project**

The project must be original research that results in a thesis of four to five chapters, or 50 to 80 pages total. Besides personal interest, resources, geography and finances all need to be considered in picking a topic. (For a look at what your predecessors have studied see <http://search.lib.unc.edu/search?Ntt=STP-hon&Ntk=Call%20Number&Nty=1>. This is a searchable list of all the previous J-School honors theses that are available to see in the Park Library. They also are in the Wilson Library and you may be able to check them out there.

**Conduct a review of previous research and writing**

By mid-October, you will have located and summarized previous studies and writing on your topic. This review of the literature will be the bulk of Chapter 1 of your thesis. You also will map out exactly how you will conduct your study – what data will be gathered and how. This will be the bulk of Chapter 2 – the Methods chapter. These two pieces and a short introduction and schedule for the rest of your work will form your thesis proposal. The proposal then will be approved by your three committee members so you may proceed with gathering and analyzing data. The proposal is important, because it will serve as your guide in conducting the research. These chapters may be rewritten later in light of additional research conducted during the second semester, but the initial version will define the scope of your study. Honors theses also often include appendices that include coding guides, questionnaires, or lists of interviewees. Please keep track of such details as you go along. I encourage you to keep a *research log* starting today that will help you keep track of your thinking and what you have done.

**Check the website for the Office of Undergraduate Research**

<http://www.unc.edu/depts/our/>. In past years, there has been some funding available for undergraduate research from this office. In addition, you will find information about the Celebration of Undergraduate Research event.

**Complete ethics training (everyone) and obtain IRB approval**

If your research will involve observing, interviewing, or measuring human beings in any way, your research design and procedures will have to be approved by the J-School (first) and then the Behavioral Institutional Review Board. Go to <http://research.unc.edu/ohre/>to see information about submitting your application online. You will also see the link (under Quicklinks) for Ethics Training. You will each need to do the online training module for conducting research with human beings. This will take about three hours (doesn’t have to be done all at once). This is a course requirement for everyone and a necessity for those of you planning to use human subjects. You have to do this before you can obtain approval for conducting your research.

**Choose an adviser (from inside the School) and a reader for your thesis**

Your honors adviser will work with you for part of the fall semester and most of the spring semester. He or she will be your direct supervisor for the completion of the project. You will need three members for your committee. Your adviser will be the chair of the committee, and I will be the second member. You should pick your third committee member or reader in consultation with your adviser and me. He or she can be from the School or from another department, or from outside the school, and preferably should be someone who has an interest in your research area and/or someone with whom you have had a class. In the past, advanced doctoral students in the School and from other departments have served as readers. We’ve also had a newspaper publisher and the director of public relations for the NC Museum of Art.

**Schedule and meet with your committee**

As soon as you have chosen your two other members of your committee, you should schedule a meeting in late October for a one-half hour meeting of your committee. This is so your committee can meet and we all can agree on the parameters of your proposed project.

**Participate in the JOMC Research Participant Pool**

Since our class will probably benefit from having other students participate in our research projects, we will give back by each student participating for at least **three** hours in the participant pool (completed in the academic year 2013/2014). You will be able to sign up online to participate in research studies being conducted by faculty and students in the School. If you’d rather not be in a study you can satisfy this requirement by writing three two-page summaries and critiques of academic research articles. Each review counts for one hour of research participation, so you can combine participation in the studies with article reviews to fulfill the requirement. You may summarize any article published in the past two years in the following journals: *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, Journal of Advertising, Mass Communication & Society, Journal of Mass Media Ethics, and Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*.

**Participate in class**

We will run the class like a seminar or sometimes like a workshop in which we are helping each other develop research projects. The class works best when we all show interest in all the projects. We may pair up so you can be sharing your work with at least one other student in the class on an ongoing basis so you can each benefit from more feedback. At some point, you will be assigned to serve as a discussion leader for the readings. This means I will expect you to come to class prepared to detail the 5-10 most important points from the readings.

**Stay in communication**

I and/or your fellow students and committee members can not help you unless you let us know what is going on for you. If you find yourself up against the wall with writing block, a dead end literature search or a time crunch, let me know so we can figure out what’s going to help. This is a project that is going to require ongoing effort. You cannot leave this to the night before it is due. So, let us know if you are having trouble staying on schedule. It is most important that your advisor is comfortable with your schedule. Most of the deadlines in the syllabus are negotiable except the final submission dates.

**Tentative Course Schedule:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Dates** | **Topics**  | **Discussion / Due**  |
| Aug. 20 | *The Challenge of Honors* | Discussion: IdeasStudent Response |
| Aug. 27 | *Big and small questions in communications* | Discussion: QuestionsStudent Response: Honors Thesis (select one) |
|  |  |  |
| Sept. 3 | *Literature reviews in writing* | Discussion: WritingStudent Response |
| Sept. 10 | *Your preliminary idea* | DiscussionStudent Response |
| Sept. 17 | *Historical Method* | Discussion: Historical MethodStudent Response |
| Sept. 24 | *Quantitative Method*  | Discussion: Quantitative MethodStudent Response |
|  |  |  |
| Oct. 1 | *Qualitative Method* | Discussion: Qualitative MethodStudent Response |
| Oct. 8 | *Your developed idea* | Student Response: 5 pages of your idea and 1-2 pages of citations  |
| Oct. 15 | *Legal Research* | Discussion: Legal ResearchStudent Response: List of faculty committee members |
| Oct. 22 | *Rough draft of chapter 1, Introduction* | Student Response: 15 pages |
|  |  |  |
| Oct. 29 | *Writing and Rewriting* | Discussion: Writing and RewritingStudent Response: Rewriting issues |
| Nov. 5 | *Rough draft chapter 2, Method* | Discussion: Rough draft chapter 2Student Response: Ideas of revision |
| Nov. 12 | *Writing and Rewriting* | Discussion: Writing and RewritingStudent Response: Writing and Rewriting |
| Nov. 19 | *Individual meetings as needed* |  |
| Nov. 26 | *Presentation to Class* |  |
|  |  |  |
| Dec. 3 | *Presentation to class and planning for spring* | Student Response: Provide an outline of the thesis |

**Outline of the**

**HONORS THESIS PROPOSAL**

***Tentative title*.**

A good title will help you organize your material and keep in mind what you are doing. The title must tell the reader what your study is about. You should include keywords in your title that will help readers decide whether they want to read the study or not. Think about whether you want to put dates in your title to indicate a beginning and end point to your research. Titles may have two levels that are separated by a colon. In this case, the top line generally is snappier than the bottom line. The last line should be as descriptive of your study as possible. Try to keep the whole title less than 10-15 words. Titles may change if the nature of the study changes, but they must reflect the contents.

***Chapter 1: Introduction and Literature Review***

 ***Introduction (2-3 pages).***

A brief overview of the topic to be addressed in the paper, including a description of the problem or issue leading to the study and an explicit statement of purpose -- even to the point of saying: "The purpose of this research project is . . . . ." The introduction may also include any background information the reader needs to understand the problem or issue, or you may need a separate background section if significant background information is necessary.

 ***Literature review (12-15 pages)*.**

The literature review is designed to:

1. familiarize the reader (and you) with what has already been written on the topic you have chosen to study;
2. demonstrate that the research you intend to undertake is original -- that it has not already been done; and
3. show where the study you will fit in or fill a gap in the relevant body of knowledge. Often literature reviews begin by reading pertinent chapters from textbooks on your subject and proceed from there by looking at other scholarly studies that might be found from footnotes and bibliographies.

A literature review is not an annotated bibliography. See <http://www.clet.ait.ac.th/EL21LIT.HTM> for an excellent set of guidelines about writing a literature review, and the class text by Pan: *Preparing Literature Reviews*. A literature review should not be just a series of disjointed paragraphs summarizing each article. The literature must be READ, summarized, discussed and analyzed, not just listed. It will probably be necessary for you to categorize the literature you survey to make sense of it for yourself and your readers. Statements such as “Several authors have said . . ..” often introduce segments of literature reviews. Then within that paragraph you would pull out what John Smith, Helen Brown and Susan Jones have said on your topic. "Taking the contrary view, Theodore Williams has argued . . ." would lead you into another point of view. You may find it necessary to bring up the same author's work under different subject headings.

A literature review should cover scholarly literature -- books and articles found in scholarly or academic journals, such as *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly, Mass Communication and Society, Public Opinion Quarterly, Journal of Broadcasting, Journalism History, American Journalism, Mass Comm Review*. For some topics, articles in trade journals such as *Editor & Publisher* and *Broadcasting* or more popular publications such as *Columbia Journalism Review* may be useful. The most recent volumes of these publications are indexed on CD ROM in Davis Library. Most are also accessible by computerized search through Dialog or other databases. Stephanie Brown can help you with some searches through the Library’s computer. She has set up a special web page for the honors class of relevant electronic databases of potential sources. (see: http://www.lib.unc.edu/parklibrary/courses/f09\_JOMC\_691.html). Remember, however, you are still going to have to use hardbound volumes for less recent materials, and computerized searching finds only a small percentage of the relevant materials.

In searching for materials relevant to your subject, do not forget to read the footnotes and bibliographies in items you find. These often prove to be treasure troves of relevant work, and it is perfectly legitimate to borrow from others’ bibliographies. You still have to go read the work yourself, of course, but at least you have some leads of where to go to find it. If we do not have articles or books relevant to your subject in our libraries, Inter-Library Loan can obtain this information for you, but that often takes some time, so order early.

If you are unable to find scholarly articles or books that pertain directly to your topic, you must locate literature on related topics. (Incidentally, a lack of research sometimes suggests the area is ripe for research. It also could mean it’s not a very fruitful or important area. We’ll help sort that out.)

***Justification (1-2 pages)*.**

The literature review is the lead-in to the next section of the proposal in which you justify the importance of and the need for your research project. Why is the project worth doing? Why is this problem important? What remains to be done in the area? Have there been new developments here? Is there a current conflict about the subject that your research might help to settle? Would your study help to fill in the gaps in our understanding of a particular issue?

***Research question(s)/ hypotheses (1-2 pages).***

In the first portion of the proposal, you provided a brief statement of purpose. Here you elaborate, listing and, if necessary, explaining the specific questions you will seek to answer. If you are conducting a scientific study this is where you state your hypotheses and rationale for them. Remember that you must answer your questions and test your hypotheses in the course of your study. Your conclusion, for instance, must make reference to and provide answers for your research questions/hypotheses. If your conclusion does not do this, go back and revise your research questions.

**Chapter 2: *Methods (5-15 pages)*.**

In this section of your proposal, you must tell your readers how you will answer the questions you have identified. Specifically what will you be studying to reach your conclusions? Are you limiting yourself to a particular time period? If so, why? Are you limiting yourself to particular resources? If so, why?

This is the place to define terms and concepts. You might also want to explain the limitations of your study here -- what exactly will you not include that a reader might expect to find, and why are you excluding it? What are the drawbacks of the database that you have chosen to draw upon? What resources are not available that might be relevant?

Legal and historical papers seldom contain much of a discussion of methods since how you go about doing this research usually is obvious: a critical evaluation of primary sources -- laws, court cases, congressional debates and hearings, newspaper articles, archival materials, etc. Other research approaches require considerably more explanation of how you intend to investigate your subject. If you are conducting original social scientific research this is where you would describe your sample, measures, study design, and data analysis strategy. If you are conducting a survey or experiment, in this section you will include discussion of and description of stimuli, draft questionnaires or measures; if you are conducting a content analysis, you will include a sample coding sheet and coding guide. These can be included in appendices and described in the methods section or included in the section.

 ***Availability of resources (1-2 pages).***

Can you obtain the information you need on campus? If not, where do you have to go to do your research? Do you need grant money to travel? If so, where is that going to come from? The University's honors program has a few competitive grants available so it’s good to get a good idea of your project as soon as possible so you can apply for these funds. They can cover such things as memory sticks, travel, and copying.

***Chapter breakdown (1 page).***

How do you see this material fitting together into chapters? Think this through because it will help you organize your research. You may, of course, alter your organizational scheme as you learn more from your research. The typical organization is as specified above, but for historical and legal or ethnographic work the “results” may be organized into different chapters.

 ***Schedule for submission (1 page)*.**

Remember that these long projects are to be submitted chapter by chapter so your adviser/ reader and I can give you feedback as you continue working. Make allowances for revision in your schedule. Establish a timetable and try to stick to it. An open-ended project is difficult to complete.

***Bibliography/ references*.**

If you are doing legal or historical research, you will divide this into primary and secondary sources. Primary sources includes interviews, contemporaneous newspaper and magazine articles and editorials, collections of letters, archival materials. Secondary sources would include books and articles commenting on your topic. These should be in proper style and each reference cited in your text must be in the reference list.

**Appendices.**

Here you would include your human subjects proposal and consent forms; preliminary coding guide and sheet if you are doing content analysis; list of cases to be analyzed if you are doing legal research; preliminary questionnaire if you are doing a survey; stimulus materials and questionnaire if conducting an experiment, etc. Each should have a title and be numbered or lettered sequentially.