

JOMC 691H
Honors in Journalism and Mass Communication
Fall 2014
Tuesday, 2:00-4:30
Carroll Hall 340

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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 is also 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/scholarship 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 2015. Then you'll graduate with honors or highest honors in May 2015!

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.)

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

- **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.

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 at the end of this fall semester will be "SP" if you make satisfactory progress toward your honors thesis. That grade will be converted to a standard grade (A, B, C, etc.) for the fall semester course and for the spring semester course at the end of the final semester of honors thesis work. This final grade in the honors courses (J691H and J692H) will reflect your work throughout the two semesters. I will assign your grade after consultation with your adviser and reader. Your grade will be evaluated in relation to the work, participation, and effort of all students in this year's J-School's Honors courses. Be sure to carefully read over the requirements for this fall semester's Honors class to understand my expectations of you during this course. An "A" will indicate that

all parties believe that your participation, effort and work in the courses have been outstanding. A “B” indicates that your participation, effort and work in the courses have been good. A “C” indicates that your participation, effort and work in the courses have been average. 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 and a letter grade 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 3.3 and a minimum grade point average of 3.5 in your J-School major.

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. Everyone in the class will need to complete the Institutional Review Board's certification process. This means you will do the CITI Online Course (CITI = Collaborative IRB Training Initiative) on the web [here](#). You will need to first Register/Create an Account, then indicate the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill as your affiliation. The registration will take you through several screens. When you choose which one you want to complete, be sure to select the Social and Behavioral Research: Basic Course. Send me an email when you've completed the training. One caution here: This certification may take some time, so I recommend you try to do this in stages.

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. Go to <http://research.unc.edu/ohre/> to see information about submitting your application online.

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 some members of the class will be using the JOMC Research Pool, we will give back by each student participating for at least **two** hours in the Participant Pool (completed in the academic year 2014/2015). 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 2 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 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.

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC) requires that, irrespective of their particular specialization, all graduates should be aware of certain core values and competencies and be able to:

- *Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;*
- *Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;*
- *Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications;*
- *Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society;*
- *Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;*
- *Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;*
- *Think critically, creatively and independently;*
- *Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;*
- *Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;*
- *Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;*
- *Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;*
- *Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.*
- *Units requesting evaluation of a graduate program must also demonstrate how their master's graduates attain this additional core competency:*
- *Contribute to knowledge appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.*

Tentative Course Schedule:

Dates	Topics and Readings	Due
Aug. 19	<i>Introduction to the course and discussion of preliminary research ideas.</i>	Be prepared to discuss your research topic ideas
Aug. 26	<p><i>Introduction to the research process: How do I develop my topic, problem statement, purpose and research questions?</i></p> <p>Read: Entire syllabus; R&V Unit 1 (Chpts. 1-4) Skim: three honors theses (see list on web)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will serve as discussion leaders for the chapters. You should be prepared to lead class discussion on 5-10 important points from the chapters. 2. Students should be prepared to discuss one honors thesis most relevant to his/her topic. 3. All students will submit 1-2 typed pages about their own research ideas.
Sept. 2	<p><i>The importance of the literature review: Building on what others have done.</i></p> <p>Read: Pan, <i>Preparing Literature Reviews</i> (pp. 1-62) Browse: JOMC website re: faculty</p> <p>Stephanie Brown, Park Librarian, guest (2-3:15)</p>	<p>Submit (bring to class):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2-3 pages (outline): issues to be explored; problem statements and (maybe) research questions 2. list of faculty members who might serve as advisers and readers 3. Please bring laptops to class
Sept. 9	<p><i>Individual meetings</i> <i>Meet with me to discuss ideas</i></p>	<p>Email to me prior to meeting:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preliminary (annotated) bibliography (5-10 key academic sources) 2. During meeting we will discuss your research ideas. Be prepared to talk about possible RQs

Sept. 16	<p><i>Guiding your study with theory/conceptual foundations</i> Read: R&V Unit 2 (Chpts. 5-11) Check out the material in the other books on reserve for related theories/conceptual issues</p>	<p>Be prepared to discuss (in pairs)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What conceptual foundation or theory might guide your project? 2. What conceptual areas do you need to review? 3. (tentatively) what might be your procedure or method?
Sept. 23	<p><i>Working on the literature review:</i> <i>Meet with me individually during class time if you have last minute questions about your literature review submission.</i></p>	<p>Submit (electronically)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 5-10 pages of lit. review by 5pm. Use my email address on this syllabus.
Sept. 30	<p><i>Using Quantitative Methods</i> Review R&V Chapters 2-4 Check out the material in the other books on reserve that have information about quantitative methods</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare an outline of the steps in your method (if you are using quantitative methods.) You may need to investigate other books and journal articles that discuss your method. Be prepared to discuss this. 2. Identify your thesis adviser and your reader
Oct. 7	<p><i>Using Qualitative/Legal/Historical Methods</i> Review R&V Chapters 2-4 Check out the material in the other books on reserve that have information about qualitative/legal/historical methods</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare an outline of the steps in your method (if you are using qualitative methods.) You may need to investigate other books and journal articles that discuss your method. Be prepared to discuss this. <p>By the end of the week: submit (electronically)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Your revised 5-10 pages of literature review to me and to your adviser
Oct. 14	<p><i>Workshop or individual meetings on chapters 1 and 2</i></p>	<p>Submit (electronically):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A draft of Chapter 2 (methods) to me, adviser and reader

Oct. 21	<i>Individual committee meetings: All students will need to set up meetings with committee members during this week.</i>	Meet with your committee
Oct. 28	<i>Workshop: Doing revisions Working on IRB submissions for those working with human subjects</i>	Be prepared to discuss how you'll revise your proposals
Nov. 4 and Nov. 11	<i>Finalizing proposals</i>	Submit (electronically): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Revised thesis proposal to me and to adviser by Nov. 17th, Monday at 5pm 2. Draft of the IRB proposal to me (and/or adviser if requested) by Monday, Nov. 17th at 5pm.
Nov. 24	<i>Individual meetings</i>	
Dec. 2	<i>Discuss feedback about your proposal. What's next? How to prepare for Spring semester</i>	Submit (electronically): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Revised thesis proposal to me, adviser, and reader with notes re: revisions you've made

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/fo9_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.