The primary goal of this advanced doctoral research seminar is to help you to conceptualize and begin your dissertation research. We will be discussing the role of the dissertation in doctoral studies, as well as expectations for the dissertation. In particular, we will explore a number of issues related to the process of crafting a dissertation prospectus, including:

- What does it mean to make a significant and original contribution to a body of literature?
- What are the qualities of good research questions, problem and purpose statements?
- What does it mean to make an argument in writing?
- What are the purposes of literature reviews?
- What are the qualities of good literature reviews?
- What is the role of theory in research?
- How do you write a good description of research methods?
- What are the key components of a dissertation and dissertation prospectus?
- What are some strategies for successful writing?
- How do you develop a system and support network to complete your dissertation?

Throughout the course of the semester, you will be drafting sections that will (ideally) eventually be part of your dissertation prospectus. As you should have already taken your research methods classes, I assume that you have a solid understanding of the methodology you plan to use in your study. We will not be reviewing various research methods in any detail in this class; however, I expect you will be able to write that section of your dissertation prospectus in some depth by the end of the semester. It is up to you to continue to develop your methodological expertise. I suggest that you go back to some of your methods textbooks and course materials regularly as you develop the sections of your prospectus. I also assume that you will work with your advisor during the semester to make sure you are meeting their expectations for a dissertation prospectus.
As this is a doctoral seminar, the class will proceed through a discussion format. I expect that you will come to class prepared to critically engage the readings with both comments and questions. You will participate in both small and large group discussions in class. You will also be writing during class (in response to specific prompts) and thus you are expected to bring a journal or loose leaf paper to class to organize these in-class writing assignments. You will also be asked to provide careful and substantive feedback on the writing of your classmates throughout the semester. This is intended both to help them to develop their ideas, as well as to stimulate your ideas and your sense of possibility.

The primary objective of this course is for you to transition from a student in doctoral coursework to an independent researcher ready to embark on your dissertation.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**


Articles available in a course dropbox folder. All articles for this class will be in an EAHE 589 dropbox folder that I will invite you to join after the first night of class.

**COURSE CONTENT OVERVIEW**

**JANUARY 15: Introduction/Overview**

**JANUARY 22: On Writing a Lot**

Silvia, *How to write a lot."

**JANUARY 29: Doctoral Dissertation Overview**


**FEBRUARY 5: Conceptualizing Research & Research Questions**


**FEBRUARY 12: Advisors, Committees, and Getting Started**


Bolker, *Writing your dissertation in fifteen minutes a day*, chapters 1-4.

*Pre-proposal Statement Due to Peer Reviewer*

**FEBRUARY 19: Literature Reviews**


*Revised Pre-proposal Statement Due*


**FEBRUARY 26: Focusing Your Research and Refining your Literature Review**


*Literature Review Concept Map Due*

**MARCH 5: Making Arguments**


**MARCH 12: NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK**

**MARCH 19: Role of Theory**


*Draft of Literature Review Due to Peer Reviewer*

**MARCH 26: Conceptualizing the Proposal**


*Revised Literature Review Due*

**APRIL 2: Visualizing the Dissertation**


Bolker, *Writing your dissertation in fifteen minutes a day*, chapters 5-7.

*Theoretical Statement Due to Peer Reviewer*

**APRIL 9: Methods**


Revised Theoretical Statement Due

APRIL 16: On Getting Done

Bolker, Writing your dissertation in fifteen minutes a day, chapters 8-10.

Biklin & Casella, A practical guide to the qualitative dissertation, chapter 8.

Prospectus Draft Due to Peer Reviewer

APRIL 23: Wrap Up, Closing Comments & Questions

APRIL 30: No Class - AERA

Revised Prospectus Due via Email

EVALUATION

EAHE 589 is graded on S/U basis. In order receive an S, I expect that you will come to each class having done the readings and with all of the assignments completed on time. You should finish this class with a solid draft of your dissertation prospectus.

Attendance and Class Participation
You are expected to carefully prepare the readings before each class so that you can participate in small and large group discussions. Active presence in class is required. If for some reason you are unable to be in class, you should let me know as soon as possible and make arrangements to turn in any work that is due that day.

Dissertation Journal
Your dissertation journal is something you will work on inside and outside of class throughout the semester. It will include both writings that you do during class (we will be writing something each week in class, typically for 15-20 minutes) and notes/writings you do for your dissertation outside of class. In addition to the assigned readings, I expect that you will also be doing reading specific to your dissertation topic, at least 3 articles or chapters (or 50 pages) per week. You should keep an ongoing journal of notes on articles you have read, organized in some way that makes sense to you.

Peer Evaluation and Self Assessment
One of the most important habits of a scholar is to solicit feedback on your writing, especially to help you during the conceptualization phase. At the same time, reading your peers’ writing is a good way to reflect on your own strengths and weaknesses as a writer. For each of the four writing assignments in class, you will be paired up with a classmate who will read and provide feedback on your first draft of the assignment. You will then be expected to revise that draft based on the comments you receive from your peer and turn the revised version in to me, along with a brief narrative (several paragraphs) reflecting on the feedback you received and the changes you made based on your peer’s comments. Your goal as a peer reviewer is to help your classmate to draft a stronger paper, to better clarify their ideas, and to more tightly organize their thoughts. Thus it is important that you give careful and substantive feedback, including questions on aspects of their work that are confusing or unclear.

**Pre-Proposal (at least 5 pages)**
Your dissertation pre-proposal is your first effort to narrow and conceptualize your dissertation. You pre-proposal should include the following sections: Research Problem/Background Context, Research Purpose, Research Questions, Significance.

**Literature Review Concept Map**
Create a visual representation of the bodies of literature you intend to draw from in your literature review and how you see them as related. You can be creative with this visualization. You may also decide to draw more than one mapping possibility. You will be asked to briefly present your map(s) to your classmates for feedback.

**Literature Review (at least 10 pages)**
You must write an initial draft of your literature review for your dissertation. The most important aspect of this draft is your introductory material where you describe how you approach and organize the literature you review, and what argument you make with that review. Ten pages is the minimum length for this review, however, the more substantive the review you can write at this point, the stronger your prospectus will be (and the more capable you will be of framing your overall dissertation project).

**Theoretical Statement (at least 5 pages)**
All research is informed by theoretical assumptions and lenses, whether we realize it or not. In this brief essay, you should discuss the theory or theories that you think will influence your dissertation, both in terms of the construction of your research and your analysis. You should not just simply describe the theory, but also be very specific about how you think the theory or theories you discuss will influence and impact your study.

**Prospectus (at least 25 pages)**
The primary goal of this class is for you to finish with a high quality draft of your dissertation prospectus. There is no one formula for what this should look like, however, it minimally should include all of the components that you have written on throughout the semester (you can include sections from all of your other class writings in your final prospectus), as well as a section (or chapter) detailing your research methodology. You
should also be working with your advisor throughout the semester to make sure you understand their expectations for what your prospectus must look like.

EXPECTATIONS FOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

All papers for this class (with the exception of your dissertation journal) must be typed, **double-spaced**, and use **1 or 1.25 inch margins** all around and **10-12 point font**. **You do not need a cover page**; simply make sure at least your name and a title for the paper or assignment are on the first page. In general, I expect your writing to reflect substantial effort and that you will respond to all aspects of the assignment. You should use section headings to identify the various pieces of the assignment. You must also use an appropriate citation style (e.g., APA, Chicago, MLA). I expect your writing to be clear and carefully edited. Your peer reviewer’s comments should help you to turn in stronger writing.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

I encourage anyone with disabilities who requires accommodations to meet the expectations and requirements of this course to talk with me as soon as possible and to also work with the SIU Disability Support Services (DSS) office to facilitate any accommodations. DSS is located in Woody Hall room B-150 and can be reached at mail code 4705, DSS@siu.edu, 453-5738 (ph), 453-5700 (FAX), or 453-2293 (TTY).

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Southern Illinois University Carbondale is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for study and work. Because some health and safety circumstances are beyond our control, we ask that you become familiar with the SIUC Emergency Response Plan and Building Emergency Response Team (BERT) program. Emergency response information is available on posters in buildings on campus, available on the BERT’s website at [www.bert.siu.edu](http://www.bert.siu.edu), Department of Public Safety’s website [www.dps.siu.edu](http://www.dps.siu.edu) (disaster drop down) and in the Emergency Response Guidelines pamphlet. Know how to respond to each type of emergency.

Instructors will provide guidance and direction to students in the classroom in the event of an emergency affecting your location. **It is important that you follow these instructions and stay with your instructor during an evacuation or sheltering emergency.** The Building Emergency Response Team will provide assistance to your instructor in evacuating the building or sheltering within the facility.