INF 391D.9 - Introduction to Doctoral Research and Theory II

Syllabus

Unique Number: 27090

Semester: Spring, 2008

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Office: SZB 562B

Office Hours: Wednesday, 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.
And by appointment.

Class Time: Tuesdays, Noon – 3:00 p.m.

Classroom: SZB 556

TA: S. C. (Hans) Huang
huangsc@mail.utexas.edu

Textbook: Readings will be placed on reserve in the ISchool IT Lab.

Synopsis:

This class is designed to help introduce new doctoral students to the world of science.

From the Doctoral Studies Committee Description, 12/5/2002:

“Aim: To immerse students in a research culture.”

“Means:
- To introduce students to important theories, research traditions, and research methods in the field.
- To make plain some of the relationships among theories, research methods, and subject areas.
- To introduce students to important themes in epistemology, the philosophy of science, and research methods used by scholars of all backgrounds in our field.”
Objectives:

The following are the objectives of DRT-I and DRT-II. All were pursued in DRT-I, and will be more fully realized with the completion of DRT-II.

Students completing DRT-I and DRT-II will:
1. Know how we know what we know. Understand that there are different ways of knowing.
2. Know that knowledge can be contested.
3. Have an understanding of the philosophy of science.
4. Know how to think critically about research. Be able to discern what is good research. Have the ability to evaluate a line of research (pointing towards the ability to carry out such a line).
5. Know how to ask and investigate (and possibly answer) research questions.
6. Know what behavioral science is.
7. Know what our field is -- what “information science” includes.
8. Know what the strengths and interests of the iSchool faculty are.
9. Begin to know where they are in the field. Know what research has been done in the area and have an idea of how they might want to extend the field. (By the end of DRT-II: Have a question and/or problem to explore and know what the relevant methodologies and theories have been.)
10. Know what the paradigm(s) in information science is/are.
11. Understand the difference between a Master’s degree and a Ph.D., the goals, expectations, measures of success, and likely future contributions.
12. Begin work on their Program of Work. (By the end of DRT-II, perhaps complete their Program of work and have it approved.)

Instructional Techniques:

The course will entail various instructional techniques:
1 – lecture
2 – demonstration
3 – student-directed discussion
4 – self-instruction, with question-answering by the professor
6 – attention to the real world
7 – individual writing project.

Policies:

Grades:

Your grade will be based on four things:
1 – Class participation (30%)
2 – Presentation of your review of a dissertation (20%)
3 – A methods section (30%)
4 – Participation in a poster session, presenting your methods section (20%)
Cheating:

Don’t. Dire consequences. (Though it is hard for me to imagine how you would cheat in this class. I’m reminded of the Woody Allen line. He told how, during a philosophy test, he cheated by “looking into the soul of the girl sitting next to me.”)

Late Assignments:

Your grade will be docked one grade per day late, for your written assignment.

Etc.:

- Attendance matters. When you aren’t here, you deprive your classmates of your shared wisdom.
- If you have a question, please ask. I will be very receptive to emails at any time, and phone calls before 10:00 p.m. (or, heck, any time if it’s important).
- Any student with a documented disability (physical or cognitive) who requires academic accommodations should contact the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259 (voice) or 471-4641 (TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing) as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations.

Schedule: (Note – some of these guests’ dates may change.)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Assignment (due BEFORE class)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T, 1/15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<td>Introduce ourselves around the table.</td>
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<td>How do we know the things we know?</td>
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<td>Address what is expected in a person with a Ph.D., and a Ph.D. student.</td>
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<td>Course syllabus and logistics.</td>
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<td>You teach me, from DRT-I.</td>
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<tr>
<td>T, 1/22</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Miksa and Dillon on Theory.</td>
<td>- <em>Have read, before class starts:</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>-- Dillon, A. (2004). <em>Designing Usable Electronic Text</em></td>
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<td>T, 1/29</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>A quantitative approach to a problem: Phonological recoding</td>
<td>- <em>Have read, before class starts:</em></td>
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<td>-- R. Bias dissertation</td>
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<td>-- <em>To know a fly</em>, V. Dethier</td>
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<td>T, 2/5</td>
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<td>A qualitative approach to a problem: Bill Lukenbill</td>
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<td>T, 2/12</td>
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<td>Miles Efron</td>
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<td>T, 2/19</td>
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<td>Lynn Westbrook</td>
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<td>T, 2/26</td>
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<td>David Gracy</td>
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<td>T, 3/4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Reviews of dissertations we’ve read. Methods sections assignments, early looks.</td>
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<td>T, 3/11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Visit to the Imaging Research Center, with Hans Huang</td>
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<td>T, 3/25</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Individual research methods project discussion</td>
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<td>T, 4/1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Advanced doctoral students – Burns, Williams, Choi, Smith, Cherian, Aumer-Ryan, Davenport, Fleming, Gunn, McGinness, Minner, Moore?</td>
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<td>T, 4/8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Saved for late-breaking opportunities</td>
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<td>T, 4/15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Bad science -- An example of a bad quantitative study (to be provided)</td>
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<td>T, 4/22</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Individual research methods presentations (just intra-class)</td>
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<td>T, 4/29</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Poster Session of all methods sections</td>
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**Assignments:**

Students will have two fundamental assignments:

1 – Read and share summary of a dissertation of your own choosing, and

2 – Write a methods section describing a mixed-methods approach designed to answer a question. This will be a methods section that could serve as part of a dissertation. We'll talk more about WHAT question you'll be addressing. I would ask that your approach be necessarily mixed-methods – i.e., that there be an experimental component to it, and a qualitative method component to it. There will be three aspects of this assignment – a written report, a class presentation, and a poster at a poster session to which the iSchool faculty and students will be invited.