

Method and Theory Paper Description – Spring 2014

T -Th * 9:30-10:50 (Section 1) *** ARM 224**

T -Th * 11:00-12:20 (Section 2) *** ARM 224**

Paper Overview

This class is designated a writing-intensive class by the university. This means there are requirements about what I am obligated to have you write. Many students find this challenging. To aid you in this process, you will (1) have multiple chances to improve your writing; (2) have step-by-step instructions. We will go over each step in detail in class, but for those of you who like an overview, you will find it below. Please note that you are **only required to write one of the two papers** and that **if you are dissatisfied with your first grade, you may rewrite for the final paper, due the last day of class**. Students who would like even more opportunities may choose to write both papers; you will receive the higher of your two grades in all cases. Papers should be written in APA style. More information about the formatting can be found here: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/13/>. All papers and homework assignments should be turned in **BEFORE** class on their due date. Papers and homework are due on Sakai. Unless you make prior arrangements before class, I will not accept paper versions turned in during class.

Please note that the paper has been divided into homework assignments and paper sections. **You are required to do all of the homework assignments**, even if you only write one paper. For homework assignments, points are pass/fail. If you do it generally correctly, you will receive full credit. If you fail to do the assignment, turn it in late, or you show extreme disregard for the instructions, you will receive no points. The homework is designed to help you, not hurt you.

Step-by-Step Paper Instructions

1. Choose a research topic that interests you. The research topic can be anything that involves human behavior. This can be in the form of a question or a statement. For example, you could write, "Are introverts more socially isolated than extraverts?"; or you could write "I am interested in the relationship between introversion and social isolation." Type this up, and turn it in as **HW# 1, due on Tuesday, Jan 28th**.
2. We will vote in class on two topics that will be the main research focus of our class on **Tues, February 11th**. You need to choose **one** of these as your research topic. If your topic is chosen, you will receive extra credit, but nothing else is due.
3. Begin background research on your topic. For your paper, you will need to locate and read at least four **peer-reviewed** research articles. These articles will help you understand what is already known about your topic. We will learn more about how to do this in class. For HW #2, you need to decide on and read at least 1 peer-reviewed research article. Summarize this article in article in the following steps. 1. What was the authors' main question? 2. What was the authors' main answer? 3. How did he authors' get to their answer? You can be brief. Turn in **both the article and the summary** on Sakai, and bring both to class. You will be expected to summarize your article for the class. I will make all the articles available for everyone in the class. HW#2 is due **Tuesday, February 18th**
4. Keep thinking about your research topic and our class discussion of the articles. Come to class Tuesday, February 18th when we will discuss the articles that you and your classmates have found. We will discuss how they relate to each other, and we will go over how to write an introduction. Begin writing your introduction. An example introduction is found in Appendix A. Your introduction will not be due until after we design the studies in class, but I strongly recommend beginning to write the introduction before then.

5. Based on the research methods we discuss in class, think about how to design a study to answer the research questions we developed in class. Briefly outline this idea (1 paragraph) and turn it in: **for paper 1, HW#3, due Thursday, Feb 27th; for paper 2, HW#5, due Thursday, March 27th**. In class on those days, we will discuss these ideas and vote on the method the class will do. Winning method receives extra credit.
6. Once we have decided on a method, finish writing the introduction. Your introduction should be 2-4 pages. The first paragraph should be a broad overview of the topic, and each successive paragraph should discuss a distinct idea or theme. You can (and should) cite all of the articles in the same paragraph of your introduction. Your introduction should NOT consist of simple summaries of each article. Your introduction should explore areas of agreement, areas of disagreement, and areas for future research. Your introduction should include at least one sentence of the type: 'Researchers agree that [X]'. Your essay should include at least one sentence of the type: 'Although Study A reported that [Y], Study B found that [Z]'. This indicates an area of potential disagreement. Finally, your introduction should make it clear how our study will build on the previous research. Your intro is due **Thursday, March 6th for Paper 1 or Thursday, April 3rd for Paper 2**.
7. Participate in data collection. Please note that you are **required to participate in data collection for both papers even if you are only writing one paper**. You will receive specific instructions on how to do so in class when we decide on a method. Turn in your data in the form specified in class. Your data are due as homework **Tuesday, March 4th, by 11:59 pm for Paper 1, HW#4 and Tuesday, April 8th for Paper 2, HW#6**.
8. We will analyze the data in class to determine the results of our study. After we have done this, complete your method and results section. This should be 2-4 pages. This is due **Thursday, March 13th for Paper 1 or Thursday, April 17th for Paper 2**.
9. Write a rough draft of your abstract. You will receive instruction on the abstract in class. The rough draft of your abstract is due as **HW#7 on Tuesday, April 22nd**. In addition to turning in your abstract on sakai, bring a copy to class with you. Part of writing a good paper is receiving feedback and making your paper better. We will exchange abstracts and have them evaluated by a peer. Your final abstract will be due the last day of class.
10. Write your discussion and your references. Your references should be in APA format, and you need at least four peer-reviewed references. See an APA manual for examples, the sample paper in your textbook (Appendix A), the website <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>. Your discussion is 2-3 pages. This is where you restate the important findings that you analyzed in the Results section, link your own research to prior research, discuss the limitations of your own research and provide some suggestions for future research. Below are some suggestions for how to do this.
 - (a) Start a paragraph: 'The present study has provided evidence that . . .' and go onto describe what you did and what you found. You should not be reporting numbers. That is for the results section.
 - (b) Start a paragraph: 'Prior research demonstrated [X], and the present study advances the field by showing [Y]' Where X is what the prior literature showed, and Y is what you did that was unique from prior studies.
 - (c) Address limitations! Say something like: 'Although the present study extends our understanding of X, it is limited by several factors. First . . .' This is a great place to discuss problems with validity and reliability and other concerns about your study.
 - (d) You should have at least one paragraph starting, 'There are a number of directions for future research' in which you provide some potential directions for future studies on this and related topics. It would be wise to make them relevant to any problems of validity and reliability (i.e., larger sample size, better measures, etc).
 - (e) A conclusion paragraph or statement of some sort. There are no style guidelines for this, so long as it makes sense.

The final version of your abstract, your discussion, and your references are all due the last day of class **Thursday, May 1st, for both papers.**

Paper Grades

Everything must be turned in **before class on the day it is due.** The assignment on Sakai will close at the start of class. Since you are turning everything in online, missing class is not an excuse for turning things in late. If you turn in assignments late, you will be docked 20% per class period. No exceptions. You have the due dates for each piece of the paper already and can work ahead if you are worried about potential scheduling conflicts. The paper is worth a total of 200 points, as described below.

Paper Parts:

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|-------------------------------------|--------|
| 1. Introduction | 50 pts |
| 2. Method and Results | 40 pts |
| 3. Discussion, Abstract, References | 60 pts |

Homework Parts:

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| 1. HW#1 | 5 pts |
| 2. HW#2 | 10 pts |
| 3. HW#3 | 5 pts |
| 4. HW#1 | 10 pts |
| 5. HW#2 | 5 pts |
| 6. HW#3 | 10 pts |
| 7. HW#7 | 5 pts |

Important Notes

Remember, you are only required to write one of the two papers. If you wish to write both, you will receive the higher of the grades on each section. In addition, if you are dissatisfied with your grade on the introduction or methods and results, you may rewrite it to turn in the last day of class with your abstract, discussion and references. Your re-write will replace your original grade.