

IPT 750: Critical Literature Reviews

Course website:

Instructor website: <http://www.the-wests.net/rick/litreview>

**"Most of the change we think we see in life
Is due to truths being in and out of favor." (Robert Frost)**



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Office Hours: Virtually & face-to-face on Mondays, 2-4 p.m. or by appointment.

Credits: In creating this course, I have borrowed from several professors who have taught similar courses including Drs. Richard Sudweeks, Thomas Reeves, and Karl White. Their ideas are interspersed throughout this syllabus.

Note

The online version of the syllabus is the one more frequently updated. In the case of any discrepancy (i.e. changed deadlines or point totals), refer to the online version over this paper version.

Course Description & Objectives

The nature of graduate work, especially in doctoral studies, is discovering new knowledge and communicating these discoveries effectively with the public and research community. Literature Review articles are one method of contributing new knowledge when done in a way that emphasizes interpretation, analysis, and clear communication over simply summarizing the words of others. In this course, we will learn strategies, methods, and habits for writing and publishing effective critical literature review. Specifically, it is my goal that by the end of the semester, you will be able to:

- Understand the components of an effective literature review that contributes new understandings
- Select an appropriate topic for a comprehensive literature review
- Develop effective strategies for searching and reviewing previous research
- Summarize and critique previous studies as a form of interpretation
- Develop effective writing strategies and habits
- Produce a critical and interpretative literature review
- Understand how to negotiate the journal peer review publishing process

Course Policies

Course policies, assignments, and deadlines are subject to change according to our needs.

Late & Makeup Work

Due dates for assignments are listed on the calendar. A minimum 10% late penalty will be assessed for work submitted after the assignment deadline unless I have previously approved a later deadline due to extenuating circumstances. Work that is submitted over a week late will receive an additional 20% penalty for each week late. No late work is accepted after the final exam date.

Peer Writing Groups

Research has shown that researchers who form writing groups are much more productive. This is for a couple of reasons. First, you can receive feedback on your ideas and work out most of the major issues before submitting them to a professor or journal editor. Second, you will probably learn as much about effective writing through giving feedback to others and seeing their successes and writing challenges as you will in receiving feedback on your own work. Third, simply being accountable to someone else will keep you on task.

In this class, we will form writing groups to provide feedback to each other on our writing. Part of your grade will come from honestly doing your best to be a good peer reviewer.

Backing Up Work

It is your responsibility to back up all of the work you do in class, saving it in at least TWO locations until you receive your final course grade. To do this you can use: 1) your required USB key drive, 2) home computer, 3) email attachments, 4) free online space (such as <http://www.box.net>), or 5) external hard drive. If you need motivation for backing up your work, ask me about the time I lost over half of my literature review to a computer failure a few weeks before my thesis was due. Ah, the memories. ;-).

Course Grading & Honesty Policy

Final grades will be calculated with the following percentages. You must complete ALL assignments to get a passing grade. You must honestly complete all the work yourself, but you may share ideas with each other.

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	F
94-100	90-93	87-89	83-86	80-82	77-79	73-76	70-72	0-69

Preventing Sexual Harassment

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity that receives federal funds. The act is intended to eliminate sex discrimination in education and pertains to admissions, academic and athletic programs, and university-sponsored activities. Title IX also prohibits sexual harassment of students by university employees, other students, and visitors to campus. If you encounter sexual harassment or gender-based discrimination, please talk to your professor; contact the Equal Employment Office at 801-422-5895 or 1-888-238-1062 (24-hours), or <http://www.ethicspoint.com>; or contact the Honor Code Office at 801-422-2847.

Writing Quality Expectation

While this class is designed to help you develop your critical thinking and interpretative writing skills, it is not a class on basic grammar or writing. It is expected that when you turn in drafts to your peers and to myself, that we will be reviewing them based on their logical structure, argumentation, interpretation, etc. If there are grammar, punctuation, or blatant writing errors, it will make it more difficult for us to give you good feedback. If the errors are too much of an impediment to understanding your paper, it will be returned to you for corrections before I can read it. Remember to use the BYU Writing Center, which is a great resource for native and non-native speakers alike! Also, if you are an international student, consider enrolling concurrently in ESL 404, which is a graduate-level writing course for ESL students.

Electronic Devices

As a courtesy to everyone, please turn off cell phones during class and use laptops only for taking notes or looking up materials relevant to our discussion. Checking email, Facebook, and other off-task sites diminishes your ability to learn and my ability to teach, and is distracting to the other learners in class.

Required Reading

Good writing is a craft—a skill that can be developed like any other. Not only that, it is the currency of the successful academic—no matter how good your ideas, you will not be successful as a researcher if you cannot write well. To that end, we will have some required readings to help educate ourselves on the skills of effective writing. Every student is required to purchase/use:

1. A book on writing literature reviews.
2. A book on grammar and writing techniques/strategies in general.
3. A copy of the APA 6 manual. This is not technically required, as I know you can borrow one in the lab. However, as a recently graduated student, I assure you that my APA manual was easily the most useful book I owned as a student. You'll be surprised how often you'll be away from the lab, at home, on the road, or wherever, and wish you had your own copy.
4. Boote, D.N. & Beile, P. (2005). Scholars before researchers: On the centrality of the dissertation literature review in research preparation. *Educational Researcher*, 34(6), 3-15. You can access this from the library.

These readings are meant to be assets to you in developing your writing skills. For one assignment, you will share writing strategies that you have learned from your selected texts. In addition, we will read a few articles that address how to write effective literature reviews. These will be provided by the instructor or will be available through the BYU library. However, the majority of the reading in this class will be the literature you are reviewing for your final article.

Books On Writing Literature Reviews (Choose One)

The following are some books you may choose as your text on effective academic writing. There may be others you could choose from as well.

Cooper, H. (1998). *Synthesizing research: A guide for literature reviews*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
Locke, L. F.; Silverman, S. J.; Spirduso, W. W. (2009). *Reading and understanding research*. Thousand Oaks, Sage.
Pan, M. L. (2008). *Preparing literature reviews: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (3rd Ed.). Glendale, CA: Pycszak Publishing.

Books On Effective Writing & Grammar In General (Choose One)

The following are some books you may choose as your text on effective academic writing. There may be others you could choose from as well.

Becker, H. S. (1998). *Tricks of the Trade: How to Think about Your Research While You're Doing It* (1st ed.). University Of Chicago Press. [I'd probably recommend one of the other books for most students].
Belcher, W. L. (2009). *Writing your journal article in 12 weeks: A guide to academic publishing success*. Los Angeles: Sage.
Fogarty, M. (2008). *Grammar Girl's Quick and Dirty Tips for Better Writing* (1st ed.). Holt Paperbacks.
O'Conner, P. T. (2009). *Woe Is I: The Grammarphobe's Guide to Better English in Plain English*, Third Edition (3rd ed.). Riverhead Hardcover.
Silvia, P. J. (2007). *How to Write a Lot: A Practical Guide to Productive Academic Writing* (1st ed.). American Psychological Association (APA).
Strunk, W., & White, E. B. (2008). *The Elements of Style: 50th Anniversary Edition* (50th ed.). Longman.

Grammar Girl (aka Mignon Fogarty) also has a free podcast. None of these books cost very much, but if you are tight on money, or if podcasts are a more effective learning method for you, than you may listen to the Grammar Girl podcast in lieu of reading a grammar book. However, the podcast episodes are short (about 5 minutes each) so listen to several of them each week, and start at the beginning because she discusses some of the most common grammar mistakes first. Or look through her archives and cherry pick the episodes about the grammar issues you struggle with most.

Supplementary Reading (When Useful To You)

- Apple, M. (1999). What counts as legitimate knowledge: The social production and use of reviews. *Review of Educational Research*, 69, 343-346.
- Bem, D.J. (1995). Writing a review article for Psychological Bulletin. *Psychological Bulletin*, 118, 172-177.
- Dunkin, M.J. (1996). Types of errors in synthesizing research in education. *Review of Educational Research*, 66, 87-97.
- Fink, A. (2005). *Conducting research literature reviews: From the internet to paper* (2nd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. [Information on meta-analyses & evaluating rigor of quantitative studies. Based on medical research].
- Galvan, J. L. (2009). Writing Literature Reviews. Glendale, CA: Pryczak. (chapters 10 & 14).
- Grant, C.A. & Graue, E. (1999). (Re)Viewing a Review: A case history of the Review of Educational Research, 69, 384-396.
- Hart, C. (2001). *Doing a literature review: Releasing the social science research imagination*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hostetler, K. (2005). What is 'good' education research? *Educational Researcher*, 34(6), 16-21.
- McEwan, E.K. & McEwan, P.J. (2003). *Making sense of research: What's good, what's not, and how to tell the difference*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Meltzoff, J. (1998). *Critical thinking about research*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Websites Compiled by Dr. Thomas Reeves (with his commentary)

The Literature Review: A Few Tips On Conducting It

<http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/litrev.html>

This site from the University of Toronto provides practical advice about conducting a literature review. The home page link on this page also includes advice on writing in general.

Problem Formation

<http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/probform.htm>

This is a segment of Professor Trochim's excellent resource web page on Social Science Research.

How to Critically Analyze Information Sources

<http://www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/research/skill26.htm>

This site from Cornell University provides helpful information on conducting a literature review plus there are links to guidelines for library research.

The Dissertation Doctor

<http://www.dissertationdoctor.com/>

Help for any graduate student can be found here! You can even hire a coach! Information about how to avoid plagiarism is also provided on this site.

Networked Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations

<http://www.ndltd.org/>

On this site, you'll find full text examples of doctoral dissertations and masters theses, many related to instructional technology.

Doctoral Research in Educational Technology: A Directory of Dissertations, 1977-2006

<http://cortland.edu/edleadership/edcaffarella/dissdir/>

Here, Professor Edward P. Caffarella provides a compilation of doctoral dissertations in our field completed during the calendar years 1977 through 2006.

American Educational Research Association

<http://aera.net/>

This is the official web site for the American Educational Research Association (AERA), a professional association dedicated to educational research. Student membership is \$35.00. The 2010 Annual Meeting will be in Denver. Attending this conference will provide you with access to the very latest literature related to your dissertation. Plan to attend!

Assignments

More detailed descriptions/rubrics for evaluating each assignment are available on the instructor's website. In general, each assignment should be submitted to your peers for their review at least one week before the due date. Peers should provide their feedback within 48 hours to allow for enough time for revisions.

Problem Statement (10 pts) — A 2-3 page summary of your topic, along with a brief summary of some literature explaining why this topic is important to study. The summary should persuade others that your topic is under-researched.

Annotated Bibliography (10 pts) — In this assignment, you are showing your ability to identify quality sources relevant to your topic, summarize studies with enough description to allow us to understand the context, and critique the value of the article (including their methods, findings, etc.) to your topic. Your bibliography will be about 10 sources, although you will need to have read many more than that—the bibliography will just be giving us enough to evaluate how well you are identifying, summarizing, and critiquing the literature.

Review Critique (10 pts) — Identify a literature review that you think is a critical one for your research area, and one that you feel is exemplary. Apply Boote and Beile (2005)'s rubric in evaluating the quality of the literature review, turn in a 1-page write-up to me, and share your evaluation with the class along with anything you learned from the strategies used by the authors.

Extended Outline (10 pts) — The main task in this assignment is to interpret all of the sources you have read and create an understanding of how they fit together and what it all means. This is where you generate the “new ideas” that will be the contribution of your literature review. Then, summarize your ideas in an outline showing the logical flow of your argument. This is an extended outline because you should provide enough details (not just headings) that we understand the reasonableness and logical flow of your argument.

Final Paper (50 pts) — Your final paper is worth XX points and is due by the end of the semester. In addition, you get 10 points for turning in each of two drafts at the requested deadlines. Your drafts should represent your best effort. There should not be grammar, punctuation, or APA issues, and it should be the best paper you could make it. This effort to make each draft your best will enable us to give better feedback to you that will benefit you more in the long run. Your paper will be evaluated based on the Boote and Beile (2005) rubric.

Pecha Kucha Presentation (25 pts) — We research because we want to improve society through new knowledge. Thus, being able to communicate our ideas effectively is critical or we will never be able to have the impact we desire. For this assignment, you will give an effective, engaging presentation summarizing your findings from your literature review. We will do the presentations in Pecha Kucha style, to force us to think outside the box. Pecha Kucha is a presentation style developed in Japan and gaining popularity because of its emphasis on a visual, flowing, narrative style. We'll discuss the Pecha Kucha method in class, and I have examples on my website of some effective presentations.

Writing Strategies Presentation (5 pts) — For this assignment, you will share insights from your academic writing textbook (about 10 minutes). You may use any kind of presentation/teaching strategy you wish to communicate the ideas from your text. In addition, we may refer to our textbooks for insights related to class topics, so keep reading your textbook even after your presentation is completed, and bring your book to class. Your grammar textbook is for your own use and does not need to be brought to class.

Peer Critiques (10 pts) — You will be given 5 points for providing *quality* peer feedback to the peers in your group on their first drafts, and then also 5 points for providing feedback on their second drafts. You must provide your drafts to your peers by the specified deadline, and then those providing feedback have three days to provide feedback.

Course Calendar

Week	Due Dates	Assignment	Points	Class Topics
1	Due the day before class (me) & 1 week earlier for peers (entire drafts)	Select/purchase your textbooks		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PROBLEM FORMULATION: Choosing your topic, audience, and target journal - Evaluating journal quality - Writing problem statements
2 - Searching	Jan. 13			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LITERATURE SEARCHING - Searching strategies & tools - "Methods" of literature reviews - recording lit searching events
3 - Searching	Jan. 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Problem Statement due - Begin Writing Strategies presentations 	10 5	DATA EVALUATION: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annotated bibliographies - Effective peer critiques
4 - Summarizing	Jan. 27	- Begin Review Critiques	5	- Meta-analyses
5 - Analyzing	Feb. 3	- Annotated bibliographies due	10	ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Models, frameworks, & roadmaps - Extended outlines
6 - Analyzing	Feb. 10			- visual representations
7 - Writing	Feb. 17			WRITING/STRUCTURING
8 - Writing	Feb. 24	- Extended Outline due	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - APA issues - Writing roadblocks & strategies
9 - Writing	March 3	First draft due to peers	5 (peer reviewing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Peer review publishing process - Reasons for publishing
10 - Writing	March 10	- First Draft due	10	- avoiding plagiarism
11 - Writing	March 17			- revising strategies
12 - Writing	March 24	Second draft due to peers	5 (peer reviewing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communicating with editors, reviewers - Negotiating authorship
13 - Writing	April 1	- Second draft due	10	
14 - Writing	April 7			PRESENTATIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effective presentation strategies - Pecha Kucha method
15 - Writing	April 14			No class - Exam Preparation day
16 - Presenting	Final Exam Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentations - Final papers w/ cover letter 	25 50	

Good Versus Poor Literature Reviews

(The source of these guidelines is unknown, although they were shared with me by Dr. Thomas Reeves, UGA)

- A Good Literature Review is organized around a coherent set of questions.
- A Poor Literature Review rambles from topic to topic without a clear focus.
- A Good Literature Review includes the major landmark or classic studies related to the questions guiding the study.
- A Poor Literature Review omits landmark or classic studies or mixes them with trivial studies without making distinctions about quality or relevance.
- A Good Literature Review acknowledges the author's biases as well as the limitations of the review process.
- A Poor Literature Review assumes an omniscient voice without acknowledging biases and limitations.
- A Good Literature Review critically evaluates the quality of the research according to clear criteria.
- A Poor Literature Review simply summarizes research findings without critical evaluation.
- A Good Literature Review uses quotes, illustrations, graphs, and/or tables to present and justify the critical analysis of the literature.
- A Poor Literature Review simply lists studies without presenting any critical evidence in the form of quotes, illustrations, graphs, and/or tables.
- A Good Literature Review takes the form of a logical argument that concludes with a clear rationale for additional research.
- A Poor Literature Review does not present a logical argument and fails to build a clear rationale for additional research.
- A Good Literature Review is interesting to read because it is clear, coherent, and systematic in its organization and presentation.
- A Poor Literature Review is boring or obtuse because of the overuse of jargon and pretentious language and the lack of organization.
- A Good Literature Review presents research evidence in a meaningful chronological order.
- A Poor Literature Review mixes studies from different decades without acknowledging chronological developments.
- A Good Literature Review has an accurate and up-to-date bibliography that adheres to APA Guidelines.
- A Poor Literature Review has inaccurate or missing references that are poorly formatted.
- A Good Literature Review is eminently publishable.
- A Poor Literature Review will never see the light of day in a respectable publication.