

Business 9704 – Research Methods (Part II)

Winter 2024

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Tuesdays 9:00am – 12:00pm
Ivey Building, Room 0131

Course Learn page: <https://learn.ivey.ca/courses/5183>

1. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course continues from its first half taught by Professor Cotte. At the end of the course, you will be required to submit a complete version of the research paper that you started in the first half of the course (i.e., the term paper submitted in December). You will also be required to give a conference-style presentation of the paper sometime in the last two weeks of the course.

We will spend most of the course discussing data-related problems, how they impact inferences about the population being studied, and how they can be handled. While most emphasis will be on quantitative research, the issues that we will address have implications for all social science and management research, regardless of method. Although technical material will be discussed when necessary, emphasis will be placed on theoretical foundations and conceptual understanding.

2. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Grades will be based on six elements:

1. weekly seminar participation (20%)
2. seminar lead (10%)
3. position papers (10%) - Due weekly at noon on the Monday before class
4. presentation slides (10%) – Due at noon on Monday, February 19, 2023
5. paper presentation (20%) -Dates to TBD
6. final term paper (30%) - Due before noon on Monday, April 8, 2023

All written assignments must be submitted on Learn (<https://learn.ivey.ca/courses/5183>). They must be typed, double-spaced, in 12-point font, and submitted as a PDF file. Except under extenuating circumstances, late assignments will not be accepted.

2.1 Weekly seminar participation (20%)

The course will be most successful if everyone participates. If you don't participate regularly, and on a weekly basis, you will get a poor grade. Still, opinion alone is not good enough. You will be evaluated on your ability to critique the readings and to put them in a wider context.

2.2 Weekly seminar participation (10%)

Aside from regular weekly seminar participation, each student will take the role of seminar leader for half of one session (approximately 60-90 minutes). The specific dates (and associated readings) for these roles will be determined during the first seminar on January 9th.

The seminar leader's role is to stimulate informed discussion and debate around the major ideas of the week's readings. Rather than summarize the readings separately, you should encourage discussion to consider how the readings overlap, complement each other, and/or contradict each other. [Hint: *do not* ask questions that have simple yes or no answers.]. You should not lecture, give a PowerPoint presentation or provide extensive handouts. However, it is acceptable to start the seminar with a 3-5 minute discussion of the general theme of the material if you feel it would be helpful.

2.3 Position papers (10% - 9 papers x 1 grade each + 1 mark if all 9 papers are successfully completed)

You are required to write **9 position papers** on the required readings (there is no position paper for February 20th, March 19th and March 26th). You will receive 1 point for each satisfactorily completed paper. If I don't think enough effort was given, you will receive a grade of 0 for that week. You must successfully complete all 9 position papers to receive the full 10/10 for this element of the course. In other words, you will receive an extra grade for completing all 9 papers. If you successfully complete only 8 papers, you will receive a grade of 8/10; if there are only 7 successful papers, your grade will be 7/10 etc. I will not provide comments on a position paper if you receive credit for it.

Each position paper must be at least one page in length and no more than two pages in length (typed, double-spaced, 12-point font). Papers less than a page will automatically receive a grade of 0, and I will not read past the second page. The weekly position papers are due before noon (London, ON time) on the Monday before the class that deals with the corresponding readings. Late papers will not be accepted.

While all the readings should be discussed, the individual readings should not be discussed separately. Instead, you should draw connections between them (and, when possible, tie them to other topics discussed in the course) and raise problems or questions that are meant to stimulate seminar discussion. At the end of each position paper (but still within the two-page length), you must include three seminar discussion questions.

2.4 Presentation slides (10%): Due Monday, February 19, 2023 at noon

The presentation slides must be submitted (in PDF format) on Learn before Monday, February 19, 2023 at noon. As mentioned above, students' presentation slides will also be required readings for weeks 11 and 12.

The standard by which the presentation slides will be graded is a top-level seminar at a major academic conference. In terms of general advice, you should include 1) an introduction to the problem the paper tackles, 2) a brief discussion of previous research and how your paper builds on it, 3) some theoretical foundation (including research questions or hypotheses), 4) information on the data that you employ (and how they were collected), 5) a discussion of the methods used to assess your research questions, 6) a clear description of your main findings, and 7) some discussion of the implications of your results and the limitations of the paper. The research questions should be convincingly explained.

You must have no more than 15 slides. Avoid using long sentences (and paragraphs); instead use succinct bullet points. Ensure that tables are legible (use at least a 18-point sans-serif font and include only necessary information). Tables and figures must be clear and comprehensible. If they are too complicated, they defeat their purpose (which is to clearly convey complex information). Numerical values in tables should be rounded to two significant digits. Finally, research on visual perception and cognition suggests that slides with white background and dark text are most easily comprehended by most people. As Tufte famously stated, your tables, figures, and slides, should maximize the 'data to ink ratio'. In other words, do not include unnecessary material of any sort.

2.5 Paper presentation (20%): TBD (last two weeks of course)

Using the slides discussed above, you will present your final paper sometime in the last two weeks of the course. I will determine the schedule for presentations before the seminar on February 24. As mentioned above, your presentation should take the form of a conference presentation. You will have 15-20 minutes for the presentation. Another 5 minutes will be allotted for a 'question and answer' period at the end of your presentation. I will allow interruptions for points of clarification during the presentation but major questions should be reserved for the 5-minute question and answer period. Your presentation will be evaluated by your peers.

2.6 Final paper (30%): due Monday, April 8 at noon

The **final paper** should be in a state that is nearly ready to submit to an academic journal for publication. It must be between at least 15 pages in length (typed, double-spaced, 12-point font, not including the title page and reference list) but no more than 20 pages (not including the title page, tables and figures, and reference list). It is just as important to keep the paper less than 20 pages as it is to ensure that you have more than 15 pages. I will subtract 2 points (i.e., 1/35 possible points for the assignment) from your final paper grade for each page less than 15 or greater than 20. I will not read past the 20th page. The paper should be written in a format acceptable for publication in a top academic journal (such as APA, Chicago or MLA style). Footnotes should rarely be used.

3. COURSE SCHEDULE AND REQUIRED READINGS

I suggest that you read the sources in the order in which they appear in the list.

- 1. January 9: What 'should' research look like?**
 - a. objectivity and subjectivity
 - b. basic and applied research
 - c. publication bias

- 2. January 16: Making inferences from data**
 - a. random samples and classical statistical inference
 - b. bootstrapping
 - c. sampling and inferences from qualitative data

- 3. January 23: Measuring concepts**
 - a. validity and reliability
 - b. collinearity
 - c. common method variance
 - d. single indicators vs composite measures

- 4. January 30: Exploration and description**
 - a. importance of graphical methods
 - b. nonlinearity
 - c. influential outliers

- 5. February 6: Data issues and regression analysis (Guest lecture)**
 - a. types of missingness
 - b. consequences of missingness and measurement error
 - c. selection bias

- 6. February 13: Causality and spurious relationships**
 - a. causal relationships
 - b. Hawthorne and placebo effects

- c. Simpson's paradox
 - d. mediation and moderation; interaction effects
7. **February 19: Presenting academic papers**
- no position paper this week
 - **presentations slides due at noon on Monday, February 19**
8. **February 27: Assessing importance and displaying results**
- a. substantive or practical importance
 - b. relative importance
 - c. effect displays
9. **March 5: Cross-national and comparative research**
- a. logic of comparative method
 - b. survey comparability
 - c. contextual versus compositional effects
 - d. multilevel models
10. **March 12: Assessing change over time (Guest lecture)**
- a. longitudinal data, repeated cross-sectional and panel data
 - b. random effects, fixed effects
 - c. difference-in-difference
11. **March 19: Student presentations (1)**
12. **March 26: Student presentations (2)**
- April 8: Final term paper due at noon**

4. ENROLLMENT RESTRICTIONS

Enrollment in this course is restricted to graduate students in the Ivey PhD Program, as well as any student that has obtained special permission to enroll in this course from the course instructor as well as the Graduate Chair (or equivalent) from the student's home program.

5. ACADEMIC OFFENCES: PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at <https://grad.uwo.ca/administration/regulations/13.html>

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism-detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently

submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

6. SUPPORT SERVICES: HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Health and Wellness at Western University <https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. Additionally, students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone they feel comfortable confiding in, such as their faculty supervisor, their program director (graduate chair), program coordinator or other relevant administrators in their unit.

As part of a successful graduate student experience at Western, we encourage students to make their health and wellness a priority. Western provides several on campus health-related services to help you achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing your graduate degree. See <https://www.uwo.ca/health>.

7. ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION WESTERN (AEW)

Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program.

Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are strongly encouraged to register with Accessible Education Western (AEW), a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both AEW and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction.