

University of Washington
Masters of Communication in Digital Media
Autumn 2005

COM 546:

Evolution and Trends in Digital Media and Technologies

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Time: Tuesdays, 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.
4 October - 6 December

1. Course Overview

This course is an entry point into the Department of Communication's Master of Communication in Digital Media program, for those who want to specialize and do research in this growing field. The course focuses on the past, present, and future of digital media, in contrast to traditional media outlets studied in most communication programs. However, we will examine the connections between new technology, traditional media content, economics, social and individual influences, and communications theory. In short, we will explore what may be truly new and revolutionary about digital media, and what may be a continuation of traditional technology, content, and audience uses. We will also examine information and telecommunications technologies that play a significant role shaping the modern society. These include the Internet, broadband communications systems, cellular telephony, wireless networking, and digital, cable, and satellite TV.

Throughout the course, we will investigate five major topics:

- Content creation
- Content distribution
- Content consumption
- Consumer applications and
- Corporate applications.

While we will examine these topics from a traditional "Who said What to Whom through What Channel with what Effect" model of mediated communication, we will also move beyond this tradition "transmission approach" to explore a "ritual approach" to digital media and examine how the technology itself shapes our concepts and mythologies about self, culture and group membership.

Learning Outcomes

- Acquire an understanding of the historical context, current trends and future projections of digital communication methods

- Explore how digital media differ from traditional media, both technically and in their social influence
- Explore how digital media influence how communities and individuals relate and behave online
- Investigate the application of digital technology and how these applications may affect democratic societies
- Develop an awareness of the unintended consequences of new media technology

Course Requirements

Required readings include book chapters and articles from scholarly journals, trade magazines, and popular publications. Assigned readings will be available on-line through the library eReserve system. In addition, topical readings on-line and in print may be assigned when appropriate.

2. Course Structure and Teaching Strategies

Teaching methods for this course will include lectures, video demonstrations, student presentations, guest lecturers, reading, and writing assignments. The course instructor will coordinate all class material, keep in close touch with each student in order to assess and meet individual needs, and evaluate all course assignments. Material is available on the class web site:
<http://courses.washington.edu/com546/2005/>

Many classes will feature a guest lecturer who is a leading professional or scholar in interactive digital media. Class discussions are also a key element of the course, and students are encouraged to ask questions, offer their own observations, and share their own experiences with new technology.

Instructor's Educational Philosophy

My goal is to provide a stimulating environment for learning. Course material includes both theory and application, with an emphasis on application to real world problems and situations. Written and oral reports are required because these skills are needed in the work environment in general, and in web development, management, and consulting in particular. Students are required to comment and collaborate as these are practical skills; the means used demonstrates theories discussed in class.

3. Evaluation

Three papers are required in this course. Grades are determined as follows:

- 65%, three papers plus proposal and annotated bibliography
- 25%, class participation
- 10%, final presentation

A. Papers

Each student will choose an industry, issue, or technology and write three interconnected papers. All will be turned in electronically via eSubmit.

- One on history of an industry/issue/technology - due 9 November
- One on its current status - due 23 November
- One on its future - due 13 December

As this is a very broad paper topic, it will be up to each student (with help from the instructor and peers) to develop a specific, appropriate, and innovative focus to each paper. For instance, you may want to choose three case studies that represent past, present and future issues of a particular industry; examine a particular ethical or legal issue; or conduct a practical review of a specific technology.

Requirements:

Combined, the three papers must include at least 15 citations from scholarly books or journals. In addition, students should use citations or examples from popular media, news media, or corporate media, as well as personal interviews with media professionals or users.

Each paper should be approximately 8 to 10 pages in length and will be evaluated on quality of analysis, original thought, focus, and clarity of presentation. All work must be original, except for material from clearly attributed sources. A bibliography and footnotes or endnotes will be required for each paper.

Your analysis in each paper should explain and apply at least one theoretical model discussed in the course. For instance, is Uses and Gratifications a good way to examine issues connected to the topic you've chosen? Medium Theory? Diffusion of Innovation?

Each of the three papers must be submitted via eSubmit as a Word document and ideally will be created using Word's outline format. Papers must include endnotes or footnotes. Please use the Chicago Manual of Style as your style guide, as it is the most commonly used style guide in business. (If you wish to use another style guide, feel free to petition me. Be persuasive!) Papers must be completed on time.

1. Proposal (draft due Friday 14 October, final due Friday 21 October; 6 pm)

The proposal should include the industry/issue/technology to be studied, the focus of the study, a clear and complete explanation of goals, and possible sources and citations for each of the three papers.

Students will use the Peer Review tool to help one another focus the proposals. Students will be assigned to small groups (at random) and expected to provide feedback on all small group member proposals. The sooner you draft a proposal, the sooner you allow feedback!

The following suggestions outline one approach to each paper; recognize that some specific topics may not be relevant to your focus, and you may want to include information and issues that aren't explicitly mentioned here. It's important to keep in touch with me if you have any questions about your paper and the direction you are heading.

1. The Past (due Wednesday 9 November @ 6pm)

Begin this paper with a clear statement of the industry you are studying, your reasons for studying it, your focus, and your goals for all three papers, then specifically introduce your approach to the past of this industry.

Next, provide an overview of the technological, cultural, and economic history of this industry, keeping in mind your focus. What historic events, social and economic trends, and technological developments are important to the development of this industry? You may also want to explore cultural context. Is this industry based in the West? Specifically in the U.S.? Has the technology historically been used in a particular geographic area or by a particular group of people? Has the cultural context of the industry changed over time?

Keep in mind that you cannot cover the entire history of the industry. You will need to choose which events and trends are most important and decide how far back in time to go.

Finally, briefly summarize the main points of your paper and introduce the main ideas and goals you plan for the next paper. Be sure to clearly cite your sources. Use information from scholarly books, journal articles, and if appropriate, popular media. You may also want to talk to veteran industry professionals who have seen changes first hand.

2. The Present (due Wednesday 23 November @ 6pm)

It is important to stay focused! Introduce your main points and goals. Next, develop these by describing and analyzing the current state of the industry (or at least the parts of the industry relevant to your focus).

Include, as always, connections to historic, social, cultural, and economic contexts. What is the industry's primary source of revenue? Describe content, distribution, and consumption. Are there particular legal or ethical issues faced by the industry today? If so, what are they? What audiences are targeted by this industry? Is the Digital Divide an issue, and if so, why? While you should use scholarly and trade publications as sources, you might also talk to industry professionals (and, if appropriate, clients or users).

3. The Future (due 13 December @ 6pm)

This will be the most analytical of the three papers. Again, you should use outside sources to bolster your analysis, but you will need to use your own knowledge of the topic to express and substantiate your opinion/viewpoint as you hypothesize about future directions/implications.

What is likely to happen to the industry economically? Will audiences or sources of revenue change? If so, why? If not, why not? Will the technology itself change? How? What is this industry or technology likely to look like in five or ten years? What sort of business, legal, or ethical decisions are industry professionals likely to face? What broader social and economic forces will shape the future of this industry/technology?

Use a similar format as in the previous two papers: Introduction, observations and analysis, conclusions.

Annotated Bibliography (due 13 December @ 6pm)

In addition, you should submit a separate, annotated bibliography that consolidates your sources from all three papers.

II. Class Participation, 25%

These points will be based both on participation in the classroom and electronically. Occasionally, the instructor may pose a question or problem to the class and offer participation points for electronic discussion. Students may also suggest questions for class discussion and receive participation credit. Time will be set aside for students to discuss their own professional media experience, and (if appropriate) show examples of their work.

Proposals:

Providing feedback on other class member proposals is part of the participation grade. You must provide positive and constructive feedback to the members of your small group. We will use the Catalyst Peer Review tool, which will establish the small group members randomly.

Reading Assignments:

Students are asked to summarize readings to help gain cognitive understanding of material as well as to hone analytical skills. Weekly assignments are not graded, except for completeness. Each week, students are to write a short (two-four paragraph) review of assigned readings and post those comments to the class blog. Students are encouraged to read and comment on the posts of fellow classmates.

The reading assignment review begins with the readings for Week 2 and are due prior to the start of that week's class; they end at Week 8. You are allowed to "miss" one week's postings - either summary or comments - without penalty.

Throughout the course, students will also read material that they will then summarize before leading an in-class discussion.

Guest Speakers:

Each peer group will be assigned to a guest speaker and charged with developing discussion questions for that class.

Presentation Evaluation:

Students will evaluate one another's presentations, using a scoring sheet provided by the instructor. This, too, is part of the class participation score.

III. Class Presentation: 10%

The final portion of the term project is a formal presentation. Each student will present a concise (10-15 minutes) summary of their term project, highlighting the most relevant and intriguing findings. You may wish to supplement your summary with audio-visual material, such as Powerpoint slides or sound/video clips. The presentation will be evaluated based upon presentation style, engaging content, organization, and creativity.

There is no midterm or final exam.

4. Schedule and Readings

The class meets weekly on Tuesday from 6 p.m. until 10 p.m., and the scheduled is posted on the class web site; net access is essential. Readings are from the text or are available online.

Required text:

- Brian Winston, *Media Technology and Society - A History: From the Telegraph to the Internet*
- Thomas L. Friedman, *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century*

Recommended texts:

- Dan Gillmor, *We the Media* (eBook available online, free)
- Strunk and White, *The Elements of Style*
- Lynn Truss, *Eats, Shoots & Leaves*
- Kate L. Turabian: *A Manual for Writers*
- University of Chicago Staff, *Chicago Manual of Style*

5. Course Policies

Absences

You are responsible for all assigned readings and materials presented in class lectures. You should be aware that missing class could adversely affect your performance on assignments. It is your responsibility to obtain all materials missed and complete all assignments, even if you missed the class where the assignment was made.

Assignments

All assignments are due when noted. Late submissions will not be accepted, except with advance notice of extenuating circumstances (sudden illness, death in the family, and so forth).

Academic Dishonesty

Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses and are not tolerated by the University. For more information, please refer to the University's Academic Dishonesty policy.

Courteous Discourse

Whether in class or online, students are expected to conduct themselves with professional courtesy and decorum. Please make constructive comments; flames and insults are not acceptable. Disagree with the idea, not the person!

20 September 2005

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COM 546:
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Books

Media, Technology and Society. Brian Winston. 1998.
The World is Flat. Thomas L. Friedman. 2005.

Assignments

Reading summaries are due 8 am Monday before Tuesday's class unless otherwise noted.

Week 1 - 4 October - Class Overview/Introduction

Week 2 - 11 October - Communication Theories

- "Introduction" and "Chapter 1: The Telegraph," from *Media Technology and Society*.
- "Social Aspects of New Media Technologies," from *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research*, 1994. (eReserve)
- "How the Internet killed the phone business," from *The Economist*, 17 September 2005 (eReserve)

Reading Summary: Two "ah-ha's" from these readings. How might the readings apply to your possible research interests?

Week 3 - 18 October - Diffusion of Innovation

- *Everyone*: Chapters 2 & 3 from *Media, Technology and Society*, 1998.
- *Everyone*: *Informing Ourselves to Death*, Neil Postman, 1990. Link: <http://www.frostbytes.com/~jimf/informing.html>

Reading Summary: Discuss the importance of "supervening necessity" - can you think of other examples? What about the law of unintended consequences?

For Class Discussion:

Explore why new technologies are adopted, particularly those dealing with communication.

- *Group 1 Also Read:*
"Determining Uses and Gratifications for the Internet," from *Decision Sciences*, Vol 35 No 2, March 2004. Link: <http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/bpl/dec/2004/00000035/00000002/art00005>
- *Group 3 Also Read:*
"Around the World Wide Web in 80 Ways: how motives for going online are linked to internet activities among politically interested internet users," from *Social Science Computer Review*, Vol 21 Issue 3, 2003. Link: <http://ssc.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/21/3/304>
- *Group 2&5 Will Serve as Recorders*

Pre-Class Deliverable for Groups 1,3:

Synthesize all readings (class and group) and supplement discussion material with at least one additional reading per group member.

Each group member posts, to the class blog, a reaction to the assigned reading(s)* that includes a short abstract (with link) of the supplemental resource. These blog posts are due 6 pm day of class.

** Each person does not have to read all discussion readings!*

In Class Process:

Each group (1-4) will have about 45 minutes to discuss the readings and the supplemental materials and agree upon key learnings. Group 5 will discuss the core reading and I will work with them on recording roles.

We will then break into groups so that a member of each team is in each group (a group will be composed of one person from 1-2-3-4-5). Now the groups will share the key points and learnings from all the readings and supplemental materials. Members of Group 5 will record. We will then have a class debrief.

Week 4 - 25 October - Diffusion of Innovation

- *Everyone:* "Technologies of the Third Mediamorphosis," by Roger Fidler (eReserve)

Reading Summary: Discuss the effects of applying computing power to communication.

For Class Discussion:

What factors have led to the adoption of computing technologies? Where do you see communication technologies moving in the future? What audiences, applications? Why? How do we, as a society, decide to fund long-range research that may or may not "pay off"?

- *Groups 1&3 Will Serve As Recorders*
- *Group 2 Also Read:* Chapters 9-10 from Winston
- *Group 4 Also Read:* "As We May Think," by Vannevar Bush from The Atlantic Monthly, July 1945. Link:
<http://www.w3.org/History/1945/vbush/vbush.shtml>

Pre-Class Deliverable for Groups 2,4:

Synthesize all readings (class and group) and supplement discussion material with at least one additional reading per group member.

Each group member posts, to the class blog, a reaction to the assigned reading(s)* that includes a short abstract (with link) of the supplemental resource. These blog posts are due 6 pm day of class.

** Each person does not have to read all discussion readings!*

Week 5 - 1 November - Personal Technologies

- *Everyone:*
 - “Ecologizing Mobile Media,” by Howard Rheingold. 2004. Link:
<http://www.thefeaturearchives.com/101022.html>

- *Everyone:* Chapter 1 & 3 from *The World is Flat*, 2005.
 - Group 1 - Chapter 2, Flattener 1 & 2
 - Group 2 - Chapter 2, Flattener 3 & 4
 - Group 3 - Chapter 2, Flattener 5 & 6
 - Group 4 - Chapter 2, Flattener 7 & 8
 - Group 5 - Chapter 2, Flattener 9 & 10

Reading Summary: General reaction to Friedman’s thesis: anything new for you? What do you disagree with? What are the implications for the US economy and position in the world?

For Discussion: Each group will present a summary of their “flatteners” and be prepared to lead a short discussion (~15 minutes) of their material. We will have some class time for groups to formulate their strategies, learnings, but some pre-conferencing (IM, e-mail, etc) is advised. Someone from each group should be assigned the role of recorder and should post a summary of the reading/learnings to the class blog by 6 pm Friday.

Week 6 - 8 November - Community

- *Everyone*: "Communities in Cyberspace" - eReserve.
- *Everyone*: Chapter 18 and Conclusion, Winston.

Questions to Jumpstart Your Reading Summary: What types of community have you experienced online? How have they differed from off-line communities? What characteristics of the Internet (the computing network) affect the growth, power, effectiveness of online communities?

For Class Discussion:

Explore characteristics of new media. What do you agree with, disagree with? Why? How do these characteristics affect online community?

- *Groups 2&4 Will Serve As Recorders*
- *Group 1 Also Read:*
 - "Networks of Remediation" from Remediation: Understanding New Media by Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin (1999) OR
 - "The Medium Is The Message" from Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man by Marshall McLuhan (1964)
- *Group 5 Also Read:*
 - "Principles of New Media" from The Language of New Media by Lev Manovich (2001)

Pre-Class Deliverable for Groups 1,5:

Synthesize all readings (class and group) and supplement discussion material with at least one additional reading per group member.

Each group member posts, to the class blog, a reaction to the assigned reading(s)* that includes a short abstract (with link) of the supplemental resource. These blog posts are due 6 pm day of class.

** Each person does not have to read all discussion readings!*

Week 7 - 15 November - Activism, Politics

- *Everyone*: "The Tragedy of the Commons" by Garret Hardin from Science Magazine (1968). Link:
<http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/full/162/3859/1243>
- *Everyone*: Netizens: An Anthology, The Net and the Future of Politics: The Ascendency of the Commons
Link: <http://www.columbia.edu/~rh120/ch106.x14>

Questions to Jumpstart Your Reading Summary: What are your experiences with electronic government or eDemocracy; how would you rate them? Is this evolution good or bad, and why?

For Class Discussion:

What do you see as the future role of new media in public discourse? How is it similar to or different from other breakthrough media? How is the Internet a like public space, a "commons"?

- o *Groups 3&5 Will Serve As Recorders*
- o *Group 2 Also Read:*
[Hate and peace in a connected world: Comparing MoveOn and Stormfront](#) Noriko Hara and Zilia Estrada, *First Monday*, 11 Nov 2003
Link: http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue8_12/hara/index.html
- o *Group 4 Also Read:*
[e-Government, e-Society and Jordan: Strategy, theory, practice, and assessment](#), Michael Blakemore and Roderic Dutton, *First Monday*, 14 Oct 2003
Link: http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue8_11/blakemore/index.html

Pre-Class Deliverable for Groups 2,4:

Synthesize all readings (class and group) and supplement discussion material with at least one additional reading per group member.

Each group member posts, to the class blog, a reaction to the assigned reading(s)* that includes a short abstract (with link) of the supplemental resource. These blog posts are due 6 pm day of class.

** Each person does not have to read all discussion readings!*

Week 8 - 22 November - Online Media

- Chapter 1: From Tom Paine to Blogs and Beyond from *We The Media*. Link: <http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/wemedia/book/ch01.pdf>

Questions to Jumpstart Your Reading Summary:

What are your experiences with blogs - as principle writer, reader, contributor. If you have no experience with blogs, explore these links: <http://www.wiredpen.com/>

For Class Discussion:

How has the Internet affected traditional mass media (newspapers, radio, television) and how have the media responded (suppression or adoption)? Do some crystal ball gazing and hypothesize what the media landscape might look like in 10 years.

- o *Groups 1&4 Will Serve As Recorders*
- o *Group 3 Also Read:*
 - "Role of the Internet in National and Local News Media Use" from Journal of Online Behavior by Eric Riedel, Amy Gangl, Alina Oxendine, Melinda Jackson, John L. Sullivan, and Eugene Borgida (1:3) (2003).
Link: <http://www.behavior.net/JOB/vln3/riedel.html>
- o *Group 5 Also Read:*
 - "Coda: The Advent of the Media" from The Creation of The Media, Political Origins of Modern Communications by Paul Starr (2004). (eReserve)

Pre-Class Deliverable for Groups 3,5:

Synthesize all readings (class and group) and supplement discussion material with at least one additional reading per group member.

Each group member posts, to the class blog, a reaction to the assigned reading(s)* that includes a short abstract (with link) of the supplemental resource. These blog posts are due 6 pm day of class.

** Each person does not have to read all discussion readings!*

Guide to Discussions

Small group discussion is one form of active learning, which rests on two assumptions: learning is an active (not passive) endeavor and people learn in different ways. It draws on personal experience, “real life” learning. Small group discussion is also less formal and models the workplace environment.

Goals for discussion in this course include:

- Work in small groups to explore the ideas and concepts embodied in course readings
 - Reflect on individual learning
 - Gain different points of view
 - Learn by teaching others
- Learn about peer interests and goals for in- and post-course networking

Groups work best when we know one another’s names and a bit of background. Reintroduce yourselves the first week or two or when you are in a “new” group.

Decide how your group will proceed with each assignment – in other words, discuss the process.

There are many roles to be played in small groups, and most are shared roles:

- Devil’s Advocate/Skeptic – looks for logical flaws in argument or takes an opposing view for the sake of full discussion
- Gatekeeper – ensures that each member of the group provides input (has a voice in the discussion)
- Initiator – suggests new ideas
- Recorder – maintains the record; may be “minutes” format or highlights of consensus points
- Reporter – the person who shares results with the entire class
- Summarizer – the person who summarizes points of a discussion, including consensus and dissent
- Time-Keeper – the person who keeps an eye on the clock

Qualities that enhance discussion (inside the classroom, outside the classroom – face to face or electronically)

- Be courteous
- Actively read and question the assigned readings
- Build your ideas on what others say
- Question opinions but show respect for opinions that differ from your own
- Be credible: provide evidence for your claims
- Be responsible: stay on topic
- Listen actively
- Speak clearly and loudly enough to be heard by all
- Strive for understanding

A Guide to Writing for COM546

Goals of Writing Assignments:

- gain more knowledge about a particular field that interests you
- report on research findings
- synthesize different positions and evaluate which position has the greatest internal consistency
- develop support for your own position
- apply an intellectual framework to a new problem
- use theoretical criteria discussed in class in an analytical framework
- extrapolate from ideas developed in readings and in class to suggest what might happen in the future or how a past event might have changed had economic conditions differed

Journal (Blog) Writing:

Research shows that writing improves thinking (analytical) skills. It forces us to practice a skill that may have gotten rusty, because most of the time, our thinking remains isolated in our own minds. Reflection, in these hectic, “down-sized” days, is a luxury that we often postpone, sometimes indefinitely. Thus the request to blog: to reflect, then to put our thoughts on digital paper. The act of writing helps us evaluate our beliefs and assumptions and also helps cement knowledge.

The journal writing does not need to be – should not be – thought of as a “paper.” Please don’t just summarize the content of a reading. Instead, journal writing should demonstrate that you have thought about the readings and your experiences. How did the readings relate to other readings in this or another course? How did the readings relate to your experience? Did you enjoy the readings? What were your insights, criticisms, comments, questions?

The journal entries are not given a letter grade. Instead, the act of journaling (does the writing demonstrate that you completed the assignment and was it submitted on time) is what is “graded.” Each student is allowed to miss one week without demerit; completing the assignment every week yields an extra credit score.

The additional component of peer comment lets us help one another clarify understanding – whether the comments are supportive or critical of our assumptions. In all cases, however, the comments should reflect respect for the other person and for those ideas that differ from our own. As with the journals themselves, each student is allowed to miss one week of commenting without demerit.

The Three-Linked Papers:

Our class is composed of individuals with very divergent interests – from usability to streaming media, from online journalism to documentaries. The three linked papers – a more traditional academic form of writing – are designed for you to explore an area of interest to you, to expand your expertise, or to honor your intellectual curiosity. In addition, this assignment helps you develop your skills in identifying and evaluating information from a diverse set of sources, both academic and popular.

The suggested process follows:

- brainstorm ideas
- identify source materials
- refine the topic
- draft
- revise
- refine introduction, conclusion
- cite sources

Brainstorming: Brainstorming begins in the first classroom session, with the first peer group meeting. It continues in class as well as out-of-class using the Catalyst peer group tool.

Identify Source Materials: Jessica Albano, the communications resource librarian, provides a workshop the first classroom session and is available via e-mail or face-to-face to help students identify sources appropriate to their topics. I am also a resource, although on some subjects Jessica may be more familiar with source options.

Refine the Topic: After formal feedback from peer group members and the instructor using the Catalyst tool, students refine their topic and present a proposal to the instructor using Catalyst eSubmit.

Draft Project Proposal – Suggested Content (due Friday 15 October at 6 pm via Peer Review)

- State the research area you have selected.
- Explain why you're interested in this research area.
- Try to be as succinct and as focused as possible.
- Peers and the instructor will provide constructive feedback over the course of the next few days. The task usually takes the form of helping one another refine (narrow) the topic so that the work involved can be accomplished over the course of the quarter. Sometimes the task is to broaden the topic so that it will be possible to find academic resources on the subject.

Final Project Proposal – Suggested Content (due Friday 22 October at 6 pm via eSubmit)

- State the research area you have selected.
- Explain why this is an important topic to research.
- Explain how you visualize breaking your topic into three linked papers.
- Provide an **annotated** list of resources you have found that are related to your topic. By locating resources at this stage of your research, you help assure yourself that there is a body of research on your chosen topic. Remember that the final project must have 15 scholarly sources.
- The proposal is not graded. It is reviewed and noted as complete. Grade is completed/not completed.

Draft – Revise – Refine: These are classic steps in writing any document. The instructor is willing to review document drafts so long as they are submitted at least a week prior to the final paper due date. The earlier, the better, for all concerned!

There are reference materials on writing papers on hold for this class in the undergraduate library (see eReserve for details). I have reference materials in my personal library that may be borrowed for a week. Also, the University has helpful resources:

- Student Athletes writing center documents:
<http://depts.washington.edu/saas/academics/writingcenter/>
- UW Writing Centers: <http://faculty.washington.edu/jwholmes/uwwrite.html>

There are also helpful online resources:

- How to Search the Invisible Web: <http://tinyurl.com/dpqdy>
- Purdue's Online Writing Center:
 - Creating a Thesis Statement: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/545/01>
 - Developing an Outline: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/544/01>
 - Writing a Research Paper:
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/workshops/hypertext/ResearchW/>
- The Seven Deadly Sins of Bad Writing: <http://www.hamilton.edu/academics/resource/wc/sins/>
- The Writing Process: <http://www.hamilton.edu/writing/style/process.html>

Sources: Because the Chicago Manual of Style is often used in the business world, this is the recommended style guide for this course. However, students who are familiar with APA style or who wish to use a more “academic” method of citation are welcome to format citations in this manner. Online resources include:

- APA
 - APA Style: <http://www.apastyle.org/>
 - Purdue's OWL: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_apa.html
 - The Writing Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison:
<http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocAPA.html>
- Chicago
 - Search the Chicago Manual of Style (requires free registration):
<http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/search.html>
 - University Libraries, Ohio State University:
<http://library.osu.edu/sites/guides/chicagogd.html>
 - The Writing Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison:
<http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocChicago.html>
- Citing electronic sources (in general)
 - Library of Congress: <http://memory.loc.gov/learn/start/cite/index.html>
 - A Reference Guide to Online Sources:
<http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/online/citex.html>
- Other
 - Duke University Comparative Citations by Citation Type (book, journal, web page, etc):
http://www.lib.duke.edu/libguide/cite/works_cited.htm
 - Footnoted, comparative citations and links to style guide PDFs: <http://footnoted.net/>
 - UW Library's source matrix:
<http://www.lib.washington.edu/subject/communications/bi/periodicals.html>
 - Using Sources: <http://www.hamilton.edu/academics/resource/wc/usingsources.html>

Elements of a Good Project Proposal

Writing a good proposal will help you manage your time so that you can complete the quarter with three papers that meet your objectives. The specific format and content of these elements may vary; they may not always appear as separate sections or in the order listed here.

Introduction

This is a clear and concise statement of the purpose or goal of the project. Consider including (1) the specific question(s) to be answered (what) and (2) a brief explanation of the need for or significance of the study (why). The introduction should also address your objectives – what you intend to accomplish this quarter.

Literature Review

This section need not be lengthy but it should reflect your understanding of relevant bodies of literature. List all pertinent papers or reports that you have consulted in preparing the proposal; include conversations with faculty, peers or other experts. A well-written review provides a sense of critical issues which form the background for your own work this quarter.

Methodology

This section is the heart of the proposal because it provides insight into your perspective as well as details on how you plan to carry out the project. How will you accomplish your objective(s)? What theories or concepts will guide the study? How do they or might they suggest the specific hypotheses or research questions? Where might you run into obstacles?

Explain the specifics of what you want present in your project (statistical data, comparisons of historical and recent data, the evolution of a paradigm, etc.). One way to do this is by developing a rough outline of the major topics and sub-topics that you will investigate.

Your timeline and a very rough scope (past – current – future) has been pre-determined.

A final note about good proposals

Quality writing is critical. The proposal should be clear, concise, and free of jargon. There should be no spelling or grammatical errors, and the proposal should be easy to read.

Start early and share ideas with peers! Incorporate feedback; gain ideas from reading other student work.

Criteria for Evaluating Research Papers (from *McKeachie's Teaching Tips*, 11th edition, 177)

A. Content

1. Introduction

- a. Is the topic novel and original?
- b. Does the author state the purpose, problem, or question to be considered?
- c. How does the author convince the reader that the paper is worth reading?

2. Body

- a. How are the statements made warranted? Is there evidence that data collected have been analyzed and literature reviewed? Are assumptions logical?
- b. Presentation of evidence
 1. Is contradictory evidence dealt with adequately?
 2. Are multiple sources considered?
 3. Is the evidence discussed relevant to the purpose stated?
 4. Is the argument internally consistent? In other words, does one point follow from another?
 5. Is the argument plausible?
 6. Are the methods chosen for testing the argument convincing?
- c. Suitability of paper's focus
 1. Is the problem chosen focused enough to be adequately covered in the space of the paper?
 2. Is the problem chosen too specific for the author's source of information?
- d. Background information
 1. Is enough information given to familiarize the reader with the problem?
 2. Is unimportant background material included?
- e. Is the presentation easy to follow and well organized?
- f. Does the author deal with the problem set up in the introduction?

3. Conclusion

- a. Does the author summarize the findings adequately?
- b. Is the conclusion directly related to the questions asked in the introduction?
- c. Does the author suggest areas where further work is needed?

B. Connections to Class

1. Evidence that the class materials have been read and understood
2. Application of lecture materials and assigned readings to the paper

C. Form

1. Spelling
2. Grammar
3. Appropriate use of words
4. Paragraph form: Are ideas presented in coherent order?
5. Citations: Are borrowed ideas and statements given credit? Is the form of citation understandable and concise?

Grade	Research Papers – Evaluation
4.0	<p>Exceptional work. Student employs a creative and comprehensive exploration of the research area and its societal impacts; offers cogent arguments and well thought out explanations supported by evidence; synthesizes scholarly material; explains “why” as well as “how” and “what.” Thoughtful and very clear. Citations have no significant errors and are scholarly in nature.</p> <p>Organization: Organization enhances the paper; the introduction invites the reader to begin. The paper is has a well-focused and has interesting thesis; there is a smooth transition among all elements (sentences, paragraphs, ideas). The conclusion goes beyond restating the obvious. The writing style is engaging and the paper has no significant grammatical or spelling errors.</p>
3.5	<p>Outstanding work. Student employs a creative exploration of the research area and its societal impacts but it could be more comprehensive; offers relatively good arguments and explanations; synthesizes scholarly material; explains “why” as well as “how” or “what.” Thoughtful and fairly clear. Citations have minor errors and are mostly scholarly in nature.</p> <p>Organization: This paper has a useful introduction and a focused thesis. Its unified and coherent paragraphs support the thesis; transitions are smooth. The conclusion is competent. The writing style is clear and the paper has no significant grammatical or spelling errors.</p>
3.0	<p>Average work. Student exploration of the research area and societal impacts is average; arguments and explanations are average with some evidence ; moderate synthesis of scholarly material; explains “how” or “what” but “why” is not convincing. Citations have minor errors and are mostly scholarly in nature.</p> <p>Organization: This paper has a general introduction and vague thesis; has some incoherent paragraphs that attempt to support the thesis. Transitions are not smooth; the conclusion is vague. The writing style is unclear and the paper has grammatical or spelling errors.</p>
2.5	<p>Below average work. Student exploration of the research area and societal impacts is average; arguments and explanations are unconvincing and unsupported by evidence; little synthesis of scholarly material; explains “how” or “what” but not “why.” Citations have major errors and are mostly popular in nature.</p> <p>Organization: Overall organization in inconsistent. This paper has a general introduction and vague thesis; has incoherent paragraphs that bear little relevance to the thesis. It is missing transitions; choppy. The conclusion is inadequate. The writing style is unclear and the paper has significant grammatical or spelling errors.</p>
2.0	<p>Fair work. Student exploration of the research area and societal impacts is below average; arguments and explanations are unconvincing; very little synthesis of scholarly material. Citations have major errors and are mostly popular in nature.</p> <p>Organization: The paper has no clear structure. There is no introduction or no thesis; incoherent paragraphs make the paper difficult to read. It is missing transitions and the conclusion is inadequate or non-existent. There are significant grammatical or spelling errors.</p>
1.5	<p>Failure. Student exploration of the research area and societal impacts is below average; arguments and explanations are unconvincing; no synthesis of scholarly material, merely summaries. No overall coherence. Citations have major errors and are mostly popular in nature or non-existent.</p> <p>Organization: The paper lacks coherence. It has no introduction or thesis, no transitions, no clear introduction-middle-conclusion. The writing style is unreadable, and the paper has significant grammatical or spelling errors.</p>