ISM 788: Seminar in IS Research Methods

Course Syllabus for Spring 2023 (note that some changes are possible)

Professor: Dr. Franck Soh
Office: 489 Bryan Building
Email: f_sohnoume@uncg.edu
Course Meeting Time: Wednesday 11:00 am to 2:00 pm
Office Hours: Wednesday 2:30 to 3:30 pm or by Appointment

➢ Catalog Description:
This course focuses on the research process and various design elements for quantitative and qualitative research in information systems.

➢ Detailed Description
This is an experiential research course. Borrowing from Bloom’s taxonomy of the levels of learning, this course goes beyond the knowledge and comprehension aspects of the research process that you learned in previous courses, to the actual conduct and application of research methods in IS. ISM 788 is designed to get you “immersed” in the research process, learn about various specifics and techniques, and get you ready for the dissertation writing process. To this end, in completing this course, you become intimately familiar with the individual research methods and how they relate to the notion of theory building or theory testing in the context of developing credible and high-quality research. Students should be able to identify and justify necessary research methods to assess proposed theoretical models. To accomplish this end, it is necessary not only to read research articles published in some of the elite journals in the IS and sister disciplines but also to develop an appreciation for writing and communicating research ideas most effectively.

About three-fourths of the course is project-based. Through the conceptualization, design, and execution of a major research project, you will be able to experience and apply key tenets of research, concepts, methods, and various techniques. These include literature search, knowledge evaluation, theory/model building, hypotheses generation, research design, constructs, variables, instrument development, assumptions, analysis, and interpretation. You will also gain first-hand experience with various methodologies, especially surveys, experiments, and case studies. While the course is not about statistics per se, a good knowledge of fundamental statistical concepts and methods is presumed. The course requires you to complete various milestones in completing the research project. It requires your active involvement and participation. As with any doctoral course, the more you put into it – the more you will get out of it.

➢ Course Learning Objectives
At the successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

• Analyze and assess various research methods and their possible contribution to information systems research
• Examine various concepts, and research models in relation to the application of different research methods in information systems research
• Evaluate and assess the merits and weaknesses of different research methods used in IS research.

➢ Teaching Strategies
Since this is a seminar not a lecture course, active class interaction is essential. Students are expected to be prepared for each meeting and participate fully in class discussions. Since class participation is part of a student’s final grade, failure to prepare and participate will have consequences. All work must be turned in by the due date.

The course will be coordinated through a combination of class discussions, research projects, analysis of articles, and presentations by students. Students will be provided with detailed guidelines for presentations, discussions, and various research projects. They are expected to be very familiar with the readings each week; comments and questions should be prepared before class. They are also expected to share the task of leading discussions. Each student will be assigned leadership responsibility for one reading each week.

➢ Course Expectations of Students
Students are expected to set aside at least 12 to 15 hours each week outside of classes to prepare for each class meeting. Seminar courses make significant demands on the students and their ability to think beyond what is presented in the research papers. It is NOT sufficient to read the papers. **Students are expected to understand each research paper and then be able to integrate a diverse set of concepts from across the set of articles covered in each class discussion.** Therefore, it is suggested that they not only read each paper but also look for concepts that cut across many of these articles or concepts that stand out in contrast.

Additionally, students must **look for the assumptions made in each research design/method, specific research questions addressed, and the relationship between the theory proposed and the research method** chosen by the authors. Students must understand why each of the above was appropriate. Beyond this, students must also begin to ask what else or how else might one extend the line of inquiry or theory presented by the authors. What are some of the possible strengths or weaknesses of the proposed theories etc.? Additionally, students should also look at how the authors have written these papers and pick up the necessary skills for effective methods. As evident, there is a great deal expected from the students in this Ph.D. Seminar.

➢ Canvas Learning Management System
UNCG Canvas is available at [https://canvas.uncg.edu](https://canvas.uncg.edu). Course materials, announcements, and updates will be posted on Canvas regularly. Please check canvas daily for announcements, discussions, and materials. You will be responsible for any information or announcements provided to you through emails and for any updates on Canvas.

➢ Course Materials
• Although the textbook is not mandatory, I encourage you to get the following books:
  ✓ Fred N. Kerlinger, and Howard B. Lee (2000) Foundations of behavioral research, 4th
• Extensive readings (see list of readings in Canvas by week) - This course primarily uses readings and research papers drawn from various elite journals in IS and sister disciplines that cover various research designs and methodologies. The instructor will make these research papers available through the course management system. The number of research papers to be discussed each week will vary depending on the topic or methodology being considered. It is anticipated that about five to seven research papers may be discussed each week.

➢ Grading

The course grade will be calculated using the following distribution:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Final Grading Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-class Discussion</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>95-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method Presentation</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>90-94.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposal Presentation/Report</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>86-89.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Presentation/Report</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>83-85.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>80-82.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>75-79.9</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>70-74.9</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>69.9 and below</td>
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Please Note:

• Grades in the ISSCM Department are NOT posted and are NOT given over the phone. You may check your grades on UNCGenie within 3-4 days after the final exam.
• Questions concerning grading must be resolved within a reasonable time (typically one week) after the grade has been posted in Canvas. After that period, all grades are final.

➢ Participation

It is expected that each student will make a meaningful contribution to each class discussion. By meaningful discussion, I refer to a contribution that advances our understanding of the theory, method, and research concepts being discussed. This does NOT mean just mere recitation of what the authors have written word for word. We all will have read the articles before each class meeting. Therefore, it is NOT at all useful to repeat what is in the article but rather to provide a unique perspective on the concepts or theories discussed in one or more of the articles. The purpose is to learn how to integrate various concepts and theories across various articles. This is what one needs to accomplish in any good literature review to publish in a quality journal.

➢ Research Project

Each student is required to design and implement a research project during the semester. Specifically, the project must cover a thorough and relevant literature review, a review of appropriate theories, the selection of an appropriate research method to identify research question(s); the justification of research methods, the development of protocols for data collection and analysis, pilot testing, analysis and discussion of results and writing effectively for academic publication. To this end, the following items comprise various aspects of this research project:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposal</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-depth Literature Review and Research Question(s)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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</table>
Development of a Research Design 20%
Identification and Justification of Research Methods 20%
Data Collection and Analysis 20%
Effective Writing and Communication 20%

The initial proposal (at least 3 pages not exceeding 5 pages) must detail the topic, research issues, and relevant literature (not an exhaustive one at this point but the most relevant ones). Each student should provide constructive comments on their peers’ proposals. **No incompletes or late submissions are acceptable.**

➢ **In-Class Discussion**
Students are expected to read all the articles assigned each week. Each student will be assigned one reading per week. The student will prepare a typed synopsis and bring it to the class for fellow students and the instructor. In addition to the synopsis, the student will lead the class discussion on the reading. Late work will not be accepted.

➢ **Method Presentation**
Students will present a selected research method approximately every two weeks. Each student should discuss with the instructor to seek approval on the research method. Examples of research methods include polynomial regression analysis, agent-based modeling, event sequence analysis, etc.

➢ **Tentative Schedule**
The following schedule provides general guidelines and is subject to change. A detailed schedule before the beginning of each week will be posted on Canvas. It is the student’s responsibility to stay on track with course materials every week to be successful in the course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class Topics</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>January 11</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>January 18</td>
<td>Overview of research methods</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>January 25</td>
<td>Evaluating theory testing – Part 1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>February 1</td>
<td>Evaluating theory testing – Part 2</td>
<td>Method Presentation 1</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>February 8</td>
<td>Survey research – Part 1</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>February 15</td>
<td>Survey research – Part 2</td>
<td>Method Presentation 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>February 22</td>
<td>Qualitative research – Part 1 [case studies]</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>March 1</td>
<td><strong>Proposal Presentation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>March 8</td>
<td><strong>Spring Break</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>March 15</td>
<td>Qualitative research – Part 2 [historiography &amp; content analyses]</td>
<td>Method Presentation 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>March 22</td>
<td>Qualitative research – Part 3 [ethnography]</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>March 29</td>
<td>Quantitative research – Part 1 [event studies and survival models]</td>
<td>Method Presentation 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>April 5</td>
<td>Quantitative research – Part 2 [multilevel models]</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>April 12</td>
<td>Quantitative research – Part 3 [latent growth modeling / Mixed Methods]</td>
<td>Method Presentation 5</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>April 19</td>
<td>Design science</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Optional</td>
<td>Ethics in research</td>
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Franck Soh, Ph.D.
Topics can be adjusted depending on the progress of the class.

➢ Changes to the Syllabus/Schedule
The syllabus and schedule are tools to help you plan your time. Every effort is made to make the syllabus and schedule as complete as possible, but there may be occasions when changes are required, including changes in the grading components, and due dates. The instructor will announce any deviations from the syllabus or schedule in class.

➢ Attendance Policy for University Sponsored Events (Please, discard this policy as this course is asynchronous)
The University recognizes the importance of certain extra-curricular and co-curricular activities (including travel days) that enhance student learning, personal development, and professional growth. Instructors will excuse absences of students for participation in University-sponsored events under the following conditions:

1. Students who expect to miss one or more class meetings due to participation in University-sponsored activities should:
   a. Notify the instructor(s) at least five class days in advance;
   b. Arrange to complete all missed work in advance of the absence whenever practicable as judged by the instructor(s). When missed work cannot be completed in advance, the instructor(s) should provide students with the opportunity to make up the work. Students should be aware, however, that not all kinds of work can be made up. The instructor(s) have the discretion to deny make-up work if (i) alternative assignments place an unreasonable demand on the instructor, (ii) the original assignment is such that not completing it at the originally assigned time impedes student learning
   c. Present relevant documentation of participation in a relevant University-sponsored activity to the instructor(s) upon request.

Students who expect to miss more than three class periods of any single course of any kind in a term or more than two consecutive meetings of a course in order to participate in University-sponsored activities should inform the instructor at the beginning of the course. In the case that the faculty member cannot make reasonable accommodations for make-up work, the student may appropriately be advised to drop the course.

Regular class attendance is a responsibility and a privilege of university education. It is fundamental to the orderly acquisition of knowledge. Students should recognize the advantages of regular class attendance, accept it as a personal responsibility, and apprise themselves of the consequences of poor attendance. Instructors should stress the importance of these responsibilities to students, set appropriate class attendance policies for their classes, and inform students of their requirements in syllabi and orally at the beginning of each term.

➢ IMPORTANT: Academic Integrity Policy
Discussing your assignments with other students can be a valuable learning resource; however, each student is expected to do their original work. By submitting an assignment, each student is acknowledging their understanding and commitment to the Academic Integrity Policy on all major work for the course. Refer to the following URL:
https://osrr.uncg.edu/academic-integrity/. If you have questions about how this policy applies to this course or an assignment, then please see me. *Students should NOT make, borrow, or “share” copies of their assignments or files with other students, including previous ISM 788 students. Helping one another is allowed, but copying, even electronically, is cheating. This practice is against the UNCG Academic Integrity Policy and defeats the purpose of this course. No credit will be received for shared work, and other penalties may be imposed.*

➢ **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**
UNCG seeks to comply fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students requesting accommodations based on a disability must connect with the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS) in 215 Elliott University Center, (336)334-5440, oars.uncg.edu. The student is to provide a written request for each test accommodation to their instructor (an e-mail will suffice provided you have received a reply from the instructor). Both the requests to the OARS and the instructor are to be made at least ten school days before the test date.

➢ **Health and Wellness Statement**
Your health impacts your learning. Throughout your time in college, you may experience a range of health issues that can cause barriers to your learning. These might include physical ailments, illnesses, strained relationships, anxiety, high levels of stress, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, or loss of motivation. Student Health Services and The Counseling Center can help with these or other issues you may be experiencing. You can learn about the free, confidential mental health services available on campus by calling 336-334-5874, visiting the website at [https://shs.uncg.edu/](https://shs.uncg.edu/), or visiting the Anna M. Gove Student Health Center at 107 Gray Drive. Help is always available.

➢ **Religious Obligations Statement**
It is expected that instructors will make reasonable accommodations for students who have conflicts due to religious obligations. Please make arrangements with the instructor in advance of any conflict. For more information on UNCG’s Religious Obligations policy, visit: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B3_J3Uix1B4UeTV4Nk1vVFJ0VFE/view?resourcekey=0-zRdXEmUA6rRI2RzKqo6u3g](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B3_J3Uix1B4UeTV4Nk1vVFJ0VFE/view?resourcekey=0-zRdXEmUA6rRI2RzKqo6u3g)

➢ **COVID-19 Statement**
As we return for spring 2023, please uphold UNCG’s culture of care to limit the spread of covid-19 and other airborne illnesses. These actions include, but are not limited to:
- Engaging in proper hand-washing hygiene
- Self-monitoring for symptoms of covid-19
- Staying home when ill
- Complying with directions from health care providers or public health officials to isolate if ill
- Completing a self-report when experiencing covid-19 symptoms or testing positive for covid-19
- Following the CDC's exposure guidelines when exposed to someone who has tested positive for covid-19
• Staying informed about the University's policies and announcements via the covid-19 website

➢ Expectations of Faculty and Students in the Bryan School
Bryan Faculty and students in this course are expected to adhere to the guidelines stated at this link: https://bryan.uncg.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Faculty-and-Student-Guidelines-2018-2019.pdf
Reading List

There are no more than 5 readings per week. Some readings will be made optional.

Week 1 (January 11): Introduction

Week 2 (January 18): Overview of research methods


Week 3 (January 25): Evaluating theory testing – Part 1


Week 4 (February 1): Evaluating theory testing – Part 2


**Week 5 (February 8): Survey research – Part 1**


**Extra Readings**

Chapters 22 and 23


**Week 6 (February 15): Survey research – Part 2**


**Extra Readings**

Chapters 24 and 25


**Week 7 (February 22): Qualitative research – Part 1 [case studies]**


**Week 8 (March 1): Proposal Presentation**

**Week 9 (March 8): Spring break** – no class

**Week 10 (March 15): Qualitative research – Part 2 [historiography & content analyses]**


**Week 11 (March 22): Qualitative research – Part 3 [ethnography]**


**Week 12 (March 29): Quantitative research – Part 1 [event studies and survival models]**


Week 13 (April 5): Quantitative research – Part 2 [multilevel models]


Week 14 (April 12): Quantitative research – Part 3 [latent growth modeling / Mixed Methods]


Week 15 (April 19): Design science


**Optional: Ethics in research**


**Optional: Reviewing in academia**


**Week 16 (April 26): Final Presentation**

**Week 17 (May 3): Final paper due**