

ED 660: Thesis I

Pratt Institute - Art & Design Education - Fall 2015

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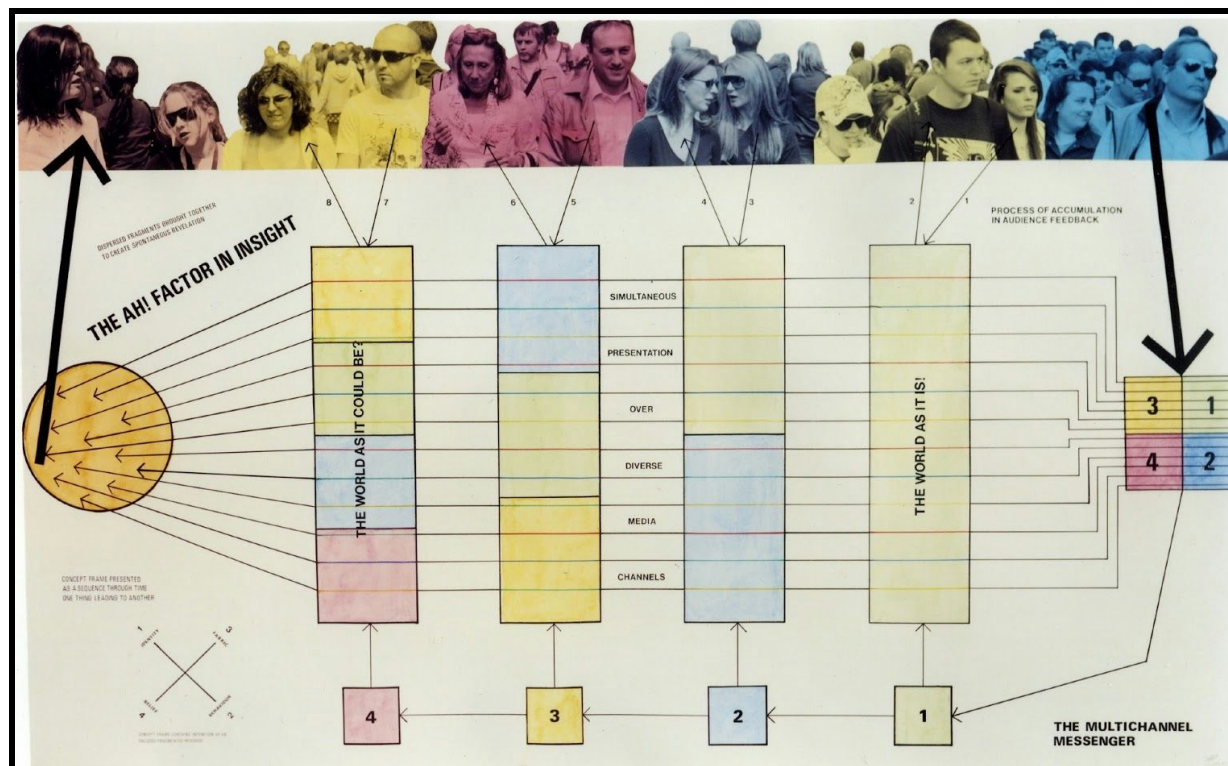
Time/Date: Wednesdays, 9:30-12:20pm

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Stephen Willats, *The Multichannel Messenger*, 2008

By your stumbling, the world is perfected. - Sri Aurobindo

Last question: What kind of a practice is yours?

For all academics, curators, and artists, research involves doing: seeing and looking, knowing, unknowing, orchestrating, and making—even if there is often uncertainty in such doing. When we all speak today about the idea of research, we are becoming *all that much more aware* that it is the ground on which we stand, the air we breath, and that it can be submitted to conscious scrutiny, that it is a little less invisible, and that there are just so many ways to use research to understand research.

Marquard Smith *Why? What is Research in the Visual Arts? Obsession, Archive, Encounter 2008 Yale University Press*

Course Description:

This is the first of two courses in developing, researching and writing your M.S. Thesis. Your thesis work will enable you to become a more reflective practitioner as you learn to explore ideas and practice in art education, pose your own research questions and carry out a research project. *Your project will require you to theorize in relation to historical and contemporary contexts, conduct critical analysis and argumentation, and to write clearly in order to communicate your ideas, findings and the implications of your study.* This course will help you analyze diverse perspectives on a topic you are curious and perhaps passionate about so that you develop the capacity to question your assumptions and previous knowledge, accept uncertainty, and situate your research within the ongoing theoretical and empirical research debates.

The thesis project is developed from questions raised by one or more of the following: observations, fieldwork, reading, studio practice, personal interest, and related art education coursework. The research is grounded in the theories and practices that sustain art education research, incorporating social science, historical and new visual arts research methods.

As the first stage of work on the thesis, this course will help develop a wide range of research skills and capacities. By the end of the semester all students will have formulated their thesis question, written a literature review, identified research methods, completed the thesis proposal, and started data collection. The goal is to be in the best position possible to complete the thesis next semester.

Learning Goals

Students will:

- Examine a range of artistic and cross-disciplinary approaches to qualitative research
- Become familiar with various techniques of effective data analysis and critical reflection
- Design an original thesis research project (*i.e. find (if you have not already decided on one), formulate, limit, and state your research problem from an identified theoretical perspective- conduct a critical literature review, select and possibly combine research methodologies to collect, analyze, interpret and present findings.*)
- Begin collecting data and apply appropriate qualitative and artistic research methodologies to fieldwork and analysis

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Effectively communicate their research inquiry and area of focus
- Synthesize and use relevant literature to inform their fieldwork and research process
- Reflect on project's relevance within the field of art and design education
- Practice effective written and visual communication, successfully integrating source material, using APA style

Learning Outcomes Assessment:

- 10% Thesis Research Statement
- 30% Revised Literature Review
- 30 % Methodology
- 30 % Thesis Proposal and Presentation

Assessment: Instructor review based on rubric, and self-reflection

Assignments

Assignments to help get you where you are going. These are the stepping stones.

1. **Assignment 1: Research Statement.** Students will develop a revised research question and subquestions using an inquiry mode. Please use this opportunity to set up an online “project site” to share and document your research process, ideas, and ephemera - post your statement to this site. (ie. Google Sites, Tumblr etc.) (due September 23)
2. **Annotated Bibliography.** Students will develop an annotated bibliography.
3. **Assignment 2: Revised Literature Review.** Students will situate their research question within a larger context by reviewing the literature on their topic. Students will write a critical analysis of no fewer than 10-15 books and articles. After completing the literature review, students will revise their research question if necessary. (8-10 pg.; Due October 14)
4. **Assignment 3: Methodology.** Students will formulate an action plan and decide on the research methodology that is most appropriate to your topic. Your action plan should consider the where, what, how and when of your research and the dates the data collection will take place. (3-4 pg) Note: Institutional Review Board (IRB) applications must be included. (Due October 28)
5. **Assignment 4: Thesis Proposal.** Students will develop a proposal that will help them produce an evidence-based, sound thesis project. A committee of your peers, your advisor, and an outside reader will review the proposal. (20 pg.; Due November 4)
6. **Data Collection.** Students will begin data collection (in discussion with Instructor)
7. **Proposal Presentation:** Students will prepare a 8-10 minute oral/powerpoint presentation that details their proposed thesis study. (Due December 2)

8. **Reading Responses:** Alongside each required reading, respond to summative prompts and questions posed by the authors. These reflections will be useful in developing your thesis proposal, the building blocks of thinking/writing/creation that go into an in-depth research study. These response don't have to be "pretty" (you can even do a bulleted list) but the more you think/write/create through these steps in the process now, the easier it will be later when weaving and constructing your final proposal and thesis.

All written assignments should adhere to the following formats:

1. Follow APA ([see guidelines](#))
2. Double-spaced
3. 1-inch margins
4. 12 point font
5. Timely submission
6. And be labeled with name and date

Required Reading:

Course Reader

Suggested books for your own library:

Becker, H.S. (2007). *Writing for social scientists: How to start and finish your thesis, book, or article* (2nd Ed.). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Booth, W. C., Colomb, G.G., & Williams, J.M. (2008). *The craft of research* (3rd ed.). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Hart, C. (2009). *Doing a literature search: A comprehensive guide for the social sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Originally published 1998. [Google books has a preview with sections omitted](#)

Recommended Reading:

Falk, B. & Blumenreich, M. (2005). *The power of questions: A guide to teacher and student research*. Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann.

La Pierre, S.D. & Zimmerman, E, Eds. (1997). *Research methods and methodologies for art education*. Reston, VA: National Art Education Association. (In library and office)

Merriam, S. B. (1998) *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco, C.A.: Jossey-Bass (In library and office).

Eisner, E.W. & Day, M.D. (2004). *Handbook of research in art education*. Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associations (In the library).

Course Calendar

*Please note this course schedule may change.

Part 1: Ways of Knowing

An Introduction to Qualitative Research

Week 1: August 26th (Group Meeting)

An exploration of common approaches to qualitative research in art education. This will include a review of the research process including the development of your statement, literature review, thesis proposal, and data collection. How do researchers develop interesting questions and pursue inquiries in schools and community contexts? What are some of the benefits and challenges of a qualitative approach? What role can art play in translating, negotiating and producing meaning?

Self-Presentations: Students will reflect on research topics chosen last semester, and share any new insights, questions or thoughts.

Reading:

1. Part 1: An Introduction to Qualitative Research in Course Reader.

Reading Prompts

Respond to the following prompts and questions posed by the author:

1. The article talks about the nature of a question. What kind of question do you have? For instance, is it open ended, experiential? What makes it that way? Where does your question come from; for instance, a review of the literature, your own experience? Is it an emerging question growing out of grounded theory? Connect any relevant voices on this topic from your own literature review.

2. One of your goals in your thesis is to situate your research as qualitative. This article offers an entry point to many perspectives on what constitutes qualitative research. Briefly summarize what qualitative research is and does. Connect any relevant voices on this topic from your own literature review.

3. Qualitative researchers, therefore, must explain their approach and selection of methods (Smith, 1978; Stokrocki, 1991). Based on the summary of the types of inquiry described in this article, what are your initial thoughts as to your own research study and process of translation? What type(s) of approach do you think you might use and why do you think this? Connect any relevant voices on this topic from your own literature review.

4. *Narrative: At this stage in your process, how are you going to gain access to your research site? If this is a case study involving people, how are you establishing trust? How might your research impact them? ? Connect any relevant voices on this topic from your own literature review.*

Developing a Research Methodology

Week 2: September 2nd (Group Meeting)

A focus on the selection of an effective research methodology that helps to address the research question or inquiry posed. (ie. Case Study - exploratory, single, comparative, Grounded / Historical, Phenomenology, Narrative Analysis and Portraiture, Ethnography and Arts-Based Research). A consideration of ethical issues - how to develop your IRB Application, preparation of consent forms and discussion of time and planning issues.

Activity: In small groups we'll practice identifying different research methodologies used in past thesis studies - creating visual mind maps and collages to map approaches and themes.

Reading:

1. Part 2: An Introduction to Qualitative Methods, in Course Reader
2. Smith, M. (2008) Introduction. In M. Smith, M. Ann Holly, (Eds.), *What Is research in the visual arts?: Obsession, archive, encounter* (x -xxvi). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Reading Prompts

Respond to the following prompts and questions posed by the author:

1. *Based on the reading this week: What are your emerging thoughts on the method(s) that you will employ for your study? Connect any relevant voices on this topic from your own literature review.*
 2. *At this point, what do you think your data will consist of?*
 3. *At this point, what are your criteria for a research site, or location to collect data? How do you think that this space will help you to answer your question? Why do you think this? What kinds of issues do you foresee at this point in trying to establish this space for our inquiry? Being mindful of the issues (that you foresee at this stage), how might you deal with those issues and be open to the unexpected? (Note: If you are considering research using interview methods, what ways of communication will you use? And how will you ensure transparency and confidentiality?)*
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Methods of Data Collection

Week 3: September 9 (Group Meeting)

A consideration of common research methods including interview, survey, observation, focus groups, art making, artifact collection and documentation. We'll also consider digital strategies - using blogs, video, and forms of digital storytelling.

Activity: Working individually, each student will practice observational fieldwork by selecting a site on campus, observing for 15 minutes and writing a brief field report. We'll also get a chance to practice interviewing by developing a set of questions and then engaging in a structured conversation with a peer.

In-Class Reading:

Stanford D School. (2013). Excerpts from *Bootcamp bootleg*. Stanford, CA: Stanford D School.

Readings:

Merriam, S. (1998). Being a Careful Observer. In *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Reading Prompts

Respond to the following prompts and questions posed by the author:

1. *How is your research connected to your own lived experience?*
2. *At this point, in conceptualizing your study, what are specific aspects of your data that you imagine examining deeply and how do you imagine doing this- i.e. what methods are you using to enhance your investigation?*
3. *After reading this article, what other methods might be used in conjunction to shape your lens and allow for other ways of understanding the data (triangulation)?*
4. *If applicable, how do you propose gaining entry into your site? Use the points described by Bogden & Biklen to think about this.*
5. *If applicable, what might be your relationship between you as the observer and the observed? Outline your emerging notions about this at this point? How will you deal with issues of power?*

Data Analysis**Week 4: September 16 (Group Meeting)**

A focus on data analysis, from transcribing interviews to organizing data and finding relationships and themes within your findings. We'll explore questions such as: How do you make sense of data? How much data is enough? And how can your argument be supported

by literature and empirical evidence? What methods are most useful given my choice of research methodologies?

Activity: Exploring A/r/tography - In small groups, we'll experiment with a range of art making materials to translate sources of data - from interview transcripts and artifacts, to field notes and reflections.

Readings

1. Merriam, S. B. (1998). Chapter 8: Analytic techniques and data management. In *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
2. Detlefsen, J. (2012). A conversation about a/r/tography: What are the qualities of living inquiry that foster a qualitative whole in art education? *Visual Arts Research*, 38(2), 71-82.

Reading Prompts

Respond to the following prompts and questions posed by the author:

1. *What are your initial ideas about managing your research process? Think about this based on the reading as well as in terms of how you currently organize your information.*
2. *Once you have your well developed question... How might you allow space for emergent learning during the research process? What about the surprises and the unexpected?*
3. *Based on the reading, what are your initial ideas about how you will analyze your data?*
4. *At this point, in thinking about your own question, if someone else was going to do your study and you had to advise them, what would you tell them to do in order to go about developing findings and learning the answers?*

Part 2: Research Design

Conceptualizing Your Research Design

Week 5: September 23 (Individual Check-ins by appt.)

Begin to outline the major components of your research study. *Purpose, context & background of the problem, specific contexts—who, what, when, where—researcher roles (situating & power), Theoretical frame.* Use the IRB Application as a starting point to describe the purpose of your study, the goals and objectives, and what the expected outcomes may be.

Readings

1. Marshall, C. & Rossman, G. (1999). Chapter 2: The what of the study. In *Designing Qualitative Research Design*. Troy, NY: Sage Publications.

Assignment 1 Due: Revised Research Statement and Question (email to instructor)

Week 6: September 30 (Individual Check-ins by appt.)

Read sample literature reviews from prior theses based on your topics. Organize the sources in your annotated bibliography into categories and create an outline for your literature review. Add to your annotated bibliography.

Reading:

1. Falk, B. & Blumeriech, M. (2005). Chapter 4: Standing on the shoulders of those who came before. In *The power of questions: A guide to teacher and student research*, 41-59. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
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Making Sense of the (your) Sources

Week 7: October 7

Continue to rework, edit and add to your literature review. Ensure there are at least 2-3 contemporary sources that relate to your field or research interest. Recognize contributions scholars have made. Compare and contrast sources and discuss commonalities and differences. Begin to prepare a final revision for review next week.

Literature Review

Week 8: October 14 (Individual Check-ins by appt.)

Prepare and finalize literature review.

Assignment 2 Due: Final Literature Review (8-10 pgs.)

Research Approach & Methodology

Week 9: October 21 (Individual Check-ins by appt.)

Formulate an action plan and decide on the research methodology that is most appropriate to your topic. Your action plan should consider the where, what, how and when of your research and the dates the data collection will take place. Institutional Review Board (IRB) applications **MUST BE IN** (we will discuss this in class). Your action plan and research methodology should produce the kind of evidence you need to explore your problem and support your approach to solving it.

Week 10: October 28 (Individual Check-ins by appt.)

Reading:

1. Falk, B. & Blumeriech, M. (2005). The research design: Developing an action plan for your inquiry. In *The power of questions: A guide to teacher and student research*, 60-90. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Assignment 3 Due: Research Methodology

Part 3: Planning & Fieldwork

Planning & Project Development

Week 11: November 4 (Individual Check-ins by appt.)

Develop a research proposal, which incorporates your INTRODUCTION, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SUBQUESTIONS (3-4 pages), RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND ACTION PLAN (3-4 pages), LITERATURE REVIEW (8-10 pages), AND BIBLIOGRAPHY. The proposal should be approximately 20 pages double-spaced, APA style.

Assignment 4 Due: Thesis Proposal

Data Collection

Week 12: November 11 (Individual Check-ins by appt.)

Continue to plan the data collection process. Prepare for data collection (as applicable)

Week 13: November 18 (Individual Check-ins)

Refine your work plan for DATA Collection next semester.

Presentations

Week 14: December 2 (Group Meeting)

Presentation of the thesis proposal and participation in a critique by your advisor.

Reflection & Review

Week 15: December 16 (Individual Check-ins)