

Introduction to Research in Music Education: MUS533

Fall 2011

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Time: Wednesday, 10AM–12:50PM

Place: Music Building 1140

Course overview

Introduction to Research in Music Education has two primary aims: first, to provide a general acquaintance with research appropriate to the field of music education, and; second, to improve your ability to write in a manner appropriate to research and scholarly activity. Paired with discussion, this work should result in a thorough preparation to participate in research as well as foster a lifelong interest in consuming, and perhaps producing, research.

The primary focus is the intelligent consumption of research: understanding, assessing, synthesizing findings between studies, legitimate skepticism, and appropriately embracing findings when considering application to your own teaching. One reason for this approach is that researchers themselves consume more research than they produce. The average scholar likely consumes over 100 pages for every page they publish. Also, whether you ever conduct research, you will inevitably teach in an educational setting where research matters, and your ability to professionally assess research of others will help to make better use of findings and, where appropriate, protest misapplication.

We will read current research in our field's top journals and from across the field of education. Since the University of Illinois is a research university, we will also hear directly from researchers on their work. Additionally, we will look closely at exemplary studies that I personally love. These studies have had an impact on thinking within education and music education, and serve as powerful models for the appropriate conduct of research. Some are statistical, some philosophical, and some anthropological, but in each case I have chosen work that has been compelling personally, often resulting in a substantial shift in my thinking.

In addition to reading, this course aims to sharpen your abilities as a writer. Throughout, you'll respond in writing to readings, and will prepare short writing for revision and discussion in small writing groups or with the entire class.

This course is not designed to be a final course in conducting research. Most students who wish to work as researchers should consider apprenticing a faculty member, as well as supplemental courses in areas such as: statistical methods, qualitative research, mixed methods research, philosophical and historical investigation, or policy studies. Specialized courses help you to pursue specific problems using disciplinary resources; this course aims to give you a broad enough view to know which specialized approaches might be appropriate for researching a problem, as well as a critical mind for evaluating existing research.

Required text purchases

Most readings will be electronically distributed, but you must purchase the following books; current Amazon price listed after each title.

- Booth, W. C., Colomb, G. G., & Williams, J. M. (2008). *The Craft of Research* (Third ed.). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. (Currently \$11.56 on Amazon.)
- Weston, A. (2008). *A Rulebook for Arguments* (Fourth ed.). Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Pub. Co. (Currently \$7.93 on Amazon.)
- Williams, J. M. (2011). *Style: The Basics of Clarity and Grace* (Fourth ed.). New York, NY: Longman. (Currently \$15.64 on Amazon.)

For doctoral students or those who plan on further conducting research, a copy of the most recent *Publication Manual of the American Psychology Association* (currently in its sixth edition) is essential.

Required journals

The gold standard of research is peer-reviewed publication in a top-tier journal. We'll read from the most recent issues of several journals, and you should take time to get a sense of at least the following: *Journal of Research in Music Education*, *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education* (published here at UIUC), *Philosophy of Music Education Review*, *Educational Researcher*, *International Journal of Education and the Arts*, and others. Most articles we read will be freely accessible via the UIUC library website. You'll also be required to find other journal articles for review and discussion.

A research paper...

Music education students must, and all others may, take MUS 533 for four credit hours. Here's the difference: if you take the course for four hours, you also must complete and submit a 12–15-page paper of publishable quality (3000–3750 words including references). You are encouraged to write a paper for another class, but only after obtaining permission from that professor. If you are in a DMA program, you can write a research paper that might contribute to your final DMA written project. MME students who wish to pursue the thesis option should write a paper that gets them going in the area they would like to work (either a literature review, or a proposal for a study that includes a literature review are good options).

We will work in writing groups, occasionally during class, and edit each other's writing (as the Williams book states, you must apprentice to be a good writer, and that's our aspiration).

Paper timeline (you will receive feedback from me within a week of each due date):

September 14: proposal due

October 19: literature review due

November 9: paper due

December 7: revision due

Calendar

All assignments will be discussed on the day listed (i.e. they are homework for that day)!

Week 1: Welcome! What should we eat? Introduction to research

- Diets and nutrition discussion as a way to overview the interaction between society and research, examination of the Booth iterative model of research (from p. 53 in *Craft of Research*)
- Overview of argument, reading section 1 of *A Rulebook of Arguments*, applying that to a short excerpt to analyze premises and conclusions
- David Labaree's Writing Tips four questions and their application to the short writing sample
- Anne Lamott on writing and recommendation to read Becker

Week 2: an example of research from the inside and continued introduction

- Please read and respond (**RnR**) to my paper, "Music education and the shifting locus of musical experience from performance to recording to new media in a postperformance era" (in submission to *ACT*) via email by Tuesday at 5 p.m. (*note: all responses have this deadline unless otherwise noted*). Use Labaree's guidelines as a framework for your response, which should be about 500 words.

We'll also dive into our three texts for the course with the following short readings:

- Weston's *A Rulebook of Arguments (RoA)* section 1, "Short arguments: Some general rules"
- Booth et. al.'s *The Craft of Research (CoR)* section I, "Research, Researchers, and Readers"
- Williams' *Style: The basics of clarity and grace (Style)*, lesson 1, "Understanding Style"

Week 3: Scholarship in a digital age & organizing research via method¹

- You will receive a short assignment in advance of class. Please come with the assignment completed.
- We'll enjoy a visit from one of our top resident research librarians, Kirsten Dougan
- **RnR** to Lee Shulman's "Disciplines of inquiry in education: A new overview" (from digital reader).

Also read:

- *RoA* section 2, "Generalizations"
- *CoR* chapter 3 "From topics to questions", and chapter 6, "Engaging sources"

¹ Recommended reading: Jensen, M. (2007, June 15). The New Metrics of Scholarly Authority. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from <http://chronicle.com/article/The-New-Metrics-of-Scholarly/5449>

Week 4: “I am not a number. I am a person.”² (no, you’re kind of a number; or, introduction to statistics in research)³

- **Your 500-word paper proposal is due at 5 p.m. on Tuesday.**
- Read *RoA* section V, “Arguments about causes”
- **RnR** the chapter “The Law of Errors” from Louis Menand’s book *The Metaphysical Club* (digital reader). I will email you this chapter, which will serve as an entry point into statistical thinking. This book concerns the origins of American Pragmatism, with this chapter a wonderful presentation of the birth of statistical thinking as it applies to humans.
- Skim an exemplary quantitative study from the most recent of the *Journal of Research in Music Education*, “High school music ensemble students in the United States: A demographic profile”. Focus on the statistics used and the discussion section (focus on the care with which they handle claims)

Week 5: Still a number, statistics continued (never concluded) and part one of the psychological stranglehold⁴

- **RnR** the introduction and up to the section on behaviorism from Eric Bredo’s “The Social Construction of Learning” (pp. 3-16). Take your time.
- Read the excerpt from the book *Freakanomics* (digital reader) on using statistical analysis to catch teachers who help their students cheat on standardized tests in Chicago) and the chapter “What Makes a Perfect Parent” that looks at correlates between parenting variables and standardized test scores to have another encounter with statistics (the reading is fairly basic, but as Shulman would say, “good teaching”).

Week 6: The Psychological stranglehold part two: two empires

- Read the section on the conjoined twins behaviorism and cognitivism from the Bredo (pp. 16-30).
- **RnR** the classic 1967 essay by Elliot Eisner responding to the behaviorist approach, “Educational objectives: Help or hindrance?” from the *American Journal of Education*.

² This is a quote from the first episode of the 1960s series “The Prisoner”.

³ Recommended reading for statistical work in the medical world: Silberman, S. (2009, August). Placebos Are Getting More Effective. Drugmakers Are Desperate to Know Why. *Wired*, 17(9). Retrieved from http://www.wired.com/medtech/drugs/magazine/17-09/ff_placebo_effect?currentPage=all

⁴ Probably the best-known piece of research for music educators is the “Mozart Effect”. Ellen Winner and Lois Hetland conducted a rigorous examination of all the extant research on the relationship between the arts and academic achievement, published in the winter 1998 issue of the *Journal of Aesthetic Education*. Highly recommended for all who want to cut through the hype and also see what truly exemplary research in this area looks like.

Week 7: The Psychological stranglehold part three: a new hope⁵

- Finish the Bredo with the section on situated cognition.
- **RnR** the lecture, “Situated learning: A workshop with Jean Lave”. Get it here: http://www.teachingandlearning.illinois.edu/situated_learning.html

Week 8: Here’s what to do, we think: policy reports

- Read Style lesson ten, “The ethics of style”

The class will be split into small groups, each assigned to present one of the following policy documents, along with responding to questions from the rest of the class. The overall goal will be to try to make some sense where interesting changes and facts exist for our profession by taking into account larger societal trends.

- The 2010 report by the Kaiser Family Foundation, *Generation M2: Media in the lives of 8- to 18-year olds* (www.kff.org/entmedia/upload/8010.pdf)
- The Mellon Foundation’s 2008 *The economic environment of American symphony orchestras* (www.gsb.stanford.edu/news/packages/pdf/Flanagan.pdf)
- The NEA’s 2008 *Survey of public participation in the arts* (www.nea.gov/research/2008-SPPA.pdf)

Week 9: Those bad kids, from a historical perspective

- **Your first draft is due Tuesday at 5 p.m.**
- **RnR** the 2001 article from *Teachers College Record*, “Mismatch: Historical perspectives on schools and students who don’t fit them”

Week 10: Those bad kids, from an anthropological perspective

This week, we’ll read the introduction and first chapter, “Adam, Adam, Adam, and Adam: the cultural construction of a learning disability,” from the book *Successful Failure: The School America Builds* by Hervé Varenne and Ray McDermott. I believe this to be the study that has most challenged my thinking. Ray McDermott was one of my dissertation advisors, and in these pages he presents an anthropological look at students who perform poorly in classrooms and provides a very unique analysis that comes from closely examining the classroom. *Please read the chapters closely twice, making notes of issues, questions, tensions, and things you find especially convincing or problematic.*

Week 11: Philosophical research and LGBT *a la* Hubbs

- *RoA* section seven, “Extended arguments”
- *Style* lesson four, “Cohesion and coherence”
- **RnR** one of the keynote speeches from the LGBT in music education conference held on our campus in 2009 by Nadine Hubbs, “Visibility and ambivalence: thoughts on queer institutionalization”

⁵ The American Educational Research Association’s distinguished lecture of 2010 is highly recommended: Cole, M. (2010). What’s Culture Got to Do With It? Educational Research as a Necessarily Interdisciplinary Enterprise. *Educational Researcher*, 39(6), 461 -470. doi:10.3102/0013189X10380247

- You'll be responsible for reading and summarizing an article from the journal *Philosophy of Music Education Review*.

Week 12: It's all about you (well, your paper)

As you work on your paper, please check *CoR* chapter 12 "Planning" and 13 "Drafting your report".

Your paper is due Tuesday at 5 p.m. This week is devoted to the presentation of your paper. You'll have a slice of time to outline the primary arguments, respond to questions, turn in what you've got, and start to think about how proud you are to have come this far. Then, breathe in for 24 hours and start to think about revision...

Week 13: It's all about them (musicologists, in particular our own)

We'll enjoy some work by reading a section of a dissertation from 2011, as well as by reading a bit by Bruno Nettl

- Read chapter 27 of Nettl's *The study of ethnomusicology: Thirty-one issues and concepts*, "How do you get to Carnegie Hall? Teaching and Learning"
- **RnR** to chapter nine of Tanya Lee's dissertation, *Music as a birthright: Chicago's Old Town School of Folk Music and participatory music making in the twenty-first century* (<https://www.ideals.illinois.edu/handle/2142/24105>), "Musical clans, musical friendships II: Presentational performance of participatory experience in the Beatles ensemble clan" We'll be Skyping with Tanya, so come prepared! You may wish to skim some other parts of the dissertation to get a sense of the whole.

Week 14: Thanksgiving!

- It's wonderful to be thankful, whoever you're with, whatever you're eating.
- As you work on revising your paper, check out *CoR* chapters 14 "Revising your organization and argument" and 16 "Introductions and Conclusions"

Week 15: Coda

You're invited for lunch at my home (directions and information via email). We'll discuss big ideas from across the course, and otherwise enjoy each others' company. **Your paper revision is due Tuesday.**