

# Introduction to Research in Music Education: MUS533

Summer 2012

Matthew D. Thibeault, Ph.D. [mdthib@illinois.edu](mailto:mdthib@illinois.edu) [www.matthewthibeault.com](http://www.matthewthibeault.com)

Office MA 312: office hour Fridays 12:30–1:30 P.M. and by appointment

Class time: Tuesday through Thursday, 10:30 AM–12:20PM

Place: Music Building 1172

## 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.)

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 brief/project...

You will work in a group to produce a single paper, but will note who is the author of each piece or section (in other words, I can keep track of who wrote what for grading purposes). We'll discuss this project the end of week one, and you will turn in your final paper the last day of class. I will get you feedback.

## Grading

20% in-class participation

40% R&Rs

40% Final paper contributions

## Calendar

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

### Week One

**Class 1: Welcome! Presentation on video games in music education.**

**Also: What should we eat? Introduction to research**

- We'll enjoy a presentation run-through from Nick, Ben, and Matt, an early peek at a presentation that will be given the next day in Wisconsin at the Games, Learning, Society conference. Discussion and questions will be part of the mix.
- 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

**Class 2: some thoughts on the scientific method (and good writing)**

*[note: Andrew Boddicker will be our TA for class 2 & 3, and Matt will teach remotely from Wisconsin as he attends part of the GLS conference]*

We'll dive into our two texts 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"
- Read & respond (R&R) to the following Jonah Lehrer article from the *New Yorker*:
  - "The Truth Wears Off: Is There Something Wrong With the Scientific Method?"[http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/12/13/101213fa\\_fact\\_lehrer](http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/12/13/101213fa_fact_lehrer)
- Analyze the NYTimes opinion piece "How Reliable are the Social Sciences?" using the Weston reading (section 1). Look for premises, conclusions, and other aspects of short arguments. Use the handout to record your notes, ideas, and questions.

**Class 3: Research in practice: Andrew Boddicker's paper in progress**

- RoA section 2, "Generalizations"
- CoR chapter 3 "From topics to questions", and chapter 6, "Engaging sources"
- R&R to Andrew Boddicker's research paper. Use "Track Changes" in Microsoft Word to provide comments, suggestions, and questions. You must mail your Word Document to Andrew before class!

## Class 4: Scholarship in a digital age & organizing research via method<sup>1</sup>

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

Also read:

- *RoA* section 2, "Generalizations"
- We will discuss the writing project you'll begin to work on with your group over the weekend.

## Week Two

### Class 5: "I am not a number. I am a person."<sup>2</sup> (no, you're kind of a number; or, introduction to statistics in research)<sup>3</sup>

- **Your group's 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.

### Class 6: Still a number, statistics continued (never concluded) and part one of the psychological stranglehold<sup>4</sup>

- **RnR** the introduction and up to the section on behaviorism from Eric Bredekamp'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

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<sup>1</sup> 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>

<sup>2</sup> This is a quote from the first episode of the 1960s series "The Prisoner".

<sup>3</sup> 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](http://www.wired.com/medtech/drugs/magazine/17-09/ff_placebo_effect?currentPage=all)

<sup>4</sup> 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.

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”).

### Class 7: The Psychological stranglehold part two: two empires

- Finish the Brede<sup>5</sup>

### Class 8: Looking at top journals

In groups, you will each be assigned a top-tier journal from the field of music education. Your group’s responsibility is to assess and report on the journal overall by taking into account three areas: the most current issue, the top ten most-downloaded articles, and the top ten most-cited articles. You might also want to attend to the keywords for each article to look for trends. You should break up the readings, and conduct a thorough skimming of each piece. Your group will have 12-minutes for presentation and discussion.

## Week Three

### Class 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”

### Class 10: Those bad kids, from an anthropological perspective

This Class, 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.*

### Class 11: Musicology

- 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”.

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<sup>5</sup> 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

- RnR the article by Patrick Warfield, “The March as Musical Drama and the Spectacle of John Philip Sousa” [*Note: Warfield will be visiting campus for a public lecture on 27 July at 1:30 p.m. at Krannert Art Museum, you should go meet him!*]

## Class 12: Here’s what to do, we think: policy reports

The class will be split into 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](http://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](http://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](http://www.nea.gov/research/2008-SPPA.pdf)) Also include the new analysis of the 2008 data: <http://www.nea.gov/news/news11/SPPA-reports.html>

## Week Four

### Class 13: Philosophical research and LGBT *a la* Hubbs

- *RoA* section seven, “Extended arguments”
- **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”

### Class 14: Catching up and calling an audible

Realistically speaking, class always takes a few turns, moves in a different direction, and there’s a need to read something else or catch up. This day is intentionally left blank to make accommodating disorder more elegant. We’ll all appreciate it, I’m sure.

### Class 15: Your reports

Each Group will have 20 minutes to present and discuss their report. What did you learn? What conclusions have you reached? How might this have implications for your teaching? We’ll also hear back from Andrew as to how his paper is progressing.