DOCTOR OF MINISTRY RESEARCH DESIGN
Course Syllabus
Professor: S. H. Larsen, D.Min., Ph.D.
(rev. 10/25/05)

Course Description: Reviews the uses of bibliographic repositories of data (such as libraries and the internet) and the role of the review of precedent literature in research. Considers issues of research ethics, including plagiarism and the protection of human rights in research. Explores the differing and complementary strengths and weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative research methods. Builds an understanding of the importance of an integrated research proposal as a foundation for research.

Course Learning Objectives: Participants in the course will –

1. Understand and be able to demonstrate methods of accessing library and internet resources.

2. Describe the importance of research ethics and specific steps which help to safeguard against plagiarism and also to protect human rights in research.

3. Describe the relative strengths and weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative social science research and explain how each complements the other.

4. Demonstrate skill in constructing an integrated research proposal as a foundation for a dissertation.

Required Texts:


Recommended Texts:


**Assessment Criteria:** Participants will submit a proposed dissertation project topic for approval at the beginning of the first day of class (December 5) and will present in class a preliminary proposal clearly outlining the intended research design for the project (30%). Participants will submit a 20-30 page written proposal for a dissertation project by December 30, 2005 (70%).

**Office Hours:** During the modular course, Dr. Larsen is available outside of class hours by appointment and by e-mail thereafter.
**Class Schedule:**

12/5  Welcome and introductions. Course overview. Definitions of research terms. Why a “research design”? – Logical structure in research projects. Types of research design: Descriptive, Experimental, and Evaluative. Components of research project proposals. Submission of proposed dissertation project topics and discussion.

12/6  Framing the research question and subsidiary questions. Building on precedent literature. Library and internet research methods. Quotations, citations, and a note-taking system to avoid plagiarism.

12/7  Descriptive, Experimental, and Evaluative research designs

12/8  Historiographic research methods.

12/9  Quantitative and qualitative research. Validity and reliability in research design. Use of surveys in quantitative research. Use of participant observation, interviews, and focus groups in qualitative research. Data collection instrument design. Data analysis and triangulation. Protection of human rights in research.

12/12 Dissertation research design: purpose and structure. Writing the research proposal.

12/13 Proposal writing laboratory (guided practice in class)

12/14 Presentation and critique of preliminary research project proposals

12/15 Presentation and critique of preliminary research project proposals (cont.) Course summary. Course evaluation.

12/16 Individual student advisement/meetings with faculty