

Ljubljana Doctoral Summer School

15 – 19 July 2024

9:00 – 13:00 (CET, Ljubljana)

BUILDING THE RESEARCH PROJECT, “THE DISSERTATION JOURNEY” (ECTS: 4)

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Aims of the course

Here is a ritual question for doctoral students: how do I initiate and carry out all the tasks required by my doctoral research? Where should I start? What are the most important tasks, reading? writing? What is the problem I want to address? How can I make sure my topic is relevant? What should I plan? The syndrome of the blank page always threatens the apprentice researcher, as well as that of being crushed by the piles of books and articles that he/she has placed on a table, and which he/she regards in advance as an insurmountable wall... Last, but not least, how do I organize myself on a daily basis? Where will I work? Like the craftsman, it's about building your own workshop, a place where you can isolate yourself, concentrate, stay focus, and say stop to the outside world! New routines to put in place, new habits to adopt...

This seminar intends to prepare you to do the tasks needed for a doctoral dissertation. It is designed to help you to begin, engage, and build the 1st step of your research project. The aim is to set the first benchmarks for initiating the doctoral research and to enable participants to move forward in conducting their own research.

The research activity is a process made up of steps that follow one another. This seminar focuses on these first steps that are most often complex to apprehend for the newcomer in research. However, if it appears linear in its final presentation, its construction rarely is, and will require going back and forth between some of these stages: research problem, problem statement, relevance, purpose, research questions, hypotheses, adequate methodology... But what are these steps? What means developing a research question and its problematization, fixing a problem statement, constituting the literature review or constructing the theoretical framework? Different ways to do a dissertation do exist, but they all go through these main steps... Finally, a session of this seminar will be devoted to understanding scientific publication activity, its rules and issues: reading and writing are related tasks, and this may help you to go faster.

The objective for each participant is to produce at the end of the seminar a 5 to 6 pages note that summarizes the main elements of what could be your dissertation. We call it the prospectus. This note is a 1st overview of your study, a kind of a research concept paper, including:

- 1) definition of your topic (what, why) RELEVANCE
- 2) first run of your problem statement:

- brief and pertinent literature elements
- 1st step of conceptual framework and line of logic, based on a schematic, a model
- purpose statement

3) research questions/hypotheses

4) elements of appropriate methodology

5) and, last but not least, the planning of your tasks.

It aims at helping you to fix a horizon for your work, giving you a 1st sight of your journey, time landmarks for initiating tasks, and so on. Something like a compass when you are lost in the wide and wild landscape of research... This work will give rise to evaluation (for participants who require it).

Syllabus

This seminar is composed of five sessions, articulated to the scheme below, around one per day. The content is the following:

Session 1	The research project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying and formulating the problem: selecting a research topic that is researchable, identifying the research problem, the gap • Building the problem statement, 1st steps: what is your topic, why choosing it / Short and focused review to support it / Conceptual framework (schematic, model) / Relevance / The literature review: how to read • Common errors in writing the problem statement • Purpose / Research questions / Hypotheses
Session 2	Choosing the adequate methodology This session is about defining and justifying the methodological approach, whether the approach is qualitative or quantitative, or both. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying an accessible field, regardless of how the data is collected • Defining the way for collecting data
Session 3	Organizing your work and planning your tasks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning the whole: your calendar • Focus: a task among the others: collecting and analyzing data
Session 4	Reading and writing: understanding scientific publication activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The conversational metaphor of publishing • Identifying the different academic publication media • Identifying the different types of articles in management • Discovering the framing of a research article
Session 5	Formal presentation of their prospectus by the students No research exists without exchanges with the research community... Presenting one's work is one of the essential tasks of all researcher. All along the sessions, the attendees will work on their own prospectus, they are expected to advance it between each session. This session will provide the opportunity to present orally their prospectus and to discuss it with both the other participants and the professor, through a PPT presentation (15' + 15').

Course delivery

The seminar combines moments of lecture, collective workshops, group discussions.

Course materials / List of readings

Carole Roberts, Laura Hyatt, 2019, *The Dissertation Journey. A Practical and Comprehensive Guide to Planning, Writing, and Defending your Dissertation*, 3rd ed., SAGE Publications, 240 p.

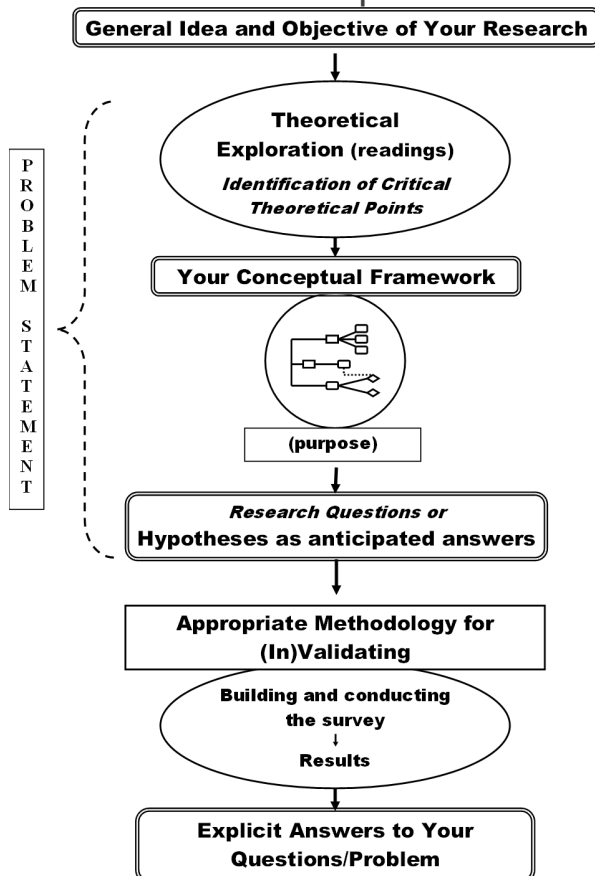
Randy L. Joyner, William A. Rouse, Allan A. Glatthorn, 2018, *Writing the Winning Thesis or Dissertation: A Step-by-Step Guide*, 4th ed. fully updated, Corwin Press, 344 p.

Anne S. Huff, 1999, *Writing for Scholarly Publication*, Thousand Oaks (Cal.) & London (UK), Sage Publication, 188 p.

Anne S. Huff, 2016, "HUFF (1998), *Writing for Scholarly Publication as a contribution to scholarly conversation*", Book Review in *M@n@gement*, Iss.3, Vol. 19, p. 240-247. https://www.cairn-int.info/article-E_MANA_193_0240--unplugged-my-own-bookreview.htm

Lièvre P. (dir), Lecoutre M., Astoul L., 2016, *Manuel d'Initiation à la Recherche*, 3rd ed., updated from 1998, Presses de l'EHESP, 172 p. Handbook to which I contributed heavily, but it is in French, so...!

Overview of the research process



Course credit

For students needing course credit for their PhD studies, assessment will be based on the oral presentation in session 5 and the draft of their prospectus.

Course leader

Marc Lecoutre is Senior Professor in Organization and Management at ESC Clermont Business School. He is currently the Pedagogical Head of the Doctorate of Business Administration program in this business school. He received his PhD in Sociology from Paris V University, following a master degree in Economics. He worked 15 years as a full-time researcher in Economics of Labor Market and Sociology of Organizations for a French National Research Laboratory, and then became associated professor at ESC Clermont where he served seven years as the Director for Research (2016-2022). Ha has been part of the Scientific Board for the Clermont Research Management laboratory (2008-2022).

He develops research in the Social Networks & Organizations field, published books and articles on this topic (for example in English, "Expanding Knowledge and Mobilizing Social Networks", 2019, in Management of Extreme Situations, London ISTE Ltd & New-York Wiley). He worked more recently on the question of creativity: "The Process of Bisociation, at the Heart of the Ideas Factory. The Case of a Managerial Innovation", presented at the research seminar of the School of Economics and Business (University of Ljubljana) in November 2023. He also contributed to a French Handbook about research methodology for beginners (2016 3rd ed.)

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