

MODULE GUIDE: DISSERTATION

JOM409

LEVEL: 7

CREDITS: 60

AIMS

The aims of this module are to enable you to:

- undertake independent study and research on and relating to the news industry in order to address one or more focused questions
- produce a substantial piece of writing to an advanced academic standard
- present the findings of your research in appropriate tone and depth
- build up analytical, professional and writing skills as well as original insight.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: on successful completion of the module, you will be able to:

- identify a subject within journalism worthy of academic scrutiny;
- devise and manage the production of a substantial piece of critical writing;
- demonstrate an advanced competence in the research skills necessary for analysis of the industry;
- produce a sustained piece of writing of advanced academic standard incorporating both exposition and argument.

CURRICULUM CONTENT (INDICATIVE)

- Methodologies and techniques for research
- Ethics of research, data search, quantitative methods and interviewing
- Writing up and submitting the final dissertation
- Beyond this, after you have selected an appropriate research project in consultation with your supervisor, the curriculum will be defined by that area of study

TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGY (INDICATIVE)

You will have five dissertation workshops in March 2011 covering the basics of the dissertation – from framing a research question(s), hypothesis and title to composing a dissertation proposal and researching and constructing the dissertation itself.

Later in the summer, there will be a workshop on writing up your dissertation.

The deadline for the 1000-word dissertation proposal is **11am, Thursday May 12, 2011** and after proposals are received supervisors will be allocated. You should then

organise a meeting with your supervisor to discuss your research and your suggested work breakdown.

It's suggested that you arrange a further three hours' contact time with your project supervisor. These sessions will involve refining the research proposal, assessing its viability, producing a schedule for its production, advising on relevant areas of literature, developing your thoughts on your research topic, giving guidance on the development of the dissertation and on the conventions of dissertation writing.

The deadline for the completed dissertation is **11am, Friday 30 September 2011**

Supervisor's role and responsibilities:

- meet up for four one-hour tutorials with supervisees (supervisors will not be available for face-to-face consultation between 15 July-1 September, although you can still contact them by email)
- give advice on the nature of the project (title, viability, methodology, university regulations), literature and other sources, research techniques, the planning of the project (organisation into chapters, sections etc.), and the standard of work expected.
- supervisors will **not** act as a proof-reader of your work and cannot be expected to provide detailed feedback on drafts

Students' responsibilities:

- take the onus for arranging meetings with supervisors (taking account of any periods of holiday or work-related absence over summer)
- attend prearranged tutorials
- take the initiative in raising problems and discussing with supervisors the type of guidance and comments needed i.e. provide objectives for tutorials
- maintain progress and meet deadlines
- ensure that work submitted is not plagiarised

Should serious difficulties arise and/or you need a deadline extension please contact Mary Braid m.braid@kingston.ac.uk

Programme for the MA dissertation workshop sessions

Tuesday, March 1, 5-6pm, room JG1007 – lecturer, Mary Braid. General introduction to the MA dissertation including how to home in on a subject area, move to a research question and formulate your hypothesis.

Tuesday, March 8, 5-6pm, room JG1007, - lecturer, Sara McConnell. Research methods 1

Tuesday March 15, 5-6pm, room JG5002 – lecturer, Sara McConnell. Research methods 2 (including ethics)

Tuesday March 22, 5-6pm, room JG1007 – lecturer, Alison Baverstock. How your can shape your dissertation to help you get a job

Tuesday March 29, 5-6pm, room JG1007 – librarian, Wendy Woodley. How to use the library properly to research your dissertation

ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

The assessment for this module is a 12,000 to 15,000 dissertation, which will test your abilities to research, structure and write a substantial critical thesis related to journalism. The dissertation must include an abstract, an extensive bibliography and a research report which demonstrates the character and depth of research undertaken. The title and structure, appropriate word length and conventions for the presentation of the piece must be approved in advance by the tutor.

The submission deadline is 11am, Friday, 30 September, 2011

ACHIEVING A PASS

You must achieve a mark of at least 50 per cent in order to pass

BIBLIOGRAPHY (INDICATIVE):

Recommended Reading:

Basic Texts (applicable to BA and MA dissertations):

Rudestam, K. E. and Newton, R.R. (2001). *Surviving Your Dissertation: A Comprehensive Guide to Content and Process*. 2nd ed, London, Sage

Swetnam, Derek (2000) *Writing Your Dissertation: How to plan, prepare and present successful work*

Walliman, Nicholas (2004) *Your Undergraduate Dissertation: The Essential Guide for Success*. Sage

Baxter, Hughes, Tight (2002) *How to Research*, 2nd ed. Open University Press

Munger, David (2002) *Researching Online, 4/E*. Addison Wesley

Walliman, Nicholas (2000) *Your Research Project: A Step-by-step Guide for the First-time Researcher*, Sage

More advanced texts:

Balian, E. S. *The Graduate Research Guidebook: A Practical Approach to Doctoral/Masters Research*. University Press of America. 1994.

Becker, Lucinda (2004). *How to Manage Your Postgraduate Course*, Palgrave

Brown, Sally, McDowell, Liz and Race, Phil (1995). *500 Tips for Research Students*, London: Routledge

Gold, Natalie (2004). *Teamwork: Multi-Disciplinary Perspectives*, Palgrave

Hoffmann, A., (2003) *Research for Writers* A&C Black

Scott, D. et al (2004). *Examining Professional Doctorates: Integrating Academic and Professional Knowledge*. Open University Press

Wisker, G (2001). *The Postgraduate Research Handbook: Succeed with Your MA, MPhil, EdD and PhD* (Palgrave Study Guides). Palgrave Macmillan