

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR
SECOND-YEAR
Developing Professional Skills
Fall 2019 – Winter 2020
ED 898-002

Class Fall 2019	Instructor	Class Winter 2020
Room 2334 Tuesday Evenings, 5:00-7:00 Sept. 3, 17, Oct. 1, 22; Nov. 5, 19; Dec. 3	Mark Hoover mhoover@umich.edu (734) 476-1990 SOE 2610	Room 2228 Thursday afternoons, 3:00-5:00 Jan. 16, 23, Feb. 6, 13, 27; Mar. 19; Apr. 9

SEMINAR FOCUS AND LEARNING GOALS

The purpose of the professional development seminars is to provide space for developing some of the many skills needed for success in graduate school and beyond. Examples might include balancing work and personal life, scholarly writing, reviewing manuscripts, giving presentations, writing for a general public, serving communities, or developing familiarity with common resources and literatures.

In the fall term, we will focus on two domains of professional work: (i) *crafting careers and professional identities* and (ii) *structuring and reviewing manuscripts*. We will also find ways to check in with each other and address questions and needs as they arise.

The first domain touches on the personal, philosophical, and practical. You had reasons for coming to graduate school. You may have had a clear sense of professional goals or you may have been uncertain. Your experiences so far may be leading you to form goals or reconsider goals. In any case, your second year is a good time to take stock, explore possibilities, and choose activities to help you chart a professional path. What are your options? What will help you succeed? What might you do now to cultivate that success? We will consider ways of thinking about professional identity, things you can do to nurture it, how its emerging shape might enable or subvert your goals, ethical and moral concerns in crafting a professional identity, and your (intended and unintended) role in shaping the professional identities of others. How do you succeed within the academy or broader educational system while working to bring about fundamental change and fulfill personal goals? How do you care for colleagues and the community that you are joining as you also care for yourself and others outside the academy? How might you strategically craft a professional identity while still in graduate school? Such questions have no simple answers, but in making good use of each other, we can work together to enrich our efforts.

Some of the experiences in which we will likely engage include:

- Learning about constructs of profession and identity
- Exploring career options and trying on different expressions of professional identity
- Hearing the stories from and interacting with professionals in the field, those with similar backgrounds and different backgrounds
- Identifying challenges of entering, surviving, and using professions
- Choosing and using professional organizations and conferences
- Writing about one's positionality in research
- Developing professional notebooks

The second domain is a particular slice of the central activity of conceiving, doing, and publishing research. Persuasive argument has structure. Research comes with expectations — explicit and implicit. A sense of common features and forms of research can help one read, critique, and produce. We will explore and experiment with some possible frameworks for thinking about research and will try out these tools as we hone skills of reading, designing, reviewing, and writing research. Of course, there are no “right” features or structure, no how-to manual for professional competence, but playing with some as we share emerging insights and sensibilities will help us all get better in this essential domain.

Some of the experiences in which we will likely engage include:

- Formulating research problems
- Exploring alternative frameworks for considering research articles
- Using structures to read and code research articles
- Using structures to review manuscripts
- Using structures to write and review precis and abstracts

Our work in these domains is designed to support you as second-year doctoral students. You've acclimated to the people, place, and program. Your courses this year will continue to provide new ways of viewing the education world and the work you want to do, but this is also the right time to begin to act on what you're learning, engaging it with who you are and want to be and your research endeavors.

In addition to these two domains, this professional seminar will be a place to take up shared concerns and needs as they arise. For instance, we will experiment with taking time at the beginning of each class to check in — both with one another and regarding plans for the course. If a pressing issue comes up, we will look for ways to adjust our work so we can address it. You may also communicate with me or the group between classes so responses can be considered and timely.

This seminar should also function as an opportunity for you to build and participate in an intellectual community with others in your cohort. Each of you comes to this group with different experiences, interests, perspectives, and expertise. Who we are and what we bring to the seminar can be resources for the course, if we learn to make use of them, and of one another. If we are successful, each person's learning will be enhanced by the work of others in the group.

Building the culture of the class so that genuine inquiry is possible will take all of our efforts to make the seminar a context in which in which people listen and are listened to, in which evidence matters, in which thoughtful questioning of one another's claims is desirable, and in which alternative perspectives and interpretations are valued. How we listen to others' reactions to our ideas, accommodate critique and questions, change our minds and revise at times — all will affect the intellectual culture of the class. A sense of professional identity and the production of research are areas in which graduate students (and mature scholars, too, at times) feel vulnerable. Finding a helpful balance of support and challenge for one another is therefore an important goal.

In the winter term, we will continue the fall themes in less direct ways as we identify an extensive range of professional products each of us is producing and workshop these together. Products might include a class paper, presentation slides, professional bio, conference proposal, draft email, portfolio review statement, framing of your research interest, funding proposal, diagrams of your interests or idea, professional journal, sketch of a scholarly paper, or any other artifact you are generating to support your professional work. We will explore ways of asking for and providing constructive feedback as we learn to support each to advance our work. We will also discuss how to make prepare for and make good use of conferences, as well as upcoming program mileposts, such as prelims and candidacy.

SEMINAR POLICIES AND PRINCIPLES

Diversity and Respect in the Classroom Community

In order to create community and spaces where people share their ideas and views and are open to hearing others, and where we seek to challenge and change patterns of marginalization and privilege, the following core principles are fundamental and expected in this class:

- **Respect:** We must respect and value the efforts, identities, capacities, and ideas that each person brings into the space. We call people their chosen names and we make the effort to learn and to say their names as they wish them said.
- **Curiosity and openness:** We must all be open to alternative views, experiences, and perspectives, and curious to learn about and from one another. Freedom to express ourselves, a fundamental civil and human right, excludes expressions that commit or encourage violence or trauma toward others. I do not invite racist, sexist, classist, and generally bigoted ideas, nor am I inviting tolerance or respect for such ideas. Judgments about this are part of the responsibility that a free and just society entails.
- **Diversity:** We stand for the goals of diversity, inclusion, justice, and equity expressed in our school community's statement of institutional commitments: <http://www.soe.umich.edu/diversity/>. Acting on these commitments in our day to day work together means that we each must cultivate awareness of our own biases and perspectives. Actively advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice requires that we are mindful of our ways of being, listening, talking. Being cognizant of our own biases and perspectives and actively working to advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice will require each of us to critically interrogate the materials, ideas, structures, and contexts we examine, and the ways in which we examine them in our work together.

Acknowledgement

I want to acknowledge the exploitation and privilege that has played a role in creating our opportunity to study together. In particular, I understand that our American society is rooted in a violent colonial history that confiscated indigenous people's lands, enslaved Africans, subjugated women, and oppressed and exploited many. I acknowledge that the University of Michigan was built on indigenous people's lands and I pay respect to their Elders past and present. I also acknowledge that it was built on a slave economy, in a region of the country that, however surreptitiously, bought and sold people of African and indigenous descent and used their labor to prosper. I further acknowledge that the university, established in 1817 to serve the public good, benefited from the work women did to help the school thrive while excluding them from admission for over 50 years and continuing to exclude them from full participation through the present. Finally, I acknowledge that acknowledgement is not enough and I request that students in this class consider acknowledgements they might make.

Appreciation

Our opportunities to learn together in this course also owe a great deal to the work of many others who labor to ensure that classes are held in clean and heated rooms, where the technology works to support our learning, and that we have the supplies we need, and access to the materials and resources we need. Many unnamed people across campus are often invisible to us and are disproportionately people of color and low-income people, while their labor creates comfort and security for our school. In fact, their work is successful when it simply happens without attracting attention, yet they are often not accorded the respect and gratitude they deserve. Please join me in seeing who these people are and in expressing thanks for their skill and resourcefulness in making it possible to teach and learn here.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know as soon as possible. Some aspects of this course — the assignments, the in-class activities, and the way the course is taught — may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make

me aware of your needs, I will work with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) to help me make appropriate academic accommodations. SSD typically recommends accommodation through a Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) form. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such. SSD contact information: [734-763-3000](tel:734-763-3000); ssd.umich.edu

SEMINAR REQUIREMENTS

The requirements for this course are designed to help you develop as a professional. I will ask you to do short tasks during class and outside of our meeting time. Tasks will be designed with sensitivity to burden on your time and payoff in terms of your learning. Further, I encourage you to use tasks in this seminar to help complete assignments for other courses. You may need to adapt them, but my hope is that the reading and writing you do for this seminar will support your other academic work, improving your skills for engaging in the work, not adding an independent load. When I ask you to code articles, use articles you are reading for other courses. When you write abstracts and introductions, you are welcome to draft ones to use in papers for other courses. This will require coordination, so please let me know when you see adjustments that would help you coordinate more productively.

Required activities

For the fall term, activities will include the following:

1. Participation in class: Because we are treating this as a *professional development* seminar, every person's participation is important. One major source and context of your learning is one another — your experiences, questions, ideas, interests. In many ways, having a course like this is a luxury — many graduate programs do not offer such a course. It is important that you treat the seminar as a serious commitment, both in terms of being here every class and being here on time, as well as being prepared for and engaged in class. We will begin promptly at 5:00 p.m. and will end no later than 7:00 p.m.
2. Draft abstracts and introductions: Once we consider some frameworks for viewing manuscripts and code an article or two, I will ask you to write and rewrite study abstracts and research problem formulations. The long version will be a paper introduction (1-2 pages). These are meant to be exercises with feedback and revision. You may focus on one, improving it through the semester, or try out several different approaches to framing alternative versions of the same paper, or play with completely different paper topics. By the end of the semester, you should have a couple of useful products, but moreso a clear sense of the important role of research problems and how to craft them.
3. Interview of an experienced professional: Either individually or together with one or two other members of our class, interview an education professional about one of the following two topics. Based on that interview, extract ideas that could be useful to the group and represent them for others in a usable form. We will plan and design how to do this together.
 - a. The professional's career choices, challenges, and reflections.
 - b. The professional's use of a positionality statement.
4. Write a positionality statement: Draft a positionality statement for a particular piece of research. We will explore issues to consider and you will again get feedback and revise.

Communication

I will use Canvas to send announcements to communicate with you. Important information about assignments, classes, changes, and additional resources will be provided and I will assume you

are receiving all such announcements. Please make sure that you set Canvas to receive announcements through the email you use regularly.

I will respond within 24 hours to all email messages you send to mhoover@umich.edu. If you need to reach me, you can also text (734) 476-1990.

To make the management of class files easier and more reliable, please title class documents with a standard label, namely: <assignmentname_lastname.docx>. Please submit all assignments to the course Canvas site.

Grading and Evaluation

Drafts will not be graded. Grades for your abstract/introduction and positionality statement will be based on your final submission and the ways in which you worked on the drafts during the semester. Your grade for the interview work will be based on your representation for the class. Please submit artifacts you feel are central to your representation. These might include audio or video of your presentation to the class, but only if you see those as essential to your representation.

Your final grade for this course in the fall term will be based on the following distribution:

Task	Product	Due	Percentage of final grade
a) Participation	Preparation and engagement in class	Ongoing	30%
b) Abstract and introduction	Three drafts for the same or different framings and a final submission	Oct. 1 Oct. 22 Nov. 5 Dec. 3	40%
c) Interview of an experienced professional	Interview questions Useful representation for the class	Nov. 5 Nov. 19	15%
d) Positionality statement for a particular piece of research	A draft and a revised submission	Dec. 3 Dec. 10	15%

A few comments about evaluation in graduate work: I want your experiences in this course to contribute to your growing capacity to do excellent work. To support that, I will comment on your writing, offer suggestions, and encourage you to refine your ideas in a variety of ways and using different resources to do so. Instead of large papers, this course focuses on supporting you to write and rewrite draft components, with feedback, and to revise.

You can use your work in this course, with one another and with me, to help you to improve your sense of what good work consists of, and how to produce it. This includes writing good sentences and paragraphs, using words carefully, treating ideas with discipline and respect. I will make these standards as concrete as possible, and to make visible strategies for achieving them. If there is something in particular you are working on in your writing, or something on a specific assignment for this class, please let me know so that I can focus on that in my comments. As you develop your sensibilities, you will be able to do more and more as your own critic and editor.

One obvious reason to take writing seriously is that your career as a graduate student depends on it. You will not be able to earn your degree unless you can write good papers, exams, and theses. I think of writing as a tool in learning and teaching. Providing scaffolding for your work, and direct and focused feedback on what you produce, are concrete ways to help you develop skills and sensibilities, and to be successful in the program.

A second and perhaps even more important reason to take your writing seriously is that you intend to work as a professional in a field in which the overarching objective is helping people learn and do. Moreover, improving the quality of the educational enterprise depends on communication among educators and with many publics. Good writing is unfortunately not something at which most professionals in public education have excelled. Current educational debate, like U.S. educational history and much teaching and writing in schools of education, is littered with jargon-filled, clumsy, and obscure writing. Some of the problems are technical or literary: incorrect grammar, a passion for the passive voice, and needless words. Many other problems are intellectual: arguments that wander, implausible assumptions, paragraphs that do not cohere, and a failure to consider other views respectfully. Professionals who communicate in such ways are in no position to help students learn to write, to help teachers learn to teach them to write, or to communicate well with the publics on which public education depends.

Please bear in mind that my comments are directed towards particular things you have produced, not about you. Improving your work is a joint endeavor, composed of what I can offer you by way of help and feedback, and how you use my guidance and that of your classmates.

Specific activities and grading for the winter term will be communicated at the start of the winter term.