REM 802 **Ken Lertzman**
Research Approaches and Integration for REM Ph.D. Students **Spring 2016**

Mon. 10:30 – 12:20 p.m. Wed. 10:30 – 12:20 p.m.

This is a class for REM PhD students in the second term of their first year in the program. It is intended to help them prepare for the multi-disciplinary REM comprehensive exam and provide guidance on the research process, strategies for academic scholarship, and career planning.

Goals for the Course

1. Prepare students for the comprehensive/defense of the thesis proposal.
2. Prepare students to be effective, efficient, and successful in their PhD research.
3. Support PhD students in developing an integrative, synthetic, and cross-disciplinary approach to research and thinking about problems in resource and environmental management.

Objectives for Students in the Course

1. Understand the structure and process of the REM PhD degree, both via the written guidelines in the PhD Handbook and via discussions of the intent of those who wrote the Handbook.
2. Learn how to choose, scope, and conceptualize a Ph.D. research project; understand the nature of PhD projects and their role in academia.
3. Understand your approach to research within broad historical and philosophical movements in science and scholarship.
4. Gain a deeper understanding of the nature and challenges of synthesis, both within and across disciplines in resource and environmental management.
5. Learn about research proposals and prepare for defending the research proposal
6. Prepare a draft of the PhD thesis proposal that will be defended within a year of completing the class.
7. Prepare for the cross-disciplinary and integrative aspects of planned PhD research and the REM comprehensive/proposal defense
8. Practice breadth-oriented oral examination skills.
9. Develop and polish skills in research design and communication.
10. Gain experience applying critical and creative thinking skills in research.

Suggested Text

There is no overall required text for the course but we will refer regularly to Davis et al. 2012 (3rd Ed.) — I'll discuss a number of options for this with you. There are a number of copies of the first and second editions around REM, but the third edition provides some useful updates.

Davis, Martha, Kaaron Davis, and Marion Dunagan. 2012. Scientific Papers and Presentations, 3rd Ed. Elsevier.

I also recently found a new book on writing, which I may try to incorporate into class.
Pinker, S. (2014). The Sense of Style: The Thinking Person's Guide to Writing in the 21st Century. New York, New York: Penguin.

I will provide many individual articles, primarily as pdf's or URL's: these will form the bulk of the reading for class. I also have a collection of other books on thesis writing in general, writing PhD theses in particular, proposal writing, and research design – all these will be available.

Format and Grades

This course will consist primarily of a series of discussions among the participants (students and instructor), with occasional guests. Everyone must come prepared to participate fully in these discussions. The primary goals of the course are to prepare you to design and conduct interdisciplinary PhD research and further your progress towards the combined REM proposal defense and comprehensive exam. The final product of the class is a draft of the PhD proposal that you will all be expected to defend within a year of completing this course. You will move toward those goals in direct proportion the amount you put into the course. This is much more a course about you learning what you need to know as part of a structured group process than it is a course about the instructor downloading information. Four of the graded products (representing >55% of the course marks) are a sequence of exercises building on each other towards the final proposal for the course.

I would like all assignments turned in electronically. When papers are turned in electronically, single-spaced text is appropriate (12 point text, with at least 1 inch/2.5 cm margins). If any hard copy is turned in, it should always be double-spaced.

Grades will be based on your participation on a daily basis in class discussions and exercises, on smaller written and oral submissions, and on the proposal completed at the end of the class. The breakdown of grade assessment last year is as follows, this year will be similar, though not identical:

1.	Operationalizing Research Table (Jan 19)	3%
2.	Summary presentation and outline of research proposal (Feb 2&4)	5%
3.	Draft research proposal (Feb 20-21)	12%
4.	Cross-disciplinary synthesis assignment (March 23 & 25)	15%
5.	Mock Oral Exam	10%
6.	Final research proposal	35%
7.	Class Participation (e.g. discussions, peer editing)	20%
	Total	100%