Course Outline - Fall, 2000

I. Course Description

Introduction to research methods for preparing scholarly and defensible papers and senior projects, and in conducting qualitative and quantitative evaluations, testing, and research in graphic communication. Methods covered include statistical, historical, descriptive, questionnaires, interviewing, content analysis, and sampling.

As a 1 unit class, the instructor serves in an advisory capacity to the students in guiding them through the first three chapters of their senior project. The class meets formally for the first half of the quarter during which the student learns about Cal Poly research resources and how to select the proper research method(s) for the study being undertaken. For the second half of the quarter, the students work independently for the most part and report weekly progress during scheduled class sessions.

II. Required Prerequisite Preparation

Senior status and two quarters prior to completing curriculum requirements.

III. Expected Outcomes

A. Skills in clear, concise, and scholarly writing.

B. An awareness of sources of data in graphic communication, i.e., institutions, foundations, organizations, libraries, publications.

C. A knowledge of quantitative and statistical tests and measurements used to measure, organize, test, and validate data.

D. A knowledge of qualitative research methods including historical-descriptive data collection techniques.

E. A research plan for Senior Project.

F. First three chapters of Senior Project.
IV. Required Reading


IV. Methods of Evaluating Outcomes

Completion of first three chapters of Senior Project in compliance with acceptable methods for valid and scholarly research. (80% - 90% of final grade)

I. Introduction and Purpose of Study

II. Literature Review

III. Research Methods and Procedures

Quizzes - If given. (10% of final grade)

Class attendance and participation during formal sessions. (10% of final grade)

V. Course Content

A. Introduction
B. The Structure of Senior Project Chapters 1, 2, and 3
C. Cal Poly Writing Lab
D. Graphic Communication Data Base and Abstract Services at Cal Poly
E. Statistical Consulting Services at Cal Poly
F. The Scientific Method
G. Elite and Specialized Interviewing
H. Historical-Descriptive Research
I. Statistical Research
J. Content Analysis
K. Constructing Questionnaires
L. Rules for Scholarly Writing
M. Research Organizations in Graphic Communication
N. Publications as Sources of Data