General Course Outline

GETTING STARTED

PhD Course, 3ECTS, Period I-II

18.10.2022

Teachers: Prof. Ewald Kibler (ewald.kibler@aalto.fi), Prof. Henri Schildt
(henri.schildt@aalto.fi)
Target group: 1st (and 2nd) year doctoral students at Department of Management Studies
Schedule: 14 September, 19 October, 16 November, 14 December
Room: Q103 Ryhmäopetus (Väre building, Otaniementie 14)
MyCourses: Course: 21L25000 - Getting started, Lecture, 14.9.2022-14.12.2022 (aalto.fi)

LEARNING GOALS

This introductory course is designed to support the new doctoral students in getting to
know the local academic community and in understanding the basic premises of writing
their doctoral dissertation. Students will get acquainted with different types of research
published in academic journals, learn how to read academic articles effectively, and be
better equipped to get started with their studies, literature reviews and empirical research
work. After the course, students understand better what the doctoral studies and journey
entail and what are the main requirements for writing their doctoral dissertation. In specific,
we address questions such as:

- How to start your course work?
- How to get to know the academic community?
- How to form your own research network?
- How to plan the early stages in our research journey?
- How to read academic literature? How to find a research topic?
- How to identity a suitable research setting?
- How to plan/craft qualitative, quantitative and theory papers?
- How to receive, and deal, with feedback?
- How to choose academic conferences and journals?

LEARNING CONTENT

Students are provided with understandings and tools to successfully start their course work,
literature reviews and independent research projects. Class discussions support this learning
and sharing of experiences and help students generate their own research ideas, identify

thesis topics, and develop a first roadmap for their studies and research work. Teachers in charge provide introductions to the key themes and issues, the necessary reading materials, and the assignments. The main outline of the four course sessions is provided below; but please **NOTE (!)** that the teachers will always implement continuous feedback from students and thus some themes and assignments might be adjusted from session to session depending on emerging needs.

1st session (14 September): In this session, students will be able to get to know each other and some faculty members of the Department of Management Studies (incl. Entrepreneurship, International Business, Organization & Management, and Organizational Communication). The teachers in charge will provide an introductory overview of the individual units at the Department of Management Studies (e.g. staff members, fields of research, methodological expertise) and give students some basic, practical information about doctoral studies in general and how to get started with their course and research work. Teachers will also provide some first insights on what academic work is like and what student may be going through in the coming PhD years. We will conclude the session with a Q&A to offer enough time for open questions.

2nd session (19 October): In this session, students will be able to share and discuss insights from their interviews with a recent graduate and their former supervisor on how the **doctoral dissertation** was made and what were the main challenges the graduate/supervisor encountered during the PhD journey. Following this, the students and teachers will discuss more in detail some of the main aspects and issues during early and later stages of the thesis process. The teachers will also share some practical insights on how to select research topics, theoretical angles, methods, empirical settings, etc. for the doctoral research and on how to plan the individual essay/paper contributions of overall doctoral dissertation package. We will conclude the session with a Q&A to offer enough time for open questions.

3rd session (16 November): In this session, students will be able to share and discuss their insights from reading and reflecting on two **qualitative research** papers published in the top journals in our fields. The teachers in charge will walk through some practical examples in conducting qualitative research and writing qualitative papers. They will also share some of their recent experiences in how to move from early stages of the project (e.g. data collection) to publishing a qualitative article in a top journal. We will also discuss more in detail some of the key problems in publishing qualitative research. We will conclude the session with a Q&A to offer enough time for open questions.

4th session (14 December): In this session, students will be able to share and discuss their insights from reading and reflecting on two **quantitative research** papers published in the top journals in our fields. The teachers in charge will walk through

some practical examples in conducting quantitative research and writing quantitative papers. They will also share some of their recent experiences in how to move from early stages of the project (e.g. data collection) to crafting a quantitative article. We will also discuss some of the key problems in publishing quantitative research. We will conclude the session with a Q&A to offer enough time for open questions.

ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments need to be submitted before the respective session in [MyCourses](#). In total, there are three pre-assignments (as base for session 2, 3 and 4) and one assignment to be developed in a group throughout the course. Each assignment requires students to access articles from academic journals. If students have problems to access an article, please contact the teachers or their supervisors.

Pre-assignment for Session 2:

Submit a short essay (1000-1500 words) about writing a dissertation based on your main insights from interviewing a graduate and her/his supervisor by 17 October 2022. Also, build on your essay to prepare a 5-10-minute presentation for the session on 19 October.

To do so, choose a published dissertation (completed after around 2015) that is of genuine interest to you and that was not advised or conducted by your own supervisor. Then, carefully read the dissertation and interview both the graduate and the related 1st (or if not possible the 2nd) supervisor. Exemplary themes/questions informing the interview and writing your essay should include at least the following:

- What were the phases of writing the dissertation? What happened over time?
- What was the researcher's main research question and task, and how did that come out in the dissertation? Does the doctoral thesis in your view address this task or question?
- An account that presents both from the researcher's and her/his advisor's point of view answers to the following questions:
    - What made it possible to finish the dissertation (successfully)?
    - Why is the dissertation like it is? (e.g. regarding the structure, choices of literatures and methods, style and content of the essays, …)
- Any observations, insights or questions evoked by this inquiry regarding the process doctoral studies and writing the dissertation

Pre-assignment for Session 3:

Submit an essay (1500-2000 words) based on your reflections of published qualitative research by 14 November 2022. Also, based on your essay, prepare a 5–10-minute presentation for the session on 16 November.

To do so, select <u>two qualitative empirical studies</u> that are of interest to you. Specifically, select one article published in the *Academy of Management Journal* and one article published in different journal on the [FT-50 journal list](). Send an email to Ewald ([ewald.kibler@aalto.fi]()) **by Monday, 24 October**, where you provide and confirm the references of the two articles.

Do not repeat the article texts in your paper but try to formulate a more general understanding and critical reflection of the research, for instance by addressing the following questions for each article:

- Why did you select these papers? Why do you find them appealing?
- How is the paper framed theoretically (the conceptual frontend)?
- What are the data like and how has it been analyzed? How are the findings presented?
- What is the main theoretical insight? And, what kind of contributions does it make to what literatures or conversations, and how?
- What did you learn in terms of how to write a qualitative research paper?
- What are the main differences (along the themes above) between the articles?
- What was difficult or unclear? Any other observations, insights or questions evoked by this inquiry regarding the process doctoral studies and writing the dissertation?

Pre-assignment for Session 4:

Submit an essay (1500-2000 words) based on your reflections of published quantitative research by 12 December 2022. Also, based on your essay, prepare a 5–10-minute presentation for the session on 14 December.

To do so, select <u>two quantitative empirical studies</u> that are of interest to you. Specifically, select one article published in the *Academy of Management Journal* and one article published in different journal on the [FT-50 journal list](). Send an email to Ewald ([ewald.kibler@aalto.fi]()) **by Monday, 21 November**, where you provide and confirm the references of the two articles.

Do not repeat the article texts in your paper but try to formulate a more general understanding and critical reflection of the research, for instance by addressing the following issues for each article:

- Why did you select these papers? Why do you find them appealing?
- How is the paper positioned theoretically (the conceptual frontend)?
- How are the hypotheses (and the theoretical models) developed?
- What are the data like, and which method has been used to test the hypotheses/model (or explore the data, if the paper is more of explorative nature)?
- How are the findings presented and discussed?
- What kind of contributions does it make to what literatures or conversations, and how?
- What did you learn in terms how to write a quantitative research paper?
- What are the main differences (along the themes above) between the articles?
- What was difficult or unclear? Any other observations, insights or questions evoked by this inquiry regarding the process doctoral studies and writing the dissertation?

***Literature review assignment (throughout the course)*:**

The aim of this assignment is that students familiarize themselves with published **literature reviews** and, by doing so, begin to reflect on some of the broader, potential themes of interest for their thesis work. For this assignment, students are required to meet <u>at least two times with 1-2 of their assigned peers</u> during the course to talk about their topical interests and discuss review papers that might be of relevance for their own research. The groups will be assigned in the second session.

Specifically, each student must select (at least) <u>three review papers</u> from the *Academy of Management Annals (AMA)* (note: only full reviews and not editorials) where they think these might be interesting and useful for their own work. Students have to submit the **three (or more) references** via MyCourses by **31 October**. Those articles should then serve as base for their discussions with their peers and for gradually developing a rationale for why one review article (as compared to other selected ones) might serve as the most important base for their own thesis research, for instance with regards to research topic, theoretical discourse/home, research focus/question, theoretical lens, key concepts, etc.

Finally, each student needs to write a **short reflection (1200-1500 words)** of what they feel/think their overall **research topic** could/will be and **why this one AMA review paper could/will be a fundament for their own work**.

We will discuss this assignment more in detail in the second session of the course and throughout the course. DL for submitting the short essay is **16 December**.

GRADING & ASSESSMENT

The course is graded with a ***pass-fail.*** In order to pass the course, students need to participate in all course sessions and complete all assignments in time.

OVERVIEW OF ESTIMATED WORKLOAD (HOURS/CREDITS)

Main task	Task examples	Hours	Credits
Reading	Reading (a) two qualitative papers, (b) two qualitative papers, and (c) three literature review papers.	25,00	0,9
Writing	Writing (a) an essay of 1000-1500 words, (b) two reflections of 1500-2000 words, and (c) a short reflection of 800-1000 words.	35,00	1,3
Contact sessions	Lectures, individual presentations, Q&A sessions, etc.	12,00	0,5
Group work	Discussing literature review papers in a group	8,00	0,3
		80,00	**3**
		hours of work	*study credits*