500 Research Methods
Fall 2002

- First class welcome
- Course overview
- Reading packet
- Assignments
- Foundations
- Rutledge article brief
500 Course Description

- Survey of research methods in design. Overview of development of research problems, literature reviews, instrumentation, data interpretation and presentation, and proposal development. Three credits.
Objectives

1. Understand what research is.
2. Understand the ways research may be conducted.
3. Recognize research terminology and concepts.
4. Develop research problems, instrumentation, and data analysis.
5. Awareness of how to interpret research results and their implications.
6. Awareness of how to prepare research proposals.
Aims

- This course aims at developing an understanding of what research and scientific inquiry means in general, and what architectural and design research means in particular.
Aims

- Be able to formulate a research problem on a chosen topic.
- Develop hypothesis.
- Be aware of research methodologies applicable to a given research problem.
- Be aware of some of the different methods of data analysis & different ways of synthesizing data & reaching conclusions.
- Strive to explore examples of both quantitative & qualitative research.
Aims

- Accessing book and non-book resources in libraries, resources on the internet, and other possible sources of information will be important attributes for each student to further develop.
Course Materials

- Course packet of readings available at the alternative copy shop, 915 S. Forest avenue.
- Student research and presentation of selected literature throughout the course.
- Handouts and other materials from the instructor.
Textbooks


Select a style manual

- Check with your major professor on the choice that they would like for you to use.
- Examples
  - APA
  - MLA
  - Several others
Assumptions

- A survey course on traditional research methods that will serve as a foundation for your later work on a thesis or applied project.

- Presented in a discussion and collaborative format.

- Work in small teams to develop research instruments, analysis methods, & other phases of research that may be used in the thesis/project.
Assumptions

- Individual work.
- Quality writing and English language abilities supportive of intensive graduate student skills.
Assignments

- Supportive readings; Endnote format
- Mini-assignments each week
- Lead a class session (in teams)
- Mini-thesis/project proposal
- Active participant in class
Questions & clarification

- Your questions
- Clarifications about class
Foundations

- According to Zeisel (Inquiry by design):
  - Research & design are both similar – both invent new ways to see the world around us. (p. 226)
  - Research & design not interchangeable. (p.226)
  - “A researcher or designer who presents his ideas well can test them more easily; the more effectively an idea is tested, the better informed later decisions will be....”
Foundations

- According to Schön (The reflective practitioner):
  - “The reflective researcher cannot maintain distance from.....the experience of practice.” (p. 323)
  - “The roles of practitioner and researcher will have permeable boundaries, and research and practice will intertwine as a matter of course.” (p. 325).
Foundations

- According to Beveridge (The art of scientific investigation):
  - “Research has been likened to warfare against the unknown” (p. 176)
First National Bank Plaza Research Project Overview

- Classic evaluation study
- Conducted by Al Rutledge, a landscape architect.

- A multi-method approach:
  - Observation
  - Interviews
  - Photography
  - Documents review
Key points

- Investigation of an urban plaza adjacent to the First National Bank in Chicago.
- Conducted by author and his graduate students.
Key points

- Objectives:
  - Test designer’s assumptions about use of plaza – behavior.
  - Assess user response to plaza.
  - Comparison for findings from user evaluation to "critic" approach.
Key points

- Designers had several assumptions about the plaza; reviewed by researchers.
- Approached as a pilot study; typically used to refine research method prior to the real study.
- Any study of this nature requires an accurate description of the setting and explanation of the context.
Key points

- A reasonably accurate description of the users is also important because they are your subjects of the study.

- Key findings are presented; preferably in chart or graph form. The key data is discussed, not all data!
Key points

- Many studies will include an evaluation of the methods used and recommendations for future research. Always look for and review this information.

- There is a summary of the findings and importance of study at end.
Final comments

- Questions
- Next week