How to Write a Good Dissertation

Bryane Michael, *University of Hong Kong*
Writing a Good Dissertation
A Practical Course to Help You Define, Write and Defend Your Dissertation
Professor Bryane Michael

Disclaimer: This represents the lessons from the universities I’ve attended and taught at. Your University may have a different academic culture and yard stick for good research. To your chagrin, academics have different values and opinions about what constitutes “good” research. Please contact your supervisor/advisor for guidance in your context.

Course overview

In this course, I hope to expose you to the skills and ideas that have helped me and my own students to write successful theses and dissertations. We will work through the 7 steps to defining your thesis (of any size) – using practical exercises rather than blah-blah. We will also practice collecting and using data illustrate and defend your arguments. We will practice writing your arguments crisply and defending your ideas in writing and orally.

This course mixes lawyers and other social scientists together. I want lawyers together with other social scientists because you will see that the same skills that make great research (and practice) in economics, public administration, politics, etc make for great legal research. When necessary, I will address topics specific to scholarly legal writing – using language that non-legal specialists can understand.

Agenda for the day

9:30 – 10:45 Overview of the Five Step Method and the first 3 steps
11.15- 12.45 Theory, data and turning it into a workable outline
14.00 – 15.00 Data and writing practical (both law and “normal” sciences)
15.05 – 16.15 Dealing with defence, rewrites and resubmissions and getting “cool points” for your thesis after your studies

How is this course taught?

Following the format adopted in my other UN-EU courses, this course will be taught by Socratic Method. Socratic Method means teaching through questions – as we solve specific concrete problems together. I will throw you in – immediately tackling problems. At first, it will seem frustrating, disorganised and confusing. Over the day, you will see how the ideas will snap together in your head. Similarly, I will speak in a vibrant (sometimes non-scholarly) way. Hopefully, you will see that the pursuit for new ideas doesn’t need to be as boring as older generation scholars made it out to be. As we critique other writing, you will see that many scholars hide behind stuffy writing and abstraction. Don’t do the same.
What do you need for this course?

It would be lovely if you had a laptop (not tablet) with internet access. If you had Excel (for some of the data related parts of the course) and Word (for the writing part of the course), that would be brilliant.

How to get the most from this course?

You will get the most from this course if you THINK ABOUT YOUR THESIS/DISSERTATION BEFORE COMING. If you read through this manual and try to answer some of the questions before coming, everything won’t see some confused and disorganised. Don’t be a passive receiver of information. Instead, think about how you would use this material in your research AS WELL AS YOUR WORK. The same skills that make a superlative academic also make for a superlative manager, legal counsel and Board-level director.

What if I’m stuck?

Your supervisor is the alpha and omega of your dissertation writing process. If you need some friendly advice though, drop me a line on Skype at publicfinance1

Who am I (why should you trust me)?

Prof. Bryane Michael is currently at the University of Hong Kong and has held teaching appointments at the University of Oxford (2002-2007) and at Columbia University (2011). He is ranked among the top 2% of academics (as ranked by downloads on the SSRN network). He has taught over 200 students in one-to-one tutorials from Harvard, MIT, Stanford, and other universities. He has worked at the World Bank and OECD for 5 years (1995-2000), served as an advisor to the UN and EU (2007-present) and advised over 250 clients – including Ministries of Justice and Ministries of Finance. Some current clients include the Government of Brunei, Malaysian Competition Commission, and the Hong Kong SAR Government.
Contents of this course pack

9:30 – 10:45     Overview of the Five Step Method and the first 3 steps........................................ 5
    Interesting Question Worksheet................................................................................................ 8
    Crisp thesis statement .................................................................................................................. 10
    Focus and gap in literature ......................................................................................................... 11
11.15- 12.45     Theory, data and turning it into a workable outline .............................................. 13
    Model practice .............................................................................................................................. 14
    Data practical ................................................................................................................................. 17
    Turning your ruminations into a thesis plan .................................................................................... 19
14.00 – 15.00    Data and writing practical (both law and “normal” sciences) .................. 24
    What does the data mean inquisition .......................................................................................... 25
    Writing inquisition ......................................................................................................................... 28
15.05 – 16.15    Dealing with defence, rewrites and resubmissions and getting “cool points” for your thesis after your studies 30
    Learning to critique and defend inquisition .............................................................................. 30
    Adapting to the real world ........................................................................................................... 31

Supplemental materials

These are some extra materials which may help you – keeping in the mind the caveat that your Institution and supervisor may have different values and approaches. So, make sure to clear what you do with them first!

General thinking and writing skills
1. Writing your Dissertation 15 minutes a day
   http://www.amazon.com/Writing-Your-Dissertation-Fifteen-Minutes/dp/080504891X/ref=sr_1_sc_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1391834475&sr=1-1&spell&keywords=writing+dissertations

2. Writing a Dissertation For Dummies
   http://www.amazon.com/Writing-Dissertation-Dummies-Carrie-Winstanley/dp/0470742704/ref=sr_1_7?ie=UTF8&qid=1391834521&sr=1-7&keywords=writing+dissertation

3. Using Tutorials in the Development of Economics and Management Thinking Skills
   http://works.bepress.com/bryane_michael/29/

Statistics

These are links we talk about in this course:
Excel is Fun
   http://www.youtube.com/user/ExcellIsFun?feature=watch
Basic Statistics Videos
http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3D44D9D8397977AE

Learn from the masters
http://flowingdata.com/
http://visualizing.org/
9:30 – 10:45  Overview of the Five Step Method and the first 3 steps

What will we do in this period?

**Step 1: Overview of the entire process using an example you give me (20 minutes)**
In this exercise, you will give me a topic or issue that you want to write about. Before your eyes, I will turn the topic into a thesis outline, using the steps I will introduce in this course. This is the first step of the Harvard Medical School method of learning (see one, do one, teach one). I will show you the process from beginning to end. We will spend most of the day “doing one”. We will – as we go along – “teach one” by critiquing others’ work as I pose problems to tackle.

**Step 2: Criticizing my approach (20 minutes)**
No thesis (dissertation) is possible without critique. We will have our first glance at critique. You will criticise my approach. You will also see me defend my approach (a skill we will cover at the end of the day). This will be your first foray into listing the ways of criticising scholarly work.

**Step 3: Why (how) legal scholars use the same process as the rest of us (20 minutes)**
Law students interested in writing for law reviews tend to think that their approach is completely different. They should focus on follow the law. Its true. However, law is a process of discovering natural social principles. I will show, using the example we just used, how I would write a law review piece (instead of a social sciences piece) based on the same method we just described. The social scientists in the room will (hopefully) see that lawyers are not so very different than the rest of us.

**Step 4: Question-thesis statement inquisition (15 minutes)**
Great answers start with great questions. In this session, we will find great questions – by looking at the world around us. We will turn our looking-around into a specific, cool question. We will then practice turning cool questions into specific, testable theses. Every work – be it a song, painting, law review piece or historical manuscript – has a thesis statement…. a main message. Your job is to find that message in the things you read. And to write one that rings clear as a bell.
What do you need to know?

1. **Interesting question** – great research starts with great questions. Why does a government adopt electronic tendering? What will new EU directives mean for the poorest consumers. Try to imagine who will use this research (literally closing your eyes and imaging the faces of these people). This helps you define your “market” for your research.

2. **Crisp thesis statement.** Your thesis statement is your one-line answer or summary. It’s the whole message you want to convey in 1-2 sentences. For example, you may want to know why the adoption of a formal training programme in a public procurement agency did not lead to more value-for-money in acquisitions. You hypothesize that trainers themselves don’t focus on value-for-money concepts. So, your thesis statement might be “trainers in Carpatistan with poor demonstrated understanding of value-for-money tend to correlate with trainees who procure significantly lower value-for-money items.” Your thesis statement can be proven to be true or false. Don’t try not to prove it....just articulate it.

3. **Focus.** You can’t solve the big questions in life – like what is the best procurement system. You need bite-sized questions and theses that you can give a solid yes/no/maybe answer to. A good thesis might be “my thesis is that having an internal audit department in the public procurement agency decreases procurement times.” A bad thesis would be “there a many factors that lead to the improvement of accountability and thus improve the way procurement agency staff work.”

4. **“Gap in the literature”**. Your dissertation coach will tell you that you need to focus on a gap in the literature. What does that mean? In simple terms, it means “is there something I need when I write on this topic that I and others lack”? Ever written a paper and thought how great it would be if some did a study which helped you prove your point? Or maybe you asked why no one ever criticised a study you think is stupid. THAT is a gap in the literature.

5. **Use a model.** Other people have theorised about the question you have asked. Maybe these people are in another discipline or country. For example, you might want to know if party politics leads to a politicisation of the public procurement agency, and thus a decrease in the effectiveness of procurements. You can draw on models from the politics literature, public administration literature and even management literature. A model helps you boil your question down to its most important elements.

6. **Confront with data.** You have looked at a bunch of models and ways other people have tried to answer your dissertation question. What have other scholars said on the subject? What data would help prove or disprove your thesis? Don’t focus yet on determining if your thesis is true or false. For now, just figure out what data you would need to argue convincingly that your thesis would be true or false.
7. **Criticise EVERYTHING!** You have found UN and World Bank experts. You have found Nobel prize winners. The dissertation committee doesn’t want you to mindless tell why they are smart. You must critique them. Critique everything in your dissertation....including the answers you find. Critique offers balance. For example, you find a study showing that electronic procurement reduces costs and increases procurement quality. Is that always true? When does it NOT work. If you cant find a criticism to a theory or data result, you aren’t thinking hard/long enough.

8. **Even a no result is a good result.** In other words, you may have looked at all the data, cited a caravan of scholars who argue for and against your thesis, and find you cant give a “true/false” answer to your question. That’s still a win. Present your question, thesis, data, arguments, models, and analysis. Tell why we still know the answer. If you are able, tell what else we need to know to decide if your thesis statement is true or false.

9. **Always think about 3 angry people who will interrogate you.** A dissertation helps prepare you to answer questions under pressure. Your dissertation committee will consist of opponents who will question and try to critique everything. In your professional life, your opponents and rivals will try to discredit you. As you write your dissertation, imagine youself having to explain and justify what you’ve written to your worst enemies. If you can’t justify it to them, don’t write it!
Interesting Question Worksheet

1. What works crappily and/or what has baffled writers that you’ve read?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

2. What question have your identifying in your research?
(no more than 15 words)

__________________________________________________________________________

3. Who is the target audience for your research?
(proper names if you can not just abstract groupings)

__________________________________________________________________________

4. What is so amazingly awesome about your research that you think at least 10% of your target audience will download an article based on your research?
(imagine you must tell your 15 year old nephew or niece)

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

5. Does your question use the 5Ws (who, what, where, when, why and how)? Good questions are specific.

Who: _________________________________ (concrete, not abstract whos)

What: _________________________________

Where: ________________________________

When: _________________________________

How: __________________________________

6. What are the possible outcomes that can answer your question? (these are your pre-thesis questions)....

1. _______________________________________

2. _______________________________________
7. What are the impacts of the answer(s) that you find... in concrete terms, numbers of people, resource spent, etc.

people: ___________________________

govt funds ________________________

social welfare _____________________

8. Extra credit question: What is your plan to marketize your answer (like I showed you).

__________________________________________

___________________________________________

___________________________________________
Crisp thesis statement

1. Repeat the three possible outcomes to your question we discussed previously?
   a) ________________________________-
   b) ________________________________
   c) ________________________________

2. Which outcome do you think is most likely? And put it in the form we discussed in our tutorial....
   (no longer than 18 words)

   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

3. Has anyone already hypothesized this? (just do a quick internet search for now). What is the closest someone has come?
   Who? _____________________________
   What did he/she say?
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   Why is it different than what you’ve hypothesized?
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

4. Does your initial thesis statement pass the Simon Caldwell test?
   (too abstract, too boring, too specific, just a tweak of something else, etc.)
Focus and gap in literature

1. What are the major bunches of literature (use the idea-mapping like we did in tutorial)

2. Now draw where your contribution is in/on this map. List 3-4 authors you “extend” upon (like we talked about) and the reasons why you extend INTELLECTUALLY on their contribution

   a) dude (dudette) one: __________________________________
      why your thesis will extend or critique?
      __________________________________________________________________
      __________________________________________________________________

   b) dude (dudette) two: _____________________________________
      why your thesis will extend or critique?
      __________________________________________________________________
      __________________________________________________________________

   c) dude (dudette) two: _____________________________________
      why your thesis will extend or critique?
      __________________________________________________________________
      __________________________________________________________________
3 (optional). Critiquing practice

Please list at least 6 problems with one of the theories or models you presented above (just like we did in tutorial).

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________
### What will we do in this period?

#### Step 5: Model inquisition (45 minutes)
Now we have the question and a thesis. What “drives” the way our question and hypothesis work? In this step, I will take your questions (or use the one we have been working on). We will draw a model of the way the thing is supposed to work. We will also discuss how to “pull out” the model from your readings (yes, even lawyers use models).

#### Step 6: Data inquisition (60 minutes)
With will discuss how to find data needed to test your model (and hypothesis). We will discuss how to download data (and actually do it). We will discuss how to put this data in Excel, and think about what the data means for our hypothesis (this is ESPECIALLY important for legal scholars!). To the extent we have time, I will show you some basic tricks – like correlation and t-testing.

#### Step 7: Turning your ruminations into a workable outline
Wow! You’ve done all that work BEFORE putting in an outline. As you saw, once you get good at it, you can do it in 1.5-2 hours. So, you’ve decided you have enough to get a good masters (PhD) out of this process. Now what?
In this session, we will talk about the different ways of putting it into an outline for your advisor. We will discuss how to avoid consulting reports and language likely to irritate your advisor.
Model practice

1. What is the underlying model you are using to think about your question and thesis? This isn’t your question or theory – it’s the “motor” or “map” that drives the stuff that determines your question and thesis.
(please provide a drawing, like we did in tutorial)

2. What are 2-3 other models (not ideas, not theories, I mean models) you have found in the literature or things you learned at Turin relevant to your dissertation?

a) ____________________________________________

b) ____________________________________________

c) ____________________________________________
3. Critiquing practice (not optional)

Using the list we developed in tutorial, what are the problems with your own model? And what are your defenses (including flat acceptance)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weakness</th>
<th>Defence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Let's redraw your model, this time labelling the data attached to each concept you've drawn

5. Let's put some of these data into the usual equation format (even for law, we hypothesize that an amendment will cause some change in an independent variable).

\[ \text{thing you care about} = \text{another thing} + \text{another thing} \]
6. Data collection strategy – for each variable we talked about, let’s think about where you will get the data. In tutorial, we will talk about “proxies” and the extent to which they can help you quantify the seemingly unquantifiable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>thing you are interested in</th>
<th>variable</th>
<th>data source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>___________________________</td>
<td>__________________</td>
<td>__________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___________________________</td>
<td>__________________</td>
<td>__________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___________________________</td>
<td>__________________</td>
<td>__________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Data practical**

1. I want to start by figuring out how much you already know. Even lawyers must have basic Excel skills in today's world. Please do the following:

   a) download any dataset from the internet in Excel (doesn’t matter what it is),

   b) find the average of any group of numbers,

   c) produce a graph based on these numbers (any graph you want)

   d) make the graph look as pretty as you can...

   maybe use my own as a guide

   www.facebook.com/bryane-michael

   (Note bene: if you can’t do this but want to work with someone who can, please feel free to share).

2. Demonstration

   Based on what proportion of the class can do these tasks, I will cover areas where the majority (more than 50% of the class) can’t do it.

3. Let's look at the three sources of data for your dissertation. For this exercise, I want you to:

   a) type of Google words which give you direct access to Excel data (from World Bank, IMF, etc.) which relate to the model we already discussed,

   b) use Google words needed to find charts and graphs from other sources related to your data needs, and replicate part of the chart by hand,

   c) work out a way (which we will discuss in tutorial) for turning blah-blah into quantified statistics.

   d) make a chart on the quantified blah-blah.

4. Using statistics to determine correlation (causality). In this section, we will look at the way two groups of numbers that you find (or make) relate to each other. Your tasks (inspired on guidance from me) are:

   a) create a scatterplot of two sets of numbers you have just found or made

   b) calculate the correlation coefficient
c) tell me what the correlation coefficient means

d) make an argument around that correlation telling: i) the reason for the correlation, ii) whether the correlation makes sense given academic stuff and practical stuff you know, and iii) criticisms about your argument

5. Random data (if we have time). If students in Asia campus are taller than students in Americas campus, on average, can we deduce the populations are different? If the average you found for one string of numbers is larger than the other string, that don’t mean nothin’. We need to look at the standard deviation and assess whether they are “statistically significantly different”.

Your (our) tasks are:

a) calculate the standard deviation of the two strings of numbers that are sitting on your screen right now,

b) tell if the averages are 2-standard deviations away from each other. Tell me what that means. (One person will do this, and I’ll repeat and explain so everyone understands).

c) look up on the internet the way the grown-ups report statistically significant differences
Turning your ruminations into a thesis plan

General tips:
1. Writing is like making shoes or cars, it’s just production, nothing more
2. Focus on writing little pieces, not the whole thing
3. Avoid Christmas tree theses

Chapter 1: Introduction

The first 2-3 paragraphs should inspire or motivate your reader to continue. You may start with a story, an interesting anecdote, or anything else you would fine engaging. For example “Did you know that governments lost over $5 billion last year because of a simple type in the WCO Agreement” Or “In 2012, the Victoria Gazette reported that the Public Procurement Agency Director had never been more nervous”. A good hook will keep your reader interested.

You then probably want to state your research question. “Why does making procurement procurement staff part of the normal civil service seem to decrease the efficiency of the public procurement office?” (or whatever your question is). Give 4-5 lines of explanation and description.

You may want to spend 2-3 paragraphs explaining why your question is so interesting. To who is it interesting? What cool facts and “stuff” did you find from the interest that you can use to show how great and interesting your question is?

Present your thesis statement (hypothesis). Don’t be afraid to say directly “My thesis statement is ...” if you fear your readers might not see it. You can then spend the next 4-5 sentences doing all the explaining you couldn’t do in that (those) 1-2 lines.

Structure (about 2-3 paragraphs). Lead your reader through the structure of your dissertation. “In the second chapter, I describe the literature explaining why adoption of new “harmonized” EU procurement provisions in an African context can help improve procurement outcomes. In the third chapter, I review the empirical studies and data.” And so forth.

You may want to spend 3-4 paragraphs explaining why you had to limit your analysis. You cant describe all the elements of your research question. What did you leave out? Tell your reader directly – so she or he doesn’t think you just didn’t know. For example “Because of space, I could not discuss five important aspects of my question.”

Chapter 2: Background and literature

Spend the first paragraph explaining how the rest of the chapter is organised “In this chapter, I will look at the three ways of analysing administrative structures in public
procurement.” Don’t be afraid to have an interesting lead-in, so the reader will want to keep reading.

From here on out, the structure really depends on the research question. Some writings will want to break this section up into 3 main parts (consisting of 5-6 paragraphs per part for example). Each part would review a major “school” or group of findings from the literature.

Others may want to follow a story format, looking at the development of the literature historically (please don’t do this, it’s amazingly boring).

Others may show data and provide examples. For example, if your dissertation compares Lithuanian with Togo and Uruguayan procurement practices, you may want to have three major sections with about 6-7 paragraphs on each country’s procurement. Again, don’t just recite laws and books. Tell what is interesting. Don’t be afraid to criticise.

You may focus on quantitative methods. You may divide this section then into two parts. In the first part, you review the theoretical literature relevant to your research (of about 12 paragraphs). In the next section, you may review the methods literature (how others have empirically researched your question) – again with about 12 paragraphs.

End with a paragraph or two describing what you’ve just told us, and what you will tell us in the next chapter. “In this chapter, I’ve shown how the existing literature does not address the role of politics when adopting an e-procurement system. In the next chapter, I will look at my methods. I will describe my application of the Polyarchy model, and describe the data I downloaded from the public procurement office’s website to test that theory.”

Chapter 3: Methods and Sources

We still don’t know what the answer to your question is. You’ve given us the background. We now want to know how you will answer your question. DON’T use this chapter to tell us boring stuff, like how you searched the internet. Instead, use it to walk us through the way you choose the methods (and excluded others) and use these methods.

Just like in the previous chapters, have an interesting paragraph or two lead-in.

Describe using 6-7 paragraphs the various methods you COULD HAVE used. Why did you use quantitative rather than qualitative methods? Why did you use t-test instead of F-test? Be warned: this section is not a free-think. You should refer to the literature when outlining your argument. At its heart, a dissertation is a test or exam of your ability to collect information, use it and critique it. You should become suspicious if you see you’ve written 5-6 lines without a reference.

If you’ve done any fieldwork, you will want to describe that in detail. Again, this is not a magazine description. You need to show why you went to the capital instead of the
provinces (for example). Again, if I personally see I’ve written 6-7 lines without a reference, I might go looking online for relevant references. I find this makes me think more clearly about what others have done – and how it can help my discussion.

If your dissertation is completely a desk exercise, you still have plenty to write about under the methods section. Maybe you analyse the word use of policy documents. Why do you use NVivo rather than another software to analyse text? You could have done an online survey (which is basically free). Why didn’t you?

In this section, don’t be afraid to provide pictures, diagrams or flow charts to show your methods. Did you interview in a procurement office? Why not include a picture if it helps the reader understand the context? Don’t forget to attribute pictures and especially charts and graphs.

If you have collected data, you may present them – to give the reader a feel for them. We call these “descriptive statistics”. Remember you are making a dissertation-length argument. The more analysis you provide, the better. If its qualitative or legal analysis, why not present materials you found – in a way the reader will enjoy and find interesting?

The last paragraph or two again highlights the salient features you presented and gives a “roadmap” of where you are in the dissertation (and what you will present in the next chapter).

Chapter 4: Results (Conclusions)

What is the answer to your thesis? You may have hypothesized that larger staff sizes lead to increased effectiveness of the public procurement office. Or you have argued that e-procurement provisions in Carpatistan conflict with international “best practice” – leading to lower qualities of procured goods. This is the chapter to tell us what you found.

The first paragraph or two tells us what you found and “hooks us” into wanting to read the rest.

You will take as many paragraphs as you need to describe your findings. Don’t just describe (e.g. “I found an average of 64% did not have graduate qualifications”). Put your findings in a chart or other way the reader will find pleasing. Nothing is more boring than trying to read pages and pages of boring statistics.

You may want to mix your statistics with a story. For example “I found an average of 64% did not have graduate qualifications. Bob illustrates the reasons why most didn’t have graduate qualifications. He said he didn’t go to graduate school because the procurement office sees graduates as too intellectual.” Notice how tying a story to data can help add depth to the discussion.
Again, your findings don’t exist in a vacuum. Compare or contrast your findings with other studies. Surprise your reader. Delight them. Tell them why your finding revolutionises the way we think about procurement (or doesn’t).

You will also want to criticise yourself. Expect to type 5-6 paragraphs describing the weaknesses in your findings. By criticising yourself, you give the reader balance. You show you are so awesome, you don’t mind criticism. Don’t cover up or hide even stupid mistakes you might have made. This is a learning exercise – and the dissertation committee will respect your honesty much more than if you try to cover over your mistakes.

Critique serves another purpose. You give future researchers a reason to look up and cite your work. By directly telling the weaknesses in your results, you encourage others to “fix” them.

The last paragraph or two reviews the headline findings and describes the next chapter in brief.

**Chapter 5: Discussion**

We have your findings. So what? How does that help me (the reader). The purpose of this section is to show how your results fill that “gap in the literature” we described previously. It also places your research into the broader debate. Your findings may have policy implications. This is your place to say “hey Director General, you should do X!”

Your first paragraph (or two) recounts the glorious findings you’ve made – and tells the reader what to expect in this chapter.

The next sections will depend on your research. For a policy focused dissertation, you may provide three areas in specific procurement agencies where they should change their work based on your findings. Again, you need to cite others. What I do is type what I want to say... then I go online to find others who might repeat that. What does your research “show” about that other guy’s findings? Why is your research better? Different?

If your research is theoretical (coming up with a new model for the international procurement of IP), tell what your research tells law makers to do. Go back to the literature review from Chapter 2 and tell how your findings “alter” the research of others. How does your research criticise their results? You can just keep choosing different scholars or practitioner books, critiquing them and compare/contrast with your own findings, until you fill the desired number of pages.

Last paragraph reviews the chapter.

As a final word, make sure you’ve answered the most important question of all in the discussion section. That is: what’s so cool about my findings? How does it help you (the reader)?
Bibliography

Put the books and materials you cited throughout. I tend to shoot for about 50.
14.00 – 15.00  Data and writing practical (both law and “normal” sciences)

What will we do in this period?

Data inquisition (30 minutes)
You have seen a bunch of data stuff. It looked bewildering (or not). In this session, we will look at understanding other people’s statistical analyses. We don’t need to reproduce it. We only need to make sure we understand it and can accurately write about it (and criticise it).

Writing inquisition (30 minutes)
In this session, we will fix together poor writing. By seeing how we fix it, you will see not to do these mistakes.
What does the data mean inquisition

1. Please look up the following paper:

2. Tell me what the following mean

| Table 4: Discontinuity Effect of Publicity on Entry and Winning Rebate: Regression Analysis |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Dependent variable | Publicity | Number of bidders | Number of bidders | Winning rebate | Winning rebate |
| Method              | OLS-ITT (1) | OLS-ITT (2) | IV-LATE (3) | OLS-ITT (4) | IV-LATE (5) |
| Mean outcome Theo. Publicity | 0.204*** (0.019) | 4.531*** (1.544) | 0.971** (0.378) |
| Publicity           | 22.189*** (7.832) | 4.765** (1.922) |
| F-first stage       | 197.8 | 197.8 |
| Year effects        | yes | yes | yes | yes | yes |
| 4th order poly.     | yes | yes | yes | yes | yes |
| y ∈ [2, 8]          | yes | yes | yes | yes | yes |
| Observations        | 17,512 | 17,512 | 17,512 | 17,512 | 17,512 |

Notes. Coefficient (and SE in parentheses) of the effect of publicity. In column 1 the Dep. Var. is the observed level of publicity (first stage), while the number of bidders in columns 2-3, and the winning rebate in columns 4-5. The first row reports the mean outcome of each dependent variable. Theo. Publicity is the theoretical level of publicity determined by the starting value, y ≥ 5. Publicity is the observed level of publicity. F-first stage is the first-stage F-statistics for the excluded instrument. All the regressions include the 4th order polynomial in the difference of the starting value from the threshold, and five year indicators. Columns 2 and 4 report OLS-ITT estimates while 3 and 5 report IV-LATE estimates using Theo. Publicity as the instrument for Publicity. SEs adjusted for heteroskedasticity. Significance at the 10% (*), at the 5% (**), and at the 1% (**$). Source: Statistics for all the public procurements works tendered between 2000 and 2005, with starting value y ∈ [2, 8], in 100,000 euros (2000 equivalents). The number of observations is smaller than the one of the full sample described in Table 2, because here we restrict the analysis to auctions with starting value y ∈ [2, 8].

3. (Mainly for lawyers, but also for everyone)... 
   http://www.harvardlawreview.org/media/pdf/greiner.pdf

Look at the graph. Can we assume that employers violate the rights of women? Of elderly? What does this imply about “balance of probabilities”. If the data are true, what legal revisions need to be made?
Salaries Versus Years Worked, Male and Female, for a Hypothetical Firm (Simulated Data): At any given level of Years Worked, it appears that men generally have higher salaries than women. But in a simple regression approach, represented by the two parallel lines, the line for women is above the line for men, suggesting discrimination against men! Under this framework, the amount of “damage” for each man equals the (constant) distance between the two lines. The explanation for the simple regression model’s incorrect result is (i) a curve in the data (at least for men) that is not reflected in the regression equation, and (ii) the fact that men have a wider range of years worked than women.

4. For all groups...
Does e-procurement help?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single-process e-procurement tools</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrative e-procurement tools</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean Difference (single-process vs integrative)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.49</td>
<td>-6.77</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>p &lt; .0001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. What the heck does this mean?

Pearcy, Parker and Giunipero

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7</th>
<th>Logistic Regression Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dependent Variable is Group (1 = Integrative Tools; 0 = Basic Tools)</td>
<td>Manufacturing is the reference group for Industry Dummy Variables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of obs. † =</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LR χ²(10) =</td>
<td>19.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prob &gt; χ² =</td>
<td>0.0401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo R² =</td>
<td>0.1019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log likelihood =</td>
<td>-83.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable (Industry)</th>
<th>Odds Ratio</th>
<th>Std. Err.</th>
<th>z</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>95% Conf Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chemicals</td>
<td>.2625</td>
<td>.1827203</td>
<td>-1.92</td>
<td>0.055</td>
<td>.0670853 - 1.027144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronics</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.4029888</td>
<td>-0.81</td>
<td>0.420</td>
<td>.1366608 - 2.294753</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>.7</td>
<td>.4914265</td>
<td>-0.51</td>
<td>0.611</td>
<td>.1763163 - 2.777237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measuring and Analyzing instruments</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>.9734601</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.958</td>
<td>.1701225 - 6.461634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>.1166667</td>
<td>.1441289</td>
<td>-1.74</td>
<td>0.082</td>
<td>.0105605 - 1.313751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petroleum</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.122693</td>
<td>-2.32</td>
<td>0.020**</td>
<td>.030889 - 0.7453055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Metals</td>
<td>.175</td>
<td>.1699264</td>
<td>-1.80</td>
<td>0.073</td>
<td>.0260924 - 1.177715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubber</td>
<td>.525</td>
<td>.5318306</td>
<td>-0.64</td>
<td>0.525</td>
<td>.0720913 - 3.821274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation Equipment</td>
<td>.125</td>
<td>.0851751</td>
<td>-3.05</td>
<td>0.002**</td>
<td>.0328787 - 4.752324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale</td>
<td>.4666667</td>
<td>.3248361</td>
<td>-1.09</td>
<td>0.274</td>
<td>.1191627 - 1.826034</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Five observations/industries could not be analyzed due to low representation (≤2 firms)

**p<0.05


Writing inquisition

   a) find the thesis statement,
   b) does using the Christmas tree approach give a clear idea of the article?
   c) what are the data used?
   d) critiques?

2. In small groups, please “correct” the writing style in the first paragraph....
   I will call up one group to present their corrections.

   The size and volume of government procurement contracts facilitates the government’s decisions with regarding when and whom it contracts with, and these decisions affect a number of issues. Aside from government procurement being “business,” i.e., the acquisition of goods and services on the best possible terms, it also has broader social, economic and political implications (Labuschagne, 1985; Morris, 1998; Turpin, 1972). Government procurement is and has, for example, often been used to promote aims which are, arguably, secondary to the primary aim of procurement. Examples include using procurement to promote social, industrial or environmental policies (Arrowsmith, Linarelli & Wallace, 2000; Cane, 2004; Turpin, 1989). It is in this regard that government procurement is of particular significance to South Africa. Due to the discriminatory and unfair practices of the past, a number of groups in South Africa were prevented from accessing government contracts. Prior to 1994, the government procurement system was geared towards large and established contractors. Thus new contractors found it very difficult to participate in government procurement procedures (Minister of Finance, 1997). The aim of this paper is to evaluate the way in which the South African government has made provision for the use of procurement as a means to address past imbalances.

3. Mostly for lawyers, but everyone should participate:
   Is this written well? After you analyse these paragraphs together, we will do it as a class. (You are asking yourself, if professors write sloppily, why can’t I? For a dissertation, you must show you know how to do it right. Its like a driving test.... after you get the license you can drive your own way.)

Even without regulatory guidance, it appears that U.S. agencies have begun to make broad use of electronic reverse auctions. Although no rule was ever finalized with regard to reverse auctions, agencies regularly publish notices of procurements that involve reverse auctions on the central government registry for procurement opportunities, and some U.S. agencies offer reverse auction services to others. Procedures in these U.S. agency auctions appear, in the absence of regulation, to vary widely, and seem to be set on an almost *ad hoc* basis. Although no central regulation guides U.S. reverse auctions, an example from a recent procurement may help to illuminate how, it appears, many of these procurements are actually run. The procurement at issue was to be run by a third-party vendor named “FedBid, Inc.,” which reported that it had completed 10,000 online reverse auctions by May 2004. For sheer
scope, we should note that a database search of the central site for federal procurement opportunities, [www.fedbizopps.gov](http://www.fedbizopps.gov), in January 2005 for the term “reverse auction” yielded 1576 “hits” (in both active and archived procurements), and a search in the same database for “FedBid” yielded 757 “hits.” This crude search suggested that FedBid coordinated a substantial share of the reverse auctions in the U.S. government.
15.05 – 16.15  Dealing with defence, rewrites and resubmissions and getting “cool points” for your thesis after your studies

We have gone through the 7 steps... most of you will have an outline thesis/dissertation in mind. What are some of the common problems with theses and dissertations?
In this practical, we will learn how to defend against some criticisms (whether founded or not). I will throw some unfounded complaints, to teach you how to deal with them diplomatically.

What will we do in this period?

Learning to critique and defend (60 minutes)
Its easier to destroy than create. When you know how to rip other people’s work, you will be vigilant against people doing this to you! In this session, we will look at real theses and

Adapting your work to the real world (10 minutes)
In this session, we will fix together poor writing. By seeing how we fix it, you will see not to do these mistakes.

Learning to critique and defend inquisition

1. Learning to critique
Look at the following... prepare your critiques with your group for 10 minutes (pick only one)
http://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/40273/Final%20thesis%2028022012.pdf?sequence=1
http://www2.leuphana.de/umanagement/csm/content/nama/downloads/download_publicationen/Roos_Sustainable%20Public%20Procurement.pdf
(Note bene: Im not telling these are bad. ALL research can be critiqued. Indeed, these people are commented for sharing their research. I personally think those that don’t share their research are hiding their bad research).

2. Creating your outline from the 7 steps.... (20 minutes for this task)
Please prepare – either as an individual or as a group -- an outline of your thesis based on the steps we have done together...
The outline doesn’t have to be very detailed, but must have:
a) the question,
b) thesis,
c) your model  
d) data  
e) critiques of your analysis

2. Present it (5 minutes – including shuffling around time)  
You (or a representative of your group) will stand up and present – **in 2 minutes** – the dissertation outline.

3. I will do my Socratic Method stuff (you will defend) (5 minutes)

4. I will give a list of ways you can address my concerns, and deflect my ungrounded complaints (5 minutes)

5. Repeat (15 minutes)

Parting ideas: What to do if your supervisor/committee hates your proposal/dissertation?  
a) game the system (I don’t want this in writing)  
b) push for exact comments (we are fallible, you must “manage your manager”)

c) get agreement on minimal level of pass

---

**Adapting to the real world**

1. Please SKIM the following the following paper  
[http://www.mubs.ac.ug/procdocs/Procurement%20Ethics%202/Public%20procurement%20Articles/pp7.pdf](http://www.mubs.ac.ug/procdocs/Procurement%20Ethics%202/Public%20procurement%20Articles/pp7.pdf)

What are the differences in lay-out and substance between the theses we just looked at and this article?

2. When articles come from noting. Why does this paper fail all the tests we described today?  
[http://www.wto.int/english/tratop_e/gproc_e/wkshop_tanz_jan03/hunja2a2_e.doc](http://www.wto.int/english/tratop_e/gproc_e/wkshop_tanz_jan03/hunja2a2_e.doc)  
(just prepare a list of reasons, not need to go into too much depth)

3. This paper is based on a master’s thesis. Does it succeed or fail?  
[http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/20491/2/CIB1913%5B1%5D.pdf](http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/20491/2/CIB1913%5B1%5D.pdf)  
(again, just say “fail, not fail” and give some reasons why).

Parting observation: Reformating your dissertation for normal human beings  
Theses and dissertation are formatting strangely. They are a test of your knowledge, not a usable product in themselves. To make them useful, you must do three things:

a) remove all the “crap”  
b) stick to the core 7 steps we talked about  
c) replace stilted language with more direct language  
d) focus on the results, not the process
Extra credit: for lawyers..
Why does the following represent poor research and worksmanship (I'm asking about the bad stuff to encourage critical thinking)....
http://works.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1091&context=bryane_michael
(Note bene: I'm purposely focusing on bad parts.. please don’t go my bosses telling them why I'm too incompetent).