INTEG 420 A & B

KI Senior Honours Project

Tuesdays & Thursdays in EV2-2069, 4:00 - 5:20 pm
https://integ420-1718.slack.com/
Dr. John McLevey

Professor: Dr. John McLevey
Office: EV1-215
Office Hours: Thursday 3:30 pm - 4:30 pm[1]
Email: john.mclevey@uwaterloo.ca, but please contact me on #slack instead

IMPORTANT LINKS

Weekly Reports for Working Groups
Supervisor Information
Getting Started Survey
Request a Theme for a Tuesday Workshop
Sign up for #Slack Team

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Senior Research Project is the two-term culmination of the Knowledge Integration degree. It provides you with the opportunity to engage in an original research or design project supervised by an expert (or experts) in your chosen field. Traditionally, INTEG 420 A (taken in the fall) is focused on designing your project, conducting literature reviews, applying for ethics clearance, and making serious progress on any empirical research (if your project requires empirical work). INTEG 420 B (taken in the winter) is focused on writing the actual thesis and disseminating the work through the thesis itself, a conference paper, a presentation, and a poster.[2] In reality, students progress at different

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1. Yes, office hours overlap with the Thursday meetings.

2. Students registered for a different thesis course, e.g., PSYCH 499, are still required to complete the conference paper and poster in order to receive credit towards INTEG 420A/B, and are encouraged to join a peer research / writing group in INTEG 420A/B as well.

speeds, in part because of differences in the type of work that people do in different disciplines. I will be taking these differences into consideration when advising you on how to make progress on your project.

I am (probably) not your supervisor, because I am (probably) not an expert in your chosen field. That means you will have to rely on your actual supervisor to provide meaningful feedback on the substantive content of the work you produce. Instead, my role in this class is primarily to be a *facilitator* and *mentor*. I will help you find your supervisor and get your project off the ground. You will have access to my expertise in research design and methodology, and my experience conducting research in a wide range of research areas. I will do everything I can to make sure you do not fall behind, and that you complete your project on time. I will grade some of your work, but not all of it.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

You will design and execute an original research or design project. You will disseminate your work by producing a written thesis, a short conference paper, a presentation to be given in front of your peers, and a poster for the KI poster session at the end of the winter term.

CLASS MEETINGS AND WORKING GROUPS

The topics of Tuesday class meetings will vary over the semester and based on student need, but in general I will use them to (1) help you find a supervisor and design a compelling project, (2) help improve your research, writing, design, and communication skills, and (2) keep you on track by having you publicly set goals and report progress. Thursday class meetings will be dedicated exclusively to collaborative work. Attendance is mandatory.

You will complete a survey on the first day of class. Your responses to that survey will help me form official working groups. The working groups will consist of people who are doing broadly similar types of theses, or working in cognate disciplines. You will work very closely with these 4-5 people all throughout the next 2 semesters. Outside of your friend group (obviously), they will be your primary support group. You will be accountable to them every work day (see "daily check ins" below) of both semesters. You will help them solve their problems, and they will help you solve yours.

DELIVERABLES

The deadlines noted in Table 1 are first. If you are late, I will deduct 5% a day every day. However, I will grant each person 3 days of exceptions for all of 420 A and B. Use them anytime. After 3 days, you will need a medical note. While I am strict about late assignments, you should know that it is absolutely fine to submit work early. If you intend to do so, please let me know in advance. I will have to set aside time for evaluating your work.

All work will be submitted electronically. I will not accept paper copies for any reason.

Table 1: Overview of Deliverables.

Deliverable	Deadline	Value
Mini-Proposals (Optional)	September 19th	5%
Research Proposal	October 3rd	20%
Daily Checkins & Weekly Progress Reports	Ongoing	20%
Conference Presentation	~ March 16th	5%
Conference Paper	March 23rd	5%
Conference Poster	March 23rd	5%
Final Thesis	March 31st	40%

Mini-Proposals (Optional)

If you are uncertain about what you want to do for your thesis project, you can submit mini-proposals for up to 3 different ideas. They should all be submitted at the same time. Regardless of whether you compare 2 or 3 ideas, do not write more than 1000 words total. It is totally fine to write less if you don't need 1000 words to adequately compare the ideas. Your mini-proposals should (1) identify a problem or question (not just a theme or an area), (2) say why you think that problem or question is important and what value your work might contribute, (3) say how you will probably go about addressing that problem or question (e.g. interviews, secondary data analysis, content analysis, computer simulations, reading *n* numbers of books, going to an archive, etc.), (4) identify any potential challenges you might encounter and what if anything you could do to mitigate them, and finally (5) list people who might be able to supervise your thesis. If you complete the mini proposals, they will count for 5% of your final grade. If not, the 5% is automatically added to your full research proposal.

Research Proposal

You will have to provide a 1500 - 2000 word research proposal no later than October 3rd. I encourage you to complete your proposal earlier if possible. I will provide a detailed set of instructions for the research proposal in one of our first classes.

Daily Checkins & Weekly Progress Reports

In lieu of written updates once or twice throughout the course, you will engage in daily and weekly progress reports with me and your working group. Treat these exactly the same as you would a more

official written progress report, because they serve a similar function and are worth the same amount of your grade.

Every day you will visit your slack channel for your working group and quickly post a check-in that answers the following three questions: (1) what did you do yesterday, (2) what did you do today, and (3) is there anything preventing you from making progress. I expect you to resist the urge to do any impression management, as that defeats the purpose. Be honest. That means there will probably be days where your update is: "I did nothing yesterday and I will probably do nothing today." I hope there are very few days when you say that, but I do expect to see some.

Every Tuesday we will have dedicated time for face-to-face progress reports and strategy sessions. You and your working group will each report on what you did the following week. You will set a strategic plan for the coming week. You will talk about any problems that came up and what you are doing / could be doing to overcome them. **Every week, I expect you to** have a kanban board[3] open as the group talks, and for at least one person to be moving cards across "todo," "in progress," and "done" columns for each group member. If you are not using a kanban board to make your work visible and accountable, you *must* submit a one-page summary of the official agreed-upon system you will use for these weekly sessions no later than Tuesday September 12th. If it is a reasonable way to visualize, track, and prioritize work, I will approve it. If not, I will tell you what to change.

In addition to visualizing, tracking, and prioritizing work with a kanban board or approved alternative, I expect a member of your group to report on the session using this form: `http://bit.ly/working_group_reports`. Whoever is responsible for completing the reports in any given week must do so during the meeting itself. Please complete a different form for each person in the group. I will be checking these every week to help identify problems in (nearly) real time.

I expect you to earn your 20% by taking this process extremely seriously. I expect you to do it, I expect you to be honest, and most importantly I expect you to help your peers, and to turn to your peers for help when you need it, and as soon as you need it. The entire reason for doing things this way is (1) make you accountable, and (2) to identify and resolve problems as soon as they emerge. You'll thank me later.

Conference Presentation

Towards the end of the Winter term we will organize a mini-conference to share the work you have done, and to get constructive feedback from the class at large. Unlike most of our other conversations (which are about getting lots of tiny tasks accomplished), the conference will be entirely focused on the content of your research. If you want to be filmed (for any reason whatsoever), I will film your talk and turn over the file. We will advertise the conference and you can invite whoever you want.

Conference Paper & Poster

You will submit a conference paper and poster towards the end of the winter semester. The conference paper should include a concise summary of the topic, approach, results, and conclusions. A template for the paper will be provided to students in advance of the due date. In addition, students must create a poster version of their project for public presentation. We will cover design principles for posters in class.

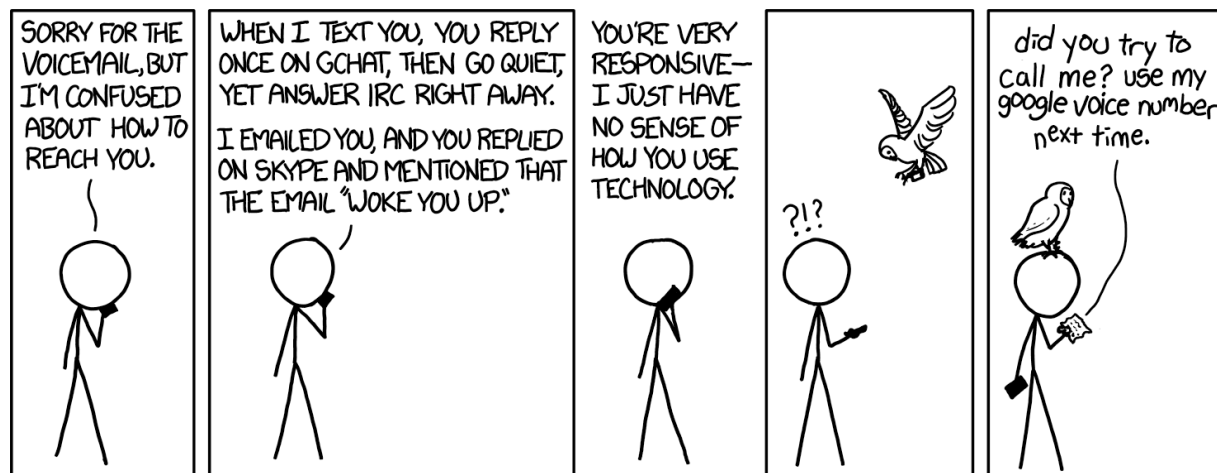3.   I recommend **Meistertask**, but you may use something else if you like.

Figure 1: "Preffered Chat System" by xkcd. https://xkcd.com/1254/.

Final Thesis

The deliverable for the final project will vary and should be discussed in advance with your external supervisor. It may take the form of a thesis written in the form of a journal article, a policy report or white paper, software, etc. There are plenty of options. Make sure you talk to your supervisor and work out all of the details in your research proposal.

COMMUNICATION

We will be using the collaboration tool #slack for regular class communication. I use the do not disturb settings on #slack, so I will not see any messages you send me outside of normal working hours. You are free to email me, of course, but I tend to respond to slack messages from students faster than I respond to emails. There are free #slack apps for Mac OS X, Linux (beta), Windows (beta), iOS, and Android.

FEEDBACK

I will solicit brief, informal, and confidential course evaluations throughout the semester. These will only take a few minutes of your time. The purpose is to make sure that we are moving at a comfortable pace, that you feel you understand the material, and that my teaching style is meeting your needs. I will use this ongoing feedback to make adjustments as the course progresses. Although you are not obligated to do so, please fill out the evaluations so that I can make this the best learning experience for you, and the best teaching experience for me.

ON CAMPUS RESOURCES

Access Ability Services

The AccessAbility Office, located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without

compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AccessAbility Office at the beginning of each academic term.

Mental Health

The University of Waterloo, the Faculty of Environment, and our Departments consider students' well-being to be extremely important. We recognize that throughout the term students may face health challenges – physical and / or emotional. Please note that help is available. Mental health is a serious issue for everyone and can affect your ability to do your best work. Counselling Services is an inclusive, non-judgmental, and confidential space for anyone to seek support. They offer confidential counselling for a variety of areas including anxiety, stress management, depression, grief, substance use, sexuality, relationship issues, and much more.

The Writing Centre

Although I will be giving you feedback on your work throughout the term, I encourage you to make appointments with people at the writing centre. Their services are available to all UW students.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic Integrity

In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

We will all uphold academic integrity policies at University of Waterloo, which include but are not limited to promoting academic freedom and a community free from discrimination and harassment. You can educate yourself on these policies – and the disciplinary processes in place to deal with violations – on the Office of Academic Integrity website.

A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offense, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about 'rules' for group work / collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71, Student Discipline. For typical penalties, check Guidelines for Assessment of Penalties.

Grievances and Appeals

A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his / her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70: Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4. When in doubt please contact your Undergraduate Advisor for details.

A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 – Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71 – (Student Discipline) may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72 (Student Appeals).

Religious Observances

Student needs to inform the instructor at the beginning of term if special accommodation needs to be made for religious observances that are not otherwise accounted for in the scheduling of classes and deliverables.