

MM 350 Term Paper

Purpose

The purpose of this assignment is to provide you with an opportunity to explore in depth some facet of theory related to multimedia practice and to share your results with the other students in the class. You will be examining the literature related to some general area of multimedia development and focusing on research into a specific question. First and foremost, your paper must address a topic related in some way to multimedia development. Papers on unrelated topics, however beautifully crafted, will receive no credit. If you have any uncertainty regarding the suitability of your topic, ask me about it.

Tasks

I. General Background

The first few weeks of class we will be discussing the scientific method and the nature of scientific writing in general. As we do so, you should be thinking hard about what you know about multimedia design and development and pondering questions that might one might answer using scientific methods. Maintain a list of these questions to refer to as we begin library work.

As the course progresses you will be writing some research paper summaries. Select papers to summarize that appear to have something to do with one or more of your questions. Reading and writing about the issues should help you refine your idea for a term paper. If one of the papers you read in this stage of the work is a “meta-analysis” that summarizes the state of knowledge about some question, its sources will help you quickly get a broad perspective on the research in the area.

II. Research Question

Your review of the general background material should suggest an area that has been examined in depth. Your basic sources from Task I should provide references to materials that provide firmer scientific evidence for this area (and perhaps others). Identify a fairly specific question to address. Don't choose too specific a question, or you may find no pertinent results. Similarly, try to avoid sweeping questions that will require you to review dozens of research articles.

III. Focused Literature Review

Review scientific literature addressing your question from Task II. Your review here should include at least five primary research efforts. Two of these may be web publications. You may also choose to include additional sources that offer philosophical insights.

By the time you reach this phase of work you should have several papers to give you a variety of information about your question, and you will have learned to interpret what they have to say. Now you can begin constructing a review of the research that specifically addresses your question using the published findings of others as support.

Your review should synthesize the information presented in your sources, including the theoretical background and the hypotheses tested. You should summarize the findings and any suggestions for further work. If there is disagreement in the results, you may

wish to attempt an explanation. *Be careful to properly cite information and maintain a list of references.*

IV. Draft (Due at the beginning of Week Seven)

Compose a draft of your paper including the general background information as an introductory section and the focused review as the body of the report. Include a list of all references. *Either proof-read this draft yourself, or have someone proof-read it for you **before** submitting it.* I will make remarks on content, references, citation, and organization and return it to you within ten days. This draft should be free of spelling and grammatical errors. Please seek help from the Learning Center if you are at all uncertain of your work. Tip: Write the body of the paper first, and then write the introduction.

V. Presentations (Week ten of the term)

Prepare a five to seven minute presentation presenting your research question and summarizing the general background and any specific findings. You will make your presentation to the class during the last week of class.

VI. Final Draft

Turn in a neatly-formatted final draft, including title page and references, no later than 3:00 PM the last Wednesday of class. You should begin polishing your draft, and continue working on this, as soon as you have turned in the initial draft—don't wait for my feedback, but do incorporate any suggestions I make when I return your draft.

Assessment

Your term research paper will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

Draft

Topic is clearly related to multimedia research	10 points
Draft includes correct resources	10 points
Draft has relatively few mechanical errors	10 points
Draft shows logical progression of ideas	10 points
Draft is well organized	10 points
Draft employs appropriate sentence structure	10 points

Final Paper

Free from mechanical and spelling errors	25 points
Well organized	25 points
Good synthesis of ideas	25 points
Resources and summary agree	20 points
Logical progression	25 points
Correct citation of authorities	20 points

Presentation

Provides good summary of work	10 points
Appropriate use of media	15 points
Well organized	15 points
Correct timing	10 points

Some Example Topics (By no means comprehensive!)

General Area: Interface Design

- Menu construction
- Positioning or size & shape of buttons
- Use of image maps for navigation
- Number of buttons
- Screen layouts
- Organization of nodes

General Area: Media Selection

- Levels of realism for different types of illustration
- Icon selection
- Use of audio (or visual) feedback
- Use of animation
- Length of video
- Number of frames per second

General Area: Message Reinforcement

- Combining media, text
- Order of presentation

General Area: Multimedia for Learning

- Use of special images in lessons
- Pacing of presentation
- Learner control
- Timing of feedback (delayed or immediate?)

All of the above areas draw from some well-established theoretical basis as a starting point. In some cases the most interesting studies may involve examination of the interaction between two issues (such as visual realism and lesson pacing).

For Reference:

UWR Writing Intensive Outcomes:

- * Students will produce at least 5,000 words (including drafts, in-class writing, informal papers, and polished papers); 2,000 words of this total should be in polished papers which students have revised after receiving feedback and criticism.
- * Students will practice the forms of writing and reflect upon the nature of the writing used by graduates and professionals in the discipline the course represents.

- * Students will write at least one paper integrating information from more than one source, employing the appropriate documentation style for the discipline represented by the course.
- * Students will draft, revise, and edit their formal written work.
- * Students will seek assistance from a Writing Tutor in the Writing Lab when needed and when referred by the instructor.