World View, Paradigms and the Research Process

“World view: a comprehensive outlook about life and the universe from which one explains and/or structures relationships and activities” --- Peter A. Angeles
For each method . . .

- Paradigm
  - Worldview & basic assumptions?
- Purpose
  - What does it do best?
- Process
  - What are basic steps to doing it well?
- Product
  - What are common outcomes/documents?
How do we cope with life?

To deal with life we need to:

- Ask and Answer Questions
- Define and Solve Problems
- Find or Develop Support for Claims
- Make Better Decisions

Are you intellectually curious? It’s a coresize!
What role do assumptions play?

- Assumptions shape
  - Your patterns of explanation?
  - The QUESTIONS you ask and what you think count as viable ANSWERS and ARGUMENTS.
  - Four things shape our assumptions . . . .

Got the job? Didn’t get the job?
Components of a world view

- Epistemology—Standards for Truth?
  - Is knowledge best conceived in parts or wholes?
  - For something to be “true” must it be true everywhere?

We’d be a happy family if it wasn’t for Timmy . . .
Components of a world view

- Epistemology--Standards for Truth?
- Ontology--Nature of Reality? The essence of a thing.
  - To what extent do humans make real choices?
  - To what extent are humans best understood in terms of states or traits?
  - To what extent is human experience individual versus social?
Components of a world view

- Epistemology--Standards for Truth?
- Ontology--Nature of Reality?
- Axiology--Nature of Values?

Should this study be allowed?

Should scholarship attempt social change?
Components of a world view

- Epistemology--Standards for Truth?
- Ontology--Nature of Reality?
- Axiology--Nature of Values?
- Cosmology--Natural—Supernatural?
  - Does the supernatural exist?
  - What can we know about it?
  - What is it’s relationship with the natural world?
“Nothing is more important than what a man believes about God. How he perceives Him will determine, to a significant degree, what he believes about himself and how he relates to others. It will also define his interpretation of life and the meaning of events.”

Richard Exley, *Man of Valor*
Application

- You have a world view
  - Consciously built?
  - Passively accepted?
- Authors of texts, theories, etc. also have world views
- **Methods we will examine are based on certain world views**
- “The unexamined life is not worth living”
  Plato.
For each method

- Paradigm
  - Basic set of positions on worldview issues?
  - Summary available on my website!

- Purpose
  - What does method do best?
  - When is it most appropriate?

- Process
  - What are basic steps?

- Product
  - What are the common outcomes/documents?
The Big Picture
An Overview of the Research Methods We Will Encounter
So . . . What’s your major?

Briefly answer the following questions:

- Do seniors date differently than freshmen?
- Why or why not?
- How would you study the phenomenon to see if your conclusions are supported?
Making Sense of . . .

Existing Information

- Secondary Research
  - Efficient
  - Vocabulary
  - Methods
- Library Workshop
Application

What kinds of existing information would we look at to begin to answer our research question?

- Vocabulary?
  - Scholarly
  - Slang/Common

- Current trends?

- Historical data?
Making Sense of . . . Subjective Experience

- Qualitative research
  - Emphasis on Description
  - “Local reality,” vocabulary, rules and processes

- Research Project One
Interpretive Research Uses Qualitative Methods

- In-Depth Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Observational studies
- Case Studies

How might we use interpretive research to explore differences in senior and freshmen dating practices at UNCW?
Making Sense of . . .

Messages and Artifacts

- There are two broad approaches to making sense of “texts”
  - Rhetorical Analysis
  - Content Analysis
Rhetorical Analysis

- Typically focus is on evaluation and judgment
- Typically uses rhetorical theories as its tools
- COM 341
Content Analysis

- Focuses on quantitative description of large sample of texts
  - Uses numbers and coding to identify patterns
  - Uses concepts and logic of social sciences

“I TOLD you Irene was going to hit here !@$%^!!!”

Application Activity
How might we examine some existing messages about dating?
Making Sense of... 

Measurable Responses

Quantitative research focuses on observable and measurable aspects of the phenomenon under study.
Empirical Research Uses Quantitative Methods

- Content Analysis
- Surveys
- Experiments
- Content Analysis activity
- Research Project Two
Application

How might we use surveys or experiments to explore differences in senior and freshmen dating practices at UNCW?
Why do we have so many methods!?!?

The KEY to all of this is: **Appropriateness**: Does your method match your research question?
Before you FREAK OUT! . . .

- This was an overview, we will go through this again!
- Your writing assignments will focus on using just one of these primary methods at a time

I am at peace with COM 200 . . . and my mullet
Next Time

- Practice quiz
- Get into Groups—Don’t be absent!!
- Discuss Group skills CBT (look at assignment on my website)