"From Idea to Text: Designing, Validating, and Presenting Your PhD Research"

Prof. Dr Konstantinos Dallas, Professor and Head, Digital Cultures and Communication Department, Faculty of Communication, Vilnius University

Seminar Description:

This 90-minute seminar is designed for doctoral students at all stages of their PhD journey who wish to critically assess, refine, or validate their research design. Whether students are still shaping their topic or writing their chapters, this seminar offers a structured framework to sketch out or revisit their research architecture —from initial idea to final thesis presentation. Through examples and case prompts, participants will critically explore the alignment between topic, theory, data, method, and narrative—ensuring that their work is both feasible and intellectually robust.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Evaluate the originality, relevance, and feasibility of their research topic.
2. Assess the soundness of their theoretical framework or sensitizing concepts.
3. Ensure the appropriateness of evidence, conceptualization, and methods adopted.
4. Design or revise their thesis structure to support clarity of argument, narrative flow, evidential support, and scholarly voice.

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Key Content:

1. From Idea to Topic: Anchoring Your Research
· Moving from a hunch or interest to a focused, researchable topic
· Assessing importance, originality, and feasibility
· Identifying the gap: relevance to existing literature and disciplinary conversations
· Justifying the study: claims of significance and framing contribution

2. Theoretical Framing and Conceptual Anchoring
· Sensitizing concepts vs. formal theoretical frameworks
· How theory helps structure evidence and define scope
· Reflecting on disciplinary traditions and interdisciplinarity

3. Evidence and Ontology: Defining the Field of Inquiry
· Sketch the structure of your "data universe" to clarify what your study investigates
· Represent the imagery, or ontology, of your research object
· Distinguish between data collection, conceptualization, and operationalization

4. Methodological Alignment and Soundness
· Choosing methods that "fit" theory, topic, and evidence
· Considering methodological principles across paradigms (e.g., validity, reliability, coherence, saturation)

5. From Design to Writing: Building Your Thesis Narrative
· Structuring the dissertation: chapter logic, and thematic scaffolding
· Integrating evidence, analysis, and scholarship within argumentation
· Writing voice and scholarly stance: clarity, tone, and style