Literature Reviews in Management Research

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Course instructor

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Location

Campus Munich

Application and registration procedure

Goal and target audience

The seminar is designed for doctoral candidates at the TUM School of Management. It provides an in-depth examination of literature review methodologies as a key element of academic scholarship. It is especially suited for doctoral candidates planning a literature review for their dissertation and preparing a review paper for publication.

Application/Registration process

Limited spots are available. Doctoral students from other TUM schools and universities are welcome.
If the seats are booked out, priority will be given to doctoral candidates from the TUM School of Management.
Application via Email to Prof. Dr. Frank-Martin Belz by 1 December 2026 (23:59 p.m.) with CV and a short motivation letter (max. 1 page), including a tentative topic for a review related to the dissertation.

Course aims

What this course is

This seminar provides doctoral candidates with a comprehensive repertoire of literature review methodologies (systematic, integrative, and problematizing) and the craft of positioning a scholarly contribution. Participants will also gain hands-on experience with literature reviews, including AI-assisted tools.

What this course is not

The seminar is not an introduction to academic writing or solely focused on using AI tools for literature review. We emphasize theorizing, methodological transparency, and contribution.

Course objectives

Knowledge Objectives

- Explain what makes a high-quality, impactful review
- Distinguish systematic, integrative and problematizing reviews and when each is appropriate
- Understand where AI tools help (or not) with reviews

Skills Objectives

- Develop and evaluate a protocol design for a literature review

- Execute a search and screening of the relevant literature
- Produce a problematizing memo and write a clear positioning/contribution section

Learning Objectives

By the end of the seminar, participants:

- Develop a structured review protocol for a topic related to your dissertation
- Write a problematizing memo
- Conduct an AI-enhanced literature review.

Schedule

#	Date	Contents	Location
1	25.01.2027 (14:15-15:45)	Introduction to Literature Reviews in Management Research	
2	25.01.2027 (16:00-17:30)	Reviews as Research – Relevance, Rigor and Reflexivity	
3	26.01.2027 (9:15-10:45)	Systematic Reviews – Methods and Reporting	
4	26.01.2027 (11:00-12:30)	Literature Review Sprint (I): Developing a Review Protocol Design	
5	26.01.2027 (14:00-15:45)	Literature Review Sprint (II): Presenting and Discussing Your Review Protocol Designs	
6	27.01.2027 (9:15-10:45)	Integrative Reviews – Synthesizing for Theory	
7	27.01.2027 (11:00-12:30)	Problematizing Reviews – Challenging Assumptions	
8	27.01.2027 (14:00-15:30)	Literature Review Sprint (III): Developing a Problematizing Memo	
9	28.01.2027 (9:15-10:45)	Literature Review Sprint (IV): Presenting and Discussing Your Problematizing Memos	
10	28.01.2027 (11:00-12:30)	The Future of Reviews – AI in Action	
11	28.01.2027 (14:00-15:30)	Literature Review Sprint (V): Developing an AI-Enhanced Mini-Review	
12	28.01.2027 (16:00-17:30)	Literature Review Sprint (VI): Developing an AI-Enhanced Mini-Review	
13	29.01.2027 (9:15-10:45)	Literature Review Sprint (VII): Presenting and Discussing Your AI-Enhanced Mini-Reviews	

14	29.01.2027 (11:00-12:30)	Reviews as Research Revisited – Critical Reflections	

The bloc seminar will be held in person on the main campus of the Technical University of Munich.

Core readings

The **core readings** cover all three main review methodologies (systematic, integrative, problematizing) in management research. This gives the doctoral candidates a full overview of approaches, including the use of AI in literature review. Each session has 2-3 carefully chosen, highly cited, and recent core readings. The methodological articles are listed in logical order of proposed reading (not in alphabetical order). The doctoral candidates are expected to **read the articles before class** to enable individual assignments, group exercises, and plenum discussions. The required and further readings are available as PDF files on Moodle for participants' convenience.

Session 1: Reviews as Research – Relevance, Rigor and Reflexivity

Post, C., Riika, S., Gatrell, C. and Prescott, J.E. (2020): Advancing Theory with Review Articles. *Journal of Management Studies*, 57, 351-376.

Rousseau, D.M. (2024): Reviews as Research: Steps in Developing Trustworthy Synthesis. *Academy of Management Annals*, 18, 395-402.

Krlev, G., Hannigan, T. and Spicer, A. (2025): What Makes a Good Review Article? Empirical Evidence from Management and Organization Research. *Academy of Management Annals*, 19, 376-403.

Session 2: Systematic Reviews – Methods and Reporting

Tranfield, D., Denyer, D., and Smart, P. (2003): Towards a Methodology for Developing Evidence-Informed Management Knowledge by Means of Systematic Review. *British Journal of Management*, 14, 207-222.

Simsek, Z., Fox, B., and Heavey, C. (2023): Systematicity in Organizational Research Literature Reviews: A Framework and Assessment. *Organizational Research Methods*, 26, 292-321.

Page, M.J. et al. (2021): The PRISMA 2020 statement: an updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *BMJ*, 2021, 372, 71.

Session 3: Integrative Reviews – Synthesizing for Theory

Torraco, R.J. (2016): Writing Integrative Literature Reviews: Using the Past and Present to Explore the Future. *Human Resource Development Review*, 15, 404-428.

Cronin, M.A., and George, E. (2023). The Why and How of the Integrative Review. *Organizational Research Methods*, 26, 168-192.

Elsbach, K.D., and van Knippenberg, D. (2020): Creating High-Impact Literature Reviews: An Argument for Integrative Reviews. *Journal of Management Studies*, 57, 1277-1289.

Session 4: Problematizing Reviews – Challenging Assumptions

Alvesson, M. and Sandberg, J. (2020): The Problematizing Review: A Counterpoint to Elsbach and van Knippenberg's Argument for Integrative Reviews. *Journal of Management Studies*, 57, 1290-1304.

Patriotta, G. (2020): Writing Impactful Reviews. *Journal of Management Studies*, 57, 1272-1276.

Session 5: The Future of Reviews – AI in Action

Antons, D. Breidbach, C.F., Josho. A.M., and Salge, T.O. (2023): Computational Literature Reviews: Method, Algorithms, and Roadmap. Organizational Research Methods, 26, 107-138.

Thau, S., & Katila, R. (2025). Large Language Models as Tools for Integrative Reviews. *Academy of Management Annals*, 19, 435-439.

Course procedures

The bloc seminar combines short lectures, interactive discussions, and hands-on exercises. The doctoral candidates are expected to **prepare thoroughly beforehand**, as class time is for discussion and application. Each session builds on preparatory readings and applies them to participants' own dissertation-related topics. The doctoral candidates are expected to:

- Complete all assigned readings before each session and bring annotated notes or questions to facilitate discussion.
- Actively participate in in-class activities, including peer feedback rounds and practical exercises (e.g., search string development, screening calibration, assumption-challenging).
- Apply seminar content directly to their chosen review topic, progressing through three assignments in sequence.

Learning Environment & Expectations

The seminar is designed as a collaborative and constructive learning space where all participants contribute to the shared knowledge-building. To maintain a high-quality and respectful academic environment, the doctoral candidates are expected to follow our codes of conduct, and:

- Engage respectfully with peers' work and provide constructive, evidence-based feedback.
- Observe plagiarism at all times, including correct citation and avoidance of plagiarism.
- Use AI tools responsibly, ensuring transparency about their role in the research process, and critically reviewing any AI-generated content before inclusion into the assignment.
- Protect the confidentiality of peer review topics and data shared during the seminar.
- Be prepared to present and discuss progress on assignments in plenary and small-group discussions.

The instructor commits to fostering an open, constructive and supportive atmosphere and offering timely feedback.

Assignments

There are three individual assignments organized as a "literature review sprint" during the bloc seminar. They are designed to give doctoral candidates hands-on experience with different review methodologies and methods, while directly advancing their dissertation work. Each task emphasizes methodological rigor, critical reflection, and transparency, including the responsible use of AI tools. Together, they ensure that participants not only understand the literature review conceptually, but also apply it in practice.

1. Review Protocol Design: Develop a structured review protocol for a topic related to your dissertation. This must include: reason why a literature review is useful, research question, databases, search strings, inclusion/exclusion criteria, screening, coding plan and a PRISMA-style flowchart (3 pages, including flowchart).
2. Problematizing Memo: Select 3 core papers for a topic related to your dissertation, and read them carefully, employing a hermeneutic analysis. Write a problematizing memo that challenges the basic assumptions and formulates a novel, clearly articulated research question (3 pages).
3. AI-Enhanced Mini-Review: Use at least one AI tool for literature reviews (e.g., Hubmeta, Elicit) to conduct a small-scale review of a topic related to your dissertation. Document the AI-process (input, output, decisions) and critically reflect on the contents of the mini review, transparency, reproducibility, the opportunities and limitations (3 pages, plus “AI-use appendix” like screenshots, logs, and prompts).

Assessment

The seminar is graded on a **pass/fail** basis. To successfully pass the seminar, the participants must:

- Attend and actively participate in all seminar sessions. Absences require prior notification and must be compensated for through agreed-upon work.
- Complete all required readings prior to the relevant sessions, and be prepared to summarize the key points and contribute to discussions and exercises.
- Participate in collaborative activities, including peer feedback and group exercises, in a respectful and professional manner.
- Submit all three assignments by the stated deadline.
- Demonstrate satisfactory quality in each assignment. Unsatisfactory work in one assignment can be revised once after feedback.

Workload

3 ECTS = 90 hours

Use of AI

This syllabus, including its overall structure and the careful selection of readings, was prepared by the instructor. ChatGPT 5.0 was employed to refine the text and support the development of assignments. Any AI-generated input was critically reviewed, revised and approved by the instructor.