Course Overview
Research can be a powerful tool for our competition as well as our own industry. The competition definitely utilizes their tools, are you prepared to discuss them? During this course, you should become familiar with current research and how to use it to your advantage as well as how the competition uses it to theirs. Research can be used to validate advertising or advance specification changes in both ASTM and AASHTO.

Course Tasks
For this course, you are to make use of the links listed under “Resources and Required Reading” for guidance. Not all pertinent information will be found on the first page you view. After you have become familiar with the site’s information, choose one research topic from each site that would most greatly affect the market in your area. Each piece of research should cover durability, failures or hydraulics. Then craft a 200 word (approximately a ½ page) rebuttal or explanation for each of your three topics (durability, failures, and hydraulics) from each of the 3 sources, and one 300 word rebuttal from a source and topic of your choice that explains how you could use the research to your benefit to build a irrefutable case against the competition. For example, are there portions of the research or advertisement that was based on research that seem incomplete, used incorrectly, or are represented in a misleading manner? Could you use the research to show an agency a strength / weakness in the product and suggest a specification change? What kind of specification change would you suggest? How is the competition using this research, and what strategy would you take to counteract it? Many times the American Concrete Pipe Association has addressed research and prepared arguments. Other times the topic is unexplored, but in vital need of disproof in your market. Feel free to contact your ACPA staff or its members who work closely with the association for assistance.

Conclusion
This is an opportunity to learn about the current research issues in the market, how to use them as a tool, and what the ACPA has available for your use on the subject. Please submit your reports to the ACPA who will evaluate them on a pass / fail grading scale. You might also discover that the ACPA would like to share your expertise on the subject to the rest of the membership for their use as a tool. When submitting your report, please indicate whether or not ACPA has permission to share your information.