

LIBRARY 100: INFORMATION LITERACY (Spring 2007)

An Introduction to Library Research (SYLLABUS)

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Class: Rosenthal Library, Rms. 223 & 225, Friday 10:15am-12:05pm

Office Hours: Rosenthal Library, Rm. 348; Friday, 12:05-1pm & by appointment

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WHAT IS THIS COURSE?

This is a 1-credit introduction to doing Library research. It is intended for first and second year students but is open to anyone who would like to improve their research skills. This is a success-based course whose primary goal is to enable every student to learn the process of doing basic research. This is best accomplished by researching something you are interested in. We will take a biography-centered approach in the hope that a historical figure of importance in your major will interest you. The course is designed to offer you formal instruction through lecture and demonstration, hands-on experience with in-class assignments, and research experience through out-of-class homework assignments. You are required to research a topic and write an essay because you will have to do this frequently in other courses. The best way to learn is by going through the process - by researching and writing, albeit on a smaller scale. After completing the course it should be easier for you to complete research and writing projects in your courses.

WHY IS THIS SYLLABUS LONG?

The syllabus is long on detail because I think it is best for us both to know exactly what you are expected to do in the course: learn research skills, and get a good grade, by doing a moderate amount of work consistently every week.

REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

5 Assignments	(30 points)
3 Essays (1-page each)	(15 points)
3 Quizzes	(15 points)
1 Pre-Final In-Class Project	(10 points)
1 Final In-Class Project	(15 points)
1 Final Essay (3-5 pages)	(10 points)
<u>Class Participation</u>	<u>(5 points)</u>
TOTAL	(100 points)

GRADING EQUIVALENCIES

A+ 97-100	B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	D+ 67-69
A 93-96	B 83-86	C 73-76	D 60-66
A- 90-92	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	F 0-59

ATTENDANCE

I cannot compel you to attend class, but class participation is part of your grade, and I will be taking attendance. The course is only 8 weeks long. Even with one absence you will miss a good portion of the course, and must make up the work on your own.

ASSIGNMENTS

The assignments are arranged to give you practical experience doing research using Library resources. There is no substitute for doing real research. By real research I mean researching, and reading, material that is written by knowledgeable people. Simply searching the World Wide Web and using indiscriminately whatever you find is not considered research. You will be shown how to evaluate websites, but most of what you will be doing is locating published material owned by the Library, to read and use in writing your essay. You will begin most assignments in class and complete them for homework by the next class meeting.

READINGS

You will retrieve and read 5 sources on your topic: 1 entry from a specialized reference book, 1 magazine article, 1 newspaper article, 1 scholarly journal article, 1 book part. Except for these readings there is no textbook or required reading. However, the following books are recommended as useful guides to research or writing.

Research

Barzun, Jacques and Henry F Graff. *The Modern Researcher*. 6th edition. Belmont, C.A.: Thomson/Wadsworth, 2004.

Gates, Jean Key. *Guide to the Use of Libraries and Information Sources*. 7th edition. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994.

Mann, Thomas. *Oxford Guide to Library Research*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Wolf, Carolyn. *Basic Library Skills*. 4th edition. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1999.

Writing

Strunk, William and E. B. White. *Elements of Style*. 4th edition. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1999.

Zinsser, William. *On Writing Well: The Classic Guide to Writing Nonfiction*. 6th edition. New York: HarperCollins, 1998.

1-PAGE ESSAYS

You will write THREE one page essays based on the readings you select as the best for your topic. This is designed to help you evaluate and analyze your reading material so as to extract the most important information from your reading. It also gives you some practice in writing, with feedback from, so that you can write a good synthesis for the final essay.

QUIZZES

The quizzes are multiple choice questions. Some will test your familiarity with the definitions that I have covered in class because it is important for you to learn the basic terminology that is used when doing research. It will help you understand the research process better, and make your questions more intelligible when you ask librarians and professors for assistance. Others are all based upon your practical experience in doing your research, so as long as you have done the assignments you should do well.

FINAL ESSAY & BIBLIOGRAPHY

The essay has to be 3-5 pages long, double-spaced word processed. No handwritten or typewritten essays will be accepted. The entire essay must include a title page, 3-5 pages of text, a separate page for endnotes, and a complete bibliography as well. So, you must submit 6 to 8 pages total (1 title page, 3-5 text of essay, 1 endnotes, 1 bibliography). You must have consulted a minimum of 5 sources total, including ALL of the following:

- 1 Entry from a specialized Reference Book
- 1 Magazine Article
- 1 Newspaper Article (it must be the *New York Times* obituary if one exists)
- 1 Scholarly Journal Article
- 1 Book Part (chapter from a circulating book; if not, an entry from a specialized reference book)

You must also submit copies of the actual readings listed in your bibliography: reference book entries/chapters and articles. For any websites you have listed you must submit a copy of the main or introductory page of the website.

Content of the Essay

The essay should describe the life and work of the person you have researched, and focus on the impact this person's life and work has had on our modern world. How are we better or worse off because of this person's achievements or failures? When writing the essay assume that your reader, in this case it is me, knows little or nothing about your topic. Part of the process of writing an essay is evaluating what you read. The material you retrieve will be of varying quality and type. I want you to learn that people write things for different purposes, for different audiences, and with different goals in mind. They write having been influenced themselves in various social, cultural, and ideological ways. Pay attention whenever possible to who has written what you are reading. What do you know about the writer? Gender, race, ethnicity, education, employment, etc may all have an impact on the perspective(s) from which this person is writing. Scholars try to be objective in what they write, but even they do not always succeed.

Grading of the Essay

I will grade your essay on how well you have done your research (meaning how carefully did you evaluate and select the materials to read), and how well you have synthesized what you have read into an intelligible essay. In addition, I will take into account how well you document your essay and prepare the notes and bibliography.

Endnotes

I expect you to footnote anything you have paraphrased from your readings. You must also footnote anything you have quoted from your readings, and be sure to place it in quotation marks in the text of your essay. Since your essay will be written only from the material that you have selected and listed in your bibliography, I will check your sources to make sure you are getting your ideas from the material you have submitted.

THE PRE-FINAL AND FINAL IN-CLASS PROJECTS

You will demonstrate the research skills and techniques you learned in the course. You will be required to locate different types of reading material on a research topic that I will assign, and answer questions on the topic derived from those readings.

CLASS BEHAVIOR

I expect us all to treat each other with courtesy and respect. This includes adhering to some basic rules of decorum and politeness:

Please do not talk while I or a classmate is talking to the class.

Please do not eat, drink, read, or sleep in class.

Please do not leave during class, except to use the rest room, or for some emergency.
Please do not put your feet on the desks or other furniture.
Please do not turn on your cell phone – talking on a cell phone is not permitted in the Library.

WHAT IF...

I anticipate everyone doing well in class, and hope you learn useful research skills that will help you. Nevertheless, just in case outside forces intrude into your work, or if you are temporarily distracted by other things in your busy life, your grade will be affected.

...you hand in an assignment late? Up to one week late, the most you can receive for the assignment is 5 points; more than a week late, 0 points.

...you hand in your essays late? Up to one week late, the most you can receive is 4 points; more than a week late, 0 points..

...your final essay is late? 1 point will be deducted from your grade for every day it is late, for a maximum of two days; the final deadline by which you can hand in your essay is March 28th at 10pm, but the most you can receive by then is 8 points; if it is not in by the final deadline? 0 points for the essay.

...your final essay reads exactly like your readings? Plagiarism will not be tolerated. The penalty will be an F in the course and reporting of the offense to the Vice President for Student Affairs. It will be very obvious to me if what you write has been copied from your readings, or if it has not come from the material you have submitted with your essay.

...you are absent on the day of a Quiz? Contact me right away, you must take a makeup quiz before the next class meeting. The most you can receive for the makeup quiz is 4 points.

...you are absent on the day of the Pre-Final In-Class Project or the Final In-Class Project? 0 points for the Project - no makeup.

ASKING FOR HELP

Please let me know if you need help at any time during the course. You can meet me during Office Hours or set up an appointment.

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