

**Introduction to Graduate Research
Description**

As students of TESL, rhetoric/ composition, or literature, you'll have the opportunity in this seminar to define, plan, and complete the first stages of a major research project on an issue of particular professional interest. In the process, you'll identify the theoretical approach most appropriate to the project; become familiar with key resources for scholarly research in your field; gain skills in accessing these resources in print and on-line; consider publishing criteria and submission procedures for journals relevant to your topic; and practice identifying, summarizing, critically analyzing, and synthesizing research data. As a class, we'll also consider how access to information -- and thus the possibility of democracy -- have at the same time been revolutionized by technology and constrained by growing media monopoly. Working both independently and in collaboration with others, you'll have the chance to experience the challenge and excitement of the research process, and to explore implications of your own role as intellectual sleuth. By the end of the course, you'll have developed an extensive annotated bibliography. Imagining the potential essay toward which it points, you'll present your work-in-progress to your colleagues in a seminar colloquium.

As members of the academic community, we tend to think of ourselves as familiar with libraries and skilled in using them -- we have all written papers that required research of one sort or another. However, the search for the sources needed for a major project frequently leads either to a burdensome overload of information or to apparent dead-ends. You may walk away convinced that what you need doesn't exist or isn't worth the effort to find. This course is designed to help you negotiate your way effectively through these perils.

The format of the seminar combines class discussion, hands-on practice, and sharing what you've discovered through reports and presentations. In addition to becoming familiar with general reference tools and research problems, you'll be using your individual academic interests to shape the sorts of data-gathering to be covered. Approximately half of each scheduled class period will be spent in hands-on workshops in library and Internet research skills and individual research, as you search out and compile the information needed to write a persuasive and original scholarly paper. The carefully shaped and annotated bibliography you'll produce could form the basis for a major research essay, thesis, or conference paper. It could also be helpful preparation for graduate exams.

GENERAL TEXTS

Byatt, Possession: A Romance
Parenti, Inventing Reality
Tyson, Critical Theory Today

TEXTS SPECIFIC TO M.A. EMPHASIS

- (buy, or use at library reference desk, those most appropriate to your work)
1. a. Altick & Fenstermaker, The Art of Literary Research
or b. Hawisher and Selfe, CCCC Bibliography of Composition/ Rhetoric
or c. Johnson, Approaches to Research in Second Language Learning (out of print)
 - 2) a. MLA (Modern Language Association) Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (latest ed.)
or b. Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (latest ed.)

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

Harner, Literary Research Guide: A Guide to Reference Sources for the Study of Literatures in English and Related Topics (2nd ed.)

Walker, Writing Research Papers: A Norton Guide

HANDOUTS

Class Packet 1a (syllabus, description)

Class Packet 1b (assignment-related information & readings)

MATERIALS (rec.)

Two light-weight folders with dividers (one to hold your writings, the other for class notes and handouts)

Several computer disks (for saving info from library and Internet research)

REQUIREMENTS

During the quarter you will:

- Shape an organized body of researched information:
 - identify the available resources in your area of interest
 - define the theoretical approach most appropriate to your project
 - submit plans for compiling bibliographic information in your area
 - determine, compile, analyze, and annotate relevant bibliographic information
 - report often in class on your findings
- Solve specific research problems to hone your sleuthing skills
- Research publication policies of several journals in your area of interest
- Write two short essays pertinent to the research process
- Get into your campus Intranet account, and use it to access and store information (on books, journal articles, etc.) from library databases, as well as to consult with your colleagues and me
- Access the on-line discussion group set up for our course: post questions or ideas to the class & respond to others
- Exploring keeping a research journal, with such sections as:
 - a log of your research in this class (date and brief reminders of time spent, tasks undertaken, and next steps)
 - a running list of questions/ problems and answers/ solutions
 - project notes: ideas about your subject, clarification of focus, possible approaches
 - good tips: mistakes to avoid, useful shortcuts, effective tools, URLs of useful Web sites
- Gather a file of notes and clippings on issues relating to the politics of information access
- Make various short written and oral contributions to the class

GRADING

Course grade will be based on:

- class participation (active presence -- speaking, listening, mutual support, including miscellaneous written and oral assignments): 25%
- Essays: #1 + summaries and #2 25%
- Research Exercises + presentation: 10%
- research/ final annotated bibliography (including preliminary assignments and final presentation with handout: 40%

Notes on writing assignments:

Please type (or word-process) each piece of out-of-class writing, and turn it in on time. Be sure to make an extra copy for yourself before letting go of anything you've written.

CLASS MEETING TIMES/PLACE: Th 5:30-9:20 Room 24-106

How to find me

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Office hours: TTh 10:45-12, W 4-5:30 [and other times by appointment]
(Sign up ahead of time if you can, & bring a book in case you have to wait.)

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