

rev. 9/9/2000

Fall 2000 - ENGLISH 500
Dr. Deirdre Lashgari

Introduction to Graduate Research

COURSE SYLLABUS

Class meetings will begin at 5:30 in 24-106. The last part of the class will usually move to the library. Between 6:40 and 7:10, we'll take a 20-minute break for supper (plus 10 minutes to get to the library).

Complete all reading and writing assignments before our class meeting.
(*Starred writing assignments are to be turned in.)

Week 1: 9/27

Focus

Introduction: Overview of course requirements. Pooling knowledge, research experience. Discussion of research interests. Discussion of issues pertaining to the politics of information access. Announcements and explanation of coming assignments (including first essay, research journal/log, and info access file). How to activate your campus Intranet account (for e-mail and web access).

Reading

(In-class handouts: syllabus, course description, assignments, and readings)

Writing

(In-class): computer proficiency survey.

Workshop

7:10 to 9 work on library computers in small web-buddy groups: e-mail procedures, on-line discussion board, and Internet resources.

Week 2: 10/4

Focus

Definition of "annotation" in connection with bibliography assignment. Explanation of "research exercises" assignment. Narrowing focus of research interest. Sharing useful info from skimmed reference books and other research tools. Journal sharing (especially questions/problems and hot tips). Library research tools (CD-ROM & on-line).

Reading

(req.) Handout on annotation.

Skim (as appropriate to your area of interest and need): Altick & Fenstermaker, Hawisher & Selfe, Walker. Bring specific useful ideas & resources to class. *Tip: you'll all do well to spend at least a couple of good hours with A&F (as well as Harner)

(rec.) Harner

Writing

*Tentative research proposal and strategy (1 par. each)

Results of initial searches, with new, narrowed focus

*Research journal/log -- in as many of the following categories as you've found useful: log (date/time spent); focus; problems and solutions; project notes; sleuthing tips

Best sources (ongoing): print and Internet (+ issues)

Workshop

7:10 to 9 Library: further gateway work, using the buddy system:

Tasks: 1) Get into your Intranet account (if you have your password: see handout), 2) access one or more web sites relevant to your emphasis, 3) send an email message to me, with the URL and explanation of the site's usefulness

Week 3: 10/11

Focus

The mystery and romance of research (real or imagined). Testing credibility of sources; defining your theoretical stance; seeking out and acknowledging counter-perspectives. Discussion of "Research Exercises" assignment. Journal sharing (especially questions/problems and hot tools and tips). Other good research tips: managing sources and notes (hard copies and on your computer). More Internet resources.

Reading

(req.) Byatt: Possession, a Romance

Lazere: "Groundrules for Polemicists"

"Titles" (under "Tips and Tools" on class web site)

(rec.) Harner

Writing

*Essay #1 (3-4 pages): on the adventures and perils of research (comparing Byatt's characters' experience with your own current and projected experience)

*Sample annotation (two items)

*Tips from your research journal: best print sites in Altick & Fenstermaker, or Hawisher & Selfe (and elsewhere) (1 pg)

*Internet/research journal/log

Workshop

7:10 to 9 Library Room 114: Online research workshop with Reference Librarian Kate Seifert (including our library's online catalog, Wilson, WorldCat, Link+, Interlibrary Loan; also: the Web as source of (mis)information; search engines and other online tools; tips for focusing searches.

Tasks: 1) locate one potentially useful book or article; 2) check in OPAC to be sure our library doesn't have it; 3) make an on-line Document Delivery request; 4) *E-mail specific research questions for Reference Librarian to Kate Seifert (kwseifert) for next week's library workshop--copied to me (delashgari).

Week 4: 10/18

Focus

What to include in midterm evaluation assignment. Your projects in progress. Journal sharing (especially questions/problems and hot tips). Good print and Net sites (and tools) you've found. Presentation of Research Exercises strategies, tools, and solutions.

Reading

(req.) Tyson: Critical Theory Today (or other overview of theory) (skim all, and read closely in theories you find most useful)

More skimming in Altick & Fenstermaker, Hawisher & Selfe, Walker.

(rec.) Harner

Writing

*Research Exercise assignment (detailed steps in your detective work on 2 of 4 assigned questions)

*Definition of your theoretical stance (single or eclectic): 1 par.

Internet/research journal/log (opt.)

Workshop

7:10 to 9 Library Rm.114: Workshop: further info on library CD-ROM and database tools (e.g., Modern Language Association Bibliography, ERIC, Humanities Index, Historical Abstracts, Lexus/Nexus); further tips on limiting and focusing searches. **Tasks:** post a group message on our class discussion board re a major "gateway" web site in your field.

Week 5: 10/25

Focus

Now--the nitty-gritty of research: documentation styles. Parenti: the politics of information access, effects of media monopoly. Authorial stance; "worthy opponents." Tips on summarizing v. critiquing; "Parenti et al." assignment. Small-group workshop on documentation (plus research problems and tips). Library consultations.

Reading

(req.) Parenti: Inventing Reality

Lazere: "Groundrules for Polemicists" (review handout)

MLA & APA handbooks: skim, be aware of differences in accepted style;

also check Chicago style (see Reference Desk) as variant--then focus on the one you'll be using

Writing

*Preliminary annotated bibliography with narrowed research focus

*A prior research essay you've written, with documentation (more?) complete and corrected to conform to current (post '95) MLA or APA style (internal citations as well as "sources cited" or bibliography page)

*Self-evaluation & course evaluation (1 pg. each): send to me by e-mail, or bring hard copy to class.

Internet/research journal (opt.)

Workshop

7:10 to 9 Library: Reference desk. Follow-up individual work with Kate Seifert (and other Reference librarians as available). **Task:** note useful tips & resources in your journal.

Week 6: 11/1 (Library research day - I'll be away from campus)

*Midterm evaluation conferences (by e-mail)

Week 7: 11/8

Focus

Discuss Bagdikian or other book source on the politics of information access: media distortion, omission. Reading and researching critically; testing for reliability of sources; identifying expertise and bias (your own and your sources', overt or hidden).

Reading

(req.) (library) Bagdikian: Media Monopoly, Fallows: Breaking the News: How the Media Undermine American Democracy, or other book (see list)

Writing

*Summaries of Parenti and second source (1-2 pages each). Begin compiling ideas for your comparative review of both authors in the context of your own knowledge of information access issues.

Info Access file

Internet/research journal (opt.)

Workshop

7:10 to 9 Library: web sites: checking credibility.

Task: Locate a web site you plan to include in your annotated bibliography, and explain in a posting to the class how you determined it to be a reliable authority for your research topic.

Week 8: 11/15

Focus

"Community Forum": The politics of information access: divergent perspectives, proposed solutions. Discussion of problems and successes with individual research.

Reading

Your own research sources

Writing

*Essay #2: "book review" of Parenti and second source, incorporating recent information you've found independently (your file of material from radio, tv, newspapers, magazines, etc.) on the politics of information access.

Internet/research journal (opt.)

Workshop

7:10 to 9 Individual work in library

Week 9: 11/22

Focus

Publishing strategies. Explanation of "publishing guidelines" assignment.
Discussion of problems and successes with individual research.

Reading

"Going Public" (under "Tools" on class web site)
Your own research sources

Writing

*Full draft of annotated bibliography.
*Internet/research journal (3 weeks required, the rest optional)

Workshop

7:10 to 9 Library: individual research

Week 10: 11/29

Focus

Reports on publishing guidelines. "Best Tips."

Colloquium I

Oral presentation on your research (significance of this topic, the
perspectives you've gained on your subject, the essay you could publish)
+ handout

Reading

Your own work

Writing

*Publishing guidelines assignment.
*Best Tips handout (copies for seminar colleagues)
*Handout for colloquium presentation (copies for seminar colleagues):
rationale for project, current stage of completion, next steps,
contributions to the discourse in the field, publishing possibilities

Week 11 (Finals week): 12/6 (usual hours)

Colloquium II

Oral presentation on your research (significance of this topic, the
perspectives you've gained on your subject, the essay you could publish)
+ handout

Writing

*Final annotated bibliography
*Handout for colloquium presentation (copies for seminar colleagues):rationale
for project, current stage of completion, next steps, contributions to
the discourse in the field, publishing possibilities
*Self-evaluation (2 pp)
Course evaluations (in-class: computerized & narrative)