

HON 296A: Academic Research Strategies and Contexts

Spring 2007 MW 3:00-4:15

D. H. Hill Library -- ITTC Lab 2

<http://blogs.lib.ncsu.edu/page/hon296a>

Students in this course must be enrolled in the University Honors Program.

Instructors

Amanda French

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Course Description

Academic research has changed greatly in the last fifteen years with the rise of the personal computer and the internet; the information technology that produced the online library catalog, the scholarly article database, Google, and Wikipedia has also produced many urgent "information issues." Will there be such a thing as a library in the future? Are current laws and policies on copyright and plagiarism relevant to the Information Age? How do we balance the need to find the best information with the desire to find information fast?

This course will give students the opportunity to explore information sources for their Capstone Projects (or any topic of their choice) while increasing their "information literacy" in several ways. Students will improve their research skills by learning how to formulate effective search strategies of library catalogs, scholarly article databases, and web search engines; they will learn how to critically evaluate print and electronic information; and they will also study the economic, legal, and ethical issues surrounding the use of information technology.

Textbook

Leslie F. Stebbins, *Student Guide to Research in the Digital Age: How to Locate and Evaluate Information Sources* (Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2006). \$45.00

Course Assignments

Blog (20%): Throughout the semester, students will post responses to "information landscape" and "research reflection" questions on the course blog. Due every Monday beginning January 29. Blog grades will be assigned February 28 and April 11.

Research Question (20%): Each student will develop a research question to investigate throughout the semester. Some background effort will go into developing the question. Due February 7.

Interview (20%): Students will interview a professor or librarian in their discipline regarding their information-seeking habits. Due March 19.

Presentation (10%): Students will give an oral presentation summarizing what they learned about finding information in their discipline. Due in class on April 16, 18, or 23.

Report (30%): Students will write a brief (3- to 5-page) paper reporting the results of their research, with formal in-text citations and a proper bibliography of at least fifteen (15) authoritative sources. Due Friday, May 4 by email.

General Education Requirement

This course falls into the "Science, Technology, and Society" category of the General Education Requirements. The rationale and objectives for courses in this category (available at <http://www.ncsu.edu/uap/academic-standards/ger/hss/rat.htm>) are as follows:

Rationale: North Carolina State University, as a land grant university, has a mission that stresses the application of science and technology for the betterment of humankind. It is essential, therefore, that students be exposed to the vital interactions among science, technology, society, and the quality of life.

Objectives for courses in the category of Science, Technology & Society:

Courses fulfilling the Science, Technology & Society requirement should have as a central instructional focus the following objectives. To provide sustained, rigorous, and substantive instruction, efforts to meet the GER Science, Technology & Society objectives should be evident across the entire syllabus and be reflected in course lectures, discussion, readings, projects, assignments, etc.

Each course in the Science, Technology & Society category of the GER will provide instruction and guidance that help students to:

1. develop an understanding of the mutual relationships between science or technology and societies, including the effects of or the effects on cultures, values, industries, governments, or other facets of those societies.
2. develop an ability to critically evaluate information regarding these mutual relationships, recognizing that the information may come from a variety of sources and perspectives.

Outcomes and Assessment

- **Objective:** Help students to develop an understanding of the mutual relationships between science or technology and societies, including the effects of or the effects on cultures, values, industries, governments, or other facets of those societies.
 - o **Learning Outcome:** Students will gain a deeper understanding of how the digitization of information affects the culture, economics, and practice of academic research.
 - o **Assessment:** This objective will be assessed chiefly in the Interview and the Presentation, where students will reflect on both an advanced researcher's and their own experience of using digital information tools.
- **Objective:** Help students develop an ability to critically evaluate information regarding these mutual relationships, recognizing that the information may come from a variety of sources and perspectives.
 - o **Learning Outcome:** Students will be able to identify, describe, use, and evaluate a wide variety of information resources, both print and digital, including reference books, proprietary databases, and academic journals. Students will be able to choose the best information tool or source, not the most convenient tool or source.
 - o **Assessment:** The student's ability to find and choose authoritative sources will be assessed in the final Report.

Other Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. pose an effective research question;
2. identify, describe and effectively search a wide variety of information sources, including the open web, scholarly research databases, and government information sources;
3. effectively evaluate information; and
4. grow as a researcher through reflection and practice.

Grading Scale

A+	98-100	C	73-76
A	94-97	C-	70-72
A-	90-93	D+	67-69
B+	87-89	D	63-66
B	83-86	D-	60-62
B-	80-82	F	59 and below
C+	77-79		

Attendance and Late Work Policies

- 1) Excuses for anticipated absences must be sent to and approved by Amanda French via email at least one day before the absence.
- 2) Excuses for unanticipated absences due to an emergency must be sent to and approved by Amanda French via email within one week after the absence.

- 3) Three unexcused absences will lower a student's course grade by one-third, i.e., from a B to a B-. Every additional unexcused absence will lower the student's grade an additional one-third.
- 4) Being late to class by fifteen minutes or more constitutes half an unexcused absence. The instructors reserve the right to judge a flagrantly inattentive student as absent without excuse.
- 5) Requests for extensions must be sent to and approved by Amanda French via email at least one day before the assignment due date.
- 6) Excuses for late work due to an emergency must be sent to and approved by Amanda French via email within one week after the assignment due date.
- 7) Unexcused late work will lower a student's assignment grade by one-third for each day the assignment is late, i.e., from a B to a B-.

For more information, see NCSU's Attendance Regulation (REG02.20.3) at http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/academic_affairs/courses_undergrad/REG02.20.3.php.

Academic Integrity

It is the understanding of the instructors of this course that the student's typed or signed name on any assignment indicates that the student adheres to the Honor pledge ("I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this test or assignment"). The instructor supports academic integrity as defined by NCSU's Code of Student Conduct Policy (POL11.35.1):

http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/student_services/student_discipline/POL11.35.1.php.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with verifiable disabilities. In order to take advantage of available accommodations, students must register with Disability Services for Students at 1900 Student Health Center, Campus Box 7509, 515-7653. For more information on NCSU's policy on working with students with disabilities, please see the Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Regulation (REG02.20.1):

http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/academic_affairs/pols_regs/REG205.00.28.php.

Additional Notes

This course requires no laboratory work, field trips, extra expenses, or extra transportation.

SCHEDULE

Date	In-Class Topics and Activities	Assignments
Wed 1/10	Overview of the course and expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of instructors and students • What do you hope to learn in this course? • What do you already know about research strategies? 	
Mon 1/15	MLK Holiday – No Class	
Wed 1/17	Defining a research topic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What makes a good research question? • Using this course to explore a topic for your Capstone experience Introduce Research Question assignment	Stebbins, Chapter 1: Research and critical evaluation
Mon 1/22 Amy	Academic Disciplines and the Research Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How information behavior is studied • Models of the process • Humanities, Social Sciences, and Sciences Introduce blog assignment	Bates, "Berry picking"
Wed 1/24	Finding background information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reference books • Evaluating reference books 	Stebbins, Chapter 2: Finding Books and eBooks
Mon 1/29	Finding background information (cont'd.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the library catalog to find books (What is the library catalog, as opposed to library databases and web?) • WorldCat and ILL 	Blog response #1
Wed 1/31 Katherine	Tools Used by Researchers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citation Management with RefWorks 	Set up RefWorks account
Mon 2/5	Discuss research questions	Blog response #2 Come with 3 research question drafts

Date	In-Class Topics and Activities	Assignments
Wed 2/7	Articles as Sources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More in-depth lesson on scholarly vs. popular • Trade publications • Conference papers and pre-prints (timeframe for dissemination of information) • Review articles 	Research Questions Due Stebbins, Chapter 3: Scholarly and Popular Articles
Mon 2/12 Kim	Using databases to find articles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proprietary article databases vs. web and library catalog Economics of Information presentation	Blog response #3
Wed 2/14	Follow-up discussion or exercise to bring closure to Economics of Information presentation. Using databases to find articles (cont'd) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article database commonalities • How to find article databases for various disciplines or subjects 	
Mon 2/19	Using databases to find articles (cont'd.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuation of in-class Database Exploration exercise • Reports on databases for different subjects 	Blog response #4
Wed 2/21	Using databases to find articles (cont'd) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constructing an effective search strategy (Share search strategies in small groups; teacher demos selected searches; review and discussion) 	
Mon 2/26	Using databases to find articles (cont'd) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluating articles Share questions and potential interviewee for Expert Interview	Blog response #5 Know who to interview, come with interview questions
Wed 2/28 Amy	Using databases to find articles (cont'd) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow up on evaluation • Citation searching Blog grades available Visitn from Larry Blanton	
	Spring Break 3/5 - 3/9	

Date	In-Class Topics and Activities	Assignments
Mon 3/12	Expert Interviews Discussion	Blog response #6 Expert Interviews Due
Wed 3/14 (Greg)	Scholarly communication and the Open Access movement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guest speaker: Greg Raschke, Associate Director for Collection Management, Organization, and Preservation 	
Mon 3/19	Intellectual Freedom and Privacy	Blog response #7
Wed 3/21	Academic Freedom	
Mon 3/26 Karen	Searching for and evaluating open web sources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluating web sources 	Blog response #8
Wed 3/28	Searching for and evaluating open web sources (cont'd) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expert web searching – search engines and search strategies 	
Mon 4/2	Intellectual property and copyright <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation by Peggy Hoon, Scholarly Communication Librarian 	Blog response #9
Wed 4/4	Follow up on Intellectual property presentation Plagiarism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion of plagiarism terms and issues 	Stebbins, Chapter 8: Citing Sources, Avoiding Plagiarism, and Organizing References
Mon 4/9	Plagiarism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exercises on avoiding accidental plagiarism Information scandals assignment	Blog response #10 Howard, "Academic Death Penalty"
Wed 4/11	Information scandals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students present reports on info scandals Blog grades available	Informal report on information scandals
Mon 4/16	Final Presentations	
Wed 4/18	Final Presentations	
Mon 4/23	Final Presentations	
Wed 4/25	Course Evaluation and Summary	
Fri 5/4	Date for final exam (there will be no exam)	Research Reports due via email by 4pm