Course Syllabus

Research: Methods and Data. Fall 2015

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Boston College Mission Statement

Strengthened by more than a century and a half of dedication to academic excellence, Boston College commits itself to the highest standards of teaching and research in undergraduate, graduate and professional programs and to the pursuit of a just society through its own accomplishments, the work of its faculty and staff, and the achievements of its graduates. It seeks both to advance its place among the nation's finest universities and to bring to the company of its distinguished peers and to contemporary society the richness of the Catholic intellectual ideal of a mutually illuminating relationship between religious faith and free intellectual inquiry.

Boston College draws inspiration for its academic societal mission from its distinctive religious tradition. As a Catholic and Jesuit university, it is rooted in a world view that encounters God in all creation and through all human activity, especially in the search for truth in every discipline, in the desire to learn, and in the call to live justly together. In this spirit, the University regards the contribution of different religious traditions and value systems as essential to the fullness of its intellectual life and to the continuous development of its distinctive intellectual heritage.

Course Description

Recommended as the first course, it examines the logic of research design and explores how data are approached, collected and analyzed in an interactive information age. Practical applications across disciplines introduce both the electronic and traditional tools and techniques necessary to interpret and utilize findings. Cases and presentations prepare students to analyze, evaluate and challenge specific applications and to suggest alternative interpretations. Online databases, the WWW and the internet expand options.
Course Objectives

1. Students will learn to apply course material (to improve thinking, problem solving, and decision making) regarding the principles and practice of research in a variety of disciplinary areas.

2. Students after completing the course will be well equipped to utilize print and online resources, both library and other, in researching and writing complex research papers.

3. Students will develop improved skills in expressing themselves both orally and in writing.

4. Students will demonstrate skill across cultural settings and will learn the impact of culture, gender, socioeconomic status and age in a variety of research endeavors as demonstrated by numerous examples of how data are approached, collected and analyzed.

5. Students will demonstrate essential ethical knowledge of the principles and practices of research across a variety of disciplines.

Major Project

Project Due Date

Sample Project from the Past

You will submit an annotated bibliography of various resources – books (both print and electronic), media materials (videos, TV programs, CD-ROMS, DVD's Laserdiscs, streaming videos, etc.), articles from journals, newspapers, and magazines and web documents. You will write an annotated descriptive and evaluative paragraph of each resource. The purpose of the annotation is to inform the reader of the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the sources cited.

- First determine a topic that you are interested in
- Use the tools we will learn in this course to locate:

A combination of

- **FIVE** print and or electronic books and media (video, DVD, CDROM, Laserdisc, Streaming Video, etc.) on a topic of your interest

- **TWENTY** articles from a journal, newspaper, or magazine on your topic (USE RESEARCH DATABASES COVERED IN THE COURSE OF THE SEMESTER)

- **FIVE** documents from the Web using search engines such as Google, Alta Vista, HotBot, Yippy, and Excite.
Use sources dated between 2008 AND 2015. Check in with me if you need to use older sources

Your ONE HUNDRED WORD per entry annotation should include some -- not all-- of the points below:

a description of

- the content/focus of the item you are describing
- the usefulness of the book/video/website
- any limitations you think the item has-what level of readers is being appealed to; is it done appropriately? Is the information timely?
- the methods used to gather the information
- what audience the item is intended for
- how reliable this item/document is
- the background/qualification of the author(s)
- any conclusions made by the authors
- your own impressions of this item/document-favorable or unfavorable

_____________________________________________________

TEMPLE FOR ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY PROJECT

Your Name: -----------------------------------------
Topic: ___________________________________________________

Write one paragraph indicating why you chose this topic:

Be sure to use the correct bibliographic format for each of the materials you will be using

Section One: Books/Media Materials -- Video, CD, DVD, Streaming Video, etc. (5)
Section 2: Articles from journals, newspapers, or magazines using RESEARCH DATABASES (20)
Section 3: Documents from the Web using search engines such as Google, Alta Vista, HotBot, Excite, Yippy, Ask.com (5)

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Class Presentation Guidelines

1. What is your topic, and why that topic? (If you don't have any reason why you chose the topic, make one up).
2. What did you know, or did not know about the topic before you started your research?
3. Pick TWO of the books and describe what they covered.
4. Pick one of the media materials and describe what it covered. (Use three books if you were not able to find any media material)

5. Select three of the articles (from the Online Databases search) and give a summary of what they covered.

6. Pick two of the web sites you went to and summarize what you found there-Google, Dogpile, Yippy, etc.

7. Overall, what did you learn from doing this project?

Please be respectful of other people's time. Do not turn your 10 minutes into the State of the Union address. We want everyone to have an opportunity to present.

______________________________________________________________________

Grading

Class participation 20

Assignments 20

Midterm Examination 30

Major Project 30

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WCAS Grading System

The undergraduate grading system consists of twelve categories: A (4.00), A- (3.67), excellent; B+ (3.33), B (3.00), B- (2.67), good; C+ (2.33), C (2.00), C- (1.67), satisfactory; D+ (1.33), D (1.00), D- (.67), passing but unsatisfactory; F (.00), failure; I (.00), incomplete; F (.00), course dropped without notifying office; W (.00), official withdrawal from course. The graduate grading system is A (4.00), A- (3.67), Excellent; B+ (3.33), B (3.00), good; B- (2.67), C (2.00), passing but not for degree credit; F (.00), failure.

Grade Reports. All students are required to log into the web through Agora to access their semester grades. Students must utilize their BC username and password to log on. If your username or password is not known, call (617) 552-Help.

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Text(s)/Readings (Required)

All course materials are on Canvas

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September 2 Introduction to Course

September 10 Information Explosion
September 17  Boston College Libraries Resources
September 23  Using the Internet for Research
September 30  Legal Information Sources
October 7    Business Information Sources
October 14   Survey Research Methods
October 21   Grant Proposals
October 28   Ethical Issues in Research

November 4   Midterm Examination
November 11  In Class Group Work—Government Information
November 18  In Class Group Work—Science/Statistical Information
November 25  Thanksgiving Holidays—No class today.

December 2   In class presentations of final project for class.
December 9   In class presentations of final project for class
December 16  Final Project Due today. End of semester examination

Important Policies

http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/schools/advstudies/guide/academicinteg.html

Scholarship and Academic Integrity

It is expected that students will produce original work and cite references appropriately. Failure to reference properly is plagiarism. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not necessarily limited to, plagiarism, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, cheating on examinations or assignments, and submitting the same paper or substantially similar papers to meet the requirements of more than one course without seeking permission of all instructors concerned. Scholastic misconduct may also involve, but is not necessarily limited to, acts that violate the rights of other students, such as depriving another student of course materials or interfering with another student’s work.

Request for Accommodations

If you have a disability and will be requesting accommodations for this course, please register with either Dr. Kathy Duggan (dugganka@bc.edu), Associate Director, Connors Family
Learning Center (learning disabilities or AHD) or Dean Paulette Durrett, (paulette.durrett@bc.edu), Assistant Dean for students with disabilities, (all other disabilities). Advance notice and appropriate documentation are required for accommodations. http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/libraries/help/tutoring/specialservices.html.

- **Attendance**

Class attendance is an important component of learning. Students are expected to attend all classes and to arrive by the beginning of and remain for the entire class period. When an occasion occurs that prevents a student from attending class, it is the student’s obligation to inform the instructor of the conflict before the class meets. The student is still expected to meet all assignment deadlines. If a student knows that he or she will be absent on a particular day, the student is responsible for seeing the instructor beforehand to obtain the assignments for that day. If a student misses a class, he or she is responsible for making up the work by obtaining a classmate's notes and handouts and turning in any assignments due. Furthermore, many instructors give points for participation in class. If you miss class, you cannot make up participation points associated with that class. Types of absences that are not typically excused include weddings, showers, vacations, birthday parties, graduations, etc. Additional assignments, penalties and correctives are at the discretion of the instructor. If circumstances necessitate excessive absence from class, the student should consider withdrawing from the class. In all cases, students are expected to accept the decision of the instructor regarding attendance policies specific to the class.

Consistent with our commitment of creating an academic community that is respectful of and welcoming to persons of differing backgrounds, we believe that every reasonable effort should be made to allow members of the university community to observe their religious holidays without jeopardizing the fulfillment of their academic obligations. It is the responsibility of students to review course syllabi as soon as they are distributed and to consult the faculty member promptly regarding any possible conflicts with observed religious holidays. If asked, the student should provide accurate information about the obligations entailed in the observance of that particular holiday. However, it is the responsibility of the student to complete any and all class requirements for days that are missed due to conflicts due to religious holidays.

There may be circumstances that necessitate a departure from this policy. **Feel free to contact the WCAS at 617-552-3900 for consultation.**

**Deadlines**

Assignments are due at the beginning of the class period on the specified dates. Late assignments will be graded accordingly.

**Course Assignments** (readings, exercises and/or experiences)
In addition to the four hours per week homework and assignments, you will have to post your reaction to the readings using the Discussions feature in Canvas.

Class Presentation Guidelines

1. What is your topic, and why that topic?

2. What did you know, or did not know about the topic before you started your research?

3. Pick THREE of the books and describe what they covered.

4. Pick one of the media materials and describe what it covered. (Use four books if you were not able to find any media material)

5. Select three of the articles (from the Online Databases search) and give a summary of what they covered.

6. Pick two of the web sites you went to and summarize what you found there-Google, Dogpile, Yippy, etc.

7. Overall, what did you learn from doing this project?

Please be respectful of other people's time. Do not go over 10 minutes. We want everyone to have an opportunity to present.