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English 305: Research in the Information Age

Course Objectives

This course will introduce students to search strategies and methods for finding various materials (primary and secondary sources, images, etc.) in various formats, particularly electronic and in print, using the research resources at Edith Garland Dupré Library and online. The course will focus on the location, evaluation, management and use of information and will combine short lectures and hands-on learning in helping students to apply critical thinking to their search for sources, writing and presentation, and it will give them the tools to continue refining these skills in the future.

Requirements

The course is open to students who have taken English 101 and 102 or their equivalent. Students are expected to attend and actively participate in the class discussions.

Grading

Attendance, participation and final project completion will be taken into account in determining final grades for the course. The course is worth 1 credit.

Required reading

None

Tentative* Course Outline

*As always, may be dependent on holidays, assignments; weather

Week One

Library Orientation & Tour

Week Two

Starting your research; picking a topic

Week Three

Understanding Information & Information Gathering

Week Four

Evaluating information online; Google Scholar and Wikipedia; using help tools - turn in journals

Week Five

Introducing the library website; advanced database searching

Week Six

Classifying systems; Older information formats - microfilm; using the periodical guide, journals

Week Seven

Gov Docs, online and in person; controlled vocabulary

Week Eight

Using E-books - turn in journals

Week Nine

Specialized reference sources: biographical/statistical/business - discuss research proposals

Week 10

Bibliographies/Style Manuals

Week 11

Special Collections/Center for Louisiana Studies

Week 12

Week 12

Citation and Plagiarism

Week 13

Using WorldCat/Interlibrary Loan; citation management tools – turn in final journal

Week 14

Class wrap-up – last chance to turn in late assignments; turn in rough draft of proposal/bibliography

Week 15

Dead week; review for final – turn in research proposal/annotated bibliography

Week 16

Final – class evaluation due

Course Assignments & Grading

Grading Scale

A=90-100 · B=80-89 · C=70-79 · D=60-69 · F=below 60

Attendance

Attendance is required and will be considered in the final grading.

Weekly Assignments

Most days you will have group work based on the lessons that will be turned in at the end of class. Occasionally you will have short assignments that are not group projects to complete before the next class. Failure to turn these assignments in (or make sure your name is on the paper if it's a group assignment) could negatively impact your grade.

Research Diary

In this class, you will keep a diary of your research progress. It is up to you whether you keep this electronic or in the form of an actual notebook. All notebook entries should amount to a page or two (200-300 words, roughly) of reflection on your progress in formulating a research proposal for the Annotated Bibliography at the end of class, or on something you find interesting or valuable about class. The research diaries will be collected periodically.

Research Proposal and Annotated Bibliography

Near the end of the semester, all students will turn in a research proposal and an annotated bibliography for this research proposal. Students will be expected to come up with a 2-3 page research topic and question that could be used to write an academic paper. You're welcome to discuss ideas for that topic and question with the instructor, and more information will be given closer to the end of the semester. In addition to your research proposal, students will turn in an annotated bibliography of 8-10 sources that would be considered strong academic sources for this proposal.

Class Evaluation

Students are asked to turn in an evaluation of the class and instructor at the end of the semester. This evaluation will be worth 10 points.

Final

The final will encompass topics covered throughout the semester. There will be no midterm exam.

Emergency Evacuation Procedure

A map of each floor is posted near the elevator marking the evacuation route and the Designated Rescue Area. This is an area where emergency service personnel will go first to look for individuals who need assistance in exiting the building. Students who may need assistance should identify themselves to library staff.



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