Introduction to College Inquiry

Fall 2017 Syllabus

Washington Mentorship Program
School of Professional and Extended Studies
American University

Class: Mondays & Thursdays 11:20 a.m. - 12:35 p.m.
Office Hours: Mondays 1 p.m. - 2 p.m. and by appointment
Professional Lecturer: Sandoval
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Course Description

Introduction to College Inquiry introduces students from different academic fields to the essentials of scholarly research and conduct to create an in-depth understanding of the various steps, opportunities, differences, limitations, and structures within the research process. This class uses real-world questions, issues, and disciplines to develop inquiry, research, and communication skills. Students will collaborate within and beyond the classroom to acquire a broad understanding of key approaches to both learning and research. The course will utilize an experiential learning approach to enable students to apply what they are learning, while exploring the vast diversity of resources available to them at American University and in Washington, DC.

Course Objectives

This course will:

- Improve student understanding of key approaches to academic research including: comparative study, case study, qualitative and quantitative assessment, and primary and secondary sourcing.
- Explore educational and professional opportunities at American University including: courses of study; student services; internships; and scholarly research by American University faculty.
- Provide students with an opportunity for collaboration and teamwork.
- Enhance numerous skills including writing; analysis; public speaking; teamwork and collaboration; and research.

Course Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Identify key approaches to both inquiry and academic research.
- Compare and contrast diverse sources and information content, recognizing types of sources, bias, and characteristics of research data.
- Demonstrate active learning and engagement through such activities as: critical questioning, synthesis and evaluation of course readings and resource materials, introductory research, active discussion, written summary and presentation, and analytical writing.
Course Format

Our class meets Mondays and Thursdays for 75 minutes. In addition to attending all classes, students may be asked to engage in inquiry activities, such as interviews, site visits, trainings, educational events, etc. All students are expected to come to class prepared for discussions and critical analysis, having read or viewed the assigned preparatory materials in advance.

Course Materials


Additionally, recognizing the breadth of materials available in academic research, this class also includes many resources available online and open source for this course. The purpose for these resources is to enable students to be exposed to scholarly works in multiple disciplines and in a variety of formats and to explore resources that will emphasize inquiry materials that cover key concepts in college inquiry.

On-line readings, current event articles and videos, and other preparatory materials are listed in the course schedule below. However, additional readings may be added during the course and distributed digitally.

The following are highly recommended for reading material for this course:
- TED.com and TEDx.com
- BBC News
- CNN International
- The Economist
- Washington Post (for local coverage and perspectives on policy issues)
- American University Magazine and AU Today

Course Requirements and Grading System

**Participation – Reading chapters and class discussions: 20%
- There will be class activities, which will be assessed based upon effort and demonstration of understanding of key course concepts and reading comprehension.

Class assignments: 30%
- See details in course schedule, including instructions for preparation and assignments.

Mid-term exam: 20%
- This exam will be based on the required textbook readings, and include identifications and short answer questions asking you to describe and apply key course concepts and class discussions and class preparation.

Annotated Bibliography: 30% (See end of syllabus for detailed instructions.)
- Students will select a current event or research topic of interest to research. They will then write an Annotated Bibliography on this topic. Instructions provided at end of this syllabus.
Course Schedule

**Theme 1: Introductions and Understanding Research Inquiry**

August 28-31: **Introductions to the course and each other**
- Syllabus review
- Why are we taking this class? What are the goals and expected outcomes?
- Why are we not just writing a research paper?
- Syllabi are important to academic success
  - Critical reading
    - Using a syllabus to understand course expectations and main concepts.
    - Using a syllabus to be more actively engaged.
  - Introduction to comparative analysis
    - How are your syllabi varied? How are they similar?
- **Preparation:** Review this website prior to Thursday’s class on Aug. 31st: [http://cte.illinois.edu/resources/topics/syllabus/purpose.html](http://cte.illinois.edu/resources/topics/syllabus/purpose.html)
- **Assignment:** Read Chapters 1 & 4, *Doing Your Research Project.*
  - Chapter 1: Taking the Leap into the Research World, pgs. 1-14
  - Chapter 4: Undertaking Credible and Ethical Research, pgs. 47-70

September 4: **No class, Labor Day**

September 5-7: **Understanding the research world and ethical research**
- Continued discussion of our goals – Why are we studying inquiry?
- Class lecture and discussion on Chapters 1 & 4
- **Preparation:** [http://writingcenter.waldenu.edu/774.htm](http://writingcenter.waldenu.edu/774.htm). Watch this 8 minute presentation. Take notes on methods for avoiding bias and writing well. Consider the effectiveness of learning from an online presentation. We will discuss in class.
- **Preparation:** [http://users.drew.edu/~sjamieso/summary.html](http://users.drew.edu/~sjamieso/summary.html) - understanding the significance of summarization as a learning and professional skill.
- **Assignment:** Write a summary of Chapters 1 & 4; DUE September 11th. Guiding questions will be provided. Write between 2 - 4 pages.

September 11-14: **An introduction to research at American University**
- Library research class – primary versus secondary sources; how to use research databases. What does ‘peer-reviewed’ mean?
- **Preparation:** Familiarize yourself with the AU library website
  - [http://www.american.edu/library/about/index.cfm](http://www.american.edu/library/about/index.cfm)
  - Come prepared to be able to discuss why libraries are relevant to higher education.
- **Assignment:** Read Chapter 3.
  - Chapter 3: Developing Your Research Question, pgs. 31-46
Theme 2: Understanding the Importance of Your Research Question

September 18-21: Developing your own research questions
- Class lecture and discussion on Chapter 3: Developing Your Research Question
  o Defining your topic
  o Understanding researchable questions
  o Characteristics of good questions
- Assignment: Write a summary of Chapter 3; DUE September 21st. Guiding questions will be provided. Write between 1 - 2 pages.
- Assignment: Read Chapter 6.
  o Chapter 6: Reviewing Literature, pgs. 85-103

September 25-28: Importance of a literature review
- Class lecture and discussion on Chapter 6: Reviewing Literature
  o The importance of literature
  o Sourcing relevant literature
  o Managing the literature
  o Writing the formal ‘literature review’
- Assignment: Write a summary of Chapter 6; DUE September 28th. Guiding questions will be provided. Write between 1 - 2 pages.
- Assignment: Read Chapter 7.
  o Chapter 7: Designing a Research Plan, pgs. 105-119

October 2-5: Designing a research plan
- Class lecture and discussion on Chapter 7: Designing a Research Plan
  o Moving from questions to answers
  o Getting it right for the researcher
  o Pragmatics: making it doable
  o It's all in the details
- Review Annotated Bibliography Assignment
  o Start thinking about your research question(s)
  o Discussion in class about types of sources
- Assignment: Write a summary of Chapter 7; DUE October 5th. Guiding questions will be provided. Write between 1 - 2 pages.
- Assignment: Read Chapter 8.
  o Chapter 8: Understanding Methodologies: Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed Approaches, pgs. 120-151
Theme 3: Methods of research

October 9-12: Understanding methodologies
- Class lecture and discussion on Chapter 8: Understanding Methodologies: Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed Approaches
  - Qualitative vs Quantitative
  - The quantitative tradition
  - The qualitative tradition
  - Mixed methodology
- Preparation:
  - [http://www.uniteforsight.org/research-methodology/module3](http://www.uniteforsight.org/research-methodology/module3)
- Assignment: Write a summary of Chapter 8; DUE October 12th. Guiding questions will be provided. Write between 1 - 2 pages.
- Assignment: Read Chapter 9.
  - Chapter 9: Understanding Methodologies: Evaluative, Action-Oriented and Emancipatory Strategies, pgs. 156-178

October 16-19: Understanding methodologies, continued
- Class lecture and discussion on Chapter 9: Understanding Methodologies: Evaluative, Action-Oriented and Emancipatory Strategies
  - Research to drive change
  - Creating new academic knowledge and changing society
  - Evaluative research
  - Action research
  - Emancipatory research
- Preparation:
  - [http://www.orau.gov/cdcynergy/soc2web/Content/phase05/phase05_step03_deeper_qualitative_and_quantitative.htm](http://www.orau.gov/cdcynergy/soc2web/Content/phase05/phase05_step03_deeper_qualitative_and_quantitative.htm) (useful to print and keep as notes)
- Assignment: Select Research Question(s) for Annotated Bibliography. Turn in Short Summary of research question; Write between 1 - 2 pages; DUE October 16.
- Assignment: Write a summary of Chapter 9; DUE October 19th. Guiding questions will be provided. Write between 1 - 2 pages.
- Assignment: Read Chapter 11.
  - Chapter 11: Primary Data: Surveys, Interviews and Observation, pgs. 201-240

October 23: Review for Midterm
- Class review and discussion on Chapters 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 9
- A Review of Key Terms will be provided in class.

October 26: Midterm
- Exam will be defining key terms and short answers; 20% of final grade.
Theme 4: Data Collection and Analysis

October 30-November 2: Introduction to Data, Primary and Secondary
- Class lecture and discussion on Chapter 11: Primary Data: Surveys, Interviews and Observation
  - The challenge of collecting primary data
  - Surveying
  - Interviewing
  - Observation
- Assignment: Pass back Short Summary of research question(s) with edits. Make edits to your research question(s); DUE Nov. 9th.
- Preparation:
  - http://lib1.bmcc.cuny.edu/help/sources.html
- Assignment: Write a summary of Chapter 11; DUE Nov. 2nd. Guiding questions will be provided. Write between 1 - 2 pages.
- Assignment: Read Chapter 12.
  - Chapter 12: Secondary Data: Documents, Data Sets and Online Data, pgs. 243-270

November 6-9: Introduction to Data: Primary and Secondary, continued
- Class lecture and discussion on Chapter 12: Secondary Data: Documents, Data Sets and Online Data
  - The challenge of working with secondary data
  - ‘Texts’ and documents
  - Existing studies and data sets
  - Online data
- Assignment: Finalize your Short Summary of research question(s); DUE Nov. 9th.
- Assignment: Write a summary of Chapter 12; DUE Nov. 9th. Guiding questions will be provided. Write between 1 - 2 pages.
- Assignment: Read Chapter 13.
  - Chapter 13: Analysing Quantitative Data, pgs. 274-297

November 13-16: Analyzing Data
- Class lecture and discussion on Chapter 13: Analysing Quantitative Data
  - Moving from raw data to significant findings
  - Managing data and defining variables
  - Descriptive statistics
  - Inferential statistics
  - Presenting quantitative data
- Continue work on Annotated Bibliography. Must have 10 sources by Nov. 20th.
- Preparation: http://www.bcps.org/offices/lis/researchcourse/develop_quantitative.html
- Assignment: Write a summary of Chapter 13; DUE Nov. 16th. Guiding questions will be provided. Write between 1 - 2 pages.
- Assignment: Read Chapter 14.
  - Chapter 14: Analysing Qualitative Data, pgs. 299-320
November 20: **Analyzing Data, continued**
- Class lecture and discussion on Chapter 14: Analysing Qualitative Data
  - The promise of qualitative data
  - The methods of QDA
  - Specific QDA strategies
- **Preparation:** [http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/?p=307](http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/?p=307)
  - Read three websites of professors in an AU school of your choice (preferably where you plan to major). Identify their primary research area(s) they are currently working on. Discuss your favorite in class.
- **Assignment:** Turn in Annotated Bibliography (5 sources); DUE Nov. 30th.
- **Assignment:** Write a summary of Chapter 14; DUE Nov. 30th. Guiding questions will be provided. Write between 1 - 2 pages.
- **Assignment:** Read Chapter 15.
  - Chapter 15: The Challenge of Writing Up, pgs. 325-344

November 23: **No classes, Thanksgiving Holiday**

**Theme 5: Communicating findings – how do you effectively present your research?**

November 27: **The Challenge of Writing Up**
- Class lecture and discussion on Chapter 15: The Challenge of Writing Up
  - The writing challenge
  - Research as communication
  - The writing process
  - Creating powerful presentations
- **Preparation:** Watch three videos from this list - [http://mashable.com/2013/07/08/ted-talks-change-your-life/](http://mashable.com/2013/07/08/ted-talks-change-your-life/)
  - Study them for their presentation style – Which one do you find most effective as a presentation and why? Remember to identify at least five variables that help you make this decision.
  - Be prepared to concisely:
    - Explain the theme of the video and explain why you liked the video.
    - Describe techniques the presenter used to be an effective presenter.
  - Discuss the videos you watched, in preparation, in small groups.
  - Discussion – What do you like in a presenter? What communication strategies are important? What should we avoid when presenting?
  - In-class – examples of presentations
- **Writing assignment for Chapter 14 DUE Nov. 30th**
- **Annotated Bibliography - 5 sources DUE Nov. 30th**
November 30: **Review of Annotated Bibliography**
- What is an annotated bibliography and why do we do them?
- Discussion of AB assignment and the required sources
  - What is a source? Why do we use different kinds? Why aren’t 7 one-page articles sufficient? Why don’t you have blogs on this list?
- Discuss and continue AB planning in class – remember you should strive to have up with 20 sources at the end of the semester.
- Review edits of first 5 sources; **Final Annotated Bibliography DUE Dec. 7th.**
- **Preparation:** https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/01/

December 4: **Course conclusions**
- What have we learned? How can we continue to learn more?
- Discussion of final Annotated Bibliography - 10 sources.

December 7: **Turn in Annotated Bibliography - 10 sources; 30% of final grade**
Annotated Bibliography Assignment

This assignment is designed to enable you to select readings and online resources of interest to you and relevant to key course concepts on college inquiry. You will be provided with a sample Annotated Bibliography for review. You must select TEN sources for your research inquiry. There is no page limit for this assignment, but all of the aspects listed below must be fully developed for full credit (an A grade).

Remember to start this project early in the semester and to pick a research topic that will allow you to select at least FIVE scholarly journal articles from online databases and/or printed scholarly journals. You must follow the schedule, summarized above in the Class Schedule section of this syllabus, to turn-in each part of this assignment on time. Final Annotated Bibliography is due December 7th and is 30% of the final grade.

Write a brief, one-page introduction on your research topic.
- Why did you choose it? Why does it interest you?
- Why is it important in our society and to scholarly research?

Find TEN inquiry and media materials related to your topic.
- Your research sources must include:
  - FIVE peer-reviewed scholarly journal articles
  - At least ONE media article
- Your sources may include videos.
  - For videos, look at multimedia sites, such as: Ted Talks, PBS, Frontline, National Geographic, CNN, BBC, Al Jazeera World News, etc.

For EACH of the TEN resources, provide the following information:
- Author(s) and/or website address
- Title of scholarly article or online story
- Name of scholarly journal and/or website address
- Year of publication or last update (online sources)
- ONE paragraph summarizing the resource.
  - What is the major finding(s) and conclusions from the scholarly journal articles and/or media resource or open source, online video?
  - Why do the authors think this is important?
  - Why is this a problem or a solution or relevant?
  - How does this article connect to other material on this issue?

As a conclusion, write ONE paragraph summarizing these research and media sources. The following are guiding questions, but not mandatory to answer each one:
- What were some of the challenges in researching your topic? Think about the ease of finding your selected sources and amount of literature, or lack thereof, published about the topic.
- Do you plan to pursue this research inquiry in another course? Why or why not?
Additional Class Information and Resources

Classroom Guidelines and Expectations
● Plan to be on time to class as well, as late entries are disruptive to others.
● It is helpful to bring your notebooks, writing materials, readings (when requested), weekly schedules and syllabus to class daily.
● Only bring laptops to class for note taking. While they are useful in some settings, they are also distracting to other students, the instructor, and guests.
● Sleeping or texting/use of mobile phones in class or during guest speakers is a professional concern on many levels and will be addressed individually as well as significantly impact your participation grade.

Office Hours
● You can contact me to schedule an appointment. I am available regularly via email.
● You may stop by any of the office hours or sign-up for a different time than those scheduled for class office hours.

General Assignment Policies
● Papers should be proofread, in 12-point font, Times New Roman, with 1-inch margins and page numbers clearly marked.
● Students with questions should contact me early in the semester for assistance.
● Grading will follow AU’s policy – 90-100 A; 80-89 B; 70-79 C; 60-69 D; below 60 F.
● Please note AU’s academic integrity policies. If you have questions about how to cite materials, please see the Writing Center and/or the instructor. Remember, when in doubt, cite.

Academic Integrity Code
Standards of academic conduct are set forth in the University’s Academic Integrity Code which can be found at http://www.american.edu/academics/integrity/code01.htm. It is expected that all assignments will be completed according to the standards set forth in this code. By registering, students have acknowledged awareness of the Academic code and are obliged to become familiar with their rights and responsibilities as defined by the Code. Violations of the Academic Integrity Code will not be treated lightly, and disciplinary action will be taken should such violations occur. Please see me if there are any questions about the academic violations described in the Code in general, or as they relate to particular requirements for this or any other course or work at AU.
Disabilities statement
If you experience difficulty in this course for any reason, please do not hesitate to consult with me. A wide range of services is available to support you in your efforts to meet the course requirements.

Academic Support Center (x3360, MGC 243) offers study skills workshops, individual instruction, tutor referrals, and services for students with learning disabilities.

Counseling Center (x3500, MGC 214) offers counseling and consultations regarding personal concerns, self-help information, and connections to off-campus resources.

Disability Support Services (x3315, MGC 206) offers technical and practical support and assistance with accommodations for students with physical, medical, or psychological disabilities.

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please notify me in a timely manner with a letter from the Academic Support Center or Disability Support Services so that we can make arrangements to address your needs.

AU – Emergency Preparedness
In the event of a declared pandemic (influenza or other communicable disease) or other emergency, American University will implement a plan for meeting the needs of all members of the university community. Should the university be required to close for a period of time, we are committed to ensuring that all aspects of our educational programs will be delivered to our students. These may include altering and extending the duration of the traditional term schedule to complete essential instruction in the traditional format and/or use of distance instructional methods. All faculty members will design alternative means of completing classes. Specific strategies will vary from class to class, depending on the format of the course and the timing of the emergency. We will communicate class-specific information to students via AU e-mail and/or Blackboard. Students are responsible for checking AU e-mail regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies. In the event of a declared pandemic or other emergency, you should refer to the AU Web site (www.prepared.american.edu) and the AU information line at (202) 885-1100 for general university-wide information. AND contact your faculty and/or respective dean’s office for course and school/college-specific information.