

WR 222: Writing Research Papers

Winter 2020

Section 003 / CRN: 44244 / Cred: 4 / WEB

Instructor: Alex Dannemiller

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Course Objective: Writing 222 explores the critical thinking, reading, and writing skills required for academic research papers. We will cover topics including research and note taking methods, documentation styles, paper formatting, thesis development, revision process, source evaluation, the synthesis of sources with your own voice, and finalizing a draft, among others. Other topics may be introduced depending upon our progress through the course.

Research should focus on your interests and allow you to build your knowledge to a point where you are comfortable participating in a larger academic conversation. Such practiced ability is useful not only for university studies, but also in daily life wherever you must address an issue with a critical eye. We will focus on developing your critical researching skills so that you may employ them successfully throughout your college studies and beyond.

Required Materials:

- *EmpoWord*, First Edition, by Shane Abrams – Free and digital textbook, available here: <https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/pdxopen/20/>
- Access to D2L for assignments, handouts, and turning in work.

Recommended:

- *Rules for Writers*, Eighth Edition, by Diana Hacker and Nancy Sommers (with MLA 8 for the most recent MLA)

Course Requirements:

1. Reading Assignments: Be prepared to discuss reading assignments listed on the syllabus on the day they are due. Most of the reading will be from *EmpoWord* (see above) and some supplementary texts may be provided on D2L. Pay attention to the course schedule below as it notes what reading you will be expected to do from *EmpoWord*.
2. Final Portfolio: Your final portfolio includes: the final research essay itself, with a Works Cited, and a short reflective freewrite. The final essay on a subject of your choice, meeting my approval, must be 5 – 7 pages, and cite a minimum of 6 reliable sources. Your Works Cited does **not** count toward your page count. The complete essay is due by the end of the final exam time, while the reflection will be due in our last week. More details can be found in

the assignment description document (D2L). Your final portfolio will count as 60% of your final grade.

3. Research Report & Annotated Bibliography: As we research you will be encouraged to take notes and evaluate your sources as you read them. We will develop these notes into annotations for an Annotated Bibliography of possible sources you might use in your final paper. These annotations will summarize sources, evaluate their contents and arguments, and explain their value to your argument. A research report is a summation of all the information you've found thus far on the topic. This is different from your final essay in that the research report makes no arguable claim, but rather simply presents an overview of the topic in a condensed form. The research report will be 1 – 3 pages, and include citations for sourced information. The annotated bibliography will not count towards that page count and will be included after the research report, serving as a kind of works cited. 10% of your final grade.
4. Critical Analysis: A 4-page paper summarizing and evaluating *one source* that you will use in your final research paper, with consideration given to the rhetorical choices made in this source. You will also include further questions to ask of the source and its possible use to support your argument. More details are in the assignment description document. 10% of your final grade.
5. Research Proposal: Once your topic is chosen you will write a research proposal that introduces the topic, including your thesis, its contexts, its stakeholders, importance, relevance to the reader, your interest, outlines a structure for the paper, and discusses your strategy for using sources. It will include a short Works Cited following MLA style. 5% of your final grade.
6. Basic Mechanics of Written English: This course does not focus on grammar and proofreading, but a clear demonstration of competency in these areas will be necessary to pass the course. Optimistically, little time will be spent on these writing mechanics in WR 222. If you are struggling with these mechanics I will direct you to utilize the Writing Center or a writing guide. I will not be basing your grade upon these mechanics alone, but if your assignments do not reflect your best efforts toward improvement, your grade may reflect this.
7. Participation: Given the online nature of this course, participation will be gauged through responses to readings and other feedback provided to your peers, such as rough drafts. This work will be done through D2L's Discussion Board feature and regularly reviewed by me. Length of these responses will vary, but you should remain respectful and constructive in your responses. Participation will account for 15% of your final grade.

Grading: Your grade in this course is based on a 100-point scale. To receive an A, you must complete all of the expected work, participate regularly, and show exceptional improvement over the term. Points are distributed as follows:

- **60%:** *Final Essay* – A persuasive research essay. Due 3/17
- **10%:** *Research Report and Annotated Bibliography* – Due 2/18
- **10%:** *Critical Analysis* – Due 2/11
- **5%:** *Research Proposal* – Due 1/28
- **15%:** *Participation* – Freewrites, exercises, prompts, participation in D2L discussions, and peer reviews.

Course Policies

Late Work: Assignments are due on the date specified in the course schedule. I *do* accept late assignments, but deduct five percent for each class meeting the paper is late, and *will not accept* anything turned in two classes late (i.e. if it's due on Monday the 7th and you try to turn it in on Monday the 14th, I will not accept it). *All major assignments must be submitted to pass the class.* If a documented emergency arises, I will work with you to set an alternative due date if possible. Final essays *cannot* be turned in late and will not be accepted if turned in after the time noted on the syllabus. To pass this course you must hand in your final essay by the due day and time.

Plagiarism: For the finer points on plagiarism, consult your Student's Handbook for PSU's plagiarism policy. In short, please do not attempt to plagiarize work as it disrespects all those involved and takes away from your learning experience. You are here to become a better writer and you cannot do this through plagiarizing. It is easily detectable and you are very likely to be caught. All plagiarism will result in an immediate fail of the course and be subject to further university disciplinary actions. If you are having difficulty with an assignment and feel the need to plagiarize to complete it, please speak to me instead. If you have further questions feel free to speak to me.

Assignment Formatting: All major assignments, including drafts, must be typed in 12-pt font with 1" margins (Times New Roman is the suggested font-family, but a similar font-family is acceptable) and compatible with Microsoft Word, PDF, or D2L's online viewing option (*Pages and Open Office file types often do not work, please speak with me if these are your only options*). Include your name and page numbers in the top right corner. Other specific formatting details will be covered in class, but the suggested default will be MLA style.

Title IX Reporting Obligations: As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment for my students and for the campus as a whole. Please be aware that federal, state, and PSU policies require faculty members to report any instances of sexual harassment, sexual violence and/or other forms of prohibited discrimination. Similarly, PSU faculty are required to file a report if they have reasonable cause to believe that a child with whom they come into contact has suffered abuse, or that any person with whom they come into contact has abused a child. If you would rather

share information about these experiences with an employee who does not have these reporting responsibilities and can keep the information confidential, please contact one of the following campus resources (or visit this [link](#)):

- Women's Resource Center (503-725-5672)
- Queer Resource Center (503-725-9742)
- Center for Student Health and Counseling (SHAC): 1880 SW 6th Ave, (503) 725-2800
- Student Legal Services: 1825 SW Broadway, (SMSU) M343, (503) 725-4556

For more information about the applicable regulations please complete the required student module Creating a Safe Campus in your D2L.

Disabilities: PSU values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to fostering mutual respect and full participation for all students. My goal is to create a learning environment that is equitable, useable, inclusive, and welcoming. If any aspects of instruction or course design result in barriers to your inclusion or learning, please notify me. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) provides reasonable accommodations for students who encounter barriers in the learning environment.

If you have, or think you may have, a disability that may affect your work in this class and feel you need accommodations, contact the Disability Resource Center to schedule an appointment and initiate a conversation about reasonable accommodations. The DRC is located in 116 Smith Memorial Student Union, 503-725-4150, drc@pdx.edu, <https://www.pdx.edu/drc>.

- If you already have accommodations, please contact me to make sure that I have received a faculty notification letter and discuss your accommodations.
- Students who need accommodations for tests and quizzes are expected to schedule their tests to overlap with the time the class is taking the test.
- For information about emergency preparedness, please go to the [Fire and Life Safety webpage](https://www.pdx.edu/environmental-health-safety/fire-and-life-safety) (<https://www.pdx.edu/environmental-health-safety/fire-and-life-safety>) for information.

Course Schedule

This schedule is tentative and subject to change. Schedule adjustments may occur at any time during the course. I will attempt to inform you of these changes as soon as possible. All students are responsible for keeping up to date with schedule changes.

Week 1

- T – 1/7: Introduction to the Course: Introduction to the course and its key concepts. How do we take ideas that interest us and make them into a research topic?

Due: Read chapter 7 of *EmpoWord (EW)* (pp. 200 – 213). Do a brief freewrite on your experience with research essays and your understanding of rhetoric. See D2L for more on this prompt.

F – 1/10: Rhetoric and Research Questions: We'll address some basic concepts of rhetoric that you may be familiar with, and introducing others that may be new to you. Why is understanding rhetoric important to research and research writing? How does rhetoric shape our own writing? How does it shape our world? What is inquiry-based research? What are ways we can find topic ideas? How do we develop useful research questions? How can we determine an appropriate scope of perspective? How do we find our path of inquiry?

Due: Read ch. 8 from *EW* (pp. 242 – 51). Do Part One of the “Idea Generation: Curiosity Catalogue and Collaborative Inquiry” exercise (p. 256), and post results on D2L.

Week 2

T – 1/14: Research Strategies, Scholarly Databases, and Search Terms: How can we establish discourse contexts, working knowledge, and focused knowledge? How do we find information using scholarly databases and the library? Why are primary sources important? Is there enough academic material to continue with my topic? How do we shift focus if not? How are search terms used by search engines, news sites, articles, and databases? How do we refine our searches with terms and keywords? How can the results help us further refine our searches?

Due: Read *EW* from ch. 9 (271 – 283), stopping at “Research Methods: Evaluating Sources.” Do an exploratory search on your topic ideas to see what kind of results you get, and write down some notes on what you find. Do the “Research Scavenger Hunt” exercise (from p. 303 of *EW*) and turn in results on D2L.

F – 1/17: Evaluation and Synthesis of Sources: How do we evaluate sources? What red flags should we look for? What role can a source play based on our evaluation of it? What are your sources telling you about your topic? What picture is developing from them? How does this picture inform your argument?

Due: Read from *EW* ch. 9 (283 – 287), stopping at “The Annotated Bibliography.” Do the “Interacting with Sources Graphic Organizer” exercise prompt on D2L forum (from p. 305 of *EW*).

Week 3

T – 1/21: Bringing Together the Pieces: How do we develop a working thesis and inquiry question based off our initial research? What’s the most effective way to inform the reader of the topic’s contexts? How do we bring it all together for a proposal? Introduction to Research Proposals.

Due: Read from *EW* ch. 9 (288 – 297), stopping at “Revisiting Your Research Question, Developing an Introduction, and Crafting a Conclusion.” Read from ch. 8 (251 – 255) the section “Writing a Proposal,” and the model texts (265 – 270). Do the “Focus: Expanding and Contracting Scope” exercise on p. 262, and turn in the results on D2L.

F – 1/24: **Rough Draft of Research Proposal Due.** Peer-review of Research Proposal and refresher on MLA Works Cited formatting.

Due: Write a rough draft of your Research Proposal, including a Works Cited with at least two sources. Turn it in on D2L. Review one peer’s rough draft and post your feedback.

Week 4

T – 1/28: **Research Proposal Due.** What’s Being Said? And How?: Determining a source’s relevance and importance often depends on understanding the source’s ideas (what’s being said), and its use of rhetoric (how it’s saying those ideas). In order to successfully use our sources and make them matter in our argument, we must ask: What’s the main claim or thesis of the source? What symbols, patterns, or references does it contain? What meaning do I take away from this based on my lens or perspective? Then we analyze the content further, asking: How is the text using rhetoric? Are there logical fallacies? What strategies, accomplishments, and failures do I detect? What do I take away from such an analysis?

Due: Use feedback from peer-review to revise your Research Proposal. Turn in Research Proposal on D2L.

F – 1/31: **Due:** Read *EW* section intro., ch. 4 (108 – 120), and Appendix B, “Engaged Reading Strategies” (459 – 466). Do the double-column note-taking method (see p. 465 as well) with the source you plan to use for your analysis and response, and then write a summary that includes a brief analysis of the source’s rhetoric, which includes *what* the source is saying, and *how* it’s saying it. Turn in the results on D2L.

Week 5

T – 2/4: Summary, Analysis, and Synthesis: How do we identify the key points or concerns of a text? What’s the best way to engage with those ideas? In what ways can we create a dialogue with the text? How do we inform the reader of the contexts? How can we turn our observations into a thesis? What insights do we gain from our analysis and the text? How does synthesis create new meaning for your reader? What does this all look like as an essay?

Due: Read *EW* ch. 5 (127 – 133) and ch. 6 (146 – 157). Do the “Thesis Builder” exercise on page 162, and turn in results on D2L.

F – 2/7: **Rough Draft of Critical Analysis Due.** Peer review of Critical Analysis rough draft.

Due: Turn in your rough draft of the Critical Analysis on D2L. Review a peer’s rough draft and post your feedback on D2L as well.

Week 6

T – 2/11: **Critical Analysis Due.** MLA Works Cited and Intro to Annotated Bibliography and Research Report: What are the finer details of a Works Cited? How do we format an annotated bibliography? How will we use our sources in our arguments? What purpose will they serve? What is a research report? How does planning ahead as we search help us assemble sources? How can it help us see connections that inform our arguments or potential counter arguments?

Due: Review feedback on Critical Analysis and complete a final version to turn in on D2L. Read *EW*, section “The Annotated Bibliography” (287 – 288). See also the examples on 314 – 329.

F – 2/14: **Rough Draft of Research Report and Annotated Bibliography Due.** Peer-review of Research Report and Annotated Bibliographies.

Due: Rough draft of Research Report and Annotated Bibliography on D2L. Review a peer’s rough draft and give feedback via D2L.

Week 7

T – 2/18: **Research Report and Annotated Bibliography Due.** Beginning the Draft Process: What is the One Thing we want to say? What kind of structure suits our writing purposes and audience? How can we refine our research questions and thesis? Where do we start

writing? What makes an effective introduction and conclusion? Should I use the personal voice? Why do multiple drafts?

Due: Turn in Research Report and Annotated Bibliography on D2L. Read *EW* pp. 297 – 302 and Anne Lamott’s “Shitty First Drafts” (D2L). Post a short reading response to these on D2L.

F – 2/21: Integrating Sources and Developing Paragraphs: What are the best ways to integrate quotes into our paragraphs? What are effective paragraphs? How do we transition between source ideas, our own, and the ones that follow?

Due: Read one of two student example essays from *EW*, either “Economics and Obesity” on page 429 or “Student Veterans and Their Struggles with Higher Education” on page 436, and do a short freewrite giving an overall analysis of *their paragraph structure, synthesis of info, and integration of sources*. For your own essay, write two paragraphs that synthesize information from a source (or multiple sources), transition from one paragraph to the next, and present claims of their own. Turn in both on D2L.

Week 8

T – 2/25: **Rough Draft 1 of Research Paper Due.** Peer-review of the first draft. Global Revision: Revising for clarity and communication to the reader, organization around purpose and significance, and reviewing the overall structure.

Due: Complete a first rough draft of your final essay and turn it in on D2L. Review one peer’s rough draft and provide feedback via D2L. Read *EW* Appendix A, “Concepts and Strategies for Revision,” pp. 444 – 448.

Week 9

T – 3/3: **Rough Draft 2 of Research Paper Due.** Peer-review of Draft 2. Local Revision: Focusing on your personal voice, flow between your words and sources, verbal gestures, active vs. passive voice, and other sentence level concerns.

Due: Prepare a second rough draft of your final paper, taking into consideration the feedback you’ve received and concepts we’ve discussed. Turn the draft in on D2L. Review one peer’s rough draft and provide feedback via D2L.

Week 10

T – 3/10: Reflection and MLA Formatting: What can reflecting on our experiences teach us? How have our processes of research and

writing developed? What are the quirks and rules of MLA? How do we properly format our essays? What questions remain?

Due: Read *EW* Appendix C, “Metacognition,” pp. 467 – 470. Freewrite an action plan for your next steps with the final essay. Feel free to include any questions or concerns you’d like me to address. Turn in the freewrite on D2L. Review MLA formatting using a style guide of your choice (make sure it’s MLA 8).

For Final: Submit your final essay on D2L by the time below. See assignment description document for more details.

FINAL DUE: 3/17 – Tuesday, March 17th by 11:59 pm.