

ENGL 9002B Advanced Research Methods

Winter 2019

Mondays 3:30-6:30pm

Location: UC 4415

Instructor: Dr. Donna Palmateer Pennee (dpennet@uwo.ca, UC 3432)

Office Hours: Tuesdays 12:30-2:30pm, or arranged by appointment via e-mail

Course Description, Activities, and Objectives:

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to techniques, methods, and cultures of research in literary and cultural studies, to develop and refine their skills, knowledge, and understanding of advanced search and research methods, and to apply their learning in the work produced for assessment in the course. To these ends, the course will provide a range of activities, including (for example):

- instruction in Western Libraries' information eco-system
- cultivation of an understanding of research as an iterative and exploratory but also disciplined and organized process
- selected readings in disciplinary methods and discussion
- selected readings in interdisciplinary methods and discussion
- selected readings in the current scene of humanities research in the corporatized university
- reflection on and development or refinement of our own methods, assumptions, and positioning within English and cultural studies
- facilitation of the development of funding applications for fall 2019 or winter 2020 deadlines (with a focus on conceptual thinking, method, and research repertoire, not on skills or other work facilitated through the GDPC workshops for graduate students)
- facilitation of the development of individual research projects (for example, for a single course during the same term of study, for an upcoming Independent Research Project, for a conference paper or article, or for early stages of the doctoral dissertation), with assignments specific to encouraging and assessing this development
- development of a cohort or community of researcher-colleagues, of trust in sharing work-in-progress, and of skills and confidence in providing feedback, through shared weekly course activities and in-class discussion and presentation

The course offers an opportunity in the graduate curriculum to focus on development and refinement of search skills in relation to reflection on and discussion of research as a disciplined and iterative process. The disciplined and iterative process of research itself depends on reflection on and identification of assumptions and methods, or, on how one approaches the object of study in one's scholarship, how one defines the object of study, and what one wants to argue about the object of study in relation to participating in, perhaps even advancing, a scholarly conversation. This is not a course in "how to use the library," though it will from time to time teach specific search skills using the library's online interface and (perhaps) its physical holdings.

We will be teaching and learning primarily in the following ways throughout the course:

- reflecting on research as a process alongside hands-on practical (re)search skills development in catalogue, web-based, and database searches;
- formulating research questions; determining, articulating, and revising theoretical frameworks and methods; drafting work in progress; giving and taking feedback on work in progress; creating critical/analytical annotated bibliographies, and/or a research guide for a topic or field for which no guide exists (or for an existing one that needs to be updated); and other related activities such as concept mapping, refining a research proposal, proposing a conference paper, etc.;
- reflecting on readings in both literary/cultural studies scholarship and in changes to research cultures (e.g., as a result of on-line access to information and the corporatization of research as well as to intervention of new forms of knowledge and understandings of research in the academy-community interface); and
- (if numbers of participants permit it) presenting and providing feedback on work in progress.

The course will use an OWL course site for management of course materials, communications outside class time to the class as a whole, etc. Individual e-mail queries to the instructor should be sent directly to dpennee@uwo.ca (i.e., do not use OWL to e-mail the instructor).

Required Reading:

No textbook will be required. All readings will be made available through the OWL course site to Western's "Course Readings" service, which enables access to copyrighted materials for which you already pay in your tuition and fees to the university. (This service will also ensure that we are all working with the same page numbers for the readings, for ease of discussion in class and documentation in written work.)

Methods of Assessment:

Course work will be assessed in a range of ways, with some assignments shared across all members of the class, others self-selected according to kinds of work each student wishes to pursue on their own research agendas (and specified, with due dates, in individualized learning contracts): e.g., on development of skills, knowledge, and understanding of research techniques through completion of in-class and out-of-class work; on the quality of reflective writing on the research process and on required readings on matters pertaining to research methods and changing research cultures; on the quality of assignments linked to individual research projects (e.g., a draft and polished research proposal, a selected annotated bibliography); and on informed and engaged contributions to in-class work.

Methods of Assessment will be determined in consultation with the class not later the end of Week 3 (Friday 25 January 2019): individualized learning contracts must be completed and deposited in each student's OWL Drop Box not later than the end of Week 4 (Friday 1 February 2019).

Note:

While this course is primarily intended to facilitate work for students while they are in their graduate program and for those who plan to stay in the academy or in teaching or in professions that require research and problem-solving, the knowledge and skills developed and refined throughout the course will nevertheless be transferable to other domains and, in general, will be “good to think with.” Indeed, those of you who wish to take the course but do not plan on staying in the academy or teaching might consider making one of your assignments an analytical reflection on how you understand your learning to be relevant and transferable to other domains. Such an activity will ensure consciousness of the value of your activities, as does any research journaling exercise whatever the future of the writer of those analytical reflections.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC OFFENSES

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following website: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

STATEMENT ON STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES (SAS)

Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program.

Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are encouraged to register with Student Accessibility Services, a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both SAS and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction.

For more information, see <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd/>

Graduate Health and Wellness

Information regarding health- and wellness-related services available to students may be found at <http://www.health.uwo.ca/>. Students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone they feel comfortable confiding in, such as their faculty supervisor, their program director (graduate chair), or other relevant administrators in their unit. Campus mental health resources may be found at http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/resources.html.