

Instructor: Dr. Benjamin Spanbock
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College Writing R4B: Reading, Composition, and Research
“Our World Today: Global Issues, Local Contexts”

Course description:

With a focus on current events at both global and local levels, this class teaches students how to be rigorous and effective investigators. To better frame the concept of “our world,” we will begin with a brief history of place, taking UC Berkeley as a case study and discussing the role that the university and its research has played and continues to play in public life. This history will be complimented by close examinations of primary sources and discussions on finding and utilizing primary sources effectively. Tracking this history to the present moment, we will then map our conversations onto current events for a larger discussion on writing research papers using primary *and* secondary sources. Some of the issues that we will cover in our readings and discussions will include: how and where we find our information, what types of information and what sources of information we find valuable, and what we do with the information we have access to. Over the course of the semester, students will embark on a *process of discovery* related to a key issue within their chosen topic, to determine where, how, and why their research holds particular relevance to our world today.

List of Texts:

Available at the Cal Student Store

The Craft of Research, 4th edition (Booth, Wayne C.)

Weaponized Lies: How to Think Critically in the Post-Truth Era (Levitin, Daniel J.)

Available In Class, Online, or Through the Library

Course Reader

Access to various primary source, databases, and archives

Varied texts (at least one book length text) related to your discovery project

Reading, Composition, and Research:

R4B “offers students structured, sustained, and highly articulated practice in the recursive processes entailed in reading and composing, as well as critical analysis. The seminar affords students guided practice through the stages involved in creating a research paper.” In response to class readings and original research, “students craft several short pieces leading up to two longer essays—works of exposition and/or argumentation. Students also draft a research paper, developing a research question, gathering, evaluating, and synthesizing information from texts and other sources. Elements of the research process, such as proposals, annotated bibliographies, abstracts, “works cited” lists, and the like, are submitted, along with the final report, in a research portfolio. Students write a minimum of 32 pages of expository prose during the semester.”

This course satisfies the second half (Part B) of the Reading & Composition Requirement.

Course Requirements:

1. Students will be responsible for coming to class ready to discuss all readings assigned to them for that meeting. **This means bring all books and materials necessary for the day's class.** You will be expected to engage in informed discussions pertaining to a text's content, its formal features, its cultural context, or other relevant aspects as deemed necessary.

2. Class time will regularly be devoted to discussion of daily readings and assignments, as well as topics related to writing and research. Students will frequently be asked to work together **in revision groups and/or research groups**, which will meet during class, and in some cases before, after, or between classes.

3. During the semester you will be expected to keep a **writing/research notebook** and complete several informal and/or exploratory writing assignments in and out of class.

4. **You are required to check your email twice daily** for messages related to this course.

5. During the second half of the semester, students will be asked to create a portfolio of different materials and assignments related to the final research project and submit it for evaluation.

STUDENTS ARE THEREFORE RESPONSIBLE TO KEEP COPIES OF ALL FORMAL AND INFORMAL MATERIAL CREATED DURING THE SEMESTER.

Paper Submissions:

In general, the graded papers due for this class will go through a multi-step process, with my input and the input from other students given at certain steps along the way. **When you submit drafts to me, you will do so using your "bDrive," a Google platform for creating and exchanging documents that corresponds to the @berkeley.edu email address you were assigned when you were admitted to the university.** At the beginning of the semester you will receive a bDrive folder from me, which will be the repository for all of your draft writing this semester. When the course begins we will review how to upload your essays to bDrive, and how to use it as an interactive tool to work with me to improve your writing.

When you are finished with the feedback and editing stages and ready to submit a final paper for evaluation, you will do so through our "bCourses" page. Your papers should include a heading with one line for your name, one line for the date, and one line with the course time and title. Papers should be typed using Times New Roman 12pt. font or Arial 11 font with margins set to 1 inch.

All work is expected to be handed in **ON TIME** unless an extension is arranged in advance with me. Keep in mind that **without an approved late submission any incomplete assignments will be marked down accordingly**, having a negative impact on your final grade and potentially your ability to successfully complete the end of semester portfolio assignment.

Course Policies:

- Be respectful of the rights, opinions, and differences of others.
- Please take advantage of my office hours and/or email whenever you have a question, or if you just want to talk about something related to the course.
- Academic integrity refers to a set of core values that guide our conduct and decisions as members of the UC Berkeley community. Plagiarism and cheating contradict these values, and can be very serious academic offenses. Consequences for not adhering to these values can range from a failing grade on an assignment to suspension from the University. This quarter we will address research and citation methods that will help you avoid plagiarism, however you should also review the University's definitions of misconduct regarding this matter to help inform your study at <http://sa.berkeley.edu/conduct/integrity/definition>

UC Berkeley Honor Code:

"As a member of the UC Berkeley community, I act with honesty, integrity, and respect for others."

A Note on Course Participation and Attendance:

Attendance is critical to successful completion of this course. **In this class, you do not get credit for simply attending class, but absences count against you.** Your first absence will be excused, your second and third absences will be marked against your participation grade, with the third more than the second. Four or more absences will affect your final grade for the semester, and may be considered grounds for failing the course. Regardless of your reason for missing class, you will want to keep up with your work. Punctuality is also important. Chronically arriving to class late or leaving early is disruptive to your classmates and will impact your attendance grade.

That said, engagement does have the potential to lift your grade, and plays a large factor in your end of the term assessment. Engagement does not just refer to talking in class discussions (although it can). It can also mean being alert in class, participating in group work and revision groups, note-taking, avoiding non-class related technology tasks, meeting with me during office hours, corresponding with me by email, asking questions, or demonstrating interest through pursuit of information.

Student Learning Center:

The SLC offers a variety of peer based programs to help students write academic papers. The center also offers drop-in sessions with tutors for all students and workshops for non-native English speakers. They are located in the Chavez Student Center across from Sproul Hall. Their number is 642-7332 and their web address is <http://slc.berkeley.edu>.

Other Student Resources:

Your physical and emotional health and well-being are important to me, and essential for your long term success! Please take a moment to review some of the [resources available to students](#) and always feel comfortable and encouraged to talk to me if there is something going on that is interfering with your ability to succeed.

Grades:

Grades for papers are generally given after a full round of commenting and revision on a paper. They will always be given numerically. The relationship between numerical grading and alphabetical grading is expressed in the following chart (decimals are always rounded down):

// **A+** 98-100 // **A** 94-97 // **A-** 90-93 // **B+** 87-89 // **B** 84-86 // **B-** 80-83 //
// **C+** 77-79 // **C** 74-76 // **C-** 70-73 // **D (NP)** 60 -69 // **F (NP)** 59 and Below //

Breakdown of Semester Grade:

Working With Primary Sources (Essay #1) 10%
Sources in Context (Essay #2) 10%
Discovery Pathways (3 write-ups and 2 presentations @3% each) 15%
Prospectus: 05%
Annotated Bibliography 10%
Research Fair Presentation Slide Deck 10%
Research Paper 20%
Homework/Preparation 10%
Attendance/Engagement 10%

(Note: In-class journaling, freewriting, and small homework assignments are not always collected, but may be in certain cases. These assignments are critical to your homework and preparation and course participation grades. These assignments count towards your minimum writing requirements for the course.)

If you are ever concerned about your grade, your assignments, your progress, or your standing in the class, come speak with me ASAP. It's always best to address these issues earlier rather than later. You should never feel embarrassed or too overwhelmed or behind to come talk to me. My job is to help you succeed, and I want to do that to the greatest extent possible!