COM 601/HUM 380

Research Methods in Humanities

Wednesday, 6:25-9:05, SH 203

Instructor: Andrew Roback

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Office: SH 231

Office Hours: W 3:30-5:30 (except university holidays and finals week)

Course Description and Goals

This course will provide you with the knowledge of research methods and skills necessary to conduct research in the humanities. We will read about approaches to research in the humanities, examine case studies, and practice data collection and analysis methods.

After this course, I expect that you will be able to formulate a research question, collect and analyze data, and present your findings in a digital format. You should be able to explain the rationale behind your research decisions by employing the theory and approaches covered in the course readings.

All students will present their projects during the final exam period. Graduate students will also prepare a submission for the 2018 Chicago Colloquium on Digital Humanities.

Required Books and Technology

- Burdick, A., Drucker, J., Lunenfeld, P., Presner, T., & Schnapp, J. (2012). *Digital Humanities*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. (Use the [Open Access Edition](#))
- Booth, W., Colomb, G.C., Williams, J.M. *The Craft of Research*. 4th ed. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Everything else listed on the reading schedule will be provided by me or will be available through Richardson Library.

A Dropbox account is advisable, but any cloud storage will work (just make sure you have free space to store data). You'll sign up for Zotero on the first day of class.

If you'd prefer to work on your laptop, bring it with you to class. If you're working on the lab computer, you'll need a flash drive (4GB minimum).

Assignments

Research Notebook (20%)
You'll keep a research notebook by writing blog entries over the course of the semester covering the following topics:

- Responses to questions posed by me, mostly discussing the methods and research design of case studies;
- Lab exercises that ask you document/reflect on your research practices and report your findings;
- Periodic entries on your final research project.

The exact number of entries will vary depending on the nature of your project, but you will most likely have at least twelve entries including your responses to the lab exercises. Your entries should chronicle your efforts, so deletions are not permitted.

Lab exercises (20%)
We will have four in-class lab sessions where we'll practice data collection and analysis procedures. Outside of class, you'll work on exercises that will be due the following week. Those exercises will ask you to work with data and reflect on the procedures learned in class. You'll post your responses and any associated data files to the course blog.

Final project (40%)
You'll design and complete a research project and present your results in a digital format (e.g. website, video, application, digital collection, etc.). You'll document your progress in your research notebook entries. I'll provide more details on the project requirements as the semester progresses. You'll present your final project during the final exam period.

Participation (20%)
I expect you to come to class ready to discuss readings and participate in activities and lab sessions. Working on outside work during class is not allowed. Please also keep phone use, email checking, and chatting to the absolute minimum. We'll have independent and group activities in class to practice concepts. Please note that if you sit silently the entire semester and never participate in discussion, your grade for this component will suffer significantly. Points go to people who actively participate in class discussion and activities.

Grading Scale

All grades on assignments are weighted to their corresponding values on the syllabus. To calculate your grade, take the percentage grade I give you on an assignment, multiply by the value on the syllabus, and add the resulting figures. That is your final grade in the course.

Grade Percent
A   90-100
B   80-89
C   70-79
D   60-69
E   <60

Attendance Policy

I have a zero tolerance attendance policy. You can miss up to two class meetings without penalty. After that, I'll reduce your final course grade by ten percent for each additional absence. If you miss more than six class meetings, your final grade in the course will be an "E" (provided they are not excusable absences such as illness, family emergency, etc.). If you are more than 15 minutes late for class, it counts as an absence.

Family and health emergencies happen and are excused absences; however, you must notify me as soon as reasonably possible if such a situation arises. If you stop attending class without a notification, I will assume you are not coming back and issue a grade of "E" for the semester. If you receive an email from me regarding absences and you do not reply, I will make the same assumption.

If you miss a lab session, you are responsible for learning and making up the material on your own time.

Finally, having a lot of work in your other classes is not an excuse for missing this class, nor are extracurricular activities unrelated to official university events or professional development (e.g. academic conferences, athletic events, etc.). Seek permission for excused absences from me in advance whenever possible.

Late Work

With the exception of emergencies as outlined in the attendance policy, I will not accept late work for this course.

Plagiarism and academic dishonesty

You are expected to adhere to all IIT rules regarding academic honesty and conduct. Please familiarize yourself with the Student Handbook policies. Plagiarism is the appropriation of ideas without appropriate attribution of those ideas to the original author. Reordering words or sentences but conveying the same ideas as another author and representing those ideas as your own still constitutes plagiarism. The same goes for computer code, graphs, and illustrations: unless you wrote/made it, proper citations are required. I expect you to write everything you submit for this class. Unless I tell you to work in teams, your work should be solely your own.

If I detect any plagiarized content in your work, you will automatically fail the assignment and, depending on the severity of the infraction, the course. Additional penalties may be imposed by the University, such as academic sanctions and/or expulsion. If you are concerned that your work might constitute a breach of academic integrity, contact me via email before turning in your assignment and I will advise you. I will report plagiarism to the appropriate university authorities without exception and issue failing grades as necessary to prevent academic dishonesty.

The Writing Center (SH 232-233)

The Writing Center is a tutoring service that helps students develop writing skills critical to success in academic and professional pursuits. I strongly encourage any student to visit the Writing Center if you are having difficulty with any part of the writing process or if you simply want some feedback on your writing from another writer. Since you will be writing a great deal in this class (and, presumably, your entire life), it is to your benefit to take advantage of this free service to help you become a better writer.

Special Needs

Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with documented disabilities. In order to receive accommodations, students must obtain a letter of accommodation from the Center for Disability Resources and contact me in the first week of the course. The Center for Disability Resources (CDR) is located in Life Sciences Room 218, telephone 312-567-5744 or disabilities@iit.edu.