SYLLABUS: PHI 3083-0001
RESEARCH METHODS IN PHILOSOPHY
3 Credit Hours

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Course Description

This course is required for philosophy majors, and students should be philosophy majors who have taken at least one previous philosophy course in order to be enrolled in this course.

This course will provide students with a clear and practical introduction to writing a philosophical research paper. It will also provide students with the opportunity to reflect on the ontological conditions of interpretation and understanding. The instructor hopes to demystify the creative process that academics rarely discuss by focusing on the basic skills necessary for successful research in philosophy. These skills include reading, researching, and analyzing sources, as well as outlining, drafting, and revising one’s writing. Class participation and peer evaluation will be required. Students will form reading and writing communities that will allow them to develop and improve their philosophical writing with a focus on clarity, coherence, and persuasiveness. Students will also be required to present their research papers to the class.

This course is part of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) for Information Fluency (IF). IF is defined as the ability to acquire, evaluate, and use information in appropriate ways. Your research in this course will reinforce and enhance the student learning outcomes for IF. Also, this course is a Gordon Rule Writing Course and the required writing assignments are listed in the “Grading” section below and indicated with asterisks.
Course Goals

- Students will improve their readings skills. They will learn about the various levels of reading and employ them in their research.
- Students will receive library instruction. They will be able to determine the appropriateness of research for a particular purpose. They will also demonstrate knowledge of how to use resources from sources in print, file, and electronic forms, properly and effectively.
- Students will evaluate the quality of electronic resources and critically appraise information for their specific purposes.
- Students will reflect on the various stages of research and undergo the process involved in each major stage: including planning a project, developing a question, drafting an argument, and revising one’s writing.
- Students will take responsibility for and ownership of the development of their own philosophical research paper. They will produce reasonable, sound arguments to support a position.
- Students will develop an understanding of hermeneutics.
- Students will form research communities and provide constructive criticism to their peers.
- Students will formally present their research to the class.
- Students will reflect on the ethics of research and learn to distinguish between scholarly and non-scholarly sources, as well as primary and secondary sources.
- Students will learn the different styles of formatting a research paper complete with full references.
- Students will write the best research paper they can write and be prepared to submit their work to an undergraduate philosophy journal.

Required Texts

Adler, Mortimer J. and Charles Van Doren. *How to Read a Book*. New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1972. (This is abbreviated as HRB in the class schedule below.)


Turabian, Kate L., et al. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007. (This is abbreviated as MW in the class schedule below.)

Weston, Anthony. *A Rulebook for Arguments*, 4th ed. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2009. (This is abbreviated as RA in the class schedule below.)
Williams, Joseph M. *Style: Toward Clarity and Grace*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995. (This is abbreviated as S in the class schedule below.)

N.B. Additional philosophical materials will be assigned, as well as required philosophical sources (e.g., journals articles, monographs, and books) relevant to your topic to be selected by each student in consultation with the instructor.

**Recommended Supplemental Texts**


**Course Requirements**

- **eCommunity**

In order to receive electronic communication from the instructor, you are required to make sure that your e-mail address is accurate at [www.ecommunity.ucf.edu](http://www.ecommunity.ucf.edu). Please note that only you can change your e-mail address at this site. You are also requested to see that a picture of yourself is provided at this site to aid the instructor in identifying you and a brief biography (three substantial, grammatically correct sentences minimum). This exercise is due by 6 pm on Tuesday, August 30th and worth five points.

Please note that if you e-mail the instructor you should include an appropriate subject heading and your full name at the end of your message. The instructor will not respond to messages from unidentified students. Also, it is against university policy for instructors to include grades in e-mail messages, so please do not ask about your grades in an e-mail. Come to see me in my office instead or go to MyGrades via MyUCF.

- **Class Participation and Reading Assignments**

The instructor will use various pedagogical activities, e.g., people hunts, timed writing tasks, small group discussion, etc., to enhance and facilitate student learning. Consequently, class attendance and participation are essential. Students will not have the opportunity to make up missed classroom exercises,
which will affect one’s grade adversely in the case of unexcused absences. Students who miss class work (i.e., timed writings) because of official excused absences—which require appropriate documentation—will not be penalized, as the points from those exercises will not be included in the student’s final points. However, in the event of sudden illness or emergency when it is not possible to see a doctor, students may be excused and/or able to make up missed work when they are better. However, it is necessary that students notify the instructor as soon as possible (an email message is fine) regarding a possible absence to determine whether the absence will be excused. If you cannot notify the instructor before a missed class, then you must notify the instructor within 48 hours after the missed class to have him consider whether the absence will be excused. After two days without any notification the absence will be marked as unexcused. If a student is excused on a day that a graded assignment is due, then after communication between the student and the instructor, the instructor will determine if and when the student will be expected to submit the assignment.

Generally, readings from the texts will be assigned in advance for each class; see class schedule below. Classes will be a mixture of lecture and discussion. The reading assignments will help students to follow the lectures and participate in the classroom activities and discussions. Students should feel free to ask questions about the material.

➢ Timed Writings

In order to facilitate student learning there will be numerous timed writing assignments (approx. three to five minutes) throughout the course on material that has been assigned or previously covered. Timed writings will be unannounced with the exception of the double timed writings during each day of student presentations. Consequently, it is essential to be well-prepared and mindful of the course content. Timed writings cannot be made up, but if you have an illness or otherwise reasonable excuse (which must be approved by the instructor) for missing a timed writing, the missed exercise will not count against you and the points will not be included in your total points.

Each timed writing assignment will be worth four points and assessed as follows:

4 points = completely satisfactory attempt to answer question
3 points = limited, but generally satisfactory attempt; or completely satisfactory attempt to answer question, but student missed part of class
2 point = marginal attempt made with some accurate content, but not fully satisfactory or lacking in detail
1 point = no attempt, but student present for entire class period
0 points = student absent
Tests

There will be two take-home tests: one on *How to Read a Book* (See HRB pp. 402-405 for the test) and one following the same format on *Truth and Method*. See class schedule for due dates. The tests should be typed, double-spaced, and 500 to 750 words in length (approx. two to three pages).

Research Reviews

Students are required to attend two formal philosophical research presentations outside of class during the semester. The instructor will advise students of possible colloquia, and students may also inform the instructor of relevant events. See also the Colloquia and Conferences listed at the Department of Philosophy’s website under Events. Students must submit a typed, double-spaced one to two page review of the presentation by the second class period following the presentation. Students are permitted to submit a third Research Review for bonus points. See the Research Presentation Review form.

Students are also required to write a philosophical journal article review. See separate guidelines.

Research Communities and Student Research Presentation

Following the submission of the research proposals, students will be organized into research communities of three to four students based on related research interests. These communities will provide peer support throughout the research paper process and will also provide each student with important peer evaluations. During the final weeks of class students will be required to present the results of their research on a particular philosophical problem to the class for 7-10 minutes. The structure of the presentations will resemble a semi-formal academic conference.

In their presentations, students should explain the following: research problem, context/significance/key terms, and argument (i.e., claim(s), reasons, evidence. Students should have some visual aid (e.g., handout, powerpoint, outline on board). Students will be marked on clarity, completeness (including having completed the presentation requirements), and preparation. Students may refer to notes, but should not read their presentations.

Research Paper

Students are required to write one new research paper, 12-14 typed, double-spaced pages (i.e., 3,000-3,500 words; see research paper guidelines) on any philosophical problem that is approved by the instructor. This paper should consist of a critical discussion of the question/problem, which should motivate the student’s own philosophical reflections on the question. Think carefully about
choosing a problem to deal with. Please don’t hesitate to talk to me about any questions you have. **The student’s research paper must be newly and solely written for this class.** In other words, it cannot be similar to a previously written paper, or similar to a paper submitted in another class this semester. Such an act would involve self-plagiarism and have serious consequences (see “Academic Policy” below).

The well-written paper will be clear, coherent, consistent, and conceptually adequate (the four C’s) and strike a balance between critical evaluation and independent thought. The main parts of your paper should be (a) introduction to the philosophical question or problem and its significance, (b) critical evaluation of attempted solutions to the question/problem, and (c) your answer or solution to the question/problem and reasons/arguments for it.

In order to help the students to write the best paper possible, these steps will be followed. First, a typed, one-page research proposal is due. Second, a research bibliography listing ten possible sources (at least 3 primary sources) is due. Third, an outline is due. Fourth, a rough draft of the paper (minimum ten pages of text including notes and bibliography) is due. The draft will be read and commented on by the instructor and members of the research community (i.e., there will be peer reviews). The final version of the paper is due by midnight on Friday, December 9th. Late submissions will not be accepted.

Students who wish to participate in the [UCF Ethics Bowl](#) may write a philosophy research paper on one (or possibly two) of the ethics bowl cases. Students may substitute participation in the UCF Ethics Bowl for the Research Paper Oral Presentation. See the instructor for more information.

**Grading**

Students will be able to follow their progress in the course by the record of their grades found at MyGrades via MyUCF. The student’s final grade will be determined by dividing the total points received by the total possible points. The percentage will be judged according to the following scale. Note that the instructor uses a standard grading scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADE</th>
<th>GRADE POINT VALUE</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>90-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>80-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>70-79</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>60-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>59 and below</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Students will earn points on the following:

- eCommunity info.   5 pts
- Post-Test        15 pts
- Timed Writings   60 pts (approx.)
- Take-Home Tests* 40 pts (20 points each)
- Journal Article Review* 10 pts
- Research Presentation Reviews* 20 pts (10 points each)
- Research Proposal* 10 pts
- Research Bibliography 10 pts
- Research Paper Outline 10 pts
- Research Paper: First Draft* 20 pts
- Research Paper Presentation 20 pts
- Research Paper: Final Draft* 80 pts
- Peer Evaluation #1* 10 pts
- Peer Evaluation #2* 10 pts

Based on the above points, the total for the course is 320; however, this is a projection only, and there may be modifications and possible additional exercises which are developed throughout the course. Note that the assignments with an asterisk fulfill the Gordon Rule writing requirements.

Bonus points: Students who submit a paper to a philosophical conference or journal during the semester (August 22nd to December 3rd, 2011) will receive three bonus points (maximum). Hand in a copy of your letter of submission and acknowledgement. Students who have a paper accepted for a conference or journal will receive ten bonus points (maximum). Hand in a copy of your acceptance letter.

Late work: Students will lose points for each day (not class period) a particular assignment is late depending on the assignment; for 10 point assignments -3 for each day late, for 20 point assignments and higher -5. Note that if a student is seeking consideration for an excused absence or late submission, that the instructor must be notified of the absence no more than 48 hours after the absence or assignment due date for consideration. Note, however, that no late submissions of the final draft of the research paper will be accepted.

At the end of the course, borderline students may be awarded minimal bonus points (generally 1 to 3) for outstanding class participation, observable effort, and philosophical endeavor (e.g., active and insightful participation in classroom discussions, excellent attendance, completing all timed writings, attempting all activities, including bonus possibilities, etc.).

Incompletes will be given only if a student could not complete the tests because of something over which he or she had little or no control, e.g., an illness or death in the family. To receive an “I” for the course a student must have done at least
some of the work for the course, and he or she must speak to me before the final examination period.

**Academic Policy**

Students are expected to follow UCF’s Golden Rule for academic excellence and integrity. Any inappropriate behavior, academic or otherwise, will not be tolerated and may be reported to the Office of Student Conduct. For further guidance, please see [www.goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/](http://www.goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/). Students’ work will be submitted to [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com) for authentication (Class ID: 4220892; Password: Kierkegaard). Students found guilty of academic dishonesty or plagiarism will receive at minimum an F for their work and be referred to UCF’s Office of Student Conduct. They may also receive an F for the course and a “Z” grade designation.

**PHI 3083: Class Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments, etc.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, August 23</td>
<td>Introduction to Course</td>
<td>Pre-Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, August 25</td>
<td>MW 3-23, FPR article “Why Is So Much Philosophy So Tediou$?” by D. McNaughton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, August 30</td>
<td>MW 24-35, RA chap. IV</td>
<td>eCommunity info. due by 6 pm (5 points)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, September 1</td>
<td>MW 36-47 and handout “Consciousness and Free will” by S. Gallagher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, September 6</td>
<td>Library Instruction, HRB chaps.1-5</td>
<td>N.B. Class meeting in Library, room 235C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, September 8</td>
<td>HRB chaps. 6-7, Philosophy Journal Article of your choice</td>
<td>Journal Article review due (10 points)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, September 13</td>
<td>HRB chaps. 8-9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, September 15</td>
<td>HRB chaps. 10, 11 &amp; 12</td>
<td>Research Proposal Draft due (10 points)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, September 20</td>
<td>HRB chaps. 18, 20 &amp; 21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, September 22</td>
<td>TM pp. xx-xxxiv, 1-20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, September 27</td>
<td>TM pp. 102-25, 156-61</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, September 29</td>
<td>TM pp. 268-85</td>
<td>HRB Take-Home Test due (20 points)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, October 4</td>
<td>TM pp. 291-310</td>
<td>Research Bibliography due (10 points)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, October 6</td>
<td>TM pp. 341-371</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>MW 48-70, 129-130, online article <strong>“Some Reflections on Academic Ethics”</strong> by M. Piety, RA chaps. I-VII</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, October 11</td>
<td>MW 71-81, RA chap. VIII</td>
<td>TM Take-Home Test due (20 points) on Friday, 10/14, by 11:55 pm.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, October 13</td>
<td>MW 98-101, 102-108</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, October 18</td>
<td>MW 109-119, RA appendices</td>
<td>Outline of Research Paper due (10 points)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, October 20</td>
<td>S chaps. 2-4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, October 25</td>
<td>S chaps. 5-7</td>
<td>Withdrawal Deadline</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, October 27</td>
<td>S chaps. 8-10; MW 120-128, RA chap. IX</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, November 1</td>
<td>TBD, Instructor at <a href="#">Kierkegaard Conference in Hertfordshire</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, November 3</td>
<td>TBD, Instructor at <a href="#">The Erotic Conference in Prague</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, November 8</td>
<td>TBD, Instructor at <a href="#">The Erotic Conference in Prague</a></td>
<td>Rough Draft due at <a href="#">www.turnitin.com</a> (20 points)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, November 10</td>
<td>TBD, Instructor at <a href="#">The Erotic Conference in Prague</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, November 15</td>
<td>Student Research Presentations</td>
<td>Peer evaluations due (20 points)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Glendon Gordon, Ryan Rutledge, Jimmy Tater, Annette Toro, Doug Zimmerman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, November 17</td>
<td>Student Research Presentations</td>
<td>Chris Byron, Joseph Comunale, Cara Cummings, Jesus Luzardo, Rebecca Eikleberry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, November 22</td>
<td>Student Research Presentations</td>
<td>Daniel Brown, Michael Gaeta, Lyz Layman, Phillip Maikula, Stewart Vargas-Sosa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, November 24</td>
<td>No Class</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, November 29</td>
<td>Student Research Presentations</td>
<td>Jennifer Barney, Jonathan Bell, Stephanie Stepp, Peter</td>
</tr>
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Szakaly, Ross Woodie

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<tr>
<th>Thursday, December 1</th>
<th>Student Research Presentations</th>
<th>Alexa Battista, Ben Cook, Andrew Frost, Tatum Rhoads, Olga Tomasello</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, December 6</td>
<td>Final Exam Period 7:00 - 9:50 am: Student Research Presentations</td>
<td>Post-test Emily Binnie, Tim Blanton, Jeremy Botta, James Bourgeois, Lorraine Cornillie, Whitney Hamrick, Tamiera Jones, Chris Randazzo, David Rothkopf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday, December 9</td>
<td>Final Research Paper due (80 points) by midnight; submit to <a href="http://www.turnitin.com">www.turnitin.com</a></td>
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**N.B.**

The instructor welcomes comments and suggestions about the course and encourages feedback throughout the course. He also reserves the right to amend this syllabus at his discretion.

**APPENDIX: SELECTED ASSIGNMENTS**

**Research Proposal Draft**

**Instructions:**

A. Following the guidelines in MW, pp. 6-7, draft a research problem proposal. Use the specific three-step formula found on page 6 (i.e., Topic, Question, and Significance). This should be typed, doubled-spaced, and approximately half a page.

B. Go to The Philosopher’s Index (see library handout) and conduct three different key term searches relevant to your topic. Hand in a list of the search terms (the more specific the better) and the hit count for each.

**Philosophy Journal Article Review**
Instructions: Read any article from a philosophical journal (online journals included, but not a student journal), then answer the following questions in no more than two typed, double-spaced pages. You do not need to rewrite the questions, and you should write in coherent paragraphs.

1. What is the complete bibliographical reference for this article? Write this at the top of the page.
2. What is the central problem of the article?
3. What is being said in detail, and how?
4. Is the paper true, in whole or part?
5. What of it?
6. Are there any style guidelines or instructions for authors? If so, briefly note what they are. If not, write that you couldn’t find any.
7. Is the journal peer reviewed?

Links

http://library.ucf.edu/
http://philosophy.cah.ucf.edu/journals.php
http://wadsworth.com/philosophy_d/special_features/journals.html
Tip: Scroll to the end to the “General Online Journal Websties” [sic].

Research Bibliography Draft

Instructions: Write a bibliography for your research paper consisting of a minimum of ten sources. Follow carefully the Turabian/Chicago style explained in A Manual for Writers (examples are given on pp. 401-402). Your bibliography should consist of both primary and secondary sources, and following each source you should indicate parenthetically whether it is primary (P) or secondary (S). Also see A Manual for Writers for an explanation of the different kinds of sources (pp. 25-27).

Research Presentation Review

Name:
Date:

Presenter's/Author's Name:
Paper Title:
Time, Date, and Place:

Review Questions:
1. What is the central problem of the paper (presentation)?
2. What is being said in detail, and how?
3. Is the paper true, in whole or part? In other words, do you agree with the author? Why or why not?

Peer Research Paper Review

Name:
Date:
Paper Title:

Instructions: Read your peer’s rough draft carefully and include any corrections or comments within the text. Then answer the following questions. You should write approximately one page (200 words minimum, typed, double-spaced). Peer evaluations should be attached to the rough draft at the back and returned in class on or possibly be submitted via www.turnitin.com (TBD, see class schedule). Students earn a maximum ten points per peer review and will lose points if their reviews are late, incomplete, or inconsiderate.

Review Questions:

1. Can you clearly identify the main parts of the paper? Can you clearly identify the central problem of the paper and the main claim? State these briefly.
2. Are the main points of the argument clearly connected? Are there clear reasons for the claims? Comment.
3. Is the evidence presented reliable and connected to the claims? Are references properly noted? Comment.
4. Is the argument persuasive? Why or why not?
5. What of it? What is the significance of the research? Do you have any questions or suggestions to improve the paper?
6. Is the writing clear and error-free? (Note: You don’t need to write a response to this provided that you mark corrections and unclear sentences within the text.)

Research Paper Checklist

ABSTRACT (100-200 words)

INTRODUCTION (approx. 1-2 pages)
___ Opening
___ Common Ground/Context/Background
___ Statement of the Question/Problem
___ Consequences/Significance of Problem
___ Response to Problem (Major Claim or Promise of a Solution)
___ Brief description of how the paper will be developed

BODY (approx. 10 pages)

___ Headings/Sub-headings (optional, but recommended)
___ Explication of sources which deal with or are relevant to your problem
___ Development of your argument (Claims, Reasons, Evidence)
___ Critical Analysis of Sources
___ Acknowledgments and Responses
___ Expression of Warrants (optional, but recommended)

CONCLUSION (approx. 1-2 pages)

___ Clear answer to Research Problem (Main Point)
___ Summary of Reasons
___ Significance of Answer
___ An Echo (optional)

NOTES

___ Follow an acceptable style consistently

BIBLIOGRAPHY

___ Follow an acceptable style consistently
___ Minimum ten sources (at least three primary ones)

Rough Draft Manuscript Requirements

___ Title page (see MW 378 for an example)
___ 8 pages of text (minimum 2,000 words excluding title page, notes, and bibliography)
___ Notes and Bibliography or Reference List
___ Follow outline checklist above and use headings (some parts may be incomplete)
___ Typed, double-spaced, font 12 New Times Roman
N.B. Students will earn points for meeting these requirements. No points will be taken off for writing problems.

**Final Draft Manuscript Requirements**

- Title page
- 12-14 pages of text (minimum 3,000 words/maximum 3,500 words excluding title page, notes, and bibliography)
- Notes and Bibliography or Reference List
- Follow outline checklist above and use headings appropriately
- Typed, double-spaced, font 12 New Times Roman
- Proper margins (1 inch)
- Page numbers
- Submitted at www.turnitin.com by due date (see class schedule)

**Research Paper Grading in General**

In general, the student's grade will reflect the quality of the work in relation to the assignment requirements. Students earn points for meeting the stated requirements and lose points for any point on the checklist that is not met (e.g., one page short of minimum page requirement -6, no page numbers -3).

Generally, one point will be taken off for every two minor spelling, grammar, and punctuations errors. So watch out for "its & it's," "then & than," using plural pronouns with singular subjects, etc.

Major errors of clarity, consistency, coherence, or formatting will result in more points being taken off based on the nature of the error.

Papers containing an instance of plagiarism (using someone else’s words or ideas without credit) will, at minimum, earn a zero and the student will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct.