IDS 4930- Intro to Research in the Liberal Arts and Sciences

Instructor: Dr. Jacob T. Watson
Email: jacobwatson@ufl.edu
Office / Hours: Tuesday 2-3pm

OVERVIEW

The two goals of this course are: 1. to explore the diversity of undergraduate research activities available to UF students, including local, national, and international experiences; and 2. to equip students with an array of transferrable skills that can be applied in a broad range of research environments. Students will gain research-specific communication skills and research-oriented professionalization strategies. They will also learn how to apply for, obtain, and succeed in a wide variety of funded research opportunities.

OBJECTIVES

- navigate a range of research opportunities and resources available to UF students
- communicate effectively with faculty mentors
- formulate and refine a research question
- compile a bibliography related to a specific research question
- conceptualize and propose an original undergraduate research project
ASSIGNMENTS

Forums
Every other week, students will be asked to post an assignment to the class forum. In addition to creating posts, students will also be asked to reply to their classmate’s posts as part of their weekly discussion forum activity. As a general rule, posts contributed to the forum will be evaluated for thoughtful completion. To do well in this category, students should post whenever asked to do so and do their best on each forum assignment. Each student’s overall contribution to the forums will be assessed as one quarter of their total course grade.

Annotated Bibliography
At the midpoint of the semester, students will turn in a bibliography of sources related to a research question of interest. The bibliography should contain at least six scholarly sources. Each source listed will be accompanied by a 1-paragraph original summary and explanation of relevance. Bibliographies will be graded in accordance with a rubric.

Proposal
At the end of the semester, students will turn in a research project proposal similar to what many research program applications require. The proposal will outline a hypothetical project that the student could undertake to investigate their research question. It will include a description of the significance of the research project and will discuss the proposed methods that will be used to achieve a result. The proposal should be realistic in scope and founded in the preliminary knowledge gained through previous assignments and classroom activities. Proposals will be graded in accordance with a rubric.

Participation
Students will have several options for the participatory component of this course. For the biweekly live Q&A sessions on zoom, students may either attend the event and asking a question to the guest or post 2 questions the day before the event and watch the video recording after. Everyone is required to post their biggest takeaway from each Q&A or guest speaker event by the day after. There will also be biweekly reading discussions, and students may sign-up for big group, small group, or fully asynchronous (written response) discussions according to their schedule and interaction preferences.

Over the course of the semester, student participation will be observed and qualitatively assessed. Quality of participation includes factors like frequency and value of contributions to discussions and guest Q&As, evidence of preparation, and general attitude. To do well in participation, students should always engage to the best of their ability in discussion, and refrain from distracting behavior or inattentiveness whenever someone else is addressing the class. In general, student should ALWAYS avoid doing or saying anything hostile or disrespectful toward any person in the class. Overall quality of weekly participation will be evaluated as one quarter of the course grade.
GRADING
Grading percentages are as follows:

- Forums: 25%
- Participation: 25%
- Annotated Bibliography: 25%
- Project Proposal: 25%

Grading scale:
A=92.5-100; A-=89.5-92.4; B+=86.5-89.4; B=79.5-82.4; C+=76.5-79.4; C=72.5-76.4; C- =69.5-72.4; D+=66.5-69.4; D=62.5-66.4; D-=59.5-62.4; E=<59.5

ATTENDANCE
Students who need to miss an online interaction they have signed-up for should let me know as far in advance as possible and should complete the asynchronous equivalent (written reading response or written Q&A questions) on or before the deadline.

LATE WORK
Late work will not be accepted except under extenuating circumstances. Students in need of an extension for medical or other reasons should meet with the instructor prior to the assignment deadline if possible.

EVALUATIONS
Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at http://evaluations.ufl.edu. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/. To help improve the course and maximize the benefit for students, additional, informal evaluations will be assigned at the beginning and midpoint of the semester.

DISABILITY NOTICE
Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.
SCHEDULE

Weeks 1-2: Welcome to Research
   1: syllabus; course overview; introductory forum posts
   2: Why Research? video; University Scholars Q&A; reading discussion

Weeks 3-4: Preliminary Research
   3: conducting online research; how to read an article; topic selection activity
   4: guest live Q&A; reading discussion
   Readings: Constructing Research Questions, ch. 2

Weeks 5-6: The Research Project
   5: refining the research question; how to make a bibliography; research question activity
   6: guest live Q&A; reading discussion

Weeks 7-8: Reaching Out
   7: finding a mentor; how to write a proposal; contacting PIs activity
   8: guest live Q&A; reading discussion
   Readings: David G. Oppenheimer, Getting In, ch. 6: “Your Application Strategy”

Weeks 9-10: Finding Resources and Funding
   9: applying for an opportunity; virtual visit to a special collection; application activity
   10: student panel live Q&A; reading discussion
   Readings: JUR articles (TBD)

Weeks 11-12: Research Writing
   11: visually and verbally curating data; academic conferences; JUR activity
   12: guest live Q&A; reading discussion
   Readings: Scientific Writing = Thinking in Words, ch. 1: “Thinking about Your Writing”

Weeks 13-14: Peer Review and Wrap-Up