

## FYS 1170: First Year Seminar

### *An Introduction to the Liberal Arts through Research*

#### Syllabus

Instructor: Robert Smyth

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Meeting Time: Mondays (12.30-2pm) & Wednesdays (12.30-2pm)

Office Hours: By appointment.

#### **Course Description**

This course seeks to give students a firm understanding of the expectations that a liberal arts institution such as McDaniel College has of students pursuing a bachelor's degree, and to provide them with the tools to be able to succeed. The course also includes an important outreach element and involves a strong element of community engagement. Accordingly, students will learn to interact with the world and people beyond the college walls as part of a special project to develop content, such as interviewing migrants. This content will be used to help a migrants' association develop its online presence while developing a range of skills for students, such as social, interviewing, interpretation and writing up skills. This goal-based research will relate strongly to the particular major that the student is pursuing. For example, a psychology major may look at the psychology behind being a migrant.

Students are expected to help and learn from one another along the way and become acquainted with each others' majors. The course will also serve to familiarize participants with their environment culturally and politically. Another aspect is to already consider future career aims and to formulate ways of preparing to meet the demands to enter chosen fields.

#### **Course objectives**

- To develop information literacy so that students become better equipped to deal with the demands of college and subsequently working life.
- To develop critical thinking skills and apply them.
- For students to be able to find and critically process information independently through research.
- For students to produce content related to the field of their Major.
- To understand the process of creating an annotated bibliography from start to finish.
- To develop a certain level of understanding of how to go about researching within other Major specializations.
- To improve presentation skills and verbal presentation of ideas.

#### **Learning outcomes**

- Students demonstrate the ability to critically analyze college level material.
- Students convey effective oral communication, both in class presentations and informal discussions.

- Students demonstrate basic information literacy skills, including research, evaluation and citation.
- Students show an ability to construct an argument and offer appropriate evidence in support of their argument.
- Students can identify the resources and processes they need to use to apply them to their own work.
- Students have strategies for analyzing and interpreting all manner of texts.
- Students understand how to examine issues from an interdisciplinary-perspective.

### **How the course will be conducted**

During the first weeks, class will mainly be conducted in a lecture/discussion format. However, a mini research project will require students' active participation, and, especially after the midterm break, students' individual research papers will become the focus of the class.

### **Course Grade**

Class Participation and Contributions	30%
Mid-term project	30%
Final project	40%

The final exam will consist of an oral presentation of your research as well as the completion of your annotated bibliography.

### **Honor code**

You are expected to adhere to the McDaniel College Honor Code. First and foremost, do not attempt to hand in any work that is not your own. This will result in a failing grade on the work, and it will be reported to the Dean.

Second, and perhaps a bit more difficult to understand, is the use of proper source citation. In composition you are expected to use outside sources, for example websites, essays, interviews, etc. Without proper citation, an essay is claiming that the author is the source of such information. This is a form of academic dishonesty, and is treated in any forum as such.

### **Attendance**

Your presence in class is required. If you miss more than three classes your grade will drop a letter grade. Then, with each subsequent absence, the grade will drop another letter grade. If you must miss class for medical reasons, please provide a signed excuse from a doctor.

Course Schedule:

Week	Monday	Wednesday
Sep 4/6	Introductions. Getting to know the program.	Approaches to research. How to generate research ideas with ease.
Sep 11/13	Analyzing the world around you to generate new research ideas. Forming a research hypothesis.	How to write a persuasive proposal. Understanding your audience.
Sep 18/20	The Hoover Library: an online resource at your fingertips. Exploring other online libraries.	Source evaluation. Introduction to the McDaniel Writing Center.
Sep 25/27	Reading with purpose.	Exploring contemporary issues.
Oct 2/4	How to prepare for an interview.	Project work.
Oct 9/11	Internships: how to go about finding them.	Project work.
Oct 16/18	Consultations.	Consultations.
Oct 23/25	No class.	The perils of plagiarism.
Oct 30/ Nov 1	Preparing a resumé.	No class.
Nov 6/8	Debate analysis.	How to argue convincingly and persuasively.
Nov 13/15	Debating.	Finding ideas for future research.
Nov 20/22	Presentation skills.	Writing an annotated bibliography.
Nov 27/29	Project work.	Fine tuning and fact checking.
Dec 4/8	Fine tuning and fact checking.	Looking for new angles.
Dec 11/13	Presentations.	Presentations.

Note: the content of the course is subject to some minor alterations.