

SRSU PSY 4309 – Readings & Research

Summer 2020

Course Title: **Readings & Research**

Recommended Text: Birkenstein, C., Durst, R., & Graff, G. (2017). *They say /I say: The moves that matter in academic writing with readings*. (4th ed.). New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company.

Contact Information: Alicia M. Trotman, PhD – alicia.trotman@sulross.edu

Course Description:

This Readings & Research is designed as a two-credit course for students who need to complete graduation requirements. Its purpose is to ensure that you achieve acceptable performance in the practical application of the academic competencies of: 1) written (and oral) communication, 2) critical thinking and reasoning, and 3) information literacy. This section of Readings & Research will focus on a particular topic, chosen by you. You are provided with supplemental readings and given guidance on preparing and responding to arguments in sources based on your topic selection. Your goal is to complete a final manuscript and presentation that requires research and assessment of print and online sources relevant to your topic.

Course Objective:

The objective of this course is to reach mastery of academic competencies of written, oral, and visual communication, critical thinking and reasoning, and information literacy. In this particular course, you will learn how to interrogate your views and beliefs of controversial topics and, analyze the cogency and resonance of others' views and beliefs related to their arguments. Through your own self-interrogations, you will concentrate on enhancing your **own** abilities, and create a coherent case to substantiate what you **can** do. In addition, practicing these academic competencies involves discovery, curiosity and creativity that leads to new understandings, some of which may surprise or startle you. Your abilities may spring from the folds of these academic competencies addressed in the learning outcomes below.

Student Learning Outcomes:

The student learning outcomes of this course are to engage you in the **process** of learning, and to become skilled in three academic competencies. The pursuit of mastery in these competencies takes you through a process of intellectual and personal growth, which develops key aptitudes for pursuing inquiry in science. The scientific approach to learning in the humanities involves exploration, discovery, and investigation of the human experience in traditional, individual and societal movements. In additions, these academic competencies when mastered, form a foundation that may propel you for future scholastic or professional success. Throughout the course, these are the outcomes we will aspire towards:

1. **Written, oral and visual communication.** Written, oral and visual communication encompass skills to read, comprehend, articulate, and present primary and secondary sources in argumentation and research. These sources typically include reliable (and generally trustworthy) newspapers, journals and books, both in print and digital formats. Once reading is mastered, then the following aims are central to communication in writing, speech and presentation:

- a. Identifying, analyzing and evaluating arguments using logic and appropriate rhetorical techniques.
 - b. Constructing a response that infers, synthesizes and/or incorporates the words and ideas of others using formal documentation.
 - c. Formulating a meaningful thesis statement that justifies **your** response that can coincide with, distinguish, divert, and most importantly extend others' arguments.
 - d. Styling **your** thesis statement that anchors development of your argument appropriate to audience and purposes as well as employing effective tone, word choice, and sentence (syntax) patterns.
 - e. Showcasing **your** thesis statement that delineates development of your argument appropriate to audience and purpose, as well as employing effective imagery, quotations, and media.
 - f. **Method of Formative Assessment: Journal Article Summaries, Final Manuscript and Presentation**
2. **Information Literacy.** Information literacy refers to the skill in identifying, retrieving, and evaluating the reliability and validity of sources, and organizing and citing properly a wide range of resources including print, graphic and digital for independent learning and creative and practical problem solving. When becoming information literate, you will:
- a. Identify and apply the most appropriate, ethical and legal methods and search tools to retrieve information.
 - b. Determine the nature and extent of the information needed and evaluate its significance and relevance for your specific purpose.
 - c. Formulate research questions that aid in exploration and analysis.
 - d. **Method of Formative Assessment: Journal Article Summaries, Final Manuscript and Presentation**
3. **Critical Thinking and Reasoning.** Critical thinking involves the ability to interpret and analyze a subject respectfully and insightfully. Reasoning refers to further thinking about a subject's intentions in at most a logical fashion. The steps towards critical thinking and reasoning includes:
- a. Outlining your specific position (thesis/hypothesis) that accounts multiple perspectives on an issue.
 - b. Evaluating others' viewpoints or assumptions against your own viewpoints or assumptions and, analyzing arguments for implied and direct meaning and for tone, audience, and purpose.
 - c. Drawing reasonable speculations based on the evidence provided using logic and other appeals that ends with **your** qualified but necessary conclusion.
 - d. Identify and avoid flawed logic or logical fallacies and participate constructively in discourse that may be controversial in nature.
 - e. **Method of Summative Assessment: Final Manuscript and Presentation**

Course Requirements:

1. All the readings must be accessed and read in preparation for class.
2. Respect for students and lecturer must be maintained at all times when we meet. Respect is a basic human characteristic that entitles each person to their own right and identity. It also helps to nurture a healthy learning environment. If you recognize that respecting others may be a problem, please be courteous and alert me or more suitable personnel (e.g. Sul Ross State University psychologists, family members, lecturers, close friends) and or refer to the Student Conduct and Discipline section of the [SRSU Student Handbook](#).

SRSU Disability Services - AMERICANS with DISABILITIES ACT STATEMENT:

Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request for accessibility services. Students seeking accessibility services must contact Student Services.

Honoring Academic Integrity

Any instance of academic misconduct such as (1) turning in an identical written assignment for another course without approval, (2) copying from any source without proper citation, (3) crossing the boundary of what is allowed in a group project, (4) lying in connection with your academic work, (5) cheating, (6) plagiarism, (7) misrepresenting facts and/or collusion are contrary to the purpose of any educational institution and will be dealt with **most severely** to the extent of the university's disciplinary policy and/or through legal action if indicated. An instructor who determines that a student has been dishonest academically can at a minimum issue no credit for the assignment/exam, and/or pursue more severe penalties, including but not limited to failing the course. Before the penalty is imposed, the student has the right to appeal to the division chairperson or Assistant Provost for the Academic Affairs. Further information about *Academic Honesty* can be read in the [SRSU Student Handbook](#) and procedures for dealing with these acts are outlined in the [Scholastic Dishonesty Policy](#).

Marketable Skills:

1. Speaking Effectively: Students will demonstrate competency in public speaking and communicating scientific information to diverse audiences.
2. Describing Feelings: Students will demonstrate empathic or active listening and conversational skills, and/or write clearly about their affective stance, respectfully attuned to the needs of their audiences.
3. Identifying Resources: Students will demonstrate the aptitude to locate, organize and evaluate the credibility of information from multiple sources.
4. Analyzing: Students will demonstrate ability to examine the underlying issues of a scientific problem, attending to the pertinent details and creating a plan of action, recognizing ambiguity and complexity as essential components.

Observing Class Guidelines

Class Attendance

This is a course that requires in class, hands on experience and discussion. **Class attendance IS REQUIRED and participation is important.** Class participation and attendance will be worth **10%** of the final grade. The percentage is considerable so your presence will *help* your ability to complete all of assignments for this class. If you are unable to attend a class session, please discuss the reason with me and make arrangements for missed class. Excessive unexcused absences (at least 2 missed class sessions per week) will result in a **failing grade** for the course. *In particular, ceasing to attend classes for three consecutive class meetings without contacting the instructor will result in the issuance of a grade of FW which indicates "stopped attending."* This grade of FW will be calculated into the student's GPA as an F and may result in dismissal. In addition, this status will be reported to Registrar and may result in a reduction of financial aid monies. It is assumed that a student will attend all classes for which he/she is registered. Class attendance is governed by the SRSU

policy stated in the schedule of classes. Excused absences entail established religious observance, or providing emergency, university-authorized, legal or medical documentation.

Participation - This is an online course. However, your active, daily participation in this course is essential and required in order to be successful, including checking email daily, checking for Black Board announcements, staying up with readings and participating in Blackboard Collaborate meetings. ***Please check the times and days that we meet as arranged with instructor.***

Distance Education Statement: Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, such as Smarthinking, library resources, online databases, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should correspond using Sul Ross email accounts and submit online assignments through Blackboard, which requires secure login information to verify students' identities and to protect students' information. The procedures for filing a student complaint are included in the student handbook. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website.

The Online Support Desk

The Support Desk is where you can direct your more technical questions. For example, if you are having issues submitting a document, getting videos to play, or you are dealing with a technical error in the course. The support desk is open 24 hours a day/7 days a week for your convenience. You can reach the support desk:

- *By calling 888.837.6055*
- *Via email blackboardsupport@sulross.edu*
- *Using resources from the Technology Support tab within blackboard*
- *Clicking the Support Desk graphic on the course homepage*

Regular communications with the professor: It is essential that you keep me current on your progress and any difficulties you may be having so that I can respond in real time to support your success. The most efficient way of contacting me is by email or scheduling a meeting with me at <https://calendly.com/amtsulross-office-hours> which provides you with contact hours for the rest of the semester.

Course Behaviors - Respect and Disruptions: Watch the VIDEO on NETTIQUETTE -

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FWMk_Zv7nB8 and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80uRE972uQ0>.

You are encouraged and expected to openly engage in discussions, ask questions, share ideas, and express your thoughts in this web-based course in the same manner as in a face-to-face course. Please treat each other with dignity and respect and avoid disruptive behaviors. You are responsible for knowing what behaviors are acceptable versus unacceptable as referred to in the Student Conduct and Discipline section of the SRSU Student Handbook

(http://www.sulross.edu/sites/default/files//sites/default/files/users/docs/stulife/student_conduct_discipline.pdf.)

Communicating with the Professor: The best way to contact me is by email or scheduling a meeting with me at <https://calendly.com/amtsulross-office-hours> . GENERAL QUESTIONS are to be posted to a discussion

board for all. For PERSONAL or PRIVATE ISSUES email me at Alicia.trotman@sulross.edu or text me. I strive to respond as soon as possible. If you do not receive a reply within 24 hours during the work week, please resend your email or text me.

Late Assignments/Projects/Checklists

You are expected to meet assignment deadlines. **All assignments must be submitted in Blackboard BEFORE the next session.** Late exercises, summaries, responses and essays will be reduced by 10% of the overall assignment for the first day of lateness. Beyond the first day and unexcused absences, there will be an additional 40% deduction and no feedback from me. Beyond one week and unexcused absences, all points will be lost. For excused absences (university-authorized, legal or medical issues), speak with me **before the absence** so arrangements can be made.

Evaluation:

Exercises (10) – These exercises are designed to build your skills in the academic competencies. Firstly, you will read primary sources to learn the goals of written (and oral) communication. Most of the exercises will come from the Graff & Birkenstein (2010) text. Other exercises given are designed to ensure that you understand the major elements of scientific inquiry. For example, you will have exercises to demonstrate that you understand plagiarism, ethics generation of hypotheses or operational definitions, correlations, and/or the structure of a research papers. In addition, extra practice for any of these assignments may be proffered as extra credit.

Article Summaries (2) and Responses (2) – You will write two article summaries to learn the aims of information literacy. As you write these summaries (two pages), you will practice written communication strategies. Furthermore, you will do critical thinking and reasoning as you write your response (four pages) to two critical readings as you contrast your viewpoints with those belonging to the authors. Instructions for how these responses are to be constructed will be provided and will be posted on Blackboard. The responses are crucial to your slow and steady development of your critical inquiry and information literacy skills.

Final Manuscript and Presentation (1) - You will work on a research manuscript that combines the skills gained from written (and oral) communication, information literacy and critical thinking and reasoning. This manuscript will be at least 10 pages that meets college level standards for content, organization, style, grammar, mechanics, and format. You will need to manage the research and writing process effectively showing evidence of planning for research project methods and resource use. The presentation will be an application of your skills in visual communication where you outline the most important aspects of your manuscript in 10 to 12 slides.

Grading

You are expected to complete reading assignments prior to class sessions and to engage in thoughtful discussions in light of these assignments.

Grading:	1000 points total	Final Grade
Exercises	30 points (10@30 points)	30%
Article Summaries & Responses	50 points (4@50 points)	20%
Final Manuscript	200 points	20%
Final Presentation	150 points	15%
Attendance/Participation:	150 points total	15%

Course Outline

(This schedule and the topics listed below are subject to modification by the instructor.)

Day	Content
May 19 th & 20 th	Introductions ☺
Homework	Exercise (1)
May 21 st & 22 nd	Graff & Birkenstein (2017)
Homework	Exercises (2, 3 & 4)
May 25 th to 28 th	Graff & Birkenstein (2017)
Homework	Exercises (5 & 6)
May 29 th & 30 th	Graff & Birkenstein (2017)
Homework	Exercises (7 & 8)
June 1 st to 3 rd	Graff & Birkenstein (2017)
Homework	Exercises (9 & 10)
June 4 th & 5 th	Article reading (1)
Homework	Article Summary (2)
June 8 th to 10 th	Article Reading (2)
Homework	Article Summary (2)
June 11 th & 12 th	Critical Reading (1)
Homework	Article Response (1)
June 15 th to 17 th	Critical Reading (2)
Homework	Article Response (2)
June 18 th & 19 th	Reviews of Summaries
Homework	Final Manuscript and Presentation
June 22 nd through 26 th	Review for Final Manuscript and Presentation DUE Saturday June 27th