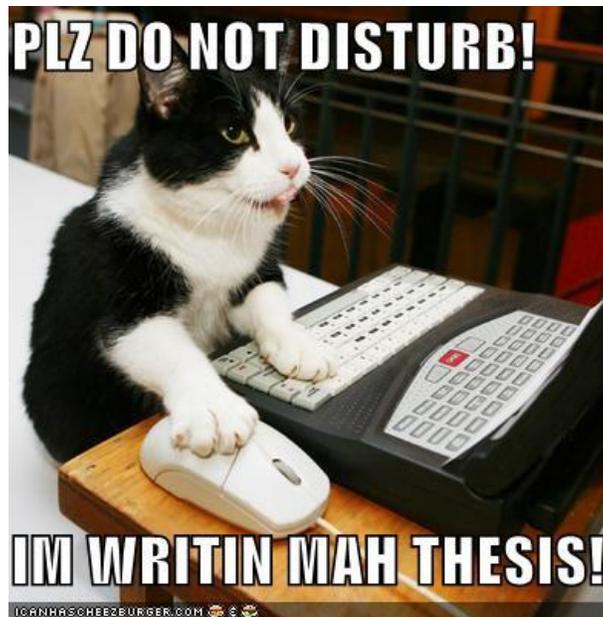


Honors Thesis Writers Seminar
Fall 2015, 050:495:01

Tuesdays, 10AM – noon
Room: Ruth Adams Building, 109A

Professor Andy Urban
Office: Ruth Adams Building, 205E
Office Hours: Mondays, 10AM to noon, and by appointment
aturban@rci.rutgers.edu



Course Goals:

The Honors Thesis Writer Seminar is designed to instruct and support you in researching and writing your senior honors thesis in American Studies, and to help you make progress on this project in a timely manner. In addition, we will engage theories and practices relating to the production of knowledge in the form of an American Studies thesis, and consider the different methodologies and conversations that comprise this interdisciplinary major. This seminar will provide a space to critique and receive critiques – through instructor and peer reviews – and to share ideas on getting through this arduous but rewarding process.

The course meets seven times during the semester. Due to our limited meetings, attendance at each session is mandatory. In addition to working on scholarly craft, we will also use these sessions to address how to overcome anxieties about the quality of your work; meeting deadlines; implementing revisions; and any other issues that arise.

This seminar involves deadlines. Deadlines force you to write, to make decisions about what arguments you want to emphasize, and to produce enough high-quality material to allow you to complete your thesis on time. All deadlines will be strictly observed.

Readings

There are no assigned books for this course, although I am happy to discuss with you some of the better writing and research manuals that exist, which you may be interested in acquiring. The assigned readings that appear in the syllabus are posted as .pdf files on the course's SAKAI site under the heading "Resources." You are required to complete these readings before class.

Assignment and Grading Overview

Additional handouts and instructions concerning the assignments will be distributed during the semester.

Thesis Proposal – 10%

- DUE TO SAKAI by no later than 5PM on Thursday, Oct. 15

Your proposal should be four to five pages in length, and should have a clear sense of the theoretical and/or methodological frames you will be using, the object of study, a preliminary thesis or question guiding your research, some indication of structure, and an initial bibliography indicating primary and secondary sources you have identified.

You are also required to submit a copy of your proposal to your advisor.

Partial Draft of Chapter – 20%

- A minimum of eight pages, with citations, due to SAKAI by no later than 5PM on Wednesday, Nov. 4

Peer Review 1 – 15%

- Peer Review comments on your classmates' drafts are due to SAKAI by no later than 5PM on Monday, November 9

Complete Draft of Chapter – 25%

- Complete draft of chapter (at least 15 pages) due to SAKAI by no later than 5PM, Monday, November 23.

You are required to send this draft to your advisor as well, so she or he can work with you to plan work on the project moving forward.

Peer Review 2 – 15%

- Peer Review comments on your classmates' drafts are due to SAKAI by no later than 5PM on Monday, November 30

Seminar Participation, Attendance, and In-Class Assignments – 15%

Grading Scale:

92-100=A; 87-91=B+; 81-86=B; 77-80=C+; 70-76=C; 60-69=D; 0-59=F

Note: there are no minus grades at Rutgers.

Class Policies

Please make sure that you are receiving and checking SAKAI announcements via email.

I regularly use the site to update class information, assignments, etc. You are responsible for keeping up-to-date with class information and making sure that you are connected.

Attendance in the seminar is mandatory.

Unexcused absences will result in a deduction from your attendance/participation grade.

If you have to miss class due to sickness, an emergency, or another excused reason, please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me.

Special Accommodation Requests:

All special accommodation requests must be brought to my attention during the first two weeks of class. Full disability policies and procedures are available for review at: <http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/>.

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations must follow the procedures outlined at <http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/request.html>

Academic Integrity Policy:

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml>

Violations include: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, denying others access to information or material, and facilitating violations of academic integrity. I take plagiarism very seriously, and will do all I can to fail you if you are caught violating this policy.

Honor Pledge:

I pledge on my honor that I will adhere to all aspects of the Rutgers Academic Integrity Policy

By accepting this syllabus and enrolling in this course, you assume responsibility for knowing the above policies and the possible penalties – including suspension and expulsion – should you violate the Honor Pledge.

Take an interactive tutorial on Plagiarism and Academic Integrity:
<http://sccweb.scc-net.rutgers.edu/douglass/sal/plagiarism/Intro.html>

Course Schedule

Tuesday, Sept. 22, Introduction

Expectations; deadlines; research tools; discussion of methodologies; funding opportunities to support research; presentation of topics

Tuesday, Sept. 29, The Art of Research

How to construct bibliographies and a research archives; citations and sourcing

Readings

- James M. O'Toole, "Between Veneration and Loathing: Loving and Hating Documents," in eds. Francis X. Blouin, William G. Rosenberg, *Archives, Documentation, and Institutions of Social Memory* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), 43-53.

Assignment

Bring in one primary source you plan on using in your thesis. Be prepared to analyze its significance to your research. **** **NOTE** **** ***Please send a pdf of the source to Prof. Urban before class meets.***

Tuesday, Oct. 13, The Craft of Writing; Analyzing an Argument

Why we write; tips and secrets; rituals and psychology; anxiety and frustration; overcoming blocks; outlining and editing

Readings

- George Orwell, "Why I Write," 1946 in eds. Project Gutenberg Australia, *Fifty Orwell Essays* (2003), <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebookso3/0300011h.html#part47>.
- Joan Didion, "Why I Write," *New York Times Book Review*, December 5, 1976.
- Ali Selim, "Stay Here as Long as You Like," in ed. Bruce Joshua Miller, *Curiosity's Cats: Writers on Research* (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2014), 9-32.

Assignment

Bring in one article or chapter important for your thesis and an outline of its arguments and methodology. Be prepared to present its arguments and

methodology to the class. **** NOTE **** *Please send a pdf of your article or chapter to Prof. Urban before class meets.*

**DEADLINE: Thesis Proposal due to SAKAI by no later than
5PM on Thursday, Oct. 15**

Tuesday, October 20, Research Resources

Library resources for conducting research

****** NOTE **** We will be meeting Librarian Tom Glynn in Room 413, Alexander Library, and conducting class there. Please bring a digital or hard copy of your thesis proposal to this session.**

Tuesday, November 3, American Studies and Methodology

Positioning your work in relationship to the larger conversations taking place in American Studies; trends and changes; scholarly identities

Readings:

- Lisa Duggan, “The Fun and the Fury of Transforming American Studies,” *American Quarterly* 67, no. 2(2015): 281-292.
- Shelley Fisher Fishkin, “Crossroads of Cultures: The Transnational Turn in American Studies --Presidential Address to the American Studies Association, November 12, 2004,” *American Quarterly* 57, no. 1 (2005): 17-57.
- Janice Radway, What's in a Name? Presidential Address to the American Studies Association, 20 November, 1998,” *American Quarterly* 51, no. 1 (1999): 1-32.
- Paul Lauter, “‘Versions of Nashville, Visions of American Studies’: Presidential Address to the American Studies Association, October 27, 1994,” *American Quarterly* 47, no. 2 (1995): 185-203.

DEADLINES:
Draft due to SAKAI by no later than 5PM on Wed., Nov. 4;
Peer review comments due to SAKAI by no later than 5PM on Mon., Nov. 9

Tuesday, November 10, In-Class Peer Review Session

DEADLINES:

**Complete chapter due to SAKAI by no later than 5PM on Mon., Nov. 23;
Peer review comments due to SAKAI by no later than 5pM on Mon., Nov. 30**

Tuesday, December 1, In-Class Peer Review Session