



HONORS 110-006 RESEARCH METHODS

Professor Mark Sample

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Meeting Time: TR 3–4:15 pm

Meeting Place: Innovation 319

Office Hours: T 4:30–5:30 pm,

R 1–2 pm, and by appointment

Graduate Teaching Assistant: Daniel Anderson (dander5@gmu.edu)

GTA Office Hours: W 3–4:30 pm, R 4:30–5 pm, and F by appointment, in Enterprise 345

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In Honors 110 you will ask a research question of significant interest to you. Your research will focus on an issue about which there is genuine debate, or perhaps explore a problem to which there could be multiple solutions, depending on the points of view or types of analysis through which it is investigated. *This must be a topic you are willing to consider from multiple perspectives, including perspectives that may conflict with your interests.*

EXPECTATIONS AND PROCESS

Whether or not you have had previous experience with academic research, your experience in Honors 110 should challenge you to *think, learn, work, and write* in new ways. You will consider the kinds of research you have already done, the sources of evidence and the methods of research that you are already familiar with, but more importantly, in HNRS 110 you will pursue sources and perspectives that you have never encountered or considered before. Because so much of your experience of Honors 110 will be shaped by your research question, *how much you learn will depend on you* even more than it does in other classes, in which the content or topic is provided for you.

HNRS 110 is built on the idea that research is a process. The readings and assignments are designed to lead you through this process by giving you practice in the various stages of investigating, drafting, and revising original research.

Your HNRS 110 classmates, professor, teaching assistant, and affiliated librarians form a learning community, and your vigorous participation will contribute to the collaborative atmosphere of the class. You will not only be graded on the quality of your own work, but also on the quality of the feedback you provide to your classmates as they pursue their own research. You will learn a great deal from reading and responding to the work of your classmates, and this will help you do your own work better. Come to class every day prepared to share your own work and to contribute to the development of your classmates' work as well.

HNRS 110 is divided into three parts, each lasting 3–4 weeks.

Part I (Weeks 1–4): *Preparation for the Research Project*

Through our consideration of exemplary stories in American history, we will focus on the significance of perspective, narrative choices, paradigm, and media to shape our understanding of natural, cultural, and historical phenomena. Texts include memoir and analysis (including analysis that will provide models for your Research Project), a museum exhibit, and a dramatic performance. Our summer reading, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, is central to our discussions throughout. Be prepared for a quiz on this text on the second day your class meets.

Part II (Weeks 5–9): *Research, Research Proposal, Working with Sources*

The middle section of HNRS 110 will walk you through the research process itself: coming up with a researchable question, finding relevant sources and data, and positioning your own claim among existing interpretations and theories.

Part III (Weeks 10–15): *Drafting and Revising and Presenting the Research Project*

The final section of HNRS 110 is concerned not only with the production of new knowledge (i.e. your research), but also with the presentation of that research, using oral, visual, and written means.

CLASS MEETINGS

Our section of HNRS 110 meets on a TR class schedule. (Other sections meet on a MW or MWF schedule.) Major assignments are due in the same weeks for all sections.

Friday Afternoon Section Meeting: This is a 4-credit class, so in addition to your regularly scheduled section meetings on Tuesday and Thursday, you are required to meet with your Graduate Teaching Assistant, a Library Representative, and the other members of your section from either **1:30 to 2:20** or from **2:30-3:20 every Friday afternoon**. These class

meetings are held in Computer Classrooms in order to provide you with the opportunity to receive individual attention and small group instruction as you pursue your research.

Makeup for Friday Afternoon Section Meeting: *For those of you who have conflicts on Friday afternoons* because of classes, practice, competitions, or travel, you will be assigned to regularly scheduled makeup sessions. If you know you will be missing Friday afternoons but have not yet been contacted about a makeup section, please email Ms. Anderson as soon as possible.

Friday Afternoon Colloquia 3:30–4:30: These will be held directly after the Friday afternoon section meetings. **Your attendance is required** for three of these events: Friday **September 3** (for Build-A-Burger), Friday **September 10** (when historian Spencer Crew discusses *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, and connects Douglass to the exhibit you will see at the National Museum of American History), and Friday **September 24** (when Harry R. Rubenstein, a curator at the National Museum of American History talks about *Communities in a Changing Nation*). Required colloquia will be recorded and these recordings will be made available to students whose schedules preclude their attendance at the actual events.

Beginning Friday October 1: Each week a different member of the faculty (representing a different field) will come to talk with you about research opportunities in his or her field. These colloquia are designed to expose you to a variety of intellectual and creative models and opportunities. You are invited to all of these, but only **required to attend two**. For your attendance to count, you must sign up ahead of time, you must be there at the start of the talk, and stay through the end (including the questions). Choose to participate in the colloquia that interest you.

If your class, travel, or practice schedule makes it impossible for you to attend two Friday Afternoon Colloquia scheduled October 1st or after, you can make these up by attending select (and pre-approved) on-campus professional lectures or performances. These opportunities will be announced throughout the semester.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* by Frederick Douglass
- *The Craft of Research* by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. 3rd edition. Chicago: U Chicago P, 2008. (Abbreviated *Craft* in syllabus)
- Duke University Libraries, “Assembling a List of Works Cited in Your Paper”: <http://library.duke.edu/research/citing/workscited/>
- Other Handouts, reserve readings, and online material

WORK

Weekly Library Assignments: Throughout the semester librarians will provide you with instructions and prompts for assignments at the Friday recitations geared teaching crucial

research skills. These library assignments will be online, allowing you to practice the skills you have learned as well as receive guidance and feedback from George Mason's team of expert librarians.

Weekly Research Journaling: Throughout the semester I and our Graduate Teaching Assistant will provide you writing prompts and other assignments for this online research journal, which will take the form of a class blog. The goal of the research journal is twofold: it will help you keep track and reflect upon your research activity; and it will serve as a forum for receiving guidance and feedback from me, our GTA, and your fellow classmates.

Museum Field Trip Assignment (Week 5): Early in the semester you will visit the National Museum of American History and analyze a specific exhibit in the museum using some of the critical approaches we explore in the first few weeks of class. Further details will be distributed once the semester is underway.

The HNRS 110 Research Project: The main product of your semester's work will be a researched essay of at least 12 pages on a subject of your own design, accompanied by a bibliography of at least 12 sources, no more than 2 of which may be web pages (digital versions of scholarly journals or academic books do not count as web pages). You must cite at least 6 of your sources in the body of your paper.

Over the course of the semester you will work through the process of finding a topic, shaping a research problem, locating and analyzing evidence that represents divergent perspectives or approaches to that problem, and presenting a scholarly argument in which you analyze your findings. Research takes time, so make sure that you work steadily on your project, which is broken up into separate assignments to keep you moving forward on schedule. We are ready to assist you at all stages, as is George Mason's team of expert librarians.

The **research project** comprises the following assignments:

Required Conferences

You are required to meet with us throughout the semester to discuss your research project. Come to these meetings prepared, with questions or any other material we may ask you to bring. These conferences provide you the opportunity to draw on our own experience as expert researchers to help you direct and shape your research project. These meetings are very important and your preparation for them will ultimately be included as part of your participation grade.

Annotations (Weeks 7, 8, 9 and 10)

Over a four-week period you will annotate the four most promising sources you have. Each annotation should demonstrate that you have thoroughly read and evaluated the source. Aim for annotations of 200–400 words, composed in

paragraph form, and introduced with a complete citation in MLA style. Use the questions below to structure each annotation. You might not be able to answer all questions for every source, but considering them will help you begin to assess the usefulness of each source and to focus on your own argument.

- What is the main question the author raises? What is the answer? (What's the author's claim?)
- What kinds of evidence or argumentation does the author use in support of the claim?
- How does the author relate his/her claim(s) and argument(s) to other sources?
- How does the text relate to others you have read?
- How does the writer's question relate to the question you are pursuing in your research?
- What are the similarities and differences between the claim you are making and the claim made by your source?

Research Problem Presentation (Weeks 7 & 8)

This is a very short, tightly focused presentation in which you introduce your topic to the class, identify the types of questions you are asking, and highlight the overall significance of your research problem. We will follow a modified *Pecha Kucha* format for this presentation (9 slides timed at 20 seconds per slide). More details will be provided a few weeks into the semester.

Research Problem Draft (Week 9)

This is a 6–8 page draft that illustrates the kinds of “research problems” (see Booth 51–65), claims, argumentation, and evidence that scholarly sources are currently articulating in relation to your own research project. There are two essential tasks to accomplish in this draft: (1) you must actively engage at least 2–3 sources (see Booth 84–100) relevant to your research agenda in order to (2) articulate an expanded version of what *The Craft of Research* calls your “research problem” (see Booth 51–65). Your objective here is to formulate your own argument and practice synthesizing sources effectively, by bringing them into a dialogue with one another.

There are various ways you could accomplish these goals. For instance, you might present one major source in detail and explain its position on several issues in relation to other sources pursuing the same or related research problems. Or you might identify and introduce a key research problem shared by several sources and summarize their positions, noting important differences in the claims made and evidence used. Or perhaps you might present a key issue or point of contention and analyze 2–3 sources' positions in some detail.

Regardless of your approach, this draft should actively engage your sources and bring them into to dialogue with one another. All of this should be framed by the

broader implications of your research problem. Who are the main stakeholders in the topic, and how do their perspectives differ? Whose point-of-view is privileged or validated by competing stories? What controversies and problems are central to your topic? What questions do you want to ask about this topic? How or why are the answers to these questions significant? How will your project challenge or supplement the research problems of other scholars working on this topic?

Research Plan (Week 10)

This is a 3 page document (due in the conference scheduled with your instructor for Week 10) that should begin with a precise statement of your research problem, continue with a summary description of the research you have completed thus far, and conclude with a detailed plan of how you intend to conduct the rest of your research. Your plan should also include descriptions of the kinds of sources you will be consulting in order to represent the points of view of the major stakeholders, as well as a list of tasks you need to complete. Your plan must be accompanied by a bibliography of at least 6 relevant sources that you have identified and plan to use in your Complete Draft, no more than 2 of which may be web pages. The plan should follow correct MLA citation form.

Enlarged Draft (Week 11):

This draft should be at least 10 pages long, cite evidence from at least 6 sources, and be accompanied by a works cited list of at least 10 sources (no more than 3 of which may be web pages), produced in correct MLA format. This draft will be graded according to how effectively it accomplishes the following:

- Makes clear the complete shape of the argument you are presenting about your issue
- Presents multiple perspectives on your issue
- Organizes arguments and information to guide and persuade your reader
- Synthesizes information and integrates supporting evidence into your own argument.

Final Research Presentation (Week 14)

In the last week of class you will prepare a Poster Presentation that describes your final research project. Guidelines regarding the format and requirements of the Final Research Presentation will be distributed midway through the semester.

Final Draft (Week 15)

The final draft of the research paper will be at least 12 pages, plus a bibliography divided into works cited and works consulted. You must include a total of at least 12 sources, no more than 2 of which may be web pages. You must refer directly to at

least 6 different sources in the body of your essay. This draft will be graded according to how effectively it accomplishes the following:

- The scope and effectiveness of your revision of the preceding draft
- The overall insight and complexity of your argument including your incorporation of multiple perspectives on the issue
- The overall effectiveness of your handling of style, rhetoric, and evidence
- The correctness of grammar, spelling, and punctuation

In addition, your revised draft must be accompanied by a 3-page reflection essay on what you learned about research this semester.

GRADING

Participation:	10%	Research Project	(60% Total)
Museum Assignment:	10%	Annotations:.....	10%
Library Assignments:	10%	Research Problem Draft:.....	10%
Journal:.....	10%	Research Plan:	5%
		Enlarged Draft:.....	10%
		Presentations.....	5%
		Final Draft:	20%

CLASS POLICIES

We expect you to keep a copy (either digital or printed) of all writing assignments you turn in. Writing assignments are due at the beginning of the class for which they are assigned. Late assignments are not normally accepted; in a class that requires as much motivation and independence as this one does, it will be crucial to your success to complete your work on time. If you believe that you are in a situation that merits an exception, please let me know as soon as possible. Our seminar format means that we rely heavily on one another's consistent participation, so do your best to keep up.

All assignments should be typed, double-spaced, in a 12-point font with 1-inch margins.

All students will need to have access to the Internet and to email for this course. All official communications from George Mason University will be sent to your GMU email account, so you should activate it as soon as possible. You're welcome to set up automatic forwarding to an alternative email account if you have one (log-in to your account via the <http://mail.gmu.edu> interface and follow the directions under "Options/Settings").

HONOR CODE / PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism constitutes a violation of the GMU Honor Code <<http://honorcode.gmu.edu>>. Plagiarism means using words, opinions, or factual information from another source

without giving that source credit. Writers give credit through the use of accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or end notes; a simple listing of books, articles, and websites is not sufficient.

Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in an academic setting. The rules for citation can be confusing. While some may think that only direct quotations need to be credited, in fact paraphrases and summaries of opinions or factual information formerly unknown to the writer or which the writer did not personally discover also need to be credited. Exceptions to this include factual information that can be obtained from a variety of sources, the writer's own insights, and what has been called common knowledge. What constitutes common knowledge can sometimes be precarious; what is common knowledge for one audience may not be for another. In such situations, it is helpful to keep the reader in mind and to think of citations as being "reader friendly." In other words, provide a citation for any piece of information that readers might want to investigate further. Not only is this attitude considerate of readers, it will almost certainly ensure that writers will not be guilty of plagiarism.

DISABILITY SERVICES

If you have a disability and need academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at <http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc/> or 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through ODS.

HNRS 110 SCHEDULE

WEEK 1

Tuesday, August 31

- Introductions and Overview

Thursday, September 2

- Reading Quiz on *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*
- Thinking about *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* in terms of a research problem
- Elicit and collect questions to be given to Spencer Crew (in preparation for the September 10 Colloquium)

Friday, September 3

- 1:30–2:20 & 2:30–3:20: Introduction to the work and process for Friday class meetings
- 3:30–5:00: Build a Burger

WEEK 2

Tuesday, September 7

- Continue discussion of *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*

Thursday, September 9

- Columbo and Milano, “Reframing: Talking Back to Official Stories” and Kohl “The Story of Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott Revisited” (Blackboard)

Friday, September 10

- 1:30–2:20 & 2:30–3:20: Library Instruction Session
- 3:30–4:30: Spencer Crew on *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* and the National Museum of American History (NMAH) [Required Colloquium]

WEEK 3

Tuesday, September 14

- Lavine, Stephen D., and Ivan Karp. “Introduction: Museums and Multiculturalism.” *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*. Ed. Ivan Karp & Stephen D. Lavine. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991. 1-9. (Blackboard)
- Hand out the Museum Assignment

Thursday, September 16

- Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara. "Objects of Ethnography." *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*. Ed. Ivan Karp & Stephen D. Lavine. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991. 386-443. (Blackboard)

Friday, September 17 / Saturday, September 18

- Trip to the *Communities in a Changing Nation* exhibit at the National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Mall, Washington, DC

WEEK 4

Tuesday, September 21

- Connecting the National Museum of American History, Frederick Douglass, and Narrative

Tuesday Evening, September 21

- Performance (Attendance Required unless you have a conflict with a Tuesday night class): Fred Morsell presents Frederick Douglass. For information: <http://www.frederickdouglass.org/>

Thursday, September 23

- "From Topics to Questions" (35-50) and "From Questions to a Problem" (51-65) in *Craft*. Group work or other activity to prepare to formulate research questions

Friday, September 24

- 1:30–2:20 & 2:30–3:20: Library instruction session #2
- 3:30–4:30: Harry R. Rubenstein, Chair and Curator, Division of Political History, National Museum of American History [Required Colloquium]

WEEK 5

Tuesday, September 28

- "Engaging Sources" (84-100) in *Craft*. In class annotation and citation exercises on one or more of the class readings

Thursday, September 30

- * Museum Assignment Due *
- Continue in class annotation and citation exercises on one or more of the class readings

Friday, October 1

- 1:30–2:20 & 2:30–3:20: Library instruction session #3
- 3:30–4:30: Peter Stearns on Research Methods in the field of History

WEEK 6

Tuesday, October 5

- Stallybrass, Peter. "The Library and Material Texts." *PMLA* 119.5 (2004): 1347-1352. <<http://bit.ly/aQQnmh>>
- Stallybrass, Peter. "Against Thinking." *PMLA* 122.5 (2007): 1580-1587. <<http://bit.ly/bWDhBX>>

Thursday, October 7

- Introduction to Research Problems and group work on formulating research formulas
- Further discussion of Research Problems with examples from instructors

Friday, October 8

- 1:30–2:20 & 2:30–3:20: Library Instruction Session #4
- 3:30–4:30: Natalia Peixoto on Research Methods in Bioengineering

WEEK 7

Tuesday, October 12

- Monday/Tuesday Switch Day: Tuesday classes do not meet this week

Thursday, October 14

- Student Research Problem presentations

Friday, October 15

- Annotation #1 Due
- 1:30–2:20 & 2:30–3:20: Library Research Session
- 3:30–4:30: Padhu Seshaiyer on Research Methods in Mathematics

WEEK 8

Tuesday, October 19

- Student Research Problem presentations

Thursday, October 21

- Student Research Problem presentations

Friday, October 22

- Annotation #2 Due
- 1:30–2:30: Peer Review of Proposals with GTAS & Librarians
- 3:30–4:30: Dan Cox on Research Methods in Molecular and Microbiology

WEEK 9

Tuesday, October 26

- Evaluation of Student Problem Presentations
- In class assessment

Thursday, October 28

- Discussion of Sample Student Papers from previous years

Friday October 29

- Annotation #3 Due
- 1:30–2:30: Continued Discussion Sample Papers
- 3:30–4:30: Barbara Cambridge on Research Methods in Policy Making

WEEK 10

Tuesday, November 2

- No class this week; we will meet with each of you to discuss your drafts
- Research Plan Due

Thursday, November 4

- No class this week; we will meet with each of you to discuss your drafts
- Research Plan Due

Friday, November 5

- Annotation #4 Due
- 1:30–2:20 & 2:30–3:20: Individual topic searches with help of librarians and GTAs (Part 2)
- 3:30–4:30 Kathleen Wage on Research Methods in Electrical and Computer Engineering

WEEK 11

Tuesday, November 9

- “Planning and Drafting” (189-204) and “Revising Your Organization and Argument” (208-221) in *Craft*
- Workshop on organization and argumentation

Thursday, November 11

- Enlarged Draft Due (10 pages; two copies)
- Begin (Example) Peer review in class

Friday, November 12

- 1:30–2:20 & 2:30–3:20: Individual Research Appointments
- 3:30–4:30: Carma Hinton on Research Methods in Documentary Film Making

WEEK 12

Tuesday, November 16

- No Class; Meet in Peer Groups

Thursday, November 18

- No Class; Meet in Peer Groups

Friday, November 19

- 1:30–2:20 & 2:30–3:20: Individual Research Appointments
- 3:30–4:30: Harold Morowitz on Research Methods at the Krasnow Institute

WEEK 13

Tuesday, November 23

- Online Session

Thursday, November 25 and Friday, November 26

- Thanksgiving Holidays

WEEK 14

Tuesday, November 30

- Preparation for Poster Presentations

Thursday, December 2

- Final Preparation for Poster Presentations

Friday, December 3

- Poster Sessions & Refreshments

WEEK 15

Tuesday, December 7

- Finishing Touches

Thursday, December 9

- Poster Presentation Winners Announced
- Final Draft Due

Friday, December 10

- No afternoon workshops or colloquia.