

IS123: Academic Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences

Dr. Nassim AbiGhanem

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Office: K24 2.04

Office hours (online): Wed: 12:00 – 01:00, or by appointment

<https://calendly.com/nabighanem>

Course Description

This seminar provides training in the methods of scholarly research and writing in the humanities and practices productive feedback. Focusing on representative contemporary research in the humanities, it assists students in advancing their own individual research projects by concentrating on the essential elements of independent scholarly work: choosing a topic or object of study; outlining the main components of an article or scholarly paper; locating, gathering, collating, and interpreting the sources needed for the project; proper citation, attribution, and bibliographic documentation; and finally, effectively presenting their work in terms of structure and style, as well as peer review and constructive feedback. With the participation of thesis advisors and other faculty members, this course focuses on individual presentations in the second half of the semester.

Annotated Bibliography

The annotated bibliography is in part a working journal of your research, showing what you have accomplished. Upload a short-ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY (AB) (minimum: two sources) to Google Shared Drive and bring your entries to class **on the days listed on the syllabus**. The materials should be organized alphabetically under two headings, "Secondary Sources" and "Primary Sources," with one bibliographic entry for each. The annotation itself (again, for each entry) should be a short paragraph in which you indicate what you gleaned from the reading and how you see it as relevant to your project (you will be provided with a model so you can see what it should look like).

Writing Workshops, Peer Support & Productive Feedback

Continuing to develop **your research topic and question** is important in this course, as is developing your ability to support your **peers' research** and writing process through productive feedback. Using your annotated bibliography, you will work with a partner and in a group to more clearly formulate and outline your topic, question, and argument. You will also practice assisting others with their work using a variety of feedback methods.

Draft Presentation

You will need to distribute **an 8–10-page paper** to your section (and your advisor). This writing sample must be circulated the **Thursday before your presentation** so that people have time to read it. If it is distributed late, the entire presentation will be lowered by one grade per day, so be sure to distribute the writing selections on time. On the day of your presentation, you should be prepared to talk about how the writing selection fits into the larger project, what your concerns are, and what you're planning to do next. This presentation should not be a recap of the writing sample, since everyone will have read it. A PowerPoint presentation is often helpful, but it's not explicitly required. The rest of the time will be spent discussing both your presentation and your writing sample.

The "**respondent**" should be well prepared with questions and should get the discussion going (or keep it going). In addition, it is the respondent's responsibility to take notes during the discussion and to provide the presenter with a **written summary of the colloquium participants' suggestions** for moving

the project forward. Your dissertation advisor will attend your presentation and may have some input, or may be helpful in "filtering" the discussion and seeing how ideas from it might be beneficial to the project.

Submission of 10-page Thesis Excerpt: Due on December 22nd

This excerpt must be submitted to your course instructor and thesis advisor. Your document must be properly formatted with footnotes, include at least four secondary sources, and include a bibliography.

You may not submit the same piece of writing that you submitted for your draft presentation.

However, it is acceptable to submit a heavily revised version of your draft if it is accompanied by a letter explaining what changes you have made and why.

Attendance

Because Bard College Berlin has an intensive, student-centered and seminar-based educational model, **attendance at all sessions of courses is mandatory.**

- However, you may encounter circumstances that prevent you from attending classes for which you may be excused, meaning that the absences will not impact your grade. These circumstances include illness, religious observance, military obligation, attendance at a conference, a Bard Network event, a civic engagement initiative, a research trip or another compelling circumstance outside of your control (i.e. court appearance, visa appointment, death of a family member). Optional non-academic travel, hosting visiting family and friends, or work schedules are **not grounds** for excused absences. You will be allowed to **self-report your absences one time**, meaning that a notification informing your instructor about the reason for your absence before or within 24 hours of the class is sufficient. If you miss class more than once, you will need to provide your instructor with appropriate documentation in order to be excused (i.e. a doctor's note, official leave of absence).
- All **unexcused absences** will lower your final grade by one step (i.e. if your final grade is a B, you will be downgraded to a B-).
- If you are facing the unusual situation of long-term, serious medical or personal emergencies (generally lasting more than two weeks), you can request a Leave of Absence, to be approved by the Deans, the Head of Student Life or the Director of Academic Services.
- If you have any **general medical issues** or other concerns that could impact your compliance with these regulations, you need to inform your instructor during the first week of the semester. For information on disability accommodation, you should consult with Maria Anderson Long, Head of Student Life: m.andersonlong@berlin.bard.edu
The process for applying for disability accommodation is explained in the Student Handbook with links to the forms here: <http://www.berlin.bard.edu/for-students/student-handbook/policies-and-regulations/#c4206>

Grade Breakdown

Attendance and Participation	50%
[includes homework/class readings; reading other students' drafts; contributing to discussions and exercises; actively collaborating with peers; communicating with professors and other students]	
Draft Presentation	20%
Annotated Bibliography	10%
10-page Thesis Excerpt (due on Dec. 22)	20%

Course Schedule

Week 1: September 4	Introduction and Getting Started on Your Project <i>1-paragraph Project Description due in class</i>
Week 2: September 11	Selection guides on conducting Interviews, Surveys and Lit. Rev.
Week 3: September 18	Workshop, Learning Commons
Week 4: September 25	Writing & Research (discussion of theses by BCB alumni) -- TBC
Week 5: October 2	Writing & Research based on designated readings and in class practice.
Week 6: October 9	Writing Workshop & <u>Annotated Bibliography (bring your two entries to class)</u>
Week 7: October 16	Writing Workshop & <u>Annotated Bibliography (bring your two entries to class)</u>
FALL BREAK (October 23 – 27)	
Week 8: October 30	Career Center Workshop & Information Session (with Judith Weber, Internship and Career Networking Officer)
Week 9: November 6	Draft Presentations 09:00 – 9:40 Presenter: Respondent: Supervisor: 09:40 – 10:20 Presenter: Respondent: Supervisor:
Week 10: November 13	Draft Presentations

09:00 – 9:40 **Presenter:**
Respondent:
Supervisor:

09:40 – 10:20 **Presenter:**
Respondent:
Supervisor:

Week 11: November 20

Draft Presentations

09:00 – 9:40 **Presenter:**
Respondent:
Supervisor:

09:40 – 10:20 **Presenter:**
Respondent:
Supervisor:

Week 12: November 27

Draft Presentations

09:00 – 9:40 **Presenter:**
Respondent:
Supervisor:

09:40 – 10:20 **Presenter:**
Respondent:
Supervisor:

Week 13: December 4

Writing Workshop if necessary or continued presentations

Week 14: December 11

Draft Presentations

09:00 – 09:40 **Presenter:**
Respondent:
Supervisor:

09:40 – 10:20 **Presenter:**
Respondent:
Supervisor:

Week 15: December 18

Completion Week – no classes

Friday, December 22

10-Page thesis excerpt due to instructor and advisor

Additional Deadlines

Declaration of your thesis title for Spring 2024 graduates on **Friday, December 8, 2023** at **3pm**. You need to complete the declaration of BA Thesis Title form. The form can be picked up from the shelf on the wall outside the Registrar's Office in the basement of P24. An electronic version of the form will also be emailed to you by the registration office. You must obtain the signatures of your supervisor and

chosen second reader, before submitting the form to the Registrar's office – registrar@berlin.bard.edu
– in person or electronically by the deadline above.

Submission of the final thesis for Spring 2024 graduates on **Friday, April 12, 2024** at 3pm. Guidelines for submission will be made available to you over the course of the research seminar this semester.