

IS123: Academic Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences

Dr. Ulrike Wagner
u.wagner@berlin.bard.edu
Classroom: Lecture Hall, P98a SR 4
Office: P98A U9
Office hours (online or in person): Mo: 12:15 – 14:00, and by appointment

Spring 2026
Monday: 9:00 – 12:15

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.

Declaration of your thesis title for Spring 2026 graduates on Friday, December 5, 2025 at 3pm.

Submission of 10-page Thesis Excerpt: Due on December 19

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.

Use of AI

I agree with and will enforce the following statement from the Harvard Kennedy School on the use of AI: "It is generally acceptable to use generative AI for finding information and for solidifying your knowledge of the course content. For instance, it is fine to use AI-powered web search and to have conversations with tools like ChatGPT to help you explore ideas, refine your thinking, identify examples, and better understand the course material. However, unless otherwise specified, it is a violation of the HKS Academic Code to incorporate into your coursework text produced predominantly by generative AI — similar to copying from a book or article. For example, it would be inappropriate to simply rewrite a draft generated by AI."

Please note that computer-generated text and ideas (including anything from ChatGPT) are sources that require citation.

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%
Submission of declaration of thesis title (Friday, December 5, 2025 at 3pm)	10%
Grading criteria: submission as per schedule	
10-page Thesis Excerpt (due on Dec 19)	10%

Course Schedule

Week 1: January 26	Introduction and Getting Started on Your Project <i>Bring 1-paragraph Project Description to class</i>
Week 2: February 2	Selections from Graff and Birkenstein, <i>They Say / I Say</i> (Fourth Ed.)
Friday, February 6	Submission of Revised Research Paragraph & Advisor Confirmation
Week 3: February 9	Workshop 1, Learning Commons Research Techniques and Introduction to BCB Library Resources
Week 4: February 16	Writing & Research (discussion of theses by BCB alumni)
Week 5: February 23	Workshop 2, Learning Commons Citation & Style

Humanities & Social Sciences Section and Creative Component Section split into two groups

Week 6: March 2	Writing Workshop & <u>Annotated Bibliography</u>
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Week 7: March 9

Writing Workshop & Annotated Bibliography

Week 8: March 16

Draft Presentations

09:00 – 09:40 **Presenter:**

Respondent:

Supervisor:

09:50 – 10:30 **Presenter:**

Respondent:

Supervisor:

Week 9: March 23

Draft Presentations

09:00 – 09:40 **Presenter:**

Respondent:

Supervisor:

09:50 – 10:30 **Presenter:**

Respondent:

Supervisor:

SPRING BREAK (March 30 – April 3)

Week 10: April 6

Federal Holiday

Week 11: April 13

Draft Presentations

09:00 – 9:40 **Presenter:**

Respondent:

Supervisor:

09:50 – 10:30 **Presenter:**

Respondent:

Supervisor:

10:40 – 11:20 **Presenter:**

Respondent:

Supervisor:

Week 12: April 20

Draft Presentations

09:00 – 9:40 **Presenter:**

Respondent:

Supervisor:

09:50 – 10:30 **Presenter:**

Respondent:

Supervisor:

10:40 – 11:20 **Presenter:**
Respondent:
Supervisor:

Friday, April 24: **Submission of Thesis Title Form**

Week 13: April 27

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

09:50 – 10:30 **Presenter:**
Respondent:
Supervisor:

Week 14: May 4

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

09:50 – 10:30 **Presenter:**
Respondent:
Supervisor:

Week 15: May 11

Completion Week

Friday, May 15

10-Page thesis excerpt due to instructor and advisor

Additional Deadlines

Declaration of your thesis title for Fall 2026 graduates on **Friday, April 24, 2026**.

The form can be collected from the shelf on the wall outside the Registrar's Office in the basement of P24. An electronic version will also be sent to you by the Registration Office. Please obtain the signatures of your supervisor and your chosen second reader before uploading the completed form to your thesis colloquium course drive by the deadline indicated above. Late submission will result in a 10% deduction from your course grade.

Submission of the final thesis for Fall 2026 graduates on **Friday, November 13, 2026** at 3pm. Guidelines for submission will be made available to you over the course of the research seminar this semester.