

IS123: Academic Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences

Fall 2026

Monday 9:00 -12:15

Dr. Nassim AbiGhanem

n.abighanem@berlin.bard.edu

Office: K24 2.04

Office hours by appointment on: <https://cal.eu/nassim-abighanem-uxti9a/30min>

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.

Assignments:

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, Instructor, 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 Fall 2026 graduates on Friday, November 27, 2026 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 10-page Thesis Excerpt: Due on Friday, December 18, 2026.

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.

A Note on the use of AI:

Using AI to find resources and utilize search engines is welcomed. However, using AI tools (such as ChatGPT) to generate work of your own is considered plagiarism and is against the BCB Academic Code of Conduct. Acknowledging that some use of such tools may go unnoticed, we urge you to avoid the utilization of such tools as they obstruct the process of learning the necessary skills for being an independent researcher.

As stated in the Bard College Berlin Student Handbook 2025-26 in regards to 14.3 Academic Misconduct:

Acts of academic misconduct, such as the following, will result in a disciplinary process and lead to outcomes:

1. Plagiarism: The presentation of the work or words of another as one's own, without appropriate attribution and/or citation, whether intentional or not. Plagiarism includes a. The attempt to pass off the work of others as one's own b. Presenting the exact words of others as one's own c. Presenting the exact words or paraphrasing borrowings from other sources without appropriate attribution and/or citation.
2. Collusion: The collaboration by two or more students on an assignment without appropriate attribution or authorization. Providing one's own work to someone else to copy or copying work provided by another, whether wholly or in part, is collusion.
or authorization. Providing one's own work to someone else to copy or copying work provided by another, whether wholly or in part, is collusion.
3. Resubmission of one's own work: The re-use of one's own work (whether wholly or in part) for another assignment without appropriate attribution. Work that a student has published or completed out with their study at the College must also be appropriately cited.
4. Cheating: the attempt to deceive by gaining or providing unauthorized advantage or assistance in a College examination or assignment, including attempts to copy from other students in an examination, communicating answers with another student in an examination, the use of unauthorized materials or information and prepared answers in an examination, impersonation (taking an examination on behalf

of another or having someone take an examination on one's own behalf), and the submission of academic work acquired from another student, AI platforms, or via essay mills and other such commercial enterprises providing writing services. If a student is in any way uncertain about what constitutes plagiarism or any of the above acts of academic misconduct, they should consult their academic advisors or course instructors.

Further, for this colloquium, I agree with and will enforce the following statement from the Harvard Kennedy School on the use of AI: "Unless otherwise specified by a faculty member for a particular course or assignment, you may use GenAI in coursework to seek clarification on concepts, brainstorm ideas, or generate scenarios that help contextualize what you are learning. For instance, it is fine to use AI-powered web search and to have "conversations" with GenAI to help you explore ideas, refine your thinking, identify examples, and better understand course material. However, unless otherwise specified by the faculty teaching your course, it is a violation of the HKS Academic Code to incorporate content produced by GenAI into your coursework. For example, it would be inappropriate to simply rewrite a draft generated by GenAI without explicit permission from the course instructor."

Please note that computer-generated text and ideas (including anything from ChatGPT) are sources that require citation. We will discuss AI use further in the colloquium, with an emphasis on clearing its use in specific circumstances with your advisor. Feel free to ask me directly as well in case of any questions.

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	15%
Annotated Bibliography	10%
Submission of declaration of thesis title	5%
(Friday, November 27, 2025 at 3pm)	
10-page Thesis Excerpt (due on Dec. 22)	20%

Course Schedule

Week 1: August 31	Introduction and Getting Started on Your Project <i>1-paragraph Project Description due in class</i>
Week 2: September 1	Selected readings on Research Design (The Craft of Research) <i>Friday, September 11 Submission of thesis project proposal (= revised and elaborated research paragraph) & advisor confirmation</i>
Week 3: September 14	Workshop, Learning Commons, Introduction to BCB Library Resources (10:45 all groups)
Week 4: September 21	Selected readings on Data Collection Methods (Kothari, Ch.6)
Week 5: September 28	Workshop, Learning Commons, Citation & Style (10:45 all groups)
Week 6: October 6	Writing & Research based on readings and in-class practice in Writing Literature Review, Greetham, Ch.17
Week 7: October 12	Writing Workshop & <u>Annotated Bibliography (bring your two entries to class)</u>

FALL BREAK (October 19– 23)

Week 8: October 26	Career Center Workshop & Information Session TBC (with Dr Asli Vatansever, Internship and Career Networking Officer)
Week 9: November 2	Draft Presentations 09:00 – 9:40 Presenter: Respondent: Supervisor: 09:40 – 10:20 Presenter: Respondent: Supervisor:
Week 10: November 9	Career service Workshop

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

Week 11: November 16

Draft Presentations

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

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

Week 12: November 23

Draft Presentations

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

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

Week 13: November 30

Draft Presentations

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

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

Week 14: December 7

Wrap-up/**Writing Workshop if necessary or continued presentations.**

Week 15: December 15

Completion Week – no classes

Friday, December 18

10-page thesis excerpt due to instructor and advisor