

# SYLLABUS

Inter-LS 250: The Undergraduate Research Experience, fall 2015

Van Hise 482

Wednesday 5-6pm

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Office Hours: Fridays 12:00pm-1:00pm, URS Office 3rd Floor Red Gym (311)

## I. Description

Inter-LS 250 is designed to introduce students to the practice of research and creative work, and its implications for society. The course has two components: the work you do as an assistant on faculty projects, and your participation in the small group seminar. In the school year 2015-16, the seminar is dedicated to the theme: ***research and creative work at the boundaries***. We will spend the year critically exploring this theme across different disciplines, and touching on a range of societal problems.

Each URS seminar section and each scholar may approach the theme differently. Through readings and other activities you will explore the theme in your own research/creative work situation. Yet you will often be asked to think beyond your situation and topic. This will expose you to the breadth of ways research and creative work happen, and will hone your intellectual and academic skills.

The theme is to provoke reflection in our research or creative work experiences, and in the different parts of the world we inhabit. Come prepared to share your thinking on the topics introduced. Through discussions, activities and assignments you may learn as much from one another as you learn through your research project.

## II. Requirements

The weekly seminar complements the research or creative work you do. Attendance, participation and completion of all assignments are critical to your success in the course and to the quality of the learning experience for everyone. General expectations for the seminar are:

- complete all reading and writing assignments and other requirements established by Fellows
- prepare in advance for discussions and other class activities
- share, ask questions about and discuss your expanding knowledge and experience of research and creative work

- deliver a presentation on the current status of your research and your role in it at the end of the semester

**A. Writing Assignments.** Writing is a way to clarify your thinking, and to communicate your research or creative work with others. Every URS scholar is required to write.

- 1 resume - *first draft due September 9, final draft due September 16*
- 1 They say/I say paper based on articles/assigned reading *due September 30*
- Newspaper article - *due November 18*
- Research summary - *due with research presentation on December 2 or December 9*

### 1. Résumé: *first draft due September 9, final draft due September 16*

The resume you create in URS will be one of the most helpful tools that you will carry with you throughout college and beyond. The purpose of the resume is to succinctly (one page) display your education, contact information, achievements, involvements, etc. We will give you more resume resources in seminar. The resume is due so soon because many of your mentors-to-be will request them from you.

### 2. They say/I say paper: *due September 30 (choose from readings discussed on September 23 and earlier)*

Advanced academic writing presents a researcher's or creator's ideas and arguments (*I say*). This is done in a way that listens to, considers and responds to those of others (*They say*). The purpose of these papers is to practice clarifying and articulating your arguments on a relevant issue, in response to those of others. You must:

- a. Take a position that matters to you. [One's position often results from being provoked in some way. What provokes you? Why? This can give your writing purpose, and help you clarify your argument's aspects.]
- b. Use the tools of academic argumentation and writing, including but not limited to: identify assumptions others make, point out faulty reasoning, point out contradictions, require more evidence, emphasize different dimensions or angles, show the limits of assumptions. Templates are available to assist in organizing your argument.

### 3. Newspaper article: *due November 18*

This assignment is intended to be a fun way to practice clearly communicating the purpose of your research to the general public. The article should be written as if you are a journalist who interviewed you about your research. The article should mainly be informative, relevant text-but feel free to quote yourself once or twice! The article should be 175-200 words.

### 4. Research Summary: *due same day as research presentation on December 2 or December 9*

*What is a research summary?* It is a clear succinct statement of what your research is about, any relevant background information about the project, a brief description of the methodology,

preliminary results, anticipated relevance and applications and plans for future research. We want to see that you have a clear understanding of both your piece and the project as a whole. The paper should be between 2-3 pages double spaced.

**B. Powerpoint or Prezi Presentation.** At the end of the *fall* semester every scholar gives a short Powerpoint or Prezi presentation about his/her research to the seminar group. Your presentation should include: purpose of the research or creative project, why it is important, research question(s) or thesis, and a description of what your role has been thus far.

The presentations are an opportunity to share everyone's work and get feedback on ideas. They are also a step toward developing your presentation style.

At the end of the *spring* semester each student presents his/her research with a talk or a poster at the campus-wide *Undergraduate Symposium*. It gives you the opportunity to formally present your work to the campus community. Your abstract is published in the symposium program.

### III. Other Important Expectations for Your Participation

- Keep up to date on all assignments – writing and reading
- Show up prepared and on time for seminar
- Give us at least one-week notice about conflicts, absences, etc.
- Keep Fellows informed about problems in your research
- Treat Fellows and peers with respect
- Keep an open mind, and have fun!

### IV. Grade

75% of your grade is determined by the faculty research mentor based on completion of assigned research tasks and participation in the research effort. 25% of your grade is determined by the URS Director in conjunction with the Research Fellows based on participation in the seminar through discussion and assignments.

**Your research grade** will be determined by your Research Mentor. Research Mentors will be using the grading guidelines below and will submit a number grade at the end of the semester. Following are the guidelines we provide to research mentors to assess your performance.

**Please note:** if you need to change the number of credits you are registered for in INTER L&S, contact the URS Program Director, Amy Sloane.

A (92-100)	Exceptional. Student took initiative or performed above and beyond expectations.
AB (89-91)	Met most expectations. Active engagement at most times. Completed most assignments, developed some new skills and applied them appropriately.
B (83-88)	Did not fully meet expectations. Not fully engaged in research activity, did not always work expected number of hours, no evidence of new or improved ability for systematic inquiry.
BC – C (71-82)	Below expectations. Minimal initiative and engagement. Poor performance in all areas.
Below C (-70 )	Very Poor performance in all areas.

**Please take time to discuss your participation in the research project with your mentor(s) *throughout* the semester.**

## V. Course Outline

### **W Sept 2: Introduction to seminar & URS**

#### **W Sept 9: Shaking up your education: Why are we here?**

*Assignment due: Resume draft*

1- Article: "Why college is necessary but gets you nowhere"

<http://robertreich.org/post/103472733520>

2- TED Talk: "Do Schools Kill Creativity?"

[http://www.ted.com/talks/ken\\_robinson\\_says\\_schools\\_kill\\_creativity?language=en](http://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_says_schools_kill_creativity?language=en)

3- Article: "Does your Major Matter?"

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/collegeprose/2012/10/29/does-your-major-matter/>

#### **W Sept 16: Reconsidering Prisons: Rehabilitation vs. Punishment**

*Assignment due: Final resume copy*

1- Documentary: "Solitary Nation"

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/locked-up-in-america/>

2- Data from the Sentencing Project

<http://www.sentencingproject.org/template/page.cfm?id=107>

3- Debatewise: "Rehabilitation vs Retribution"

<http://debatewise.org/debates/2777-rehabilitation-vs-retribution/>

### **W Sept 23: Debate: Weighing the pros and cons of fetal tissue in research**

1- Article: "Nazi Medical Experiments"

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005168>

2- Article: "Use of Fetal Tissues in Research back in Spotlight"

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/use-of-fetal-tissue-use-in-research-back-in-the-spotlight-1438382094>

3- Article: "Animals in Research and Testing"

<http://www.neavs.org/research/overview>

### **W Sept 30: Research and Creativity at the Boundaries Part 1: Ai WeiWei**

*Assignments due: Research Contracts, They Say/I Say paper*

1- Documentary: "Never Sorry" (Watch the first half, up to minute ~45)

2- Article: "Ai Weiwei's Freedom by Fiat"

<http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/ai-weiweis-freedom-by-fiat>

3- Article: "Chinese Artist Ai Weiwei Leaves for Berlin but he is Still in Limbo"

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/chinese-artist-ai-weiwei-leaves-for-berlin-but-he-is-still-in-limbo/2015/07/30/736e3377-6aa8-4fdf-a4de-2b4db196b7ec\\_story.html?wpmk=MK0000205](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/chinese-artist-ai-weiwei-leaves-for-berlin-but-he-is-still-in-limbo/2015/07/30/736e3377-6aa8-4fdf-a4de-2b4db196b7ec_story.html?wpmk=MK0000205)

### **W Oct 7: LARGE GROUP MEETING**

### **W Oct 14: Individual Meetings**

### **W Oct 21: Multiple perspectives on basic rights: Water and sanitation**

1- Article: "Is the UN turning its back on the human right to water?"

<http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/poverty-matters/2014/jun/19/un-human-right-water-access-goal>

2- Article: "California's Drought Is Part of a Much Bigger Water Crisis. Here's What You Need to Know"

<https://www.propublica.org/article/california-drought-colorado-river-water-crisis-explained>

3- TED talk: "Sanitation is a Basic Human Right"

[https://www.ted.com/talks/francis\\_de\\_los\\_reyes\\_sanitation\\_is\\_a\\_basic\\_human\\_right#t-488151](https://www.ted.com/talks/francis_de_los_reyes_sanitation_is_a_basic_human_right#t-488151)

### **W Oct 28: Quantitative and Qualitative Research: Understanding research perspectives and their boundaries**

1- The Butterfly Effect

2- Quantitative Research Designs

3- Qualitative Research Designs

(all will be handed out in class Oct 21)

**W Nov 4: The only one in the room: Creating boundaries in diversity and research**

1- TED talk: “The Danger of a Single Story” by Chimimanda Ngozi Adichie

[http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda\\_adichie\\_the\\_danger\\_of\\_a\\_single\\_story/transcript?language=en](http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story/transcript?language=en)

2- Article: “In Professor’s Model, Diversity = Productivity”

[http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/08/science/08conv.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/08/science/08conv.html?_r=0)

3- Article: “On Wyatt Cenac, 'Key & Peele,' And Being The Only One In The Room”

<http://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2015/07/29/427190143/on-wyatt-cenac-key-peelee-and-being-the-only-one-in-the-room>

**W Nov 11: Research and its boundaries: Achieving “truth”?**

1- Video: First scene of the film “Oxford Murders” (2008)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-6b84hAVMBE>

2- Video: Does Science = Truth? (Nietzsche = Mega Man) - 8-Bit Philosophy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y68mGbvZZZg>

**W Nov 18: Research and Creativity at the Boundaries: Part 2**

*Assignment due: Newspaper article*

1- Article: “The War Against Humanities at Britain’s Universities

“<http://www.theguardian.com/education/2015/mar/29/war-against-humanities-at-britains-universities>

2- Article: “Pericles Lewis: a humanities education produces truly creative leaders”

<http://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/2014/feb/04/pericles-lewis-yale-nus-research-humanities>

3- Article: “Why America’s obsession with STEM education is dangerous”

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/why-stem-wont-make-us-successful/2015/03/26/5f4604f2-d2a5-11e4-ab77-9646eea6a4c7\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/why-stem-wont-make-us-successful/2015/03/26/5f4604f2-d2a5-11e4-ab77-9646eea6a4c7_story.html)

4- TED Talk: John Maeda

[https://www.ted.com/talks/john\\_maeda\\_how\\_art\\_technology\\_and\\_design\\_inform\\_creative\\_leaders](https://www.ted.com/talks/john_maeda_how_art_technology_and_design_inform_creative_leaders)

**W Nov 25: NO MEETING – Thanksgiving Recess**

**W Dec 2: Research Presentations**

**W Dec 9: Research Presentations**

**THERE IS NO FINAL EXAM IN URS! IGNORE URS ON YOUR EXAM SCHEDULE!**