

SYLLABUS

Inter-LS 250: The Undergraduate Research Experience, fall 2016

483 Van Hise

Wednesday 5-6pm

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Office Hours: Friday, 1-2pm at the URS Office - 311 Red Gym

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 2016-17, the seminar is dedicated to the theme: **research, creative work and the public good**. 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 as it relates to your own research or creative work project. Yet you will often be asked to think beyond your project 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 intended to provoke reflection in research or creative work experiences, and in the different parts of the world we inhabit. Come prepared to share your thinking on the topics and viewpoints introduced. Through discussions, activities and assignments you may learn as much from one another in seminar as you learn through your 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 – due September 21st
- 2 They say/I say papers (2-3 pages)
 - Due on November 2nd - on **Ethical issues in research: Three Parent Babies**
 - Due on November 30th – on **Creative work and the public good: Being a World Citizen, Local Activist**

What is a They say/I say paper? 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.**
- c. Clearly distinguish premises from claims in the writing process to form more educated conclusions.

What is a research summary? It is a clear succinct statement of: 1) what you are investigating or creating, 2) relevant background information about the project, 3) brief description of the methodology, 4) any preliminary results, 5) anticipated relevance, applications and/or plans for future research. We want to see that you have a clear understanding of both your piece and the project as a whole.

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 or creative work 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.

C. Teaching activity. In the same way that we as fellows have been choosing the topics for each seminar, we want to give scholars the chance to bring topics of their interest. So, each seminar, 2 scholars will prepare to teach something related to research or creative work. The topic is open, but it must be related to either the theme of the seminar or their research/creative work projects in some way! Each scholar will have 2-3 min (at most - otherwise, be prepared to be cut off!).

With that we hope to:

- Get to know more about everyone’s interests throughout the semester.
- Allow scholars to work on their teaching and presentation skills – which will be useful for their research presentations
- To allow the seminar to cover more topics so we can have more experiences to draw from during discussion.

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.

VI. Learning Goals for the Seminar

- To be able to approach public issues through multiple academic perspectives.
- To be able to understand and evaluate methods and social implications of research and creative work.
- To develop versatile communication skills in an academic setting (such as debating, teaching, summarizing, questioning, listening...etc).
- Writing Goal: To clearly distinguish premises from claims in the writing process to form more educated conclusions.

VII. Course Outline

W Sept 7: Introduction to seminar & URS

W Sept 14: Getting ready for the semester: the power of expectations

- Podcast: Becoming Batman (~1 hour)
<http://www.npr.org/programs/invisibilia/378577902/how-to-become-batman>
- A summary of research investigating echolocation abilities of blind and sighted humans (pdf via email)

W Sept 21: Looking at the research methods: introduction to Quantitative and Qualitative research.

- Quantitative Research Designs (pdf via email)
- Qualitative Research Designs (pdf via email)
- **RESUME DUE!**

W Sept 28: Analyzing quantitative and qualitative pieces.

- The Butterfly Effect article
- Qualitative piece: Evicted, chapter 1,3 (pdf via email)
- Quantitative piece: Housing stats 2015 (pdf via email)

W Oct 5: Looking at the creative work methods: what is art?

- Documentary: Exit Through the gift shop.
<http://documentary-movie.com/exit-through-the-gift-shop/> (1 hour and 26 min)
- **RESEARCH CONTRACTS DUE!**

W Oct 12: Research and creative work: Achieving “truth”?

- Useful invention or Absolute Truth? What is Math?
<http://www.nytimes.com/1998/02/10/science/useful-invention-or-absolute-truth-what-is-math.html?pagewanted=all>

Note: If the article seems complicated, I suggest focusing more on the questions the author is raising and not that much on the answers.

- Living life as an artist: Nietzsche on creativity.
<http://theconversation.com/living-life-as-an-artist-nietzsche-on-creativity-36257>
- Scientific Studies: Last Week Tonight with John Oliver (HBO)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Rnq1NpHdmw> (19min)

W Oct 19: Ethical issues in research: Three Parent Babies

- Three-parent babies: the arguments for and against.
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/science/science-news/11386151/Three-parent-babies-the-arguments-for-and-against.html>
- U.K. Parliament approves controversial three-parent mitochondrial gene therapy.
<http://www.sciencemag.org/news/2015/02/uk-parliament-approves-controversial-three-parent-mitochondrial-gene-therapy>
- Clinical and Ethical Implications of Mitochondrial Gene Transfer.
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4005369/>
- Three Parent Baby: Genetic Innovation Could Eliminate Hereditary Disease in Children.
<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/three-parent-baby-genetic-innovation-could-eliminate-hereditary-disease-children-1438124>

W Oct 26: INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS

W Nov 2: Current issues and the public good: research and the presidential election

- Research approaches:
 - A User's Guide To FiveThirtyEight's 2016 General Election Forecast
<http://fivethirtyeight.com/features/the-state-of-the-polls-2016/>
 - The State Of The Polls, 2016
<http://fivethirtyeight.com/features/a-users-guide-to-fivethirtyeights-2016-general-election-forecast/>
 - Two party system Ideological Republicans and Group Interest Democrats: The Asymmetry of American Party Politics (sent via pdf)
- Optional Resources:
 - Campaign polling explained.
<https://www.c-span.org/video/?c4542958/campaign-polling-explained>
 - Explanation of how the primary season and election season work.
<http://apecsec.org/two-party-system-pros-and-cons/>
- **1st THEY SAY/I SAY PAPER DUE!**

W Nov 9: Creative work and the public good: Being a World Citizen, Local Activist

- What does it mean to be a citizen of the world?
https://www.ted.com/talks/hugh_evans_what_does_it_mean_to_be_a_citizen_of_the_world?language=en

- Music, activism go hand in hand for protest organizer Justice Medina.
<http://www.fresnobee.com/news/local/article94088077.html>
- Documentary: Never Sorry. <http://www.aiweiweineversorry.com/>

W Nov 16: Current issues and the public good: Reacting to Terror: how do you cope?

- Is Terrorism Getting Worse? In the West, Yes. In the World, No.
http://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/16/upshot/is-terrorism-getting-worse-in-the-west-yes-in-the-world-no.html?_r=0
- Nice attack: truck driver named as France mourns 84 killed in Bastille Day atrocity – as it happened.
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2016/jul/14/nice-bastille-day-france-attack-pro-menade-des-anglais-vehicle>
- This Is How We Must Respond to the Terror Attack in Nice.
<http://time.com/4408463/nice-attack-france-terror-politics/>

W Nov 23: NO MEETING –THANKSGIVING RECESS!

W Nov 30: Current issues and the public good: equal justice under Law

- Killer instincts: When Police become Judge, Jury And Executioner
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/john-w-whitehead/killer-instincts-when-pol_b_11407458.html?utm_hp_ref=crime&ir=Crime
- Los Angeles Police Kill 14-year-old boy; Officers say he shot at them
www.cnn.com/2016/08/10/us/los-angeles-boy-killed-by-police/index.html
- 2nd THEY SAY/I SAY PAPER DUE!

W Dec 7: RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

W Dec 14: RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

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