

EL 579 Graduate Seminar
Fall 2014
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EL 579 Graduate Seminar

This course is designed to teach research techniques and practice writing the kinds of texts that the students will need to produce during their academic careers. In this leg of the course, students practice research techniques to write an annotated bibliography, a conference abstract, and a book review.

We will organize the seminar in the form of three workshops. For each workshop, we will meet to discuss a particular kind of text and look at examples. The students will take a week to produce your own. The following week, we will meet again to give each other feedback and discuss different methods and strategies. Students need to email their work to the class two days before the meeting. I will collect the revised versions of each text after the second meeting.

Although the course is noncredit, the students will receive a Pass/Fail grade, so it is important to attend the meetings and complete the assignments.

Depending on student interest, we can hold additional meetings to discuss a book on literary scholarship, academic writing, or academia.

Workshops:

1 Annotated bibliography: Choose a paper topic and prepare a bibliography for this imaginary paper. Each entry must have a 2 sentence description of the book's content and a 2-3 sentence explanation of how the source is relevant and how it will be used in the paper (e.g. for historical context, for theoretical framework, article contains a counterargument etc.)

2 Conference abstract: Write a 300-word conference abstract. You will read each other's abstracts, exchange feedback, and revise. The abstract should clearly state a tentative argument, outline the sections of the paper, and describe the paper's main contribution to scholarship.

3 Book review: Write a 3-page review of a recently published book. A book review summarizes the book's main argument, outlines the individual chapters, places the book within previous scholarship on the same topic, comments on the contribution of the book to existing scholarship, and suggests further topics of research.