

# ENST 201: Environmental Information Resources

Autumn 2019 | T & H 9:30-10:50 | NAC 014 and Library 283/284

## INSTRUCTORS

Brittany Palmer  
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TUES 11:00-12:30 & by appointment  
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THURS 1:30-2:20 & by appointment  
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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

In the contemporary information landscape, sifting through materials for consumption and sharing can be a daunting task. As researchers, scientists, and storytellers, we must attend to the ways we consume and share information about environmental issues. The purpose of ENST 201, Environmental Information Resources, is to develop critical thinking skills that assist in researching, evaluating, and synthesizing information in order to become more effective in contributing to the larger information landscape.

This course is fundamentally a skills-based writing course, as writing is a primary method through which information is shared within academia and in other storytelling situations. Instructors for the course will be assisting you in developing your research, writing, and critical thinking skills. During the semester, students will explore the practice of research; each student will find sources and critically evaluate them, synthesize information, write a literature review research paper, and give a formal presentation. The primary objective of this course is to engage in critical thinking on topic analysis, academic writing, and peer review, and to consider how to deal with information overload.

## STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES & COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Deepen attentional practice and critical thinking skills
2. Learn how to find reliable sources, synthesize information, and contribute back to the informational landscape in a meaningful way
3. Practice your research skills by writing a literature review on a topic of your choice

## GRADING POLICY

- Attendance: Regular attendance and participation is expected. Late arrival to class may count as an absence. You won't receive points for attending class, but failing to attend class or failing to be attentive during class will result in a grade reduction. Four absences will result in one letter grade reduction; five absences will result in a failing course grade. Please speak with me in advance if you have a reason for missing several classes.
- Assignments: Unless you have made prior agreement with your instructor, late work will not be accepted. Passing this class particularly hinges upon keeping up with your assignments; each builds upon the one before it, leading up to your final research paper and presentation.
- Academic Dishonesty: Plagiarism is representing others' ideas as your own and will not be tolerated. Submitting plagiarized work will result in an automatic failure in the class. If you have questions or concerns regarding plagiarism, please ask one of your instructors.

\*\*A passing grade in the class is contingent on a passing grade for the final paper and presentation, including completed first and second drafts turned in by the due dates.

Grade breakdown: The total number of points available for assignments is 500.

- Attentional & critical thinking practices: 25 points total
- Utilizing resources: 25 points total
- Skills-building activities: 200 points total
- Conducting, writing, & presenting your research: 200 points total
- Reviewing the work of your peers: 50 points total

## ASSIGNMENTS

While the focus of the course is each student's final research paper, there are several intermediate assignments, exercises, and assessments. A paper copy of each assignment is due in class on the due date unless otherwise noted. Ben's "Library Assignments" (the four LAs) are to be emailed to him by 9:00am on each due date. Assignments will be described during class and posted on Moodle.

### 1. Attentional & critical thinking practices (5%)

#### **PRACTICE #1: Cultivating Attention | 10 points, due 9/3**

The goal of this assignment is to practice critically engaging with information while considering topics you may be interested to explore in more depth for your final paper.

#### **PRACTICE #2: Annotation & engagement | 15 points, due with each reading**

For each reading, create a mind map/outline/notes that begin to engage with your topic.

**2. Utilizing resources (5%)**

**RESOURCE #1: Moodle Introductions | 10 points, due 8/29**

Familiarize yourself with Moodle. Make a post to introducing yourself to the class according to guidelines discussed in class.

**RESOURCE #3: Instructor Check-in | 15 points, scheduled by 9/12**

Schedule a 15 minute meeting with me between weeks 3 and 7 to review your process book and discuss your research questions.

**3. Skills-building activities (40%)**

**4 ARTICLE REVIEWS | 25 points each, due 9/3, 9/10, 9/17, & 9/24**

Review the assigned article and write a review of it according to handout. Additional details will be provided in class.

**4 LIBRARY ASSIGNMENTS (LAs) | 25 points each, due 9/17, 10/1, 10/15, & 10/22**

These assignments are due to Ben via email by 9am on the listed due date.

**4. Conducting, writing, & presenting your research (40%)**

**RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT #1: 10 points | due 9/5, 9/19, 10/8**

Research proposal drafts 1 and 2 & revised final proposal.

**RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT #2: 10 points | due 10/17**

Interview assignment.

**RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT #3: 10 points | due 10/29**

Paper outline.

**RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT #4: 10 points | due 11/5**

Annotated bibliography.

**RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT #5: 10 points | due 11/12**

Abstract.

**RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT #6: 100 points | due 11/26 (draft), 12/10 (final)**

Draft & final papers; final must show a deliberate integration of previous suggestions.

**RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT #7: 50 points | due dates vary, TBD**

Present on your research.

## 5. Peer review (10%)

### **PEER REVIEW #1: 25 points | due 12/3**

One written responses to another student's written work.

### **PEER REVIEW #2: 25 points | due dates vary, TBD**

One written response to another student's presentation.

## **REQUIRED TEXTS**

Jose L. Galvan. *Writing Literature Reviews: A guide for Students of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*; 7th ed.

Additional required readings will be posted on Moodle for you to access and read however you prefer to--printed out or on a device. Readings must be completed before the start of class as we will reference them in discussion. Obvious incompleteness of the required readings will result in a decreased attendance score.

## **CAMPUS RESOURCES**

You are more likely to do well in school and this class if you care for yourself & utilize resources as necessary. The University offers resources relevant to your health and to your academic studies. Please utilize campus resources in terms of taking care of yourself personally and regarding your academic studies and reach out to your instructors if you require additional assistance.

- Disability Services: The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students. If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact Disability Services in Lommasson Center 154 or 406-243-2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide an appropriate modification.
- Curry Health Center Counseling: This service addresses the personal, behavioral, and mental health needs of UM students. Individual appointments are \$25 and your initial consultation is free if you have paid the semester's health fee.
- UM Writing Center: Located in Lommasson 271. Visit their website for helpful handouts on writing effective thesis statements or introductions, and to schedule one-on-one appointments with writing tutors throughout the semester: [www.umt.edu/writingcenter](http://www.umt.edu/writingcenter).
- UM Solutions Center: If you are experiencing technical difficulties and require immediate assistance, visit [www.umt.edu/it/support](http://www.umt.edu/it/support) or call 406-243-4357.

## **SCHEDULE**

### **week 1 | introductions + making space for critical thought**

8/27 introduction to course, each other & environmental studies as a field

8/29 thinking critically and paying attention

*DUE: student introductions on Moodle*

*DUE: read CH 1, CH 2 in Writing Literature Reviews*

### **week 2 | learning the language of literature reviews**

9/3 how to plan your research & synthesize

*DUE: attentional practice assignment #1*

*DUE: article review #1*

*DUE: read CH 3 in Writing Literature Reviews*

9/5 literature reviews: purpose and structure & library tour

*DUE: research proposal draft #1*

*DUE: read CH 4, CH 5 in Writing Literature Reviews*

### **week 3 | skill-building week: navigating and defining information**

9/10 with Ben Chiewphasa in Library Room 283

*DUE: article review #2*

9/12 with Ben Chiewphasa in Library Room 284

*DUE: utilizing resources assignment #1: schedule meeting with Brittany by today for sometime between 9/12 and 10/11 to discuss research topic.*

### **week 4 | topics + methods**

9/17 research methods

*DUE: article review #3*

*DUE to Ben: LA 1*

*DUE: read CH 6, CH 7 in Writing Literature Reviews*

9/19 topic & research proposal workshop with peer groups

*DUE: research proposal draft 2*

*DUE: read CH 8 in Writing Literature Reviews*

### **week 5 | skill-building week: organizing and communicating information**

9/24 with Ben Chiewphasa (location TBD)

*DUE: article review #4*

9/26 with Ben Chiewphasa (location TBD)

**week 6 | evaluating information + conducting interviews**

10/1 evaluating sources

*DUE to Ben: LA 2*

*DUE: read CH 9*

10/3 identifying experts and conducting interviews

**week 7 | skill-building week: specialized and popular information**

10/8 with Ben Chiewphasa in Library Room 283

*DUE: final research proposal*

10/10 with Ben Chiewphasa in Library Room 283

**week 8 | skill-building week: being critical with information**

10/15 with Ben Chiewphasa in Library Room 283

*DUE to Ben: LA 3*

10/17 with Ben Chiewphasa in Library Room 283

*DUE: interview assignment*

**week 9 | forming the pieces of your paper**

10/22 crafting the outline, introduction, & abstract

*DUE: read CH 10 in Writing Literature Reviews*

*DUE to Ben: LA 4*

10/24 creating the annotated bibliography

*DUE: read CH 11 in Writing Literature Reviews*

**week 10 | writing workshop**

10/29 presenting outlines & peer group workshop

*DUE: read CH 12, in Writing Literature Reviews*

*DUE: outline (paper copy + Moodle)*

10/31 presenting outlines & peer group workshop

**week 11 | presenting your research + giving peer review**

11/5 tips for a good presentation & citation styles

*DUE: annotated bibliography*

*DUE: read CH 13 in Writing Literature Reviews*

11/7 peer review

**week 12 | presentations + peer review**

11/12 presentations

*DUE: abstract*

11/14 presentations

**week 13 | presentations + peer review**

11/19 presentations

11/21 No class – Writing day

**week 14 | presentations + peer review**

11/26 presentations

*DUE: papers for peer review*

11/28 – U.S. Holiday: No Class

**week 15 | presentations + peer review // last week of regular classes**

12/3 presentations

*DUE: peer reviews*

12/5 presentations

**week 16 | Exam Week: No Regular Class**

Date & time TBD Extra time for presentations if needed.; course evaluations

*DUE: revised final papers*

*\*\* Schedule is subject to change based on the needs of the class*

**INTERMEDIATE WRITING COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

This course requires electronic submission (via Moodle) of an assignment stripped of your personal information to be used for educational research and assessment of the university's writing program.

Your paper will be stored in a database. A random selection of papers will be assessed by a group of faculty and staff using a rubric developed from the following Writing Learning Outcomes:

- Compose written documents that are appropriate for a given audience or purpose
- Formulate and express opinions and ideas in writing
- Use writing to learn and synthesize new concepts
- Revise written work based on constructive feedback
- Find, evaluate, and use information effectively
- Begin to use discipline-specific writing conventions (style conventions like APA or MLA)
- Demonstrate appropriate English language usage

This assessment in no way affects either your course grade or your progression at the university.