University of Massachusetts at Boston
College of Advancing and Professional Studies
Critical & Creative Thinking Program

Syllabus

CRCRTH 692: Processes of Research and Engagement
Fall 2014, online section (Class # 5730); September 8 – December 8, 2014

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Course Format

Instructor-led, online course using Blackboard Learn 9.1. In your Blackboard course list, our course is called "CRCRTH 692 OL CE1 01 Research and Engagement Process Fall 2014".

Course Description

In this course, you identify a current social or educational issue that concerns you, e.g., you want to know more about it, advocate a change, design a curriculum unit or a workshop, and so on. You work through the different phases of research and engagement with others on that issue -- from envisioning a manageable project to communicating your findings and plans for further work. The sessions run as workshops, in which you are introduced to and then practice using tools for research, communicating, and developing as a reflective practitioner. The class activities and course as a whole provide models for guiding your own students or supervisees in systematically addressing issues that concern them.

If you are a CCT student, you should integrate perspectives from your previous CCT courses and will end up well prepared for--or well underway in--your synthesis (capstone) project. Students from other graduate programs and the honors program will find this course helpful for development of dissertation/research proposals and initial writing about their topics.

Preparation Assumed for this Course, and General Expectations

This course has no formal prerequisites, although students will benefit from having some existing perspective on research topics that interest you in the form of some issue or project that you need to understand better in order to create some change to your individual or organizational practices. Such issues need not be defined clearly as they can be developed throughout the course.

Students less familiar with highly-qualified research resources such as peer-reviewed journals may expect to spend a little extra time exploring which ones are particularly relevant to your own field of interest and mastering the use of online research databases to quickly locate and organize published literature.

Students are expected to meet all standards specified in the Student Code of Conduct, posted at:
http://www.umb.edu/life_on_campus/policies/community/code

Key Links

- Blackboard login:
  https://umb.umassonline.net/
  (course will only be accessible to students upon the course start date)

- Help for Blackboard Learn:
  http://www.umb.edu/it/getting_services/support_for_online_courses_blackboard/blackboard_learn_9_student_support
  (includes links to additional tutorials and reference guides as well as tech. support contact information)

- Help on Blackboard Collaborate synchronous conferencing:
  http://bbc.wikispaces.umb.edu/Students

Course Goals

By the end of the semester, for each of the goals listed below, students will be able to identify a) things that reflect what you have achieved well related to this goal, and
b) things you have struggled with/ need more help on/ want to work further on.These goals are divided into two sets:

I. "My Project Product Shows That..."
1. I can convey who I want to influence/affect concerning what (Subject, Audience, Purpose).
2. I know what others have done before, either in the form of writing or action, that informs and connects with my project, and I know what others are doing now.
3. I have teased out my vision, so as to expand my view of issues associated with the project, expose possible new directions, clarify direction/scope within the larger set of issues, and decide the most important direction.
4. I have identified the premises and propositions that my project depends on, and can state counter-propositions. I have taken stock of the thinking and research I need to do to counter those counter-propositions or to revise my own propositions.
5. I have clear objectives with respect to product, both written and practice, and process, including personal development as a reflective practitioner. I have arranged my work in a sequence (with realistic deadlines) to realize these objectives.
6. I have gained direct information, models, and experience not readily available from other sources.
7. I have clarified the overall progression or argument underlying my research and the written reports.
8. My writing and other products Grab the attention of the readers/audience, Orient them, move them along in Steps, so they appreciate the Position I've led them to.
9. I have facilitated new avenues of classroom, workplace, and public participation.

10. To feed into my future learning and other work, I have taken stock of what has been working well and what needs changing.

II. Developing as a Reflective Practitioner, Including Taking Initiatives in and Through Relationships

1. I have integrated knowledge and perspectives from other courses into my own inquiry and engagement in social and/or educational change.
2. I have also integrated into my own inquiry and engagement the processes, experiences, and struggles of previous courses.
3. I have developed efficient ways to organize my time, research materials, computer access, bibliographies, etc.
4. I have experimented with new tools and experiences, even if not every one became part of my toolkit as a learner, teacher/facilitator of others, and reflective practitioner.
5. I have paid attention to the emotional dimensions of undertaking my own project but have found ways to clear away distractions from other sources (present & past) and not get blocked, turning apparent obstacles into opportunities to move into unfamiliar or uncomfortable territory.
6. I have developed peer and other horizontal relationships. I have sought support and advice from peers, and have given support and advice to them when asked for.
7. I have taken the lead, not dragged my feet, in dialogue with my advisor and other readers. I didn't wait for them to tell me how to solve an expository problem, what must be read and covered in a literature review, or what was meant by some comment I didn't understand. I didn't put off giving my writing to my advisor and other readers or avoid talking to them because I thought that they didn't see things the same way as I do.
8. I have revised seriously, which involved responding to the comments of others. I came to see this not as bowing down to the views of others, but taking them in and working them into my own reflective inquiry until I could convey more powerfully to others what I'm about (which may have changed as a result of the reflective inquiry).
9. I have inquired and negotiated about formal standards, but gone on to develop and internalize my own criteria for doing work--criteria other than jumping through hoops set by the professor so I get a good grade.
10. I have approached the course (and the program I am a student in) as works-in-progress, which means that, instead of harboring criticisms to submit after the fact, I have found opportunities to affirm what is working well and to suggest directions for further development.

Texts and Materials

Required:

- Elbow, P. (1981 or later reprints). Writing with Power. New York: Oxford University Press. ISBN-10: 0195120183 or ISBN-13: 978-0195120189;
- Taylor, P., J. Szteiter (2012) Taking Yourself Seriously: Processes of Research and Engagement. Arlington: The Pumping Station (online as paperback or pdf from http://thepumpingstation.org/books/ or as paperback from other online booksellers). ISBN-13: 978-0984921607
- A good style/writing manual for formal paper writing, such as the following (or equivalents): Hacker, D. (2000) A Pocket Style Manual. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins; Turabian, K. L. (1996).

A Manual For Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations. Chicago: University of Chicago Press; others may be fine as well, including the current edition of Chicago Manual of Style, MLA, or APA reference guide, or others (for course writing assignments, no single particular standard is required or favored for the class as a whole, but rather, each individual should choose which to use and then be consistent with it over the semester). Free online style resources may be acceptable as well if they are published by high-quality sources such as those mentioned above. One such site is the Purdue Online Writing Lab: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/

- Access to the UMass Boston online library resources. Students who would typically access library resources at another university may continue to use those but should still obtain a UMass Boston library barcode, since some of our course materials may require access anyway. All students, including online students, may obtain a library barcode, which allows access to a number of services: http://www.umb.edu/library/account/barcode

- Headphone-microphone for our live ("synchronous") discussion sessions (as indicated by the schedule below); it is requested that you use a headphone-microphone, rather than a desktop microphone and computer speakers, because this can improve the audio quality connection and prevents feedback during online meetings.

Optional:

- As guides to writing: Daniel, D., C. Fauske, P. Galeno, and D. Mael. (2001). Take Charge of Your Writing: Discovering Writing Through Self-Assessment. Boston: Houghton Mifflin; we won't formally use this, but it may be of general interest

- Bibliographic software for references (e.g., Endnote, or RefWorks); important for keeping track of your references, and makes it useful for creating nicely-formatted bibliographies very quickly. You need not buy software; the UMass Boston library web site provides web-based access to several Citation Tools that are available free to students: http://www.umb.edu/library/help/

You also need:

- Professional Development (PD) Workbook: a workbook/journal/system to use for notes, reflections, and ideas - paper or electronic form, to be discussed in more detail during the first class session - you will develop the format of this workbook throughout the semester to meet your own needs.

Course Communication

Although we may use some discussion boards within Blackboard for various group discussion and announcements, we will also utilize regular email outside of Blackboard for communication between individuals -- we will NOT use the internal Messages feature of Blackboard. We will only use

@umb.edu email addresses; if you prefer to use a personal email address, you must either continue to check your umb.edu email account regularly or set up your umb.edu student account to automatically forward all messages to your personal email address.

Assessment and Requirements

PROJECT OPTIONS

In this course, you will define your own focus for the research project that you will carry through, over the semester. Options for the course project include the following; some may lead to purely written products for your final report, while others allow for creation of other kinds of products with a shorter written report:

- Long essay/paper
- A Literature Review of what other people have written or done (for CCT students, aim to develop your project in this course around the one that you intend to address in your CCT capstone project, undertaken in CRCRTH 694 Synthesis of Theory and Practice)
- A Grant, Research or Project Proposal
- Case Study/Practitioner's Narratives;
- Curriculum Unit/ Professional Development Workshop Series;
- Original Products (with documentation); and
- Arts Option (Performance) (with documentation)

RATIONALE FOR DIALOGUE AND FEEDBACK

The Final Report or Documentation of this project is expected to be around 12-20 pages (2250-4500 words, or equivalent depending upon project option chosen). The project should not be seen as producing a "term paper," but as a process of development that involves:

1. dialogue with the instructor and other students; and
2. revision (re-seeing) in light of that dialogue.

The Final Report is a culmination of the work done throughout the rest of the course and assignments. This course involves a semester-long research project, but one where the assignments done throughout the semester reflect and expose your process of doing research, as well as demonstrate the content that you have learned along the way. A traditional term paper might be sometimes thought of as a long, completely "new" writing that has to happen at the end of the semester and after earlier stages of research come to a close. In this course, it may help to shift your thinking to view the ongoing assignments as preliminary contributions to the Final Paper, although they will take various forms, rather than just paragraphs of prose writing. Thus, the Final Paper is a culmination that organizes much of what you have already written and discussed into something that can stand alone and communicates to an audience.

Dialogue and revision are crucial elements of the course for most assignments. Here, we take the point of view that a piece of written work, rather than being an end point, can also be a starting point to dialogue with the instructor and other students and prompts rethinking to happen. This rethinking

allows you to acknowledge the way that others see your work and then make choices as you regard this dialogue and how to use (or not use) what has been said (which may be direct feedback, or questions about what is ambiguous or interesting, or simply reflections of others back to you about what they have taken away from what you have conveyed). Rewriting then happens as a reflection of this process.

FEEDBACK AND REVISIONS

On any assignment, the evaluation rubric below is simple. Assignments are returned with one of two designations:

- "OK/RNR" (Ok - Revision Not Requested) means that you need not revise the assignment and turn it again.
- "Revisions Requested" means that you should revise and resubmit. One or more revision may be requested before the OK/RNR is given. Even seemingly complete, high-quality assignments will be occasionally returned with a "Revisions Requested" after the initial draft. Feedback returned to you may help you to extend some aspect of your work in preparation of upcoming phases of research, and clarify how you communicate your understanding of your research. It is possible that you would be asked to revise an assignment multiple times before receiving an "OK/RNR" if your work is not fully developed.

Due dates for initial drafts of assignments are almost always on Mondays. Feedback will usually be returned by Friday of the same week.

There is no fixed due date for revisions after feedback is returned, although to keep on pace with the course, you should submit revisions within 1 week of receiving feedback.

OK/RNR	REVISIONS REQUESTED
You've submitted an assignment that is complete, shows a progression of thinking, and establishes a foundation for moving on to the subsequent assignments. No revision needs to be submitted, although you may revise and resubmit anyway if you change directions in your project, still want more feedback, and/or otherwise are not personally satisfied with how this fits in to ongoing directions in your project.	You've submitted a partial draft/outline/sketches with ideas about the assignment OR You've submitted work that fulfills the minimum requirements of the assignment and reflects the intentions of what is being asked of you. Still, there may be open questions, ambiguities, or generalizations that leave room for the work to be examined through reflection and dialogue, followed by revision.

This rubric shows that you have an opportunity to submit a partial draft by the due date and still get credit for an on-time submission, while still establishing a foundation for "dialogue around written" work that can help you more fully develop your ideas.

The implication here is that you should not hold off on submitting something by the due date just because you don't think that it is fully polished yet; instead, you are strongly encouraged to submit a

partial draft or even outline on time rather than be days or weeks late because you were waiting to get something "right".

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS AND PARTICIPATION ITEMS

A sequence of 14 assignments, participation items, and tasks facilitate that development. Provided you submit an initial draft version of the assignment on the due date, the instructor's responses will be designed to help you develop your project.

Detail about the assignments and expectations is provided on the assignment check-list and links. In brief, the following summarizes all gradable parts of the course:

<u>**Required Written Assignments**</u> **(incl. presentation): 14 total items**

- Governing question and Paragraph Overview (REQUIRED)
- Sense-making Digestion of Relevant Article
- Review of controversy Article / Initial Informant Report
- Annotated Bibliography (+ Updated Bibliography)
- Revised Map (+ updated Governing Question)
- Propositions-Counterpropositions-Countercounterpropositions ("P-C-C")
- Research & Engagement Design
- Interview Guide
- Audio-visual Project Introduction/Reflection
- Presentation on Work-in-Progress (REQUIRED)
- Brief Report on Interview/Observation/Workshop
- Narrative Outline
- Final Report (REQUIRED)
- Final Self-Assessment (REQUIRED)

<u>**Required Participation items**</u>**: 25 total items**

- attendance at 10 online meetings (attendance and participation in the session, or make-up work completed if session is missed)
- 1 Syllabus Quiz (including an information/goals worksheet)
- 2 Conferences with the instructor
- 2 Reviews of your Professional Development (PD) Workbook
- 1 Mid-semester self-assessment (set of 3 worksheets)
- 5 Peer commentaries on another student's assignments (including review of draft versions of final reports)
- 1 Support survey
- Participation in buddy-group arrangements (involving peer support and weekly check-ins), including submission of 3 written Progress Reports throughout the semester
- Others may be assigned or substituted for certain participation items above

Optional Participation Items: (to be further defined throughout the semester):

- Volunteer to have certain assignments completed early and shared with the class for discussion
- Briefing on research and engagement issues
- Others as appropriate

GRADING

Overall course grade: The system is simple, but unusual. It is designed to keep the attention off grades and on teaching/learning interactions. Read the details below and ask questions to make sure you have it clear.

80 (out of 100) points or a B+ is earned automatically for 1) at least 11 Written items (draft versions) turned in by the initial due date, 2) at least 9 Written items marked OK/RNR by the end of the course (these must include the Governing Question, Work-in-progress Presentation, Final Report, and Final Self-assessment), and 3) at least 20 Participation items fulfilled. (Not requiring every assignment or item allows you to make choices based on your other commitments about which participation items and revisions to skip.)
If you reach that level, a simple rubric is used at the end of the course to add further points:

For students reaching the automatic B+ level, the following rubric will be used to determine additional points, added to 80.

Use the following system to make your own self-assessment for each quality below

2 = "fulfilled very well"
1 = "did an OK job, but room for more development/attention"
0 = "to be honest, this was not my strength in this course"

Quality Statement	0	1	2
Submit your assignments paced more or less as in syllabus and in sequence, with timely revisions (revisions returned < 1 week after you get feedback)			
Revisions are thorough and clearly show new thinking in response to comments and interactions.			
Project innovative, such that you are making new connections beyond reporting on ground covered by others			
Well planned and carried out with considerable initiative			
Project Final Report clear and well structured, with support from references, personal experiences, and other activities that you've done in the process of gathering research			
Project Final Report is professionally presented and organized, with appropriate and consistent formatting, few or no mechanical errors			
Active, prepared participation and support of building the class as a learning community, including contributions to discussion that demonstrate new insights from the readings and your own reflections, and including consistent buddy-group interactions			

Conscientious peer commentary on other student's assignments; comments that question and stimulate thinking beyond superficial praise or suggestions			
Consistent work and development of your research organization outside session as evidenced in your PD Workbook			
Self-assessment in relation to course goals that shows deep reflection on your development through the semester and			
Final Report maps out the future directions in which you plan to develop or extend your work.			
Contribute to the group's collective understanding of being successful in an online research course, through experimenting with tools, raising issues throughout the course, and providing feedback and guidance to peers in the online environment.			

If you don't fulfill enough of each of the requirements listed above to reach the automatic B+ level, your points = 3 for each writing assignment submitted by the initial due date + an additional 4.5 for each writing assignments OK/RNR + 1.5 for each participation item fulfilled, up to a maximum of 80 points.

Overall points are converted to letter grades as follows: The minimum grade for A is 95 points, for A- is 87.5, for B+ is 80, for B is 72.5; for B- is 65; for C+ is 57.5; and for C is 50 points.

Schedule of Weekly Modules and Required Online Meetings

The course is organized into weekly modules. Each week's material is released on Monday morning and covers one or more phases of research. Work for the week usually involves activities and written assignments that relate to the current phase, and there is a single, main page for each module that serves as the starting point for all work to be done that week. The table below shows the schedule of required online meetings. For these meetings, we will use Blackboard Collaborate, a feature within the Blackboard that allows synchronous, audio-video conferencing (Blackboard Collaborate has replaced the function of the Wimba tool). For help on getting started with Blackboard Collaborate, please see:
http://bbc.wikispaces.umb.edu/Students

Online meeting attendance is required as part of Participation Items, but make-up assignments will be possible as an alternative when you cannot attend. Students should make the instructor aware if they anticipate having to miss more than a few meetings, as the class process works best when most of the students can attend most of the meetings. When there is no meeting in a given week, you'll complete the activities independently. Please attend meetings in a quiet space where distractions are minimized, using a computer with a high-quality Internet connection (hardwired Internet cable is preferable, but if not possible, please try to use a reliable wireless connection; i.e., wireless signals in Internet cafés, libraries, etc. often limit download speeds and therefore may not allow for consistent audio quality). On a week when we have an online meeting, we do session activities together during that time.

Schedule of Weekly Meetings

Week	Duration	Online Meeting (all meetings 7:30-9:00pm Eastern)	Summary	Associated Research Phase
1	Sept 8 - 14	Thursday, September 11	Getting oriented, orienting oneself: a. The course as a process; b. Initial ideas about individual projects	A
2	Sept 15 - 21	Monday, September 15	Initial sources of information and informants	B
3	Sept 22 – 28	*No meeting*	a. Models of engagement; b. Organizing and processing research materials	B, C
4	Sept 29 – Oct 5	Monday, September 29	Initial formulations -> Governing Question	C
5	Oct 6 – 12	Thursday, October 9	Propositions, Counter-propositions,...	D
6	Oct 13 – 19	*No meeting*	Design of Research and Engagement Process.	E
7	Oct 20 – 26	Monday, October 20	Interviewing, Preparation for Public Presentations on Work-in-Progress	F, G
8	Oct 27 – Nov 2	Monday, October 27	Practice Presentations on Work-in-Progress	G
9	Nov 3 – 9	Thursday, November 6	Presentations on Work-in-Progress	G
10	Nov 10 – 16	Monday, November 10	More presentations; Using Feedback on Writing	G
11	Nov 17 – 23	Monday, November 17	Direct Writing & Quick Revising	H
12	Nov 24 – 30	*No meeting*	Peer commenting on drafts	H, I
13	Dec 1 - 7	Thursday, December 5	Taking Stock of the Course: Where to go from here?	H, I, J

Reflective Practice Portfolio

This only applies to students in the Critical and Creative Thinking MA Program: the Final Self Assessment assignment is appropriate and recommended for inclusion in your MA program's Reflective Practice Portfolio. Other options might also be acceptable based on directions taken to fulfill your project.

Course Evaluation

At the end of the course, you will be asked to complete an anonymous, online course evaluation (http://bit.ly/CCTEval) as required by the Critical and Creative Thinking program. This evaluation is in addition to any other general evaluations requested of you by the university or College of Advancing and Professional Studies.

Accommodation Statement

Sections 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 offer guidelines for curriculum modifications and adaptations for students with documented disabilities. If applicable, students may obtain adaptation recommendations from the Ross Center (617-287-7430). The student must present these recommendations to each professor within a reasonable period, preferably by the end of the Drop/Add period.

Instructor Background and Experience

Jeremy Szteiter is a graduate of Carnegie Mellon University (Cognitive Science) and University of Massachusetts Boston (Critical and Creative Thinking) and now serves as the Assistant Director of the graduate program in Critical and Creative Thinking at UMass Boston. His work has centered on teaching and program development, particularly in adult education settings within community-based human services organizations; this work has involved managing, developing, and teaching programs to lifelong learners and performing research around teaching practices, non-profit organizational development, and technology. Jeremy's work draws upon principles and practices of social change pedagogy, technology-enhanced collaboration, instructional design, and participatory theater.

Syllabus Version

September 2014; This syllabus is subject to change and updated versions may be distributed after the course begins, but the workload expectations will not be increased after the semester starts.