

IDS 4930- Communicating Your Research in the Liberal Arts and Sciences



COURSE OVERVIEW

Instructor

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Office hours: 1:00-2:00PM on Tuesdays; 4:00-5:00 PM on Wednesdays or by appointment.

Class meetings

3:00PM-3:50PM, Wednesdays, Turlington 2949

Course description

This course is designed for undergraduate researchers who have a defined research interest, proposal, or project underway and are eager to put their ideas out in the world. Students will learn effective research communication strategies, sharpen their oral and written communications skills, practice presenting, and develop useful resources for communicating their research in a variety of contexts.

The goals for students in this course are to:

- (1) understand diverse approaches and perspectives on communicating research in the liberal arts and sciences;
- (2) develop transferrable communication skills and resources that can be applied in a broad range of research contexts;

- (3) improve competency and confidence in oral and written communication of research and ability to communicate to diverse audiences

Specific student learning objectives include:

- understanding basic perspectives on communicating research across disciplines
- identifying research resources at UF and beyond
- communicating research interests to peers and faculty in an effective and accessible manner
- formulating an effective research question
- writing a research abstract
- refining a research “pitch”
- conducting a peer review and providing collegial feedback
- avoiding plagiarism
- adapting writing and presentations for different audiences, purposes, and contexts

ASSIGNMENTS

Grading percentages are as follows:

- Participation: 20% (10% Midterm; 10% End of term)
- Research question and abstract: 15% (due 2/21)
- IMRaD powerpoint: 15% (due 3/14)
- In-class research “pitch”: 20% (due 4/2)
- Short report on public presentation: 15% (due 4/19) *
- Blog or podcast: 15% (due 4/28) *

* Students may opt out of completing one of these assignments if they provide documentation of presenting at an academic conference or submitting an academic paper for publication.

Other important dates for undergraduate researchers:

- UF Undergraduate Research Symposium: April 8, 2025 (Abstract submissions will be open 2/3-3/14)
- Submissions to UF Journal of Undergraduate Research due by April 1.

Participation

Throughout the course, student participation will be observed and qualitatively assessed. Quality of participation includes factors like frequency and value of contributions to class discussions, replying to classmates in forum discussions, engagement in group and collaborative work, respectful attention shown during lectures and presentations, and general attitude. To do well in participation, students should complete all readings, come prepared to speak at least once per class, always engage to the best of their ability in class exercises and group discussions, being off task, and avoid doing or saying anything disrespectful toward any person in the class. Overall quality of day-to-day participation will be evaluated twice: once at midsemester and once at end of semester.

Research question and abstract

Drawing from their ongoing research, students will submit a document containing their research question—consisting of one precise and well-formulated sentence— and a research abstract. An effective research question will seek to address an underexamined problem in the scholarly literature and should be specific, meaningful, achievable, reasoned, and testable. The abstract must illuminate your thesis, methodology, and the key findings and significance of your research. This assignment will be graded in accordance with a rubric (see canvas resources>rubrics).

IMRaD Powerpoint

IMRaD (introduction, methods, results, and discussion) is a common acronym used to outline the main elements of a research paper. For this assignment, students will develop a powerpoint slide that provides a clear and concise outline of their ongoing research following the IMRaD organization. The final product should adhere closely to content that might appear on an academic poster presentation. If a student's research does not neatly fit within the IMRaD format, they may propose an alternative organizational outline. This assignment will be graded in accordance with a rubric (see canvas resources>rubrics).

In-class research "pitch"

Students will prepare a two-minute research pitch summarizing their research topic, key findings, and the significance of your research. Students should prepare the pitch for a general audience and strive to be engaging, clear, and concise in their delivery. Be prepared to answer a few basic follow up questions. This assignment will be graded in accordance with a rubric (see canvas resources>rubrics).

Short report on public presentation

Students will attend a public presentation (such as a lecture, panel, book talk, etc.,) and write a short report summarizing the presentation and analyzing the speaker's presentation style. This assignment will be graded in accordance with a rubric (see canvas resources>rubrics).

Blog or podcast

By the end of the term, students will produce a short blog or podcast that presents their research process and findings in an engaging way. The final product should be designed for a general audience. This assignment will be graded in accordance with a rubric (see canvas resources>rubrics).

COURSE POLICIES

Academic Integrity

Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the university community. Students should make sure that they understand the UF Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/>). On all work submitted for credit by students at the university, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."

On the use of generative AI tools (ChatGPT, etc.) in this course:

The use of such tools is permitted and may be valuable for activities such as brainstorming and refining ideas, finding information on selected topic, drafting an outline to organize thoughts, and checking

grammar and style. Nevertheless, students may not submit any AI-generated content as their own work. For example, students must not use generative AI tools to compose responses on class forums, write a draft of an assignment, write full sentences or paragraphs of assignments, or to complete assignments.

Grading scale

A 100-93.5%; A- 93.4-89.5%; B+ 89.4-86.5%; B 86.4-83.5%; B- 83.4-79.5%; C+ 79.4-76.5%; C 76.4-73.5%; C- 73.4-69.5%; D+ 69.4-66.5%; D 66.4-63.5%; D- 63.4-59.5%; E 59.4—0%

Please refer to the UF Catalog for information on grading and GPA (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>).

Attendance

Regular attendance is essential to succeed in this class. Unexcused absences after the first one will result in a 2-point deduction from the final course grade (100-point scale). Students wishing to get an absence excused should notify the instructor before the absence if possible or immediately after. They will also need to provide documentation (if applicable) and will be solely responsible for making up any missed work. Three instances of lateness will be considered equivalent to an absence and will impact your final grade accordingly. It is important to note that participation is a separate, holistic score and does not directly correlate with absences. Students in need of additional services and support are encouraged to consult the Dean of Students Office.

Late work

Timely submission of assignments is critical to your success in this course. Unexcused late work will be accepted up to 10 days after the deadline, but will be assessed a 10 percent deduction per day late. It is your responsibility to ensure that assignments are submitted on time and correctly in Canvas (please double check your uploads for content and technical errors before the deadline). Assignments sent to the instructor outside of Canvas will not be accepted. Students in need of an extension for medical or other reasons should meet with the instructor prior to the assignment deadline if possible. If you miss a deadline due to extraordinary circumstances beyond your control, you are responsible for informing the instructor as soon as possible and making arrangements to complete the missing assignment.

Accessibility and accommodations

This course intends to make learning accessible to all. The University of Florida Disability Resource Center further aims to provide a universally accessible community that supports the holistic advancement of students with disabilities. If you have a documented medical, physical, psychological, and learning disability or other difference that might require accommodations or modification of the course procedures, please contact the Disability Resource Center (<https://disability.ufl.edu/contact-us/>) to register. Students who receive an accommodation letter must present it to the instructors when discussing accommodations. Please follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Course materials

Course materials will be provided through Canvas by the instructor.

Evaluations

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu, or [here](#). Summaries of evaluation results are available [here](#).

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1, Jan 15: Course overview and introductions

Week 2, Jan 22: Theoretical foundations

Paul Watzlawick, et al., "Some Tentative Axioms of Communication" (1967)

Em Griffin, et al., *A First Look at Communication Theory*, Chapter 26, "Semiotics of Roland Barthes."

Week 3, Jan 29: Thinking about reading and organization

W. Caleb McDaniel, "How to Read for History," Rice University (2008)

Elisabeth Pain, "How to (Seriously) Read a Scientific Paper," *Science*, March 21, 2016.

Due: Bring one academic article of your choice to class

Week 4, Feb 5: Thinking about writing and style

David Lindsay, *Scientific Writing=Thinking in Words* (2011), Chapter 1, "Thinking about Your Writing."

Helen Sword, *Stylish Academic Writing* (2012), Chapter 1, "Rules of Engagement."

Research writing training module

Optional: Review Strunk and White, *Elements of Style*.

Week 5 Feb 12: Formulating your research question

Zina O'Leary, *The Essential Guide to Doing Your Research Project*, Chapters 2 and 4.

Week 6, Feb 19: Campus research resources and outlets

O'Leary, *The Essential Guide*, Ch. 5.

Attending an academic conference training module

Proposals 101 training module

Due: 2/21 Research question and abstract

Week 7, Feb 26: Peer review

Review assigned abstract before class

Week 8, Mar 5: Science in the public sphere

Noah Weeth Feinstein, "Education, Communication, and Science in the Public Sphere," *Journal of Research in Science Teaching* 52, no. 2 (2015)

Marton Hajdu and Catherine Simoneau, "Communicating Science in a Policy Context to a Broader Audience" in *Science for Policy Handbook* (2020)

Week 9, Mar 12: Refining your visual presentation

Due 3/14: IMRaD Powerpoint

Week 10, Mar 26: Refining your oral presentation

Review: AI minute and Marine Science minute podcasts

Week 11, April 2: In-class research pitch

Due: Delivery of in-class research pitch

Week 12, April 9: Humanities in the public sphere

Emma Dahlin, "Mind the gap! On the Future of AI Research," *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* 8 (2021).

Digital research training module

Week 13, April 16: Representing yourself as a research professional

Jeanne Mekolichick, "Mapping the Impacts of Undergraduate Research, Scholarship, and Creative Inquiry Experiences to the NACE Career Readiness Competencies," *NACE Journal* (November 2021)

Due 4/18: Report on public presentation

Week 14, April 23: Wrap-up

Due: Blog or podcast due April 28.