LIBR 2100: Information Literacy and Research, Section 1 (Baer)
Course Theme: News Literacy Now
Spring 2018

Meeting Times: Monday & Wednesday, 11:00am - 11:50am
Location: Library, 3rd floor, Aquarium

Instructor: Andrea Baer, Ph.D.
Instructional Services Librarian/Assistant Professor
Pronouns: she/her

Phone: (678) 839-5102
Email: abaer@westga.edu
(Please do NOT email via CourseDen.)

Office Location: 319 Ingram Library,
3rd floor Instructional Services suite

Office Hours:
Monday, 12pm-1pm,
Wednesday, 10:00-11:00am, and
by appointment

COURSE MATERIALS: Posted in CourseDen under “Content>Readings & Resources”

COURSE DESCRIPTION
LIBR 2100 (formerly LIBR 1101) is an introduction to information literacy: the ability to find, evaluate, and ethically use information, both in and outside of the classroom. Information literacy moreover involves understanding ways that information is shaped by political, cultural, and social forces.

NOTE: If you previously completed LIBR 1101, this is the same course and will not provide you with additional credits.

In this course section we will develop our information literacy skills as we focus on that relationship between information literacy and cognitive biases. Cognitive biases – patterns in thinking that limit one’s ability to think critically and to consider multiple viewpoints – take a number of forms. Confirmation bias, for example, is the tendency to accept information that aligns with one’s prior beliefs and to reject information that misaligns with those beliefs. Cognitive biases have tremendous influence over how people evaluate and interact with information. Research shows that cognitive biases are particularly strong when engaging with emotionally charged information. At a politically polarized time in the United States, individuals are especially likely to be influenced by cognitive biases.

Throughout this course we will explore the roles that cognitive biases play in our own lives and in our society. At the same time that we will build our academic research skills. Each of you will also complete a research project, in which you develop and explore a research question related to cognitive bias. Your
research process will be reflected in a statement of research intent and an annotated bibliography, through which you will articulate your research question and its significance.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
By the end of the semester, an information literate UWG student will be able to:
1. Identify, access, evaluate, and use information appropriate to a specific purpose.
2. Analyze the political, cultural, and social dimensions of information.
3. Ethically create information by synthesizing sources.

CLASS POLICIES
Class ground rules: In our first week of class we will develop classroom “ground rules” that describe how we will engage in our class and with one another. You will be asked to sign the agreed-upon ground rules. This will allow us to have shared ownership over and responsibility for making our classroom a supportive place for learning with and from one another.

Attendance and participation: Much of what we learn in this class will be from class discussion and in-class activities. Active participation is therefore an essential part of this class and makes up 20% (200 points) of your final grade. Participation means being both physically and mentally present and coming to class on time.

You are allowed two unexcused absences. For each absence after that 10 points will be deducted from your participation grade. If you are unable to attend class because of a medical or personal emergency, please contact me as soon as possible to inform me of your absence and to request that the absence be excused.

Technology: Please silence your phones and refrain from using them or other mobile devices unless doing so relates directly to a class activity. If you have an emergency for which you must use your phone, please do so in a way that is least intrusive as possible.

Late work: Assignments in this course build on one another and help you to prepare for each class session. You will get the most from this class by completing each assignment on time. Partial credit will be given for assignments that are no more than three days late. For each late day, there will be a 20% point reduction. (For example, a 100-point assignment that is one day late would receive no more than 80 points.)

If you are unable to complete an assignment on time because of a medical or personal emergency, you may request an extension for an assignment prior to the assignment due date. I will decide whether an extension is warranted for your circumstances and will do so with the intention of being fair and reasonable to all.
Email and CourseDen: I will send important class updates via my work email (abaer@westga.edu). Please check your UWG email account regularly (at least once every two days during the work week [Monday-Friday]). You can email me at abaer@westga.edu. **Do not use CourseDen messaging to contact me: I do not always see those messages.** I will do my best to respond to your emails within 1 business day. Course materials and assignments will be posted and submitted in CourseDen.

Academic Integrity: As stated in the UWG Honor Code, “[a]t the University of West Georgia we believe that academic and personal integrity are based upon honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.” This includes submitting work that is your own and giving proper attribution to the intellectual work of others that you draw on in your work. Please be aware that plagiarized work will be subject to a grade of zero. If plagiarism occurs a second time, this may result in failing the course. More information on plagiarism and the UWG Honor Code is at oldlibrary.westga.edu/~handbook/index.php?page=honorcode

**GRADING SCALE**

There will be a total of 1000 points possible in this course.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90% +</td>
<td>900-1000</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80% +</td>
<td>800-899</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70% +</td>
<td>700-799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60% +</td>
<td>600-699</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>below 60%</td>
<td>599 points or fewer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ASSIGNMENTS**

Assignments will be submitted via our CourseDen site under “Assessments>Assignments.” For each assignment there will be a location in which to submit your work. Please note that assignments in this course build on one another. It is therefore essential that you complete each assignment on time. This will allow you to receive timely feedback and have time for revision.

**Note:** Periodically people experience technical difficulties with CourseDen. If you are unable to submit a given assignment because of technical issues, please email the assignment to me at abaer@westga.edu. You can then resubmit the assignment via CourseDen as soon as the site is working again.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Total points possible</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflection essays (15@20 points each)</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary research statement</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preliminary research project (research statement + annotated bibliography)</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final research project (final research statement + annotated bibliography)</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1000</strong></td>
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ASSIGNMENT OVERVIEW

Reflection essays: Responses to reflection prompts related to course materials or to your research project. These mini-essays are intended to help you reflecting on course content, prepare for classes, and develop research project.

Typically one reflection essay will be assigned each week and will be due in CourseDen on Sundays by 11:59pm (EST), unless I note otherwise when introducing the assignment. Please include your full name and the assignment name at the top of the assignment. Save the assignment’s file as follows: “LAST_NAME_Reflection1,” “LAST_NAME_Reflection2,” etc.

Research project: This project consists of several smaller assignments:
1. Preliminary research statement (explains research focus and its significance)
2. Preliminary project:
   a. Revised research statement
   b. Annotated bibliography: preliminary list of sources to use for exploring your research topic and descriptions of each source and how it contributes to your research focus
3. Final project: Final research statement + annotated bibliography

More assignment details will be given later in the course.

UWG POLICIES

For important policy information (i.e., the UWG Honor Code, Email, and Credit Hour policies) and for information on Academic Support and Online Courses, please review the information found in the Common Language for Course Syllabi documentation at [https://www.westga.edu/UWGSyllabusPolicies/](https://www.westga.edu/UWGSyllabusPolicies/). Additions and updates are made as institution, state, and federal standards change, so please review it each semester.

SUMMARY:

Americans with Disabilities Act: If you have a documented disability, you are entitled to accommodations. Contact UWG Accessibility Services for more information ([http://www.westga.edu/counseling/4486.php](http://www.westga.edu/counseling/4486.php))

Credit Hour Policy: Currently, each credit hour = 50 min. of in-class time PLUS 2 hours of out-of-class work for each credit hour. That means each week you there is an average of 4 hours for this course.

Email Policy: Check your UWG email account regularly for official communications.

UWG Honor Code: Academic dishonesty of any form, including plagiarism and cheating, is not acceptable.
POLICIES IN DETAIL: These complete UWG policies, as of January 1, 2018, are as follows.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Accessibility Services: Students with a documented disability may work with UWG Accessibility Services to receive essential services specific to their disability. All entitlements to accommodations are based on documentation and USG Board of Regents standards. If a student needs course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or chronic illness, or if he/she needs to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, the student should notify his/her instructor in writing and provide a copy of his/her Student Accommodations Report (SAR), which is available only from Accessibility Services. Faculty cannot offer accommodations without timely receipt of the SAR; further, no retroactive accommodations will be given. For more information, please contact Accessibility Services.

Center for Academic Success: The Center for Academic Success provides services, programs, and opportunities to help all undergraduate students succeed academically. For more information, contact them: 678-839-6280 or cas@westga.edu.

University Writing Center: The University Writing Center assists students with all areas of the writing process. For more information, contact them: 678-839-6513 or writing@westga.edu.

ONLINE COURSES

UWG takes students’ privacy concerns seriously: technology-enhanced and partially and fully online courses use sites and entities beyond UWG and students have the right to know the privacy policies of these entities. For more information on privacy and accessibility for the most commonly used sites, as well as technology requirements visit the UWG Online site.

Students enrolled in online courses can find answers to many of their questions in the Online/Off-Campus Student Guide.

If a student is experiencing distress and needs help, please see the resources available at the UWG Cares site. Online counseling is also available for online students.

HONOR CODE

At the University of West Georgia, we believe that academic and personal integrity are based upon honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Students at West Georgia assume responsibility for upholding the honor code. West Georgia students pledge to refrain from engaging in acts that do not maintain academic and personal integrity. These include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, aid of academic dishonesty, lying, bribery or threats, and stealing.
The University of West Georgia maintains and monitors a confidential Academic Dishonesty Tracking System. This database collects and reports patterns of repeated student violations across all the Colleges, the Ingram Library, and the School of Nursing. Each incidence of academic dishonesty is subject to review and consideration by the instructor, and is subject to a range of academic penalties including, but not limited to, failing the assignment and/or failing the course. Student conduct sanctions range from verbal warning to suspension or expulsion depending on the magnitude of the offense and/or number of offenses. The incident becomes part of the student’s conduct record at UWG.

Additionally, the student is responsible for safeguarding his/her computer account. The student’s account and network connection are for his/her individual use. A computer account is to be used only by the person to whom it has been issued. The student is responsible for all actions originating through his/her account or network connection. Students must not impersonate others or misrepresent or conceal their identities in electronic messages and actions. For more information on the University of West Georgia Honor Code, please see the Student Handbook.

**UWG EMAIL POLICY**

University of West Georgia students are provided a MyUWG e-mail account. The University considers this account to be an official means of communication between the University and the student. The purpose of the official use of the student e-mail account is to provide an effective means of communicating important university related information to UWG students in a timely manner. It is the student’s responsibility to check his or her email.

**CREDIT HOUR POLICY**

The University of West Georgia grants one semester hour of credit for work equivalent to a minimum of one hour (50 minutes) of in-class or other direct faculty instruction AND two hours of student work outside of class per week for approximately fifteen weeks. For each course, the course syllabus will document the amount of in-class (or other direct faculty instruction) and out-of-class work required to earn the credit hour(s) assigned to the course. Out-of-class work will include all forms of credit-bearing activity, including but not limited to assignments, readings, observations, and musical practice. Where available, the university grants academic credit for students who verify via competency-based testing, that they have accomplished the learning outcomes associated with a course that would normally meet the requirements outlined above (e.g. AP credit, CLEP, and departmental exams).

**HB 280 (Campus Carry)**

UWG follows University System of Georgia (USG) guidance: [http://www.usg.edu/hb280/additional_information#](http://www.usg.edu/hb280/additional_information#)

You may also visit our website for help with USG Guidance: [https://www.westga.edu/police/campus-carry.php](https://www.westga.edu/police/campus-carry.php)
*Confidential Discussions:* The Board of Regents, the governing body for the University System of Georgia, recently passed new rules regarding sexual misconduct and its reporting. (It’s called BOR 4.1.7 Sexual Misconduct Policy, link here.) As of July 1, 2016, all faculty and staff must promptly and fully report complaints of or information regarding sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator on campus. Here is the UWG Title IX website. (Also, look here for a definition of sexual misconduct). What this means is that I cannot guarantee confidentiality if you come to me and tell me about an instance of sexual misconduct. I must report. However, the following locations and individuals can offer confidential support, and I strongly encourage you to talk to them.

I can help you contact these places, too. Here is the contact list:

**HEALTH SERVICES** 678-839-6452

**COUNSELING CENTER** Counseling Center Location: 123 Row Hall Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:00 AM-5:00 PM Tel: (678) 839-6428 (after hours call UWG Police) Email: counseling@westga.edu

**PATIENT /VICTIM ADVOCATES** 678-839-0641; 678-839-5338 (after hours 678-839-6000)

(This one is not confidential, but you should have it) **UNIVERSITY POLICE** 678-839-6000 (96000 on campus)

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**COURSE SCHEDULE (subject to minor changes)**

(More detailed information on course readings and assignments posted each week in CourseDen)

**Spring 2018 Classes:** January 8th – April 30th

**Finals:** May 2nd-8th

**Week 1:** Course introduction
1/8 + 1/10

**Week 2:** Source Evaluation & Cognitive Bias
1/15 NO CLASS (MLK Holiday)
1/17

**Week 3:** Identity, Beliefs, & Debiasing
1/22 + 1/24

**Week 4:** Political Polarization, & Debiasing
1/29 + 1/31

**Week 5:** Information Circulation & Journalism
2/5 + 2/7
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Search Algorithms &amp; Bias</td>
<td>2/12 + 2/14</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Research Tools &amp; Strategies</td>
<td>2/19 + 2/21</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Developing a Research Question</td>
<td>2/26 + 2/28</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Developing a Research Question</td>
<td>3/5 + 3/7</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Citation and Scholarly Conversation</td>
<td>3/12 + 3/14</td>
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<td><strong>SPRING BREAK: 3/19-3/23</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Strategic Searching</td>
<td>3/26 + 3/28</td>
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<td>Due 4/1: Preliminary research statement</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Reading Scholarly Sources</td>
<td>4/2 + 4/6</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Reading Scholarly Sources</td>
<td>4/9 + 4/11</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Research Project Work</td>
<td>4/16 + 4/18</td>
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<td>Due 4/22: Preliminary research project</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Research Project Work</td>
<td>4/23 + 4/25</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Course Wrap-Up &amp; Reflections</td>
<td>4/30</td>
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<td><strong>Finals: 5/2-5/8</strong></td>
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<td><strong>FINAL PROJECT DUE: Friday, 5/4/18 at 11:59pm</strong></td>
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