

Syllabus

CrCrTh 692 Processes of Research and Engagement

Fall 2019

Hybrid format (Face-to-face students: class #10926; online students: class #10920)

September 10 – December 10, 2019; Tuesdays 7:00-9:45pm ET

UMass Boston, Wheatley Hall 4th Floor, Room W04-170 or online through web video conferencing (Zoom)

Instructor: Jeremy Szteiter, email: Jeremy.Szteiter@umb.edu, Phone: (617) 942-3580

Schedule Office Hours Conferences here: <https://jeremyszteitercct.youcanbook.me>

I. Key Links

- Course site (starting point for all course material): <http://blogs.umb.edu/crcrth692-szteiter/>
- Class Meetings – Zoom: <https://umassboston.zoom.us/j/474434491>
- Fall 2019 academic calendar for College of Advancing and Professional Studies (notes dates for Add/Drop/Withdraw): <https://www.umb.edu/academics/caps/credit/fall/calendar>

II. Course Summary

Course format

Instructor-led, hybrid course on campus and online, with synchronous weekly meetings in Zoom web conferencing. Online materials distributed through the course site site.

Official Course Description

In this course, students identify issues in educational or other professional settings on which to focus their critical and creative thinking skills. Each student works through the different stages of research and action -- from defining a manageable project to communicating findings and plans for further work. The classes run as workshops, in which students are introduced to and then practice using tools for research, writing, communicating, and supporting the work of others.

Additional Background

Through your previous experience in courses, life, and/or work, you identify a current social, workplace, or educational issue that concerns you, that you want to learn more about, and that involves some change that you want to develop and promote at a personal or professional level. The issue need not be defined clearly at the beginning of the term and can evolve throughout the course; it is expected that your perspective of the topic and focus on key questions may shift as you reflect on your ideas and engage with others in class. You might imagine the research that you are doing leading to the design of curriculum unit, workshop, or program, creating a new resource for some target audience, or providing a foundation for rethinking practices in some field or how to address an organizational, community, or global problem, for example. There is no

expectation that a specific change or programmatic result be implemented during the course term; your research creates a foundation of knowledge that supports further engagement and decision-making. Based on the issue chosen, you work through the different phases of research and engagement with others throughout the course term -- 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.

Assumed Preparation and Course Expectations

This course has no formal prerequisites, although through your previous courses, you should have developed the disposition of "experiment[ing] with new tools and experiences, even if not every one became part of [your] toolkit as a learner, teacher/facilitator of others, and/or reflective practitioner".

This course introduces a range of tools and practices of research and writing, but the more Research and Study Competencies that you have developed before entering the course, the better. You should be prepared to make time outside class--at least 7 hours/week--for undistracted work on the course and to view and reflect upon each assignment and the purpose of session activities in relation to the unfolding of learning during the course.

Students less familiar with academic research resources such as using peer-reviewed journals may expect to spend a little extra time identifying and 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.

Learning Objectives

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 Texts:

- Taylor, P. and J. Szteiter (2019) Taking Yourself Seriously: Processes of Research and Engagement; Arlington, MA: The Pumping Station (Available from online retailers or as PDF from <http://thepumpingstation.org>). (ISBN: 9780998889139). Exception: if you have the 2012 version of Taking Yourself Seriously, you may use that version (but note that page references in this course refer to the 2019 version, so you will have to adjust for this when identifying required readings).

- Elbow, P. (1998). Writing with power: Techniques for mastering the writing process. Oxford University Press. (ISBN: 9780195120189)
- A good style/writing manual for formal paper writing, such as the following (or something equivalent): Turabian, K. L. (2018). A manual for writers of research papers, theses, and dissertations: Chicago style for students and researchers. University of Chicago Press. ISBN: 9780226430577. Others may be fine as well, such as the current edition of Chicago Manual of Style, MLA, or APA reference guide. (For course writing assignments, no particular academic standard is favored, but student should choose which to use and then be consistent with it over the semester). Using online style resources may be acceptable as well if they are published by qualified sources, such as the free Purdue Online Writing Lab: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

Materials and Other Setup:

- Hardware and software setup for synchronous video conferences through Zoom.
- Reliable, wired Internet connection (computer connected directly to Internet modem with Ethernet cable, rather than using wireless, whenever possible).
- Face-to-face students: a laptop or tablet to bring to class meetings in order to access web resources during class; also, for joining small group discussions in Zoom that may combine face-to-face and online students.
- A notebook/notetaking system (physical and/or digital) for consistently managing scholarly sources, bibliographies, web bookmarks, journal/notes, and other research materials (will be discussed in early class meetings). Includes technical systems for organizing and backing up files. It may be helpful to explore and practice with third-party citation management systems as well, which usually offer some free options.
- Your UMB login account to access email and UMBrella, the UMass Boston library's system for accessing a wide range of research databases.

Options for Course Project

Project options include:

- Literature Review of what other people have written or done in the area you intend for your Synthesis or other Research Project
- Grant, Research or Project Proposal
- Short versions of the options for the CCT Synthesis Project, namely, Long essay/paper; Case Study/Practitioner's Narratives; Curriculum Unit/ Professional Development Workshop Series; Original Products (with documentation); and Arts Option (Performance) (also with documentation)

In contrast to the CCT Synthesis Project, the Final Report or Documentation of this project is shorter--12-20 pages (2250-4500 words) --and it is typically more flexible, indicating where further work is planned or needed and regarding your research at that point in time as a work-in-progress, rather than something that has been wrapped up with a conclusive, final result. The project should not be seen as producing a "term paper," but as a process of development that involves:

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

A sequence of Written Assignments and Participation Items, and tasks facilitate that development (see Assessment below). Provided you submit an initial version of the assignment on the due date, the instructor's responses will be designed to help you develop your project.

III. Learning Contract

General Expectations and Succeeding in the Course

The course revolves around written assignments (and a work-in-progress presentation) and participation items. The work expected for the assignments includes spending at least 7 hours per week outside class time reading, researching, and writing, submitting assignments weekly, carefully reading comments on initial submissions, and taking time to make thoughtful revisions. The kind of participation expected is that students have materials at hand prepared to engage in the activities of each session, help each other through feedback on drafts, and make time to consult with the instructor—starting with making sure you appreciate the thinking behind the details laid out in the syllabus (as against being left hidden in a conventional syllabus) and consulting with the peer commenter or instructor whenever you don't understand a comment. If you internalize these expectations, you won't have to think about the grading scheme or the details to follow.

Late Policy

The course works by building from assignment to the next so late submissions detract significantly from the learning possible in class sessions. Generally, the due date and time for all assignments is the start of class meetings (fall 2019: this means Tuesdays at 7:00pm ET). Instructor feedback is returned within one week for assignments submitted initially on-time and also for timely revisions.

Late assignments are accepted, with the following stipulations:

1. Up to two written items (including anything across the Written Assignments and Participation Items that involve written forms, except for the four REQUIRED items) may be submitted late (at any point throughout the course term) and will count as long as they eventually reach the OK/RNR level.
2. There is a two-day grace period for all other written items (fall 2019: this means by Thursdays end of day) when items can be submitted without any effect on grading (but where instructor feedback no longer is guaranteed to be returned within one week, since on-time items are reviewed first). Items are then accepted late after the grace period, but in final grading, these will count only toward the number of assignments at the OK/RNR level (if they reach that point); they will not count toward the number of on-time initial submissions.

Please refer to the Assignment Checklist to keep track of due dates and your progress rather than waiting to be reminded. If you feel at some point that you are starting to fall behind, you are encouraged to take the initiative to submit a plan to catch up and/or confer with the instructor to talk through your proposed steps. Incomplete grades are given only in special circumstances and with documentation of need. The grading structure described below, which allows a fraction of assignments to be missed without penalty or explanation, accommodates the contingencies of your lives. Not requiring every assignment or item allows you to make choices based on your other commitments about which participation items and revisions to skip. Note the implications for grading are that you are much better off submitting substantial-but-incomplete drafts on time, rather than miss the due date and submit a highly-polished version very late. This is also consistent with the course goals related to engaging in a continual process of writing and revising, rather than aiming to "get it right" the first time so that you can just "be done with it".

The different assignments and participation items are listed below so as to be explicit about the course contract. Of course, to undertake these assignments and items you need more information. You should take

into account the guidelines supplied in the Course Notes and Instructions and the examples from past students, as well as the overall expectations conveyed in the rubric below.

Rationale for Dialogue and Feedback

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 original piece of writing that is presented 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). The course activities emphasize this dialogue as well (through whole-class and small-group discussions) and serve to clarify various aspects of your work with respect to the various phases of research. Rewriting then happens as a reflection of this process.

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. [Note: if your research topic shifts in a drastic way throughout the semester (which is ok and does happen sometimes), you may be asked to add amendments to certain past assignments even though you already received OK/RNR under your original topic.]
- "Revisions Requested" means that you should revise and resubmit. One or more cycles of revision may be requested before the OK/RNR is given. Even seemingly complete, thoughtful assignments will be occasionally returned with a "Revisions Requested" at least once after the initial draft. In fact, it is normal that many assignments will involve at least one request to revise, and this is not an indication that something was wrong. Please view this as an opportunity to push your thinking into extended areas and continue to challenge what seemed clear at first. 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. Being asked to revise is a form of Dialogue Around Written Work and means that there is still room for this dialogue around a certain piece of writing (and where you respond to the instructor and/or peer comments through rewriting some parts of the assignment, rather than addressing their specific comments point-by-point).

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 are provided in the Course Notes and Instructions. In brief, the following summarizes all gradable parts of the course:

Required Written Assignments (incl. presentation) with initial draft submitted on time: 14 total items

- Governing question and Paragraph Overview (REQUIRED)
- B1. Sense-making Digestion of Relevant Article
- B2. Review of controversy Article / Initial Informant Report
- B3. Annotated Bibliography (+ Updated Bibliography)
- C. Revised Map (+ updated Governing Question)
- D. Propositions-Counterpropositions-Countercounterpropositions ("P-C-C")
- E. Research & Engagement Design
- B4. Revised and Updated annotated bibliography
- F1. Interview Guide
- G1. Presentation on Work-in-Progress (REQUIRED)
- F2. Brief Report on Interview/Observation/Workshop
- G2. Narrative Outline
- H. Final Report (REQUIRED)
- J. Final Self-Assessment (REQUIRED)

Required Participation items: 29 total items

- attendance at 14 class meetings (arrive on time and engaged participation throughout the entire meeting)
- 1 Syllabus Quiz (plus an information/goals worksheet)
- 2 Conferences with the instructor
- 2 Reviews of your Professional Development (PD) Workbook (and where 2nd review shows that you accounted for feedback or improvements that were apparent from the 1st review)
- 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 phone check-ins), including submission of 3 brief written Progress Reports throughout the semester

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

Grading

Overall course grade: The system involves a simple count of points but is unusual because 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 of 14 Written items (substantial draft versions) turned in by the initial due date,
- 2) at least 9 Written items marked OK/RNR by the end of the course (and the 4 items labeled above as REQUIRED must be part of those 9 in order to finish the course: the Governing Question, Work-in-progress Presentation, Final Report, and Final Self-assessment), and
- 3) at least 24 Participation items fulfilled (and where at least 11 of those items are fulfilled through class attendance).

If you reach that B+ level, a simple rubric is used at the end of the course to determine additional points, added to 80:

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 Statements:

1. Submitted your assignments paced more or less as in syllabus and in sequence, with timely revisions (revisions returned within 1 week after you get instructor feedback)
2. Written assignment revisions are thorough and clearly show new thinking in response to comments and interactions.
3. Project is innovative, such that you are making new connections beyond reporting on ground covered by others and can show why this is the case.
4. Project was planned well and shows that you took considerable initiative to overcome obstacles that came up; includes ongoing attention to research organization as evidenced by your PD Workbook.
5. Final Report clear and well structured, including demonstrating how your thinking has been influenced by not only the published literature but also by considering the direct experience of practitioners (yourself and/or others); Final Report serves to guide others to build upon/adopt/adapt your findings.
6. Final Report is professionally presented and organized, with appropriate and consistent formatting, few or no mechanical errors.
7. Consistent and thoughtful weekly check-ins during buddy-group meetings outside of class (through interacting during live conversation by phone/web conference/in-person -- not simply by email exchanges).
8. Conscientious peer commentary on other student's assignments; comments that question and stimulate thinking beyond superficial praise or suggestions.
9. Self-assessment in relation to course goals that shows deep reflection on your development through the semester.
10. Prepared, active, and engaged participation and support of building the class as a learning community, including completing readings and assignments ahead of class, speaking up during class discussions to share insights based on the readings and personal reflections, and providing your reasoning for your thinking. Also includes contributing to the group's collective understanding of how to be successful in a hybrid research course, where there is dependence upon technology resources and experimentation

with tools, and where we help each other to recover from any technical difficulties, guide peers, and seek ways to make the course inclusive of participants across diverse needs and perspectives.

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.

IV. Overview of Class Meetings and Topics

Class meetings are on Tuesdays from 7:00-9:45pm Eastern Time on the following dates. See detailed weekly schedule below.

9/10: Session 1-Getting oriented, orienting oneself

9/17: Session 2-Initial sources of information and informants

9/24: Session 3-Models and Organization

10/1: Session 4-From Initial formulations -> Governing Question

10/8: Session 5-Component Propositions

10/15: Session 6-Design of Research and Engagement Process

10/22: Session 7-Interviewing

10/29: Session 8-Preparation for Public Presentations on Work-in-Progress

11/5: Session 9-Presentations on Work-in-Progress (Phase G continued)

11/12: Session 10-Presentations on Work-in-Progress, open to Visitors (Phase G cont.)

11/19: Session 11-Getting and Using Feedback on Writing (Phase G continued)

11/26: Session 12-Direct Writing & Quick Revising; peer commenting on drafts

12/3: Session 13-Peer Commenting on Drafts (Phase H continued)

12/10: Session 14-Taking Stock of the Course: Where to go from here?

V. Administrative Notes

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.

Note on Recording of Class Meetings

Please note that class meetings (or portions) may be recorded (audio and/or video) through the software used for web conferencing. Recorded class sessions are intended for the sole use of students currently enrolled in a course in order to view missed sessions or review segments for personal use, and these may only be viewed for the purpose of fulfilling course requirements. Links to recordings are only available under the password-protected site to registered students and are not listed or findable through public web sites. Recordings may not be shared with anyone not registered in the course, and they will be deleted at the end of the course term.

Course Evaluation

At the end of the course, you will be asked to complete the official course evaluation, issued by the Critical and Creative Thinking program and College of Advancing and Professional Studies. This evaluation is completed online during the last class and is anonymous. Responses are returned to the instructor sometime after the Registrar's due date for submission of grades.

Accommodation Statement

Sections 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 offer guidelines for curriculum modifications and adaptations for students with documented disabilities. The student must present any adaptation recommendations to the professors within a reasonable period, preferably by the end of the Drop/Add period. The Ross Center for Disability Services at UMass Boston (CC UL 211, www.umb.edu/academics/vpass/disability, ross.center@umb.edu, 617.287.7430) provides resources for students with disabilities.

Code of Conduct

The University's Student Code of Conduct (https://www.umb.edu/life_on_campus/policies/community/code) exists to maintain and protect an environment conducive to learning. It sets clear standards of respect for members of the University community and their property, as well as laying out the procedures for addressing unacceptable conduct. Students can expect faculty members and the Office of the Dean of Students to look after the welfare of the University community and, at the same time, to take an educational approach in which students violating the Code might learn from their mistakes and understand how their behavior affects others.

Students are advised to retain a copy of this syllabus in personal files for use when applying for certification, licensure, or transfer credit.

Instructor Background

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 program and organizational development, particularly in adult education in community-based human services and has involved managing, developing, and teaching programs to lifelong learners, with an emphasis on a learning process that involves the teaching of others what has been learned and supporting the growth of individuals to become nonformal teachers of what they know. Jeremy's work draws upon principles and practices of social change pedagogy, technology-enhanced collaboration, instructional design, and participatory theater.

Syllabus Version

2019 August. Subject to change if corrections or modifications are needed, but the quantity of work described above will not be increased throughout the course term.