



ENG 104.55

MWF 8:00–8:50 AM, RB 290

Alice Thomsen

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Office: RB 396

Hours: Monday 9:00–10:30; Wednesday 12:00–1:30; by appointment



COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this class, you will identify an urban legend, myth, superstition, or common misconception, and then explore its roots, variants, and comments on society, as well as the way it continues to affect us today.

Composing Research applies the fundamentals of rhetoric to the research process: methods of research; the rhetorical nature of research; elements, strategies, and conventions common to research writing, including multi-modal presentations of new knowledge.

By the end of the semester, you will have produced a primary-research-based exploration, a literature/historical review, a research proposal, an 8–12-page research paper, a multi-modal presentation, and a blog cataloging and reflecting on your process.

COURSE GOALS

- Create and complete research projects. This involves generating a research question, engaging in critical/analytical reading, developing an argument with evidence collected from both primary and secondary research, and documenting sources appropriately.
- Align research questions with appropriate research methods.
- Employ critical thinking in evaluation, speculation, analysis, and synthesis required to evolve and complete a research project.
- Use a variety of strategies to gather and organize information appropriate for the context and persuasive to the intended audience.
- Use the university research library to forward your research agenda.
- Engage in collaborative research.
- Employ format, syntax, punctuation, and spelling appropriate to various rhetorical situations in a stylistically sophisticated manner.
- Collect, analyze, and organize research information in verbally and visually compelling ways.

- Take initiative for the development and completion of individual and joint research projects.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND SUPPLIES

- *The Bedford Researcher* (Fourth Edition: ISBN-13: 978-0-312-67512-7)
- *BallPoint Volume 2* (<http://tinyurl.com/ballpointV2>)
- *Legends, Lore, and Lies: A Skeptic's Stance* (ISBN-13: 978-0-321-43924-6)
- a blog of some sort (we will talk about this more in class)

ASSIGNMENTS OVERVIEW AND GRADING SYSTEM

Writing Project #1: Topic Exploration and Casual Proposal (100 points)

For this project, you will identify a topic you might like to explore this semester. Once you have done that, you will look into what people around you think or believe, then write a short summary of your findings, as well as a proposal with a more specific focus.

Writing Project #2: Historical Review and Formal Proposal (200 points)

Here, you will research the history of your topic, finding sources to trace its development up to the present. You will then write a paper that serves as a literature review of the information you find and conclude with a clear proposal.

Writing Project #3: Cumulative Research Paper (300 points)

This paper requires you to analyze the information you have gathered, make connections, and bring the topic into contemporary relevance.

Writing Project #4: Multimodal Presentation (200 points)

At the end of the semester, you will put together a multimodal presentation to share your research with your classmates. This project allows you a great deal of flexibility and provides you the opportunity to play to your strengths.

Blog: (150 points; 10 points per post, 40 points for design)

Every week starting Week 3, you will write a blog post reflecting on an experience from that week—something from a reading, discussion, research, etc.—by Friday.

Participation, Misc.: (150 points)

Throughout the term, we will have many class discussions, along with small group work and in-class activities. You are also encouraged to read and comment on each other's blog posts, and students who are less comfortable contributing to large discussions

should consider this as a way to improve their participation grade. Small assignments may be used to supplement scheduled assignments if I feel this becomes necessary.

Your work, unless otherwise noted, is **due in print** at the beginning of class. Unless prior arrangements have been made, assignments may be **submitted by email with a 10% penalty**.

Throughout the semester, you will have the opportunity to revise any of the three writing projects to improve your grade by to one letter grade (e.g., B- to A-). Students wishing to revise must meet with me as well as visit the Writing Center. Revisions will be accepted, in print, at the beginning of class, up to two weeks (not including breaks) after the previous draft was returned. Please note: Writing Center appointment slots do fill up. Exceptions will not be made because of inability to get a meeting there.

Grading Scale (out of 1000 possible points):

	935–1000: A	900–934: A-
875–899: B+	835–874: B	800–834: B-
775–799: C+	735–774: C	700–734: C-
675–699: D+	635–674: D	600–634: D-
599 and below:	E	

Please note: In order to fulfill the University's Core Curriculum requirement in Writing Program courses, **you must earn a minimum grade of C to pass**; a grade of C- is not considered acceptable. Writing Program courses may be repeated as many times as necessary to meet the requirement, but ...

- The first and all other grades will show up on the transcript.
- All grades except the first will be used to compute the GPA.
- Course credit hours apply only once to graduation requirements.
- Students who do not successfully complete ENG 104 before earning 90 credit hours will not be able to take the Writing Proficiency Exam. These students will instead need to take an additional writing course (WP 393) after completing ENG 104.

LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY

Late work will be accepted for up to **one week** with a **10% penalty, plus 5% per day** including weekends and holidays. (Because of this, late work may be turned in by email without receiving an additional 10% penalty.) For example, an assignment worth 10 points could earn a maximum of 9/10 turned in after the beginning of class on the due date, 8.5/10 one day after that, 8/10 two days after,

7.5 three days after, etc. Although after six days, the assignment will receive a failing grade, 5.5/10 is nevertheless better than a zero.

Under **special circumstances**, extensions may be granted at my discretion. This will be decided on a case-by-case basis. Please note: **An excused absence does not automatically mean an approved extension**, and you do not necessarily need to have an excused absence to qualify for an extension.

ATTENDANCE AND TARDY POLICY

I expect you to attend every class session. However, things happen, and you will be permitted **three absences, no questions asked**. Any subsequent absence will **lower your final grade by one partial letter** (i.e., an A- becomes a B+) unless it is excused by university policy.

Tardiness of **five minutes will constitute ¼ absence**; tardiness of more than **30 minutes will count as a full absence**. As such, if you doubt your ability to arrive on time, consider switching to a different ENG 104 section; early-morning practices, long commutes, oversleeping, etc., will not excuse lateness.

Per department policy, **students who miss more than nine classes will fail the course**. This is non-negotiable and beyond my control.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

Using someone else's ideas or words as one's own on any assignment is plagiarism. It is a violation of the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities as defined in the student handbook (or at www.bsu.edu/studentcode) and will be treated as such. If you are concerned about inadvertently violating this policy, see me before completing the assignment.

DISABILITY STATEMENT

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible. My office location and hours are listed on the first page of this syllabus.

CLASSROOM AND STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

I expect you to be prepared for and engaged in each class period. This requires you to complete the assignments—reading and writing—and contribute to discussions. If I feel these things are lacking, I may give in-class quizzes.

This class will ask you to respond to your peers' ideas and writing, and I expect you to be thoughtful, in terms of both showing respect and giving well-developed feedback.

I believe that technology can be a powerful learning tool, and as such, I will permit the use of laptops in class for academic purposes. However, if I feel that class participation or attentiveness is lacking, I reserve the right to change this policy. This is a situation where the few can ruin it for the many.

A NOTE FROM THE WRITING CENTER

Want extra feedback on your papers? The Writing Center is a community of Ball State students who value writing. Come and collaborate with one of our trained peer tutors on any project for any major. The Writing Center is a comfortable, supportive environment for writers from all communities and backgrounds. We are located in RB 291. Our hours are Mon–Thurs 10AM–8PM and Fridays 10AM–2PM. To make an appointment, go to ballstate.mywconline.com.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

I will alert you as soon as possible to any alterations in this schedule. Written assignments will never be due earlier than listed.

Date	Topic	Due
WEEK 1 1/6/14 (M)	Course goals and syllabus review	
1/8/14 (W)	Discuss overall research goal, reading, and general urban legends, etc.	LLL Introduction (Sagan, “The Burden of Skepticism”)
1/10/14 (F)	Share examples, discuss in regards to research potential	Bedford Ch. 1, list of urban legends, etc.
WEEK 2 1/13/14 (M)	Library day; introduce WP 1	Bedford Ch. 2 and 3
1/15/14 (W)	Primary research methods	Bedford Ch. 10; LLL Sass, “A Patently False Patent Myth—Still”
1/17/14 (F)	In-class research time	Primary research plan
WEEK 3 1/20/14 (M)	MLK Day—No class	

1/22/14 (W)	Computer day: set up and introduce blogs	WP 1 ; bring laptop
1/24/14 (F)	Introduce WP 2 and lit review; discuss blogging	Blog post #1
WEEK 4 1/27/14 (M)	Examine/discuss source examples for quality	Bedford Ch. 4 and 5
1/29/14 (W)	Plagiarism and attribution	Bedford Ch. 6 and 7
1/31/14 (F)	Using citation resources and finding key information	Blog post #2; Bedford Ch. 20 and skim the chapter on the style you want
WEEK 5 2/3/14 (M)	Logical fallacies	<i>An Illustrated Book of Bad Arguments</i> (online)
2/5/14 (W)	Logical fallacies identified in LLL	Bedford Ch. 13; LLL Posner, "A Not-So-Psychic ..."
2/7/14 (F)	Research Day (substitute)	Blog post #3
WEEK 6 2/10/14 (M)	Integrating sources	Complete bibliography, Bedford Ch. 15
2/12/14 (W)	Use of sources in LLL	LLL National Science Board, "Science Indicators 2000 ..."
2/14/14 (F)	Peer review of WP 2	Blog post #4, Draft for peer review
WEEK 7 (conferences all week) 2/17/14 (M)	Introduce WP 3; synthesis methods	WP 2
2/19/14 (W)	History in LLL	LLL Nickell, "Bone (Box) ..."
2/21/14 (F)	Thesis	Blog post #5; Bedford Ch. 11 and 12
WEEK 8 2/24/14 (M)	Workshop proposals	Revised proposal
2/26/14 (W)	No class	
2/28/14 (F)	No class	Blog post #6
WEEK 9 3/3/14 (M)	LLL; TV clips	LLL Waxman, "Mind Over Media ..."; find example of this online
3/5/14 (W)	Workshop outlines	Outline
3/7/14 (F)	Outline to draft	Blog post #7; Bedford Ch. 14
WEEK 10 3/8–3/16	Spring Break	

WEEK 11 3/17/14 (M)	LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW Style in LLL	LLL both Hall pieces in Ch. 3; Bedford Ch. 16
3/19/14 (W)	Peer review	Partial draft for peer review
3/21/14 (F)	In-class revision	Blog post #8; Bedford Ch. 17; bring partial draft
WEEK 12 3/24/14 (M)	Flex day to deal with common issues	
3/26/14 (W)	LLL	LLL Plait, "The Disaster ..."; 2012 parallels
3/28/14 (F)	Peer Review	Blog post #9, complete draft for peer review
WEEK 13 3/31/14 (M)	Introduce WP 4	WP 3
4/2/14 (W)	Design	Bedford Ch. 18 and 19
4/4/14 (F)	Examples	Blog post #10
WEEK 14 4/7/14 (M)	Conferences	Multimodal Proposal
4/9/14 (W)	Conferences	
4/11/14 (F)	Conferences	Blog post #11
WEEK 15 4/14/14 (M)	Workshop	Workshop material
4/16/14 (W)	LLL group work	LLL (selected on M)
4/18/14 (F)	LLL discussions	
WEEK 16 4/21/14 (M)	Metacognition (in-class writing)	Blog
4/23/14 (W)	Presentations	Multimodal Written Portion
4/25/14 (F)	Presentations, cont'd	
WEEK 17 4/28/14 (M)	Presentations, cont'd	
Finals	Presentations, cont'd	