

School of Interdisciplinary Studies (Western College Program)  
MIAMI UNIVERSITY

WCP 444 (Senior Project Workshop)

Fall 2002

Instructor: William H. Newell, 123 Peabody Hall, 529-2213, Newellwh@muohio.edu  
Office Hours: 9-11 a.m. Tues/Thurs; 11-noon Friday

Class Schedule:	Section A	11:00-12:15 p.m.	Tues/Thurs	119 Peabody
	Section B	2:00 – 3:15 p.m.	Tues/Thurs	119 Peabody
	Section C	3:30 – 4:45 p.m.	Tues/Thurs	119 Peabody

WCP 444/445 fulfills Senior Capstone requirement of Miami Plan for Liberal Education.

Description:

The workshop is designed to provide maximum support as you progress through the various stages of completing a senior project, to clarify the relationship between project advisors and the workshop, and to spell out in detail the expectations for both workshop and project. Every effort has been made to eliminate workshop activities that are not essential to helping seniors complete their projects.

Fall semester the workshop is designed to assist you through steps necessary for any senior project:

- pairing you up quickly with a project advisor,
- selecting a topic that builds on your focus,
- finding in the library the professional literatures you need,
- extracting quickly what you need from them,
- learning what a good senior project in your area looks like,
- putting together an annotated bibliography and a literature review,
- finding funding for your senior project research,
- clarifying what makes a project interdisciplinary,
- learning how to express your new ideas to people in other fields,
- learning what they can offer by virtue of their different expertise, and
- completing a substantial section of your project.

The workshop is also an intellectual community. This means you will share some common intellectual experiences directly relevant to improving the quality of your project. Good interdisciplinary courses, as you already know, depend on conversation among people with different perspectives. That holds for interdisciplinary scholarship as well. To put together a good interdisciplinary senior project, you need to talk with people who have developed different disciplinary expertise from yours as well as with people who share some of your expertise. So the workshop is set up to give you two kinds of feedback on your project--from peers whose interests overlap yours (through affinity groups), and from those having little in common with you (through discussions in the workshop as a whole). One person from each category will provide you with written feedback as well. To prepare you to comment intelligently on projects outside your area and to provide a model of a good interdisciplinary project in your area, you are asked to read and critique (orally and in writing) two senior projects. One project (available at Oxford Copy Shop) will be read and discussed by the entire class; the other (closest to your own area) you will select from projects completed in recent years.

Finally, the workshop is designed to prepare you for life after Western. Jennifer McLaughlin is the career advisor designated as the liaison to Western from the Career Planning and Placement Office (CPPO). She will meet with each section to familiarize you with the services of the CPPO, and offer workshops on preparing your résumé. The workshop will also provide information on grad programs, fellowships and competitions, and conferences. For now, see <http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/beyond/bcrank.htm>.

The workshop recognizes several different kinds of projects as appropriate. In addition to typical projects that combine library research in several professional literatures with a case study or applied focus, legitimate projects can feature an expressive product, a series of laboratory experiments, or a major activity. However, projects in the fine or performing arts and expressive projects in the humanities (e.g., a portfolio of poems or drawings or photographs, an original musical score or play, the staging and direction of a theatrical work) must include two parts:

- a performance or exhibition (which should be videotaped for archiving); and
  - a written portion (appropriately shorter for projects with a performance or exhibition).
- The latter explains the process to non-specialists -- what was being attempted and why, a detailed rationale for the artistic choices made and then grounding in the relevant professional literatures, and a discussion of the relationship of the project to the relevant tradition or form. An action-oriented project (e.g., founding a social movement organization) must include a similar written portion as well as appropriate documentation (e.g., a personal journal, a scrapbook, a documentary video) of the activity.

In addition to attending workshop twice a week and fulfilling its requirements, seniors are required to meet weekly with their project advisor. The length of those meetings can be negotiated between senior and advisor and may vary across the two semesters, but the norm is one hour a week. Advisors will discuss the progress of these meetings periodically with the workshop instructor. The focus of weekly meetings will be on the substance of your project:

- identifying and narrowing down your topic,
- identifying the people and the professional literatures you need to get to know,
- immersing yourself in the ideas they reveal,
- processing what you learn from them and deciding what issues you want to address,
- developing your thesis and the argument that backs it up,
- breaking up your project into small non-threatening pieces,
- writing one piece one at a time, and then rewriting.

#### Evaluation:

Your course grade for fall semester (WCP 444) will reflect equally your performance in senior workshop and on your project. The workshop instructor will compute the senior workshop half of your course grade on the basis of the following activities (due in workshop on dates specified) [percentage of workshop grade]:

- computer search printout and one-page evaluation of one book (8/29) [10%]
- one-page assessment (making explicit use of criteria below for evaluating quality of projects) of Yelena Boxer's senior project (required purchase) (9/10) [10%]
- one-page paper on interdisciplinarity of her project (9/12) [10%]
- annotated bibliography (to workshop director and advisor on 10/1) [15%]
- literature review (to workshop director and advisor on 10/31) [25%]
- written feedback on a lit review presentation (due next class to workshop director and person reviewed) [10%]

- written feedback on a work in progress presentation (due next class to workshop director and person reviewed) [10%]
- attendance and participation (determined at end of semester) [10%]

Late papers will be reduced a letter grade.

Your project advisor will evaluate the project half of your grade by providing the workshop instructor with assessments of quality and quantity. The workshop instructor will combine these assessments and determine your overall course grade. The quality of your project will be judged by the following equally-weighted criteria:

- A project should focus on a topic within the student's *concentration*; i.e., it should build directly on a foundation laid by more than 1 upper-division course.
- A project should have a *thesis* (a unifying idea, point, or theme) that addresses a question about that topic.
- A project should make a case for the *importance* of the question it addresses.
- The question and thesis should be *interdisciplinary*: i.e., the question should require more than 1 (disciplinary) perspective to address it adequately; and the thesis should pull together insights from more than 1 (disciplinary) perspective.
- A project should construct an *argument* (build a case) in support of the thesis.
- The argument should be explicitly and thoroughly connected to the relevant professional *literatures*.
- The argument should *connect* the abstract/general/theoretical to the concrete/specific/particular (e.g., apply theory to a case study).
- A project should show promise of reaching identifiable, defensible *conclusion*.
- A project should be effectively organized, grammatically *well written*, and free of spelling and punctuation errors. Computer spell checking is required.
- A project should be written in language *accessible* by non-specialists (i.e., jargon-free and with technical terms defined)
- Attendance at required weekly meetings with project advisor.

Your advisor will judge the quantity (length or scale of product) against these criteria:

- While the appropriate length for projects varies greatly with the type of project, our reference point will be a typical project combining library research with a case study. A reasonable target length is 80 pages of text for the finished project, with 30 pages by the end of first semester. The written component of a performance-based project might only run half that long, though the performance or exhibition would need to be nearly half completed by the end of first semester. Lab projects in the sciences fall in between.

Required Purchases from Oxford Copy Shop (in order of use):

Yelena Boxer. *Female Circumcision: A Question of Global Intervention and Women's Status*. Oxford, OH: Oxford Copy Shop, 1993.

Senior Workshop Reader (articles on interdisciplinary studies and plagiarism)

Academic Misconduct: See

[http://www.ucm.muohio.edu/documents\\_and\\_policies/Handbook/academic\\_regulations/acadregspV.cfm](http://www.ucm.muohio.edu/documents_and_policies/Handbook/academic_regulations/acadregspV.cfm).

[Electronic sources should be cited using website.]

Weekly Schedule (to be modified in light of experience during semester):

August 20: review syllabus, expectations, update class list/balance sections, handouts (advisors' areas of expertise, project evaluation forms, advisor preferences and project description forms), circulate address/telephone list

August 22: meet Bill Baker in 57 King Library (downstairs in gov't docs section) for computer search workshop. **Hand in advisor preferences and project descriptions.**

August 27: meet with Jennifer McLaughlin at CPPO's Career Resource Center (use front door of Hoyt Hall, turn right).

August 29: **Hand in computer search printout, key book or article found through it, and one-page assessment of it** (123 Peabody). Advisor list posted. **Initial meeting with advisor today or tomorrow** (discuss topic; set weekly meeting time; check SEO/DARS against proposed topic).

September 3: no workshop (Mon/Tues exchange day).

September 5: workshop replaced by Carolyn Haynes on Selecting and Focusing Topics, 7 p.m., 4<sup>th</sup> fl. Pbd. **Submit revised SEO statement and focus hours to advisor.**

September 10: Discuss Yelena Boxer's senior project. **Hand in one-page paper assessing her project against quality criteria.**

September 12: Discuss handouts on interdisciplinarity. **Hand in one-page paper evaluating the interdisciplinarity of her project**

September 17: Project proposal presentations.

September 19: Project proposal presentations. . Deadline for revised SEO on file.

September 24: Replaced by Carolyn on Discourse Communities, 7 pm, 4<sup>th</sup> fl. Pbd.

September 26: Discuss 99/00 projects. Organize into affinity groups. Sign up to provide written feedback on lit review presentation by someone in your affinity group (due the next class to workshop director and person receiving feedback).

October 1: **Hand in annotated bibliography** (to workshop director and your advisor). Affinity groups discuss bibliographies. Sign up for lit review presentation.

October 3: no workshop (work on lit review)

October 8: no workshop (work on lit review)

October 10: Literature review presentations and feedback.

October 15: Literature review presentations and feedback.

October 17: Literature review presentations and feedback.

October 22: Literature review presentations and feedback.

October 24: (Literature review presentations and feedback if needed)

October 29: Finish up literature review.

October 31: **Hand in literature review** (to workshop director and your advisor). Sign up for work in progress presentation, and to give feedback on the presentation of

someone outside your affinity group (due the next class to workshop director and person receiving feedback).

November 5: Affinity groups meet  
 November 7: Replaced by one of Jennifer McLaughlin's workshops on preparing résumés: Sept. 3, 5,11; Oct. 7; Nov. 7 (12:30-1:30 in Hoyt); or Dec. 3

November 12: Affinity groups meet  
 November 14: Presentations on work in progress.

November 19: Presentations on work in progress.  
 November 21: Presentations on work in progress.

November 26: Presentations on work in progress.  
 November 28: no workshop (Thanksgiving vacation)

December 3: **Hand in "30" pages of text** (length varies with type of project).  
 Course evaluation (oral and written).

December 5: Workshop replaced by individual joint meeting with advisor and workshop instructor to discuss status of project and plans for early next semester.

Second semester, your complete rough draft will be due February 28, your final bound project April 7, and your public presentation in senior project conference April 22-24. The number of workshop activities will be dramatically reduced.

WCP 444 (Senior Project Workshop)

Fall, 2002

## SENIOR WORKSHOP READER

William H. Newell and William J. Green, "Defining and Teaching Interdisciplinary Studies," *Improving College and University Teaching*, 30:1, Winter, 1982, 23-30.

William H. Newell, "A Theory of Interdisciplinary Studies," *Issues in Integrative Studies* 19 (2001)

"Plagiarism" from Stone & Bell, *Prose Style: A Handbook for Writers* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968), 214-219.

Yelena Boxer, *Female Circumcision: A Question of Global Intervention and Women's Status* (unpublished ms., 1993).

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Spring 2002

Instructor: William H. Newell, 123 Peabody Hall, 529-2213  
Office Hours: 1:00-2:00 Tuesday/Thursday; 10-noon Friday

Class Schedule:

Section A	11 am -12:15 p.m.	Tues/Thurs	119 Peabody
Section B	2:00 - 3:15 p.m.	Tues/Thurs	119 Peabody
Section C	3:30 - 4:45 p.m.	Tues/Thurs	119 Peabody

This year-long course fulfills the Senior Capstone Requirement of the Miami Plan for Liberal Education.

Description:

First semester, the workshop concentrated on getting your project underway. Second semester the focus of the workshop shifts to moving your project through to completion, then to preparing you to present it publicly in the Senior Project Conference. In addition, the workshop assists you in getting ready for graduation and for life after Western. Since researching and writing your project take center stage until April 8, when your bound final project is due, the workshop meets less frequently than it did last semester, and the required weekly meeting with your project advisor takes on added significance. You and your advisor should work out a schedule for completing drafts of chapters or creative/lab products that will help you meet workshop deadlines.

The semester splits into four distinct periods:

(1) January 7 (first class) to March 1 (complete rough draft due). There are several distinct tasks for the workshop during this period: getting you underway again; keeping you writing; helping you develop a thesis and line of argument understandable to people outside your field; providing you with regular feedback from people inside your field; and reserving time for you to research and write.

(2) March 2 to April 8 (final bound projects due). The workshop will meet only once a week during the period between rough draft and final project. After a brief meeting of the whole group (largely for announcements or requests for assistance from peers), the workshop will break up into affinity groups. Your advisor and the workshop instructor will read and provide feedback as soon as possible after March 1 so that you have time for significant revisions before the final bound project is due. Jennifer McLaughlin from the CPPO will offer two workshops--one on "stopping out" (short-term alternatives to starting your career and strategies for attaining them), the other on interviewing techniques.

(3) April 9 to 25 (senior project conference ends). This period is devoted exclusively to identifying what to present, practicing your 15-minute presentations (including use of equipment such as microphone, slide projector, overhead projector, and

computer for Powerpoint presentations), and then publicly presenting your project in the senior project conference.

(4) April 26 to May 5 (Graduation). Your Planning Committee may convene a brief session or a rehearsal. Then it's the Western Senior Recognition Ceremony and Miami Commencement!



### Interdisciplinarity:

The workshop is designed to help you develop an interdisciplinary senior project. Past projects and the two articles on interdisciplinary studies we read first semester raised fundamental issues about the nature and challenges of interdisciplinary scholarship; this semester, the discussion of interdisciplinarity will focus on integration. Presentations will emphasize making the thesis and argument of your project accessible to classmates in other disciplines and then to the more general audience at the Senior Project Conference.

### Evaluation:

Your course grade for spring semester will reflect in part (25%) your performance in senior workshop but mostly (75%) the assessment of your bound final project. Again, your project advisor will evaluate your project by providing the workshop instructor with assessments of quality and quantity using the criteria set out in last semester's syllabus. The workshop instructor will combine these assessments with your workshop grade to determine your overall course grade.

The workshop instructor will compute the workshop portion of your course grade on the basis of the following activities (due in workshop on dates specified) [percentage of workshop grade]:

- 25-page Work-in-Progress, i.e., half the remaining project (1/31) handed in to workshop director *and* to your advisor [20%]
- written feedback on a Thesis-and-Argument presentation (next class) [20%]
- complete rough draft (3/1) [20%]
- 15-minute public presentation in Senior Project Conference (4/23-25) [20%]
- attendance and participation (determined at end of semester) [20%]

### Academic Misconduct:

Please review the Undergraduate Academic Regulations, Part V Academic Misconduct, Section 502 Criteria, esp. b. Written or other assignments, in the *Miami Student Handbook*.

For clarification on how to cite published and electronic sources, see

- "Plagiarism" from Stone & Bell, *Prose Style: A Handbook for Writers* (McGraw-Hill, 1968), pp. 214-219 (handout last semester)
- Gibaldi, Joseph, *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* 4th ed. (New York: MLA, 1995) [for humanities projects], or
- *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* 4th ed. (Washington, DC: APA, 1994) [for social and natural science projects].

### Weekly Schedule:

January 8: review syllabus, shift enrollment as needed to even out section sizes.

January 10: Briefing by Sharon Long & sign up for Planning Committee, quickie project explanations to organize affinity groups, sign up for Thesis and Argument presentation. Sign up for peer feedback.

January 15: no class

January 17: Thesis and Argument presentations. (Unlike presentations last semester on subject matter, these focus on your thesis and the line of argument behind it.)

January 22: no class

January 24: Thesis and Argument presentations. Fill out application for May graduation (due February 2 in Commencement Office).

January 29: Thesis and Argument presentations  
 January 31: “**25**” page **Work-in-Progress due to advisor and to peer for feedback**. Length varies with type of project. No class.

**February 5: Peer feedback due on Work-in-Progress**

February 7: announcements/handouts, then break out into affinity groups

February 12: no class

February 14: announcements/handouts, then break out into affinity groups

February 19: no class (Monday/Tuesday exchange day)

February 21: announcements/handouts, then break out into affinity groups

February 26: no class

February 28: no class

**[March 1: Complete rough draft due noon to advisor and workshop director.]**

[March 4, 7-8 p.m., 21 Peabody: CPPO workshop on Stopping Out

March 5: no class

[March 6, 7-8 p.m., 21 Peabody: CPPO workshop on Interviewing Techniques]

March 7: announcements/handouts, then break out into affinity groups

[Spring Break]

March 19: no class

[March 20: CPPO’s campus-wide Spring ICE]

March 21: announcements/handouts, then break out into affinity groups

March 26: no class

March 28: announcements/handouts, then break out into affinity groups

April 2: no class

[April 3, 4-5 p.m., Shriver Multi-purpose Rm: CPPO on planning for grad school]

April 4: announcements/handouts, then break out into affinity groups

**[April 8: Bound final project due to advisor and to workshop director]**

April 9: Identify what to present. Sign up for practice presentation and set schedule. Balloting for student speakers, faculty speaker, and gown awardee.

April 11: Practice 15-minute presentations in Leonard Theater (class starts early or runs late)

April 16: Practice 15-minute presentations in Leonard Theater (long class again)

April 18: Practice 15-minute presentations in Leonard Theater (long class again)

Course evaluations

**April 23-25: Senior Project Conference**

April 30 or May 2: possible meeting of senior class

**[May 4: cir. 7:30 p.m., Kumler, Western's Senior Recognition Ceremony]**

**[May 5: 10 a.m., Yaeger Stadium, Miami Commencement]**

LINKS TO OTHER COURSE MATERIALS:

- [Annotated Bibliography and Literature Review](#)
- [Senior Project Conference](#)
- [Advisor's Evaluation of Senior Projects](#)

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