Academic Development Seminar: Research Methods (Part 1)

Video prepared by
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Topics of discussion in Part 1:

- Marking system at Queen’s College
- Analysis, Reflection, Research papers
- Researcher / Audience roles
- Gathering sources
- Creating a template for taking notes / categorizing your notes
Marking System at Queen’s College:

A+ 90-100  Exceptional. Evidence of original thought; material entirely relevant; critical analysis; critical and comprehensive account of material; hypotheses plausibly and clearly presented and defended; mastering of pertinent and appropriate issues as pertaining to the various disciplines, impeccable style, referencing and presentation.

A 85-89 Outstanding. Concise and precise account of the issues; critical and careful analysis; hypotheses plausibly and clearly presented and defended; firm grasp of pertinent and appropriate issues as pertaining to the various disciplines. Improvements: more precision in argumentation and more attention to fine detail and nuance.

A- 80-84 Excellent. Accurate account of issues; careful analysis; critical reasoning in evidence; good grasp of pertinent and appropriate issues as pertaining to the various disciplines. Improvements: more concise or precise discussion of issues; more attention to detail; better use of arguments.

B+ 77-79 Superior. Generally accurate account of issues; good analysis; some critical reasoning in evidence. Improvements: a more concise or precise discussion of issues; more attention to detail; better use of arguments.

B 74-76 Very Good. Generally accurate account of issues and details; acceptable analysis with some critical reasoning in evidence. Improvements: more concise or precise discussion of issues; more attention to detail; better use of arguments.

B- 70-73 Good. Generally accurate description of the data and an adequate grasp of the critical issues involved. Improvements: more attention of detail, greater precision of argumentation, better use of critical data.

C+ 67-69 Fair. Generally acceptable treatment of the data; some grasp of the issues, but imprecise or unclear at points; some evidence of critical reflection on issues and data. Improvements: clarity in expression; better use of critical data; greater attention to detail.

C 64-66 Adequate. Generally acceptable treatment of the data and issues, but impressionistic and vague at points; lack of clarity in the elucidation of arguments; little or no evidence of critical reflection on the issues or data. Improvements: clarity in expression; better use of critical data; greater attention to detail.

C- 62-63 Minimally Acceptable. Adequate treatment of the data and issues, but imprecise, impressionistic or vague; serious lack of clarity in the expression of issues; no evidence of critical thinking on the issues or data. Improvements: evidence of critical thinking; clarity in expression; better use of critical data; greater attention to detail.

D 60-61 Inadequate. Sloppy, imprecise or careless discussion of the issues with little or no evidence of critical thinking. Improvements: more discussion of the issues; evidence of critical thinking; clarity in expression; better use of critical data; greater attention to detail.

F 59 and below Failure. Does not meet the minimum requirements.
Types of Writing Assignments:

- Analysis Papers
- Reflection Papers
- Research Papers

What’s the difference between them?
Types of Writing Assignments:

❖ Analysis Papers

➔ from Greek *ana-* (up, back, throughout) + *lysis* (a loosening) 
< *lyein* (to unfasten) < IE root *leu-* (to loosen, divide, cut apart)

➔ closely reading / engaging with a text or body of writing with 
the goal of coming to understand / elucidate an author’s meaning

➔ involves exegesis / critical thinking

➔ outside sources may or may not be required
Types of Writing Assignments:

- Reflection Papers

→ involves reflection upon a text/topic with questions in mind:

- What specifically does this mean to me as it is described by the writer?
- What do I agree/disagree with?
- Why do I think/feel this way?
- What does it present that I have never considered before?
- What does it resolve for me?
- What questions does it raise for me?
- What does it leave out or what does it not address?
- What do other writers/sources have to say about this topic/issue/viewpoint?
Types of Writing Assignments:

- Research Papers

  ➔ will usually also involve a significant dimension of analysis

  ➔ generally involves in-depth exploration of a topic making use of a variety of sources

  ➔ to be elaborated in the remainder of these videos
What is Research?

Who is a Researcher?

- Kinds of questions
- Audience roles
- Researcher roles
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Researcher roles</th>
<th>Audience roles</th>
<th>Research Questions</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I’ve found some new and / or interesting information about X</td>
<td>Entertain me with this new and / or interesting information</td>
<td>What is new and / or interesting about X?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve found an answer to an important question / I can help you to understand something better</td>
<td>Help me to understand something better</td>
<td>How should we think about / understand X?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve found a solution to an important practical problem</td>
<td>Help me to solve my practical problem</td>
<td>What should we do about X?</td>
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Research is…

The gathering of information…
(a set of shared / sharable facts)

- to entertain
- to answer a question / help one to understand
- to solve a problem
Example:

Snake-handling Christian sects of the Appalachian Mountains

- Who are they?
- What do they do? / How do they do it?
- What happens in a snake-handling service?
- Why do they do it?
- How does the practice deepen their experience of community?
- How are they depicted by others / the media?
- How many snake-handlers get hurt / die?
- Are they doing it willingly / Are they of age?
- Where do they get the snakes? / How are the snakes kept?
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Gathering one’s Sources

What kind(s) of source material am I looking for?

How can I find the sources that I am looking for?

- dictionaries / encyclopedias / MUN reference
- MUN online databases
- Web sources
- Wikipedia?

MUN Library
Create a template for note-taking!
Avoid inadvertent plagiarism!!!
Categorizing your notes:

- sources supporting your argument / hypothesis
- sources undermining / contradicting your argument
- sources providing historical background of your topic in previous scholarship
- sources discussing the context for your topic’s importance today
- sources establishing key definitions / technical terms / principles for the discussion of the topic
Up next in Part 2: The writing begins....

- Planning your draft
- Engaging your sources creatively
- Avoiding plagiarism
- Quoting / summarizing / paraphrasing
- Strategies for working through blocks