ENG 208: Composing Research

Fall 2026 | Tuesdays & Thursdays 9:30–10:45am

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INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

- Dr. Allison Hitt—call me Dr. Allison!
- Associate Professor of English
- ahhitt@bsu.edu
- Check "Contacting Dr. Allison" on Canvas for office hours information

COURSE DESCRIPTION

from the BSU Course Catalog

Applies principles of diverse rhetorical traditions to research processes, including understanding audience, purpose, and genre in disciplinary contexts; ethics and methods of research; the varieties of researched, multimodal writing; and planning and executing a research project. Prerequisites: ENG 103 or appropriate placement

from Dr. Allison

Being a good researcher involves developing critical reading and thinking skills, listening to and evaluating multiple perspectives, and making choices about how to communicate to different audiences. We research *not* to prove a point but to understand what we don't know and contribute to larger conversations.

In ENG 208, you will learn about academic research and writing. More specifically, you will learn about ethical research and writing practices, as well as engage in a long-term research project on a topic of your own choosing. Throughout the semester, I will encourage you to reflect on academic research broadly, as well as your own personal research goals and processes:

- What do you already know about academic research and writing?

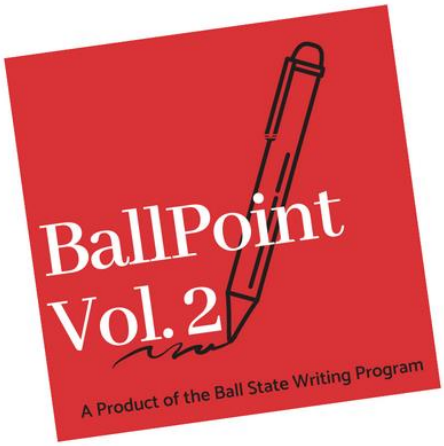
- How do you conduct ethical primary and secondary research?
- What research or writing skills will help you in your major or future career path?

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Demonstrate proficiency in reading, evaluating, analyzing, and using material collected from electronic sources (such as visual, electronic, library databases, Internet sources, other official databases, federal government databases, reputable blogs, wikis, etc.)
- Plan, develop, and complete individual research projects that include generating a research question; finding, evaluating, and documenting relevant sources; analyzing and synthesizing researched information
- Demonstrate cultural and disciplinary awareness of issues of audience, purpose, and conventions (including genre, grammar, format, and citation)
- Understand principles of relevant, effective, and ethical primary and secondary research
- Draft and revise research-based writing in multiple, disciplinary and multimodal (where appropriate) formats, including a research report or paper using relevant research to support an organized argument that addresses a research question

REQUIRED MATERIALS

The only textbook is *BallPoint*, which you pay for through tuition. **Bookmark this link: digitalresearch.bsu.edu/ballpoint2/**



You can access additional readings through Canvas, which you will use regularly to submit work and access class materials. You need to be able to access readings for class discussions. If you prefer reading and taking notes on physical copies, you can print up to 600 pages a semester at no cost through PaperCut (formerly PrintSmart).

ASSIGNMENTS

Major Projects

Project 1 Proposal and Annotated Bibliography (200 points)

Before writing your research essay, you will write a proposal that introduces your topic and its significance, plan for conducting primary research, and initial secondary research. At the end of the proposal, you will include an annotated bibliography of five sources, four of which must be peer-reviewed. Finally, you will write a brief reflection

detailing the process of working on this project. Deliverables: 1,200–1,500-word proposal (4–5 pages), 5-source annotated bibliography, 300-word reflection. **Due 10/1**

Project 2 Research Essay (200 points)

Building on Project 1, you will find secondary sources that offer different perspectives on your chosen topic and conduct primary research, i.e., interview, survey, observation, or archival research. You will use this research to compose a well-evidenced argument essay that follows the IMRD format (Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion). You will also write a brief reflection about composing this essay. Deliverables: 2,500–3,000-word essay (8–10 pages), 300-word reflection. **Due 11/12**

Project 3 Multimodal Research Reflection (100 points)

For the final project, you will engage in low-stakes primary research, drawing on your project reflections and research journal entries to reflect on what you've learned about academic research this semester. You will create a multimodal text—such as a captioned video, physical or digital zine, tri-fold poster, or podcast episode—as well as write a brief reflection on the rhetorical choices you made for your multimodal text. Deliverables: multimodal text, 300-word reflection. **Due 12/11**

Process Work

Drafts & Peer Review (100 points)

You will submit drafts of the three major projects, as well as an introduction and thesis statement for Project 2, to receive feedback from both me and your peers. If you follow the guidelines on Canvas and submit drafts (3 x 20 pts) and complete peer review (4 x 10 pts) on time, you receive full credit.

Homework & Reading Quizzes (100 points)

To prepare you for major assignments, I will ask you to engage in a range of low-stakes homework assignments (worth 5–10 pts each) and discussion board posts (5 pts). If you submit this work on time and follow the guidelines on Canvas, you will receive full credit. You will also occasionally take reading quizzes throughout the semester (5 pts). These are indicated in the course calendar below. Reading quizzes are not available until the start of class, and they close at the end of the day (11:59pm).

Collaborative Notetaking (50 points)

Twice throughout the semester, you will take class notes and/or reading notes and post them to their respective Google Docs (2 x 25 pts).

Writing Journal (50 points)

Throughout the semester, you will keep a journal that documents your writing and research processes: what's going well, what challenges you're facing, what you're learning, etc. Your journal entries will become primary source material for Project 3. You need to complete 10 entries (worth 5 pts each) by the end of the semester. **Due 12/3**

EVALUATION CRITERIA

All major projects will be accompanied by a detailed assignment sheet with guidelines and evaluation criteria on Canvas. All process work (drafts, peer feedback, homework, and notetaking) will be evaluated as complete/incomplete, excluding reading quizzes. Your grade in this class will be calculated according to the grading scale below.

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
93–100%	90–92%	87–89%	83–86%	80–82%	77–79%	73–76%	70–72%	67–69%	63–66%	60–62%	59% & below
744–800	720–743	696–719	664–695	640–663	616–639	584–615	560–583	536–559	504–535	480–503	479 & below

In order to fulfill the University's Core Curriculum requirement in Writing Program courses, students must earn a minimum grade of C- to pass; a grade of D+ is not considered acceptable.

DR. ALLISON'S EXPECTATIONS & COURSE POLICIES

Accessibility

I am committed to creating a classroom environment that is respectful of and inclusive to different learning and writing processes—whether that is in person or through Canvas. All the materials I share will be made accessible: videos will be captioned, audio will have transcripts, and images will be described. If we can work together to make the class more accessible, let me know.

When you share and compose media for this course, I ask that you be mindful of accessibility and include alt text, captions, and/or a transcript if appropriate.

Attendance

Writing is a social process, and I invite you to take part in this process by regularly attending class and completing in-class work. We will spend class time discussing readings, working on major projects, and collaborating. Although you will not be penalized for missing a few classes, **anyone who misses three weeks of class (6 classes) without communicating with me cannot pass this course.** If you miss more than five weeks of class total, regardless of whether you let me know about those absences, you cannot pass this class.

You do not need to disclose personal information if you need to miss class. A short email prior to class (when possible) is totally sufficient, e.g., "Hello Dr. Allison, I'm unable to attend class this morning, but I will check the class notes and contact you if I have questions about the homework for next class. Thank you!"

Email

I expect you to check your email regularly during the work week and respond to messages, just as you will expect me to do. **All emails regarding this class should include an informative subject line, address me by name, and be respectful and professional.** I prefer email to Canvas inbox messages, but I check both. If you have a complex question or need help beyond 1–2 simple email exchanges, please stop by office hours instead!

Feedback

I will provide written feedback on all your major project submissions, drafts, and homework assignments. I try to return major projects within 1–2 weeks of submission. If you request an extension, you will receive feedback but not within the same timeframe because late work falls to the bottom of my grading pile.

You will also receive feedback from your peers throughout the semester. If you would like additional feedback throughout any of the projects, I encourage you to stop by my office hours or make an appointment at the Writing Center.

Late Work

Assignments are due by the time specified on Canvas. However, there's a good chance that at some point throughout the semester, you will need some extra help or time. **You can request a one-week extension by emailing me before the deadline.** You don't need to disclose a reason—just send a polite email letting me know, e.g., "Hello Dr. Allison, I'm using an extension on the homework due tomorrow. Thank you!" If you need longer than a week to complete an assignment, please email me so we can work together to determine an appropriate deadline.

Extensions do not apply to reading quizzes or Project 3.

Plagiarism, AI, & Academic Integrity

You will be held to Ball State's standards of academic integrity, which can be accessed in the Student Handbook under "Student Academic Ethics Policy." You will be asked to document any sources you use for major projects.

The goal of this class is to finetune your critical reading, writing, and thinking skills. There are situations where I believe generative AI (GenAI) tools can help you as writers. However, GenAI is most useful when you already possess critical research and writing skills and can assess for yourself the truth and effectiveness of AI-generated writing.

If you use GenAI to write discussion board posts or peer feedback, extend the word count of an assignment, fabricate primary research, or summarize readings, *you are no longer doing the work of this class.* Asking for help is always encouraged. However, I strongly discourage asking anyone, AI included, to do your work *for you*.

You are welcome to consult your notes for reading quizzes. Using GenAI for quizzes is cheating, no exceptions. If you are caught cheating on a quiz, you will receive a zero.

If you have questions about plagiarism, source citation, or AI use, please ask me.

Privacy

Everyone deserves a safe space to learn, ask questions, and make mistakes. I ask that you respect each other's privacy by not sharing your peers' writing outside of class, recording or taking photos of your peers with cell phones or AI glasses, or submitting your peers' work to AI tools. Feeding someone's work to an AI tool without their permission in order to summarize that work or generate feedback is disrespectful and a serious violation of privacy, and you will be given a zero on peer feedback if you do this.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Disability Accommodations

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please contact the instructor of record as soon as possible. Ball State's Disability Services Office coordinates services for students with disabilities; documentation of a disability needs to be on file in that office before any accommodations can be provided. Disability Services can be contacted at 765-285-5293 or dsd@bsu.edu.

Freedom of Expression

In this course, we are committed to fostering a learning environment that values intellectual diversity, encourages free expression, and promotes open inquiry. As members of the Ball State community, we treat each person with civility, courtesy, compassion, and dignity and respect and learn from differences in people, ideas, and opinions. Please review Ball State's Statement on Freedom of Expression, the Freedom of Expression website, and the Beneficence Pledge.

University Statement

We are committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome, through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse.