

CAP Research Seminar Syllabus

Ignorance, the root and the stem of every evil. –*Plato*

You cannot teach a man anything; you can only help him find it within himself. –*Galileo*

I know nothing except the fact of my ignorance. –*Socrates*

Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it is time to pause and reflect. –*Mark Twain*

The only thing that is constant is change. –*Heraclitus*

Welcome to an exciting semester of CAP Research Seminar!!! Since I started teaching this course over a decade ago, dramatic changes have occurred in many areas of human existence—changes in our values, behaviors, organizations, institutions, relationships and consciousness itself. And yet, *the more things changed, the more they have stayed the same*. We find ourselves still confounded by problems that have existed for centuries. CAP Research, like the rest of us, finds itself in the middle of this paradox. This class has undergone many changes in the last decade, and there are more in store this year. But while the means and activities may change, the intended ends mostly remain the same. They won't all be apparent to you immediately, and each of you will hopefully come away from the course with many more ends that are specific to your interests and goals.

Whatever changes we make, we will continue to explore what it means to *know stuff*. Research helps us *know stuff*. Our first task this semester will be to develop good **intellectual habits of mind**. *What steps and processes are necessary to arrive at knowledge?* We will put these intellectual habits to work exploring various topics in order to help you develop your own **conceptual framework**. *What do you understand about these issues and how can you connect that knowledge into a coherent system?* **Research** will present throughout the course—sometimes at the forefront as we explore research methodology directly.

To support our research this semester, we will employ three elements that are essential to our pursuit of knowledge. We begin with **Questions**. *Only Questions* can guide our learning. Little of value is ever learned *and retained* by students without a curiosity that burns from within. The research process begins with a good question.

Once we have settled on a body of Questions to explore, there must be some mechanism through which we seek answers. Besides research, another process we will use to answer our questions is **Dialogue**. We are social beings. And thus we construct knowledge socially. Much of our class time will be spent in Dialogue. Dialogue is critical to truly understanding perspectives and ideas.

The last element of greatest importance to our work this semester is **Reflection**. While Dialogue is primarily a social endeavor, Reflection is a personal one. Reflection is the process of identifying and analyzing the source of our beliefs. We may derive and reflect on new ideas to see how they fit within our conceptual framework. Reflection helps us define our purpose. And through Reflection, we construct our collective and individual identities.

Course Material

I. Foundations of Knowledge and Habits of Mind

Epistemology, Skepticism, Inquiry, Conceptual Thinking, Intellectual Traits

II. Research Methodology and Skills

Foundations of Research, Research Design, Sourcing, Ethics, Literature Analysis and Review

III. “21st Century” and Career Skills

Collaboration, Self-direction, Communication, Information Literacy, Leadership, Project Management

IV. Organic and important topics

Education, College, Technology, Inequality, Media, Culture, Government, Economics...

Grading System:

Your grade will be based on total points. There are no categories. Assignments and activities that will require greater time and effort will be worth more than assignments that take less time and effort. *Focus on the learning and the grade will take care of itself.*

Make-up work, Late work, and Re-assessment Policy:

- A. Make-up work (absence)—To find out what assignments were missed during a legal absence, check EDLINE first. If questions still exist, consult the teacher and other classmates. You will be granted a reasonable amount of time to make up missed work.
- B. Late Work—All work is expected to be turned in on the assigned due date. The deadline for turning in late work is two class periods (48 hours) after the original due date. Work submitted after the due date will have a 10% deduction in total points. No work will be accepted for a grade after the two-class-period deadline.
- C. Re-assessed work—Only assignments completed and submitted by the due date will be available for re-assessment. Students will be told in advance which assignments are available for re-assessment.

Students, I care deeply about your success in this class and will do everything in my power to enable you to be successful. I will make myself available to you after school and during lunch by appointment. Make plans to get help before it's too late. You may also contact me by email at-- shindelk@mbhs.edu

Research is an ORGANIZED and SYSTEMATIC way of FINDING ANSWERS to QUESTIONS.

SYSTEMATIC because there is a definite set of procedures and steps which you will follow. There are certain things in the research process which are always done in order to get the most accurate results.

ORGANIZED in that there is a structure or method in going about doing research. It is a planned procedure, not a spontaneous one. It is focused and limited to a specific scope.

FINDING ANSWERS is the end of all research. Whether it is the answer to a hypothesis or even a simple question, research is successful when we find answers. Sometimes the answer is no, but it is still an answer.

QUESTIONS are central to research. If there is no question, then the answer is of no use. Research is focused on relevant, useful, and important questions. Without a question, research has no focus, drive, or purpose.