New York University
School of Education

Philosophical Inquiry
E10.2136
Fall 2001

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OVERVIEW OF COURSE

The purpose of this course is to help you conceptualize your dissertation or other scholarly research by identifying the concepts, reflecting on the logic, and building arguments that support your work. The course consists of a series of presentations on the course topics, which I will make (I), and one or more presentations by individual students (II) on the relation between the week's topic and your research. You are required to write on each topic each week (see the description below). Student participation is a key feature of this course.

September 10: Introduction on Purpose and Structure of the Course,
          (I), Research as Narrative

September 17: (II), Research as Narrative
          (I), Research as Problem

September 24: (II), Research as Problem
          (I), The Value of Research

October 1: (II), The Value of Research
          (I), Critiquing the Cannon

October 8: (II), Critiquing the Cannon
          (I), Organizing through Conceptual Maps

October 15: (II), Organizing through Conceptual Maps
          (I), The Meanings of Theory

October 22: (II), The Meanings of Theory
          (I), Method and Methodology

October 29: (II), Method and Methodology
          (I), Building Argument

November 5: (II), Building Argument
          (I), The Issue of Evidence
November 12: (II), The Issue of Evidence  
(I), Analogies, Images, and Narratives

November 19: (II), Analogies, Images, and Narratives  
(I), The Ethics of Research

November 26: (II), The Ethics of Research  
(I), The Politics of Research

December 3: (II), The Politics of Research  
(I), Summing Up: Collected Statements and Summary due

December 10: Final Class Meeting: Course Evaluation and Writing Returned

Writing for the Course

The heart of this course is the weekly writing in which you reflect on your particular research project in the light of the presentation I have made in the second half of the previous class. You may write at length on any topic, but I am asking you to hand in only two pages on each topic.* This means that each statement will have to be very clear and concise. I know that this is difficult work, but it is also at the heart of conceptualizing your research.

If you are making a presentation, please make enough copies of your statement to distribute to everyone in the class. Whether or not you make the presentation, I will read your statement and return it to you with my responses at the next class meeting. You can rewrite any of your statements and resubmit them (with the original on which I have made comments, please). At the end of the semester I will ask you to resubmit your collected statements plus a summary statement, assessing your progress in conceptualizing your research. This writing is due on December 3, and I will return it with additional feedback at the final class meeting. Remember that there is a six month limit on incompletes.

* please use normal-sized, double-spaced, ordinary print.