Lewis-Clark State College
Course Syllabus
Social Science 499: Senior Research
Fall 2006

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Overview

This is the senior "capstone" course for the social sciences. Students will be asked to research and write a scholarly social science paper and to present the paper to an audience. The paper and presentation should reflect the culmination of what the students have learned in their previous courses, and should be of a quality that is close to graduate level work.

Purposes/Goals

The purposes and goals of the course include the following

- conduct social science research
- think analytically about social phenomena
- understand and apply social science theories, concepts, and categories
- read and analyze works dealing with social science issues
- write a clear, concise, and organized paper
- give a clear, concise, and organized oral presentation
- demonstrate knowledge of one or more of the social sciences
- understand and evaluate qualitative and quantitative evidence related to social issues

Class Format

We will sometimes meet as a full class, and may meet with a research librarian. However, most of our interaction will be weekly one-on-one to discuss individual progress on the research project. There will also be a meeting during which the students will present their research to the class and other students, staff, faculty, and interested persons.

Book

Bruce Ballenger, *The Curious Researcher*, 5th ed. (New York: Pearson, 2007).

Assignments

The assignments for the course are worth a total of 600 points and are explained below.

<u>The Research Paper</u>

The primary basis of evaluation for the course will be a research paper that examines a social science topic. It will be worth 350 points; point values for the various components of the paper are listed below. The paper should be scholarly in nature; that is, it should be based a systematic investigation and based on evidence. The basic format of the paper should be as follows. (Please note that some of this material is taken from Alan G. Marshall's "Research Papers: The Quick Version," which is attached to the syllabus.)

- Begin with an introduction in which you explain the topic you researched and explain how it is important. In other words, tell to your readers what you researched and explain why they should care about what you researched. It is generally best to assume that your readers are reasonably intelligent but are NOT familiar with your topic. 30 pts.

- Next, state what you think about the topic. In other words, provide a thesis statement – that is, your main point, what you are trying to prove, and the most important thing you want your reader to understand. A thesis should not be something that is obvious or generally accepted (example: "Friends are good to have"). A good thesis statement will also help you with your research and writing. The information in your paper should work to show that your thesis statement is correct. Hence, if you have decided upon your thesis, that will help you to decide what information is relevant for your work, and what information you can disregard. Sometimes you will have to change your thesis as you gather more information. 20 pts.

- Follow your thesis with a literature review. The literature review identifies the important books and articles on your topic and summarizes and analyzes what they say or do not say. For example, perhaps some aspects of your topics have not been thoroughly covered by other authors. This will help demonstrate that you understand your topic and that your viewpoint should be taken seriously. 50 pts.

- After your literature review, provide a clear, logical discussion and analysis of the facts supporting your position. This is the "body" of your paper. 100 pts.

- Then, offer your conclusions. Your conclusions section should NOT introduce new information or ideas. Rather, it should remind the readers of your thesis and highlight key pieces of evidence from your body. 30 pts.

- Finally, provide a list of all references cited by you in the paper. This is the "works cited" section. It should included at least **fifteen** separate sources and conform with the standards of one of the Social Sciences Style Guides – American Psychological Association (APA), American Political Science Association (APSA), Chicago/Turabian, etc. You may also use the Modern Language Association (MLA). Guidebooks on various citation styles may be purchased online or checked out of the library. 30 pts.

  MLA and APA styles are summarized in the Ballenger book. Abbreviated versions of APA, APSA, and Turabian/Chicago may be accessed online via the University of Wisconsin Writing Center's website: http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/Documentation.html

Additional requirements for the paper:

- You must correctly **cite your sources** throughout the paper. You must cite whenever you use ideas and information from other sources, even if you put those ideas and/or that information into your own words. Your citations must conform to one of the standard citation formats in the Social Sciences. These include but are not limited to the American Psychological Association (APA), American Political Science Association (APSA), and Chicago/Turabian. You may also use the Modern Language Association (MLA). Guidebooks on the various citation styles may be purchased online or checked out of the library. 50 pts.

  MLA and APA styles are summarized in the Ballenger book. Abbreviated versions of APA, APSA, and Turabian/Chicago may be accessed online via the University of Wisconsin Writing Center's website: http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/Documentation.html

- Your paper should be at least 30 pages in length, typed in 10-12 point font, and double-spaced. 20 pts.

- Your paper should have page numbers. 10 pts.

- Your paper should have a title page. 10 pts.

Any paper that does not conform to all of the above standards may receive a failing grade.

The Topic Proposal

The topic proposal should be about a paragraph. Your topic should be broad enough to write a whole paper on but focused enough so that you will not be overwhelmed. Try to pick something that interests you. Chapter 1 of the Ballenger book should help you select and narrow your topic. The topic proposal will be worth 30 points and should state (1) your topic; (2) one or more questions you wish to answer; (3) why you picked the topic.

Progress Reports

Students will be asked to submit "progress reports" each week. These "reports" can take many forms – a list of relevant books and/or articles, notes on sources, partial drafts of the paper, and the like. The professor and student will work together to decide what will constitute an appropriate "progress report." However, in case of a dispute, the professor has the final say. The reports will be worth a total of 120 points.

The Presentation

Each student will make a formal oral presentation to the class and other Social Sciences faculty and students who wish to attend. Each presenter should be prepared to answer questions from the audience. The presentation should be approximately fifteen minutes in length. Students must give a presentation in order to pass the class. The presentation is valued at 100 points. It should NOT be read.

Academic Dishonesty

Class policy is the same as that of the college. As explained in the LCSC Student Handbook: Code of Conduct:
http://www.lcsc.edu/studentservices/SHBcodeofconduct.htm

Cheating or plagiarism in any form is unacceptable. The College functions to promote the cognitive and psychosocial development of all students. Therefore, all work submitted by a student must represent his/her own ideas, concepts and current understanding.
Academic Dishonesty includes:

a) Cheating—intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. The term "academic exercise" includes all forms of work submitted for credit hours.

b) Fabrication—intentional and/or unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or the source of any information in an academic exercise.

c) Collusion facilitating academic dishonesty—intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of Academic Dishonesty.

d) Plagiarism—the deliberate adoption or reproduction of ideas or words or statement of another person as one's own without acknowledgment.

Anyone found in any of the above activities or related activities will fail the course, and/or may be subject to additional sanctions imposed by the college.

Special Accommodations

Students with a documented need for special accommodations should please consult with me as soon as possible.

Class Schedule

Aug 29: Class Meeting
Introduction
Picking and Narrowing the Topic
Readings: Ballenger, chap. 1

Sept 5: Class Meeting
Research Strategies and Tactics
Readings: Ballenger, chap. 2
Topic Proposal Due

Sept 11: Class Meeting
Researching
Readings: Ballenger, chap. 3
Progress Report Due

Sept 18: Individual Meetings
Progress Report Due

Sept 25: Individual Meetings
Progress Report Due

Oct 2: Individual Meetings
Progress Report Due

Oct 9: Individual Meetings
Progress Report Due

Oct 16: Individual Meetings
Progress Report Due

Oct 23: Individual Meetings
Paper Draft Due

Oct 30: Individual Meetings
Feedback on Paper Draft

Nov 6: Individual Meetings
Progress Report Due

Nov 13: Class Meeting
Presentations Due

Nov 20-24: Thanksgiving Break

Nov 27: Individual Meetings
Progress Report Due

Dec 4: Individual Meetings
Final Paper Due

Dec 11: Individual Meetings (If Needed)

Research Papers: The Quick Version
By Dr. Alan G. Marshall

http://www.lcsc.edu/amarshal/research/index.htm

So, you've been assigned a paper. Even though I'm a professor (perhaps you're in one of my classes), I know exactly how you may feel. "Gee, not another one! I don't want to do this! These are so boring. What do I do now? I don't have enough time!" But there is no escape; the assignment must be done. The alternatives are not really acceptable.

The important thing is that you are already doing the right thing by asking the right questions!

You have questions. How can I make the assignment bearable, perhaps even interesting and desirable? What does the professor want? How do I do a "research" paper? How can you fit it into your schedule? How can I get a good grade? How can I use it in another course?

You need answers, NOW! The following are some steps and guidelines that help me to deal with "another" paper. From noting down passing ideas to proofreading the final report, each involves writing and talking. Above all, research is about communicating clearly…

What is doing research?

Research, at its simplest, is what we often do in daily life: finding out as much as we can about an interesting topic from others and forming our "own opinion."

But in daily life we usually do this with friends, that is, people who have the same opinion as we do. Out of politeness and love we rarely test their opinions by questioning their motives, their values, the correctness of their reasoning, or the accuracy of their information. It would be like questioning our own motives, values, reasoning, and information.

Similarly, we avoid asking those we don't like about the basis of their opinions. Often, we simply reject them out of hand for purely emotional, not rational, reasons.

In short, we rarely ask others, or ourselves, "Why should I believe you?"

But this is exactly what researchers do!

"Doing research" is putting your opinion to the test. This process can be exhilarating or uncomfortable, fascinating or boring. Consequently our minds play tricks on us. We magnify the importance of what we agree with. We minimize the significance of what we do not agree with. We forget inconvenient facts and unintentionally manufacture convenient ones. Researchers must discipline themselves to avoid these pitfalls to accurate understanding.

The discipline of good researchers is keeping copious notes about what they read and think. These notes remind us of what facts we have "forgotten," of our motives and values, and the validity of our reasoning. This process often requires researchers to change, clarify, or refine their opinions, sometimes radically, as they do their research.

Researchers believe that the discomfort of research is worthwhile because the best opinions to guide our actions are based on the most accurate information, logical thinking, and well-examined values and motives.

What is "writing a report?"

A research paper is a refined report of the notes taken during the messy research process. Through it you do the following things:

* You introduce the reader the topic you researched by showing how it is important, significant, and timely. In other words, tell readers why they should care about the topic.
* You state what you think about the topic. That is, you provide the reader with your theme (the "point" of the paper) or thesis (i.e., claim/opinion/position statement).
* You provide a literature review showing the range of opinions about the topic and their various strengths and weaknesses. By doing this you also convince the reader that you know enough about the topic to have a worthwhile opinion about it.
* You provide a logical discussion of the facts supporting your position while showing how and why other opinions are incorrect. This convinces the reader that you are "thinking straight" about the topic.
* You finally outline your conclusions.
* Lastly, you provide a list of all references cited by you in the paper.

In short, you convince your readers that they should believe you.

You may want to use the above list as a broad outline of your research paper. However, there are other ways of organizing a paper. Remember, though, that all the items on that

list must be covered to show that you have a well-thought out opinion on any subject.

Being Ready to Do Research

Be ready to keep your "stuff" organized; we all waste a lot of time searching for items that we've mislaid. Get a cardboard box/file folder/plastic bag/drawer, whatever, to put all your "stuff" in. The "stuff" (depending on the size of the project) will be:

* file cards (3x5", 4x6", or 5x8", depending on your taste and method)
* notebooks or note paper and a folder or binder
* dictionary, thesaurus, and an English handbook.

You may also want books such as "The Elements of Style" by William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White, "Writing Without Teachers" by Peter Elbow, or "Writing Down the Bones" by Natalie Goldberg; the reason that these books are still in print and constantly updated is that tens of thousands of writers find them useful.

The following is what you will have written on "the stuff:"

(1) reference lists,
(2) reading notes,
(3) ideas you've jotted down,
(4) pages upon which you have organized your thoughts,
(5) rough drafts of various parts of your paper.

By the way, even though we're discussing a writing project, this also works for many others. This approach is the same thing as "storyboarding" in the visual media world. Children call it "play-acting."

Why Am I Doing This Project?

This is the most difficult question that any student faces, and it also is the most important. The practical effect of answering this question is this: once you answer it satisfactorily, the project becomes much easier to start, to work on, and to complete.

Some of the reasons you might want to consider include general educational goals -- learning how to do a project; becoming a better researcher or writer; or learning more about a subject. To make the "stuff" palatable, try to relate it to your major or something else significant in your life. Check out "finding an interesting topic".

Many books have been written about planning and working on projects. The most popular recent ones are by Stephen Covey. Less popular ones include the English handbook that you bought for English 101! Use it -- it is probably better than any more commercial one.

The reason that Covey's books and others are best-sellers is this: hundreds of thousands of people face the same problem of starting and finishing projects, just as you probably do.

Many of these books have the same advice. Start by spending time writing a "letter" to yourself about why you are doing this project, i.e., what do you want to get out of the work? This is useful later on; in fact, writing a letter assessing how well you are getting where you want to be at mid-semester is a good idea, as is a summary letter at the end of the project.

What is Research?

research, n. [M.F. recerche (M.F. recherche).] 1. Careful or diligent search; a close searching; as, researches after hidden treasure.
2. Studious inquiry or examination; specif. and usually critical and exhaustive investigation or experimentation having for its aim the discovery of new facts and their correct interpretation, the revision of accepted conclusions, theories, or laws, in the light of newly discovered facts, or the practical applications of such new or revised conclusions, etc.; also, a particular investigation of such a character, or a book, article, or the like, presenting the investigator's discoveries; as, to give one's full time to research; Pasteur's researches in disease prevention.
3. Capacity for, or inclination to, research; as, a scholar of great research.

You've probably heard about the difference between primary source and secondary source research. Sometimes people think that one is more important than the other. This thought is far from correct. Secondary source research is fundamental to doing primary research.

Secondary source research simply means that you diligently search after the treasures of knowledge that may be hidden in work already published on the same topic by other people. This must be done because primary source research is very expensive. If it's already done, why repeat it? No student at any level knows everything about a topic, and new work is constantly being done. The point is this: you don't know this material and you want to increase your knowledge.

Primary source research is going directly to the origin of the information or data. For example, reading President Jefferson's original notebooks or Shakespeare's original scripts in order to discover new information is primary research. Another example of primary source research is to talk directly with people (interviews) to get information that is otherwise unavailable. Primary researchers alternatively may carefully devise a set of questions, much like a test, that they distribute to many people (questionnaires), again to get information that is otherwise unavailable.

Finding an Interesting Topic

"But the class is boring!" hmm. Possibly you've made it so. For example, you are required to take a social science course and you want an education or nursing degree. How can a social science course possibly have anything practical to do with healing people or teaching them? What does it have to do your major?

Well, if humans interact with one another they are being social -- this includes teacher-student, nurse-client, student-student, and other relationships. That is, who you are as a social being affects how others react to you and what you "stand for." "You're a man; how can you tell me about..." Why not do a project on how the social characteristics of individuals affect those interactions and their success or failure? Take a speculative adventure!

Remember, the notes that you make now are vital even if they seem "stupid!" Your ideas are "fresh" and you begin to develop your paper's claim/opinion/position statement/theme/thesis.

What is your assignment? (You should realize that your professor has not given you the paper title.) Write notes of what you think of it (even if your reaction is negative). This is your "first thoughts list."

Write down any topic that you can think of in relation to it. Does one strike you as more interesting than another? If yes, then start your research. If not, take the third topic on your list. Take notes on what you think about the topic and put them in your file.

Another technique is to apply what you are learning in a course to a subject that interests you. For example, "What is the social organization of the scientific field of chemistry?" Or, "What is the biology of culture?" Take notes on what you think about the topic and put them in your file.

Don't forget your textbooks as sources of ideas. Take notes and put them in your file.

Encyclopedias may provide ideas, too. Take notes and put them in your file. Oh. You don't want to go to the library? O.k., click here.

Review your notes and refine (i.e., make clearer or narrow down) your topic on paper.

Where's My Opinion?

This is always a problem. With all the note-taking, the quotations, the paraphrases, the data, and so on, where in the heck does a writer get to say what she thinks? This often makes papers boring work. What's the point of vomiting up someone else's stuff?

Research, remember, is this. You start out with your opinion about a person, place, thing,

or event. You review what other people have said or written about the same or similar phenomenon. Then you modify your opinion in response to the others' work. Then you report your findings.

A paper is a report of this research. In its simplest form it has the following outline: (1) in the introduction the author states what her opinion is; (2) in the body the author critically outlines the secondary and primary research (citing as necessary) that led her to that opinion; (3) the conclusion restates the opinion.

P.B. Medawar, a famous philosopher of science, put it this way:

> All advances in . . . understanding, at every level [this means yours, too], begin with a speculative adventure, an imaginative preconception of what might be true -- a preconception which always, and necessarily, goes a little way (sometimes a long way) beyond anything which we have logical or factual authority to believe in. It is the invention of a possible world, or of a tiny fraction of that world. The conjecture is then exposed to criticism to find out whether or not that imagined world is anything like the real one. . . . reasoning is therefore at all levels an interaction between two episodes of thought -- a dialogue between two voices, the one imaginative and the other critical; a dialogue . . . between the possible and the actual, between proposal and disposal, conjecture and criticism, between what might be true and what is in fact the case.

This seems like true education to me.

What Is "the Product"?

The most important "product" is the change in you! Perhaps it is the change in your knowledge, way of thinking, increased self-discipline, self-confidence, or whatever. After all, this is what learning and education is about.

To make such changes, though, you must do something. The most effective way of creating this change is to make a physical product.

"The physical product" of your research is much greater than "the paper" that you hand in at the end of the semester.

It is all of your recorded ideas, thoughts, notes, drafts, and so on. Records are what you need to focus on creating and why keeping notes on everything is so important. Keep them all in one place, i.e., in a "portfolio."

A portfolio represents your investment of time and effort--it is as good as gold. In fact, it is worth more than gold because you can use it again and again. In the next few years of school, and perhaps beyond, you will be able to draw on this "savings account" of knowledge to write other papers or reports…

When you do serious research you will have so many ideas and so much information that you can't deal with them all in the single paper that you wrote for one class. If you've kept a portfolio, you will have saved an idea that you can use in another. Some of the books or articles that you looked at, but couldn't use, will provide information relevant to another paper two or three semesters from now. Some of the reading or talking notes that you took will be germane to another project. So the physical product of your research is the portfolio…

"The paper," on the other hand, is basically a report on all of the ideas, data, and opinions that you considered while arriving at your (usually provisional) opinion backed up by a balanced selection of the notes you took while doing your research. This also should be part of the portfolio along with the comments of the evaluator; don't abandon it!

Hmmm --- Could that set of notes actually produce a different paper? In other words, could you have arrived at a different opinion? This requires further critical thinking and research -- this is what you need to do in another class! And you can do this without redoing all your research, if you've kept a portfolio!

Finding Sources

Once you've found a research area that you can stand, remember that research is all about communication! People are happy to help you! Don't you like to share your knowledge with others? Just make sure that you ask them questions relevant to their expertise. Don't ask them to do your work for you.

This is part of your research, and it involves interviewing others. Here are some general rules about how to do any interview.

Go to the library and talk with a reference librarian to discover how to find information on your topic -- they are specialists at this, don't ignore them. Take notes and put them in your file!

Go talk with your professor!

Talk with other students in your class!

Remember, all these folks are helping you! Thank them when you make an appointment with them, thank them when you meet them, thank them when you stop, and thank them when the project is completed by telling them how the project turned out!

Kinds of Reading Notes

Thousands of researchers have tried various methods of taking notes, and there are dozens of ways to do it. Notes are taken for several different purposes, so they will

take several different forms. The following are basic forms of notes other than the straightforward form of noting a quotation or paraphrase.

rhetorical précis or critical summaries -- These are short descriptions of a book or article; their purpose is to provide a sort of "scrapbook" of your reading. You will scan a large number of works in the process of research; some sources will be completely relevant, some less so. In either case you will forget some of them, or some you will confuse with others, or your memory of them will be distorted.

Rhetorical précis are necessary for you to go back over the ground that you have discovered and "map" it more accurately in other kinds of notes.

charted notes -- These are detailed notes on an article or book which you think is critical to your opinion about at topic. The point of these is to accurately reflect the author's opinion about a subject and the bases for that opinion.

There are several levels of detail in taking charted ` notes, which you can think of as an outline of the work. The most detailed is a paragraph by paragraph description of the work which includes the page number and topic sentence of each paragraph as well as a summary of the reasons or evidence the author uses to support the opinion expressed in the topic sentence. You may want to do a less detailed "charted notes" of a work, say a chapter or two of a book, or a section of a paper or a chapter. In essence these are outlines.

As you may have noticed, a rhetorical précis is the least detailed form of charted notes. The most incomplete form is the quotation or paraphrase. The advantage of charted notes over these is that you know the context.

dialectical notes -- The point of dialectical notes is to record your various reactions to the material -- your agreements and disagreements (and why you agree/disagree); the questions it answers or raises; and what you are reminded of by it. These cannot substitute for charted notes!

Your opinion is developed from these notes! When you ask yourself, "Where is my opinion?" this is where it is. Believe me, you will forget this stuff! So dialectical notes are crucial. Your paper, which, after all, should be about what you think about a topic, why you have that opinion, and what support you have for it.

As with charted notes, there are several levels of detail in taking dialectical notes which range all the way from a paragraph by paragraph reaction to one reacting to the entire work.

When/Where Do I Do the Work?

There is no substitute for a calendar; it can be your best friend or your worst enemy. Get

one; use it; govern your life by it.

My experience is that this is more difficult than it initially appears. We all get "into a rut" in which we go from day-to-day doing the same things over and over again; this is part of life. However, the "rut" always leads to the same place; you have gone to school to go to a different place -- you have new goals.

New goals mean that you have to give up some of your old goals; new goals mean new habits; new goals mean new -- or at least reordered -- values and priorities. If you don't change them, you will learn very little, and your life won't change.

A degree and the schoolwork you must do to earn it are new goals for you. Don't put your degree off by not planning what you have to do step by step.

Anything that takes you out of your rut is easy to forget or to "put on the back-burner." Your calendar is an agenda of behaviors that lead you to your new goals.

No one else can do this for you; not professors nor advisors nor your fellow students.

Don't waste time -- you don't have that much left.

Planning prevents poor performance.

Creating a Report

Research notes make writing reports, essays, or papers much easier than trying to remember information or keeping the original materials. If you don't have pages of comments and opinions developed during research, clarifications of concepts, and descriptions of processes, you haven't been doing your job.

Moreover, you're behind in writing your paper; those dialectical notes are what writing instructors call "brainstorming." Imagine the next paper you write if you do take these "brainstorming" notes. You'll have a whole file of ideas! But, if you don't, you will have forgotten some interesting, even key, ideas and you will have to search for more. These "new" ideas will not be as fresh as the ones you had before. Also you will have to clarify ideas and describe processes by going back over what you've read; in doing so you will be duplicating your own effort. Working from memory produces error, misinterpretation, and outright faulty information.

Not only do you not waste time searching for "stuff" or trying to recall that great idea you had while reading, they make the rest of the "writing process" much easier. Here's how.

First, review your dialectical notes.

Those "dialectical notes" you kept give you a jump start on figuring out what your

theme is for the paper. Many students wonder, "Where are my thoughts?! Writing is so boring -- all I can do is repeat what someone else said." No wonder it seems so easy and sensible to plagiarize ("borrow") someone else's work.

Use these thoughts and ideas for raw material. Refine them into your paper's thesis, or themes for sections of your paper, or topic sentences for your paragraphs. Organize all your notes in accord with your theme(s). The purpose of this is to generate more ideas and opinions, which you should note. Begin to eliminate weaker ideas and opinions; i.e., ideas and themes that cannot be supported through your notes on the literature, interviews, and other sources. Arrange your thoughts and ideas into a logical order. This is a rough outline of your opinion.

This is learning!

Second, go through your "working bibliography," that is, all the rhetorical notes that you think are most relevant to the various parts of your rough outline.

Rearrange your outline, if you must, to reflect your even more refined opinion.

You've learned even more!

Third, go through your notes of quotes and paraphrases, arranging them in the order that you want to use them. Does this match your rough outline? Rearrange the outline and rhetorical notes.

Organize all your notes in accord with your theme(s). The purpose of this effort is to generate more ideas and opinions, which you should note. Begin to eliminate weaker ideas and opinions; i.e., ideas and themes that cannot be supported through your notes on the literature, interviews, and other sources.

Your knowledge is growing and becoming more sophisticated!

Fourth, use your charted notes to clearly explain any complex processes or concepts.

Reorganize! Refine your thesis! Eliminate more weak ideas. Clarify concepts and processes even further. Generate more strong and refined ideas and theses/themes. Do this as often as you can!

Are there sources that don't agree with your interpretations? Good! Why are they mistaken? Take notes justifying your position.

By the end of this process you will have a strong interpretation (i.e., your notes) of your data.

Now you have a rough draft of your opinion. Moreover, it isn't "just your opinion," it is an opinion that has been tested and documented. It shows that you've given serious

thought about the issue.

You are almost done! Just take you interpretation and lay it out; include alternative explanations by others and your critique of them (i.e., your responses) in this layout. (You can do all this physically on the floor if you've used paper!)

Type all this up! You now have a rough draft. Check it for "flow," grammatical and spelling errors. You also may want to make some minor alterations.

Once you've corrected all those superficial errors, make sure that your references cited section is complete. You've got a final rough draft.

Evaluating My Own and Others' Work

The most important evaluation of your work is done by you!

If you have "cut corners" or cheated in any way, you will take little pride in your paper. Worse, you will not feel confident that you can really do any research in the future, like when you have a job. Because, in fact, what you will become is a better cheater and liar. If you want to take pride in that, everyone has to wonder about you. Plus, you run the steadily increasing risk of being discovered. At this school, that means at least failing the assignment; at most, you can be expelled from school.

If you have done your best, then you should take great pride in it, even if your professor or supervisor rates it as average. After all, many circumstances affect how well you work; illness (yours or in your family), the demands of a second job (or working while going to school), and so on. Just be sure that these are valid reasons. And make sure that your professor or supervisor knows what they are. Remember that those reasons will rarely excuse you from the demands of school or work. See " The Real Rules of Life."

Now, let's turn to your paper. Here's a list of what readers look for:

* Format -- Does the final copy follow the formatting instructions in the syllabus?--In order to check this, reread the assignment.
* Punctuation, spelling, capitalization, etc. -- Do these conform with standard rules of written English? In order to check this, use an English writing handbook, such as the ones used in the English composition classes.
* Word use -- Are words used with appropriate meaning? -- In order to check this, use your dictionary and thesaurus.
* Introductory paragraph/section -- Does this paragraph/ section state the purpose of the essay ("thesis" or "subject") and "outline" the topics to be covered in subsequent paragraphs?
* Paragraph/section formation -- Does each paragraph or section have a clear topic sentence relevant to the essay's thesis? A clear explanation of the topic sentence? Or, a clearly relevant example, when appropriate? In other words, is the content of the

paragraph relevant and clear?

* Paragraph sequencing -- Does the topic of each paragraph or section follow from the previous paragraph or from a clear transitional paragraph (i.e., a paragraph introducing an extended discussion of a topic different from the preceding one)? Does the placement of each paragraph clearly reflect the relative significance of its topic?

* Concluding paragraph/section -- Does the final paragraph remind the reader of the essay's purpose and "outline?"

* "Voice" -- Does the essay read as an integrated view of the topic in the writer's own words and style? Or does it read like a collection of paraphrases, quotes, or a copybook? By the way, do not plagiarize!

* Content -- Do the writer's comments accurately reflect the data and ideas of the course and topic? Are technical terms properly used and/or defined? Has paraphrased and quoted material been properly cited?

Tips for Doing Interviews

Interviewing differs greatly from secondary research, i.e., using already published materials. It requires much more planning and preparation. For example, you must have your questions worked out ahead of time, and they must draw upon a foundation established by secondary research.

Plus, interviewing adds an entirely different set of skills to those involved in secondary research; among other things, interviews require great attention to details of personal presentation, interpersonal relationships, and setting.

Finally, and most importantly, legal rules govern all research involving human subjects, including interviews. The rules are aimed at guaranteeing the physical and emotional safety of research subjects. If you are conducting interviews for a class project, speak to your professor about how to get your project approved by your institution's Human Subjects Research Review Committee.

Your interviews and observations are NOT shielded by law. The only relationships that are truly privileged are those between attorney and client. (Even your conversations with your doctor are NOT privileged!) Consequently ethical practices can save you and the person you interview a lot of grief!

Do not go unprepared to meet a consultant!

Here are some guidelines for working up the interview itself.

Remember, your consultants are doing you a favor! Thank them when you contact them, thank them when you start, thank them when you stop, and thank them when the project is completed by telling them how the project turned out!

Decide if you are going to have a structured interview (i.e., an interview in which you are

looking for specific answers to your questions) or an unstructured one (i.e., an interview in which you as "general" questions which allow a broader range of answers).

Write up all of your questions. Estimate how long it will take to get through the interview -- you probably will discover that you have too many! The interview should not take longer than about 45-60 minutes, depending on factors such as the interviewee's age and health or extraneous issues. You may have to schedule a second or even third meeting.

You must have your project reviewed by the human subjects research committee of any public institution to which you belong or by the granting agency.

You must have a permission form for each person you interview. The permission form must include a brief discussion of what the project is, how the information may be used (e.g.., in scholarly, profit-making, or nonprofit works), a signature line, date, space for a witnesses signature, and so forth.

Pay attention to how you look; your self-presentation will always affect your reception by your consultants.

Have your questions written out before you get to the front door.

Give a potential consultant enough time and information to make an informed decision about participating in your project.

Keep no secrets about the project. Tell a potential consultant what the purpose of your project is, why you have come to them, and generally what you will ask.

Decide on a time and place where the interview will occur. Give some thought to this because the setting will always affect the discussion.

Have all your technical gear ready and know how to use it with a minimum of fuss. This includes having enough pens/pencils, notebooks, batteries, etc., so than you do not have to stop the interview to get more.

On Good Writing
By Alan G. Marshall

http://www.lcsc.edu/amarshal/write/wGoodWriting.htm

"Good writing is clear, honest, vibrant, authoritative, rhythmic, and memorable. The best of writing, whether prose or poetry, makes use of playful and imaginative language. Good writing is economical and does not waste words."

These are some aspects of good writing. In other words, good writing has all these characteristics. The better these characteristics are displayed, the better the writing.

1. Meaning or content -- Is the piece of writing more than just "empty words?"

2. Authority -- Has the writer shown knowledge about the topic through the use of specific, accurate, and up-to-date information?

3. Voice -- Is the writer's own personality evident in the writing? Or, is the writing wooden, stilted, or simply mediocre?

4. Design -- Is the form of writing (expository, narrative, etc.) pertinent to the goal of the written piece? Is the work well-structured, appropriately ordered, and logical? Are the ideas developed well?

5. Clarity -- Does the writing present correct information simply and in an easy to follow manner?

6. Conventions -- Are the spelling, punctuation, and grammar correct?

7. Attitude -- Is the writer excited or interested in communicating about the topic with the reader?