

## **Advanced Research Topics**

### **CAS NS 433 (4 credits)**

**Instructor:** SEA Faculty

**Teaching Assistant:** SEA Visiting Faculty

**Location:** SEA campus in Woods Hole, MA, on shore in Te Waipounamu, Aotearoa New Zealand, and aboard SEA sailing school vessel *Robert C. Seamans*.

#### **Course Philosophy and Approach:**

This advanced course guides students through the process of research project design, from surveying relevant project-focused literature, through selecting and implementing effective methods and methodologies, to communicating results to targeted audiences. The course instructor will provide guidance in the selection of a viable research topic, work with students individually and in class as their research and writing progress, and identify strategies for advancing research beyond the semester at SEA. The course objectives are to develop a toolkit of strategies for collecting and synthesizing data, to identify and address biases and assumptions in academic research and knowledge, and to contribute to existing conversations in the space of climate change research in the humanities.

#### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Build on previous research experience, adding new strategies for project design, data collection, and presentation of results.
2. Improve ability to recognize inaccurate, flawed, and biased research and writing, and learn how to avoid these shortcomings in one's own project work.
3. Identify spaces for debate, discussion, and collaborative problem solving based on individual interests in climate change-related issues.

#### **Evaluation:**

Annotated Bibliography/Research Question	20%
Introductory Paragraph	10%
First Draft	30%
Final Research Project	40%

#### **Assignments:**

##### Annotated Bibliography and Research Question

Individual students will select a research topic with the guidance of the course instructor. They will test the theories and ideas learned from an extensive review of relevant literature against their own observations and interviews. The research project goals must be sufficiently narrow in scope to be addressed in a ten-page paper. An annotated bibliography of four sources will serve as an exploratory exercise to further the researcher's knowledge of the relevant

literature. The annotated bibliography and research question are due in Week 3 and are worth 20% of the total course grade.

### Introductory Paragraph

One step toward writing the first draft is to complete an introductory paragraph that outlines the objectives of the research project. The instructor will place students into small groups to discuss and provide feedback. The introductory paragraph is worth 10% of the total course grade.

### First Draft

Students have the option of identifying an ongoing or potential project at their home institutions (e.g., campus climate initiative) and writing a communication piece, such as a journal article, policy brief, or white paper, directed to interested readers and stakeholders. Others will choose a research topic that identifies a climate change-related issue along the program cruise track. Alternative climate-focused topics and formats may be acceptable with instructor's approval. The first draft of the research paper will consist of a topic-specific literature review and a summary of any data collected during the shore component. The first research draft (about eight double-spaced pages) is due at the end of Week 6 and is worth 30% of the total course grade.

### Final Research Project

The final manuscript will be 9-10 pages of text, excluding additional figures and images. It will take the form of a policy brief, public-facing article, white paper, etc. and may include an action plan to address a specific aspect of human impacts of climate change. Students in Advanced Research Topics will provide an addendum that includes a strategy for publication and a description of expected societal impact of their work. The final project is due in Week 12 and is worth 40% of the total course grade.

### **Expectations and Requirements:**

- Punctual attendance is required at every class meeting.
- Active participation in class discussion is expected.
- Late assignment submissions are not accepted.
- The policy on academic accuracy, quoted below, will be strictly followed in this class. The papers that you submit in this course are expected to be ***your original work***. You must take care to distinguish your own ideas and knowledge from wording or substantive information that you derive from one of your sources. The term "sources" includes not only published primary and secondary material, but also information and opinions gained directly from other people and text that you cut and paste from any site on the Internet.

***The responsibility for learning the proper forms of citation lies with you.*** Quotations must be placed properly within quotation marks and must be cited fully. In addition, all paraphrased material must be acknowledged completely. Whenever ideas or facts

are derived from your reading and research, the sources must be indicated.  
(Harvard *Handbook for Students*, 305)

- Considerations for use of internet sources: As you browse websites, assess their usefulness very critically. Who posted the information and why? Can you trust them to be correct? Authoritative? Unbiased? Your annotation should include the name of the author or organization originating any material that you reference. If you can't identify the source, don't use it!

**Inclusivity and Classroom Culture:**

Our SEA community embraces diversity of age, background, beliefs, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, and other visible and nonvisible categories. We expect each one of you (and you should expect the same from us) to contribute to a respectful, welcoming and inclusive environment. If you feel that you are not being welcomed, included, or accepted here, please reach out to one of your teachers or one of the deans at SEA to share your concern.

Topic	Readings/Assignments Due
<b>Week 1 (Woods Hole campus)</b>	
<b>Wed:</b> Introduction and overview  <b>Every Friday:</b> Meetings with instructor	
<b>Week 2</b>	
<b>Wed:</b> The literature search and the research question	<b>Due Mon:</b> Topic selection
<b>Week 3</b>	
<b>Wed:</b> Building a paper with annotated bibliography and research question	<b>Due Fri:</b> Annotated Bibliography and Research Question
<b>Week 4</b>	
<b>Wed:</b> Measuring societal impact on humanitites research	
<b>Week 5</b>	
<b>Wed:</b> Peer input on introductory paragraphs	<b>Due:</b> Introductory paragraph

<b>Week 6</b>	
• <b>Wed:</b> Project discussions	<b>Due:</b> First Draft
<b>Week 7 - 12 (Remote shore and at sea)</b>	
Project revision	<b>Due Week 12:</b> Final Research Project