

COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

Academic School / Department:	School of Liberal Arts
Programme:	School of Applied Liberal Arts
FHEQ Level:	4
Course Title:	Academic Research and Writing
Course Code:	LIBA 4301
Student Engagement Hours:	160 (standard 4- credit BA course)
Timetabled hours	45
Guided learning hours:	15
Independent Learning:	100
Credits:	16 UK CATS credits 8 ECTS credits 4 US credits

Course Description:

This course is designed to develop students' critical research and writing skills to be effective in the academic and professional world. It focuses on principles of good scholarship and academic practice that will be required throughout university study and in a future professional work environment. These skills are enhanced throughout the course. Upon completion of this course, successful students will become confident in using available resources to produce well-researched writing that demonstrates critical engagement with a self-selected research topic.

Prerequisites:

None

Aims and Objectives:

- To provide extended opportunity for the application of in-depth critical and reflective practices in research and writing processes.
- To enable the extension and application of knowledge of convention and good practice in research and writing across academic fields
- To develop methodological tools that are required in research and writing across the curriculum, and, more broadly, in professional life.
- To develop, through effective research of credible sources, engagement with the cultural, social and political issues under scrutiny.
- To develop understanding of the effective and ethical use of AI tools to assist at various stages of academic writing.

Programme Outcomes:

C4I, D4I

A detailed list of the programme outcomes are found in the Programme Specification. This is located at the archive maintained by the Academic Registry and found at: <http://www.richmond.ac.uk/programme-and-course-specifications/>

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, successful students should be able to:

- Demonstrate understanding of the application of in-depth and reflective practices in research and writing processes.
- Demonstrate ability to deploy appropriate level of language, convention and good practice in research and writing across academic fields.
- Apply methodological tools and processes that are required in research and writing across the curriculum and, more broadly, in professional life.
- Demonstrate, through effective research of academic sources, engagement with academic debates around the cultural, social and political issues selected for scrutiny.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the effective and ethical use of AI tools to facilitate research and writing processes.

Indicative Content:

I. Reading

- **Information literacy:** to search for and critically evaluate content from academic databases, search engines and generative AI tools.
- **Critique:** to evaluate texts; who is an author/what is a text, purposive reading; exploring the context of texts; inference; values awareness of writer's voice; contextualisation of themes
- **Reading of academic texts:** strategies, reader expectations, finding the shape and conventions of a text; finding meaning
- **Evidence:** to consider the value, authority and use of evidence.
- **Organisation of information:** independent selection, classification and processing of knowledge.
- **Research ethics:** to consider the application of ethical principles in the design and conduct of research.

II. Writing

- **Argument and logic:** identifying arguments and logical fallacies
- **Academic style and presentation:** cohesion, register; the role of evidence; identification and hierarchies of evidence; effective incorporation of evidence; use of AI for proof-reading
- **Epistemology:** concepts of knowledge (as contested, multiple, fluid, contingent on time and culture); critical comparison of texts including AI-produced material; knowledge as cumulative and incremental: drafting, processes of reviewing, redrafting a paper.
- **Research design:** strategies for outlining, organising and planning a paper, sequencing and sign posting, coherence
- **Citation:** purpose and value of citation to the reader and to the author; citation styles.

Assessment:

This course conforms to the Richmond University Standard Assessment Norms approved at Academic Board and located at: <https://www.richmond.ac.uk/university-policies/>

Teaching Methodology:

This course will be delivered face to face through a combination of lectures and interactive sessions. In addition to classroom activities, there are guided learning elements that are tutor led and arranged through Blackboard. These activities can be asynchronous online sessions, flipped classrooms, set readings with discussion boards or set guest lectures for example. Set activities are monitored by the instructor to ascertain student engagement. Students are encouraged to prepare for class and to play an active part, to raise questions, following-up ideas and interact with a wide range of provided material.

Bibliography:

See syllabus for complete reading list

Indicative Text(s):

Baratta, A. (2020) *Read critically*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Chatfield, T. (2020) *Think critically*. London: Sage.

Cottrell, S. (2023) *Critical thinking skills: effective analysis, argument and reflection*. 4th edn. London: Bloomsbury.

Cottrell, S. (2024) *The study skills handbook*. 6th edn. London: Bloomsbury.

Day, T. (2023) *Success in academic writing*. 3rd edn. London: Bloomsbury.

Lacatus, C. and Nogues, A. (2021) *Create your research poster*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Read, S.H. (2024) *Academic writing skills for international students*. 2nd edn. London: Bloomsbury.

Journals

Academic journals are available on EBSCO and JSTOR.

Change Log for this CSD:

Nature of Change	Date Approved & Approval Body (School or AB)	Change Actioned by Academic Registry
First edition	Nov 2024	