

Writing about Data Syllabus

76-107 • Fall 2019 • MWF 10:30-11:20 • Porter Hall A21

Instructor Information: Dr. Heidi Wright
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Office hours:
Skype name: writingheidi
I am usually **not** on campus Tuesdays and Thursdays this semester.

Overview:

Our lives are increasingly shaped by writing that involves numbers: newspapers routinely report the latest medical fads; politicians support their political agendas with both dubious and credible statistics; parents use data to decide where to buy a house and where to send their children to school. This 8-week class will teach you to interpret and make arguments using both quantitative and qualitative data. In addition, you will learn to pay close attention to academic and popular genres and adapt your writing style to fit these genres.

Course Goals:

In this class, you will learn to

- Analyze arguments made with data
- Produce effective data visualizations and interpret them for a range of audiences
- Write about data in a citation style appropriate for your discipline
- Write a data-driven technical report
- Introduce and propose a data-driven study by synthesizing previous research

Basic Expectations:

This is a hands-on, skills-based class. There will be one-two hours of homework every class period and we will be completing activities during class meetings. You cannot make up class meetings by getting the notes. If you cannot commit to attending class regularly and completing homework, you cannot expect a good grade in this class.

For my part, you can expect me to do my best to make good use of your time with activities that increase your knowledge and improve your skills. I also promise to do my best to clarify my expectations, grade your writing quickly and fairly, and meet with you outside of class as needed to ensure that you grasp the material.

Attendance and Lateness:

You earn points during each class meeting for submitted homework and work you complete in class. These points can only be made up if you have a valid excuse and you arrange to meet with me during my office hours (or another time) to go over what you missed. If you are late for class, you will not get full points for that class meeting. Fifteen minutes late will be marked absent. More than 2 absences and your final grade will be lowered one half a letter grade for each day you miss.

Course Materials:

There is no textbook for this class. Readings will be posted as PDFs or links on the Canvas course web site (<https://cmu.instructure.com/>). You should always bring copies of the readings to class. Electronic copies are fine, but electronic devices should only be used for class work.

Class Schedule:

Our daily class schedule will be maintained on Canvas, where you will also find class readings and materials for daily assignments. You are expected to check Canvas on a regular basis.

Grading

Your grades for this course will be based upon all of the work that you will complete, but we will treat the first and second halves of the course as separate courses with their own grades.

Projects:

You will complete two major projects for this course.

Major projects:

- Comparative Genre Analysis. Analyze a topic as it discussed in two different rhetorical contexts, collecting data to illustrate how these contexts require different communication styles and purposes.
- Literature Review and Proposal. Synthesize at least five studies on an approved topic to articulate a "status quo" and "gap" and propose a research project that will fill this gap.

Detailed guidelines for these projects will be posted on Canvas.

Calculating your grade:

Your work in this class will be weighted as follows:

Project	Percent
Comparative Genre Analysis	40
Literature review & Proposal	30
Data Visualization	10
Classwork, attendance, homework, and quizzes	20

Your numeric grade for the semester will be calculated as a percentage of total points and converted to the following letter grades:

A: 90-100%

B: 80-89%

C: 70-79%

D: 60-69%

R: 0-59%

Acting with Academic Integrity:

In both your academic and professional careers, you are expected to give appropriate credit to your sources. Any submission that includes non-documented material may receive zero points, result in an "R" for the course, and be reported to Student Affairs. If you have questions about proper documentation practices, I am happy to meet with you. If you want to understand how to relate the concept of integrity to our community standards and how to understand university procedures for maintaining our community's standards, please visit <http://www.cmu.edu/academic-integrity>.

Policies and Resources:

Communication Tutoring at the GCC:

You can receive one-on-one tutoring for any academic communication project for any class at the Global Communication Center (GCC). The GCC is a free service located in Hunt library. You can schedule a tutoring appointment directly on the website, or you can drop by first floor of the Hunt library for a walk-in appointment. See <http://www.cmu.edu/gcc> for appointments and information.

Styles of Learning and Disability:

If you have special learning needs that require special accommodations, please contact Catherine Getchell at the Equal Opportunity Services on campus (access@andrew.cmu.edu). We can arrange to

accommodate your learning style based on EOS recommendations. Please notify me at the semester's beginning of your learning needs--do not wait until the semester becomes overwhelming to acknowledge the problem. As your teacher, my goal is to work with you to empower you to become your own advocate for your learning.

Important On-Campus Resources

- Librarian: Ethan Pullman ethanp@cmu.edu
- Tech Help: Cyert tech help (412-268-4357) and it-help@cmu.edu Cyert Hall 119
- Hunt Library VPN info (<https://webdev.library.cmu.edu/using/offcampus>)
- Free MS Office online <https://www.cmu.edu/computing/software/all/msoffice/index.html>
- Virtual Andrew- - takes you to a university desktop for MS Office <https://www.cmu.edu/computing/services/endpoint/software/managed-desktops/how-to/virtual-andrew.html>
- Emotional Support- All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. You are not alone. There are many helpful resources available on campus, and an important part of the college experience is learning how to ask for help. Asking for support sooner rather than later is often helpful.

If you or anyone you know experiences any academic stress, difficult life events, or feelings like anxiety or depression, we strongly encourage you to seek support. Counseling and Psychological Services (CaPS) is here to help: call 412-268-2922 and visit their website at <http://www.cmu.edu/counseling/>. Consider reaching out to a friend, faculty or family member you trust for help getting connected to the support that can help.

If you or someone you know is feeling suicidal or in danger of self-harm, call someone immediately, day or night: CaPS: 412-268-2922
Re:solve Crisis Network: 888-796-8226

If you or someone you know is the victim of sexual misconduct or assault:
CMU Title IX Office: 412-268-7125, <http://www.cmu.edu/title-ix/reporting/index.html>
PAAR (Pennsylvania Action Against Rape): 1-888-772-7227,
<http://www.pcar.org/help-pa/victim-support>

If the situation is life threatening, call the police:
On campus: CMU Police: 412-268-2323
Off campus: 911

If you have questions about this or your coursework, please let me know.

Religious Observance:

If you have a conflict between a religious holiday and a graded assignment, please contact me in advance so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

Important things to know:

1. You are allowed one homework assignment (not major assignment) late (up to 24 hours late). After that, I will deduct 25% of the score for anything turned in up to one hour late (60 minutes) and 50% of the score for anything turned in after 1 hour up to 24 hours late (both due date and due time). After that, I will not grade it.

I may, however, give you comments to keep you moving forward. You may receive an extension on a major paper **only if you contact me 48 hours before the deadline** via email.

Major assignments are: the warm-up IMRD projects, the corpus IMRD project, and the literature review and research. These require an extension and cannot be “the one free late” assignment.

Computer/ printer/ canvas issues are NOT acceptable excuses. Email it before the due date and time if you have to, but after the due date and time, it is late.

2. Missing class is not a good idea. Not everything you need to understand the assignments will be posted to canvas. You will also lose the class points for the day. After 2 absences, 5 percentage points will be subtracted from your final grade in the course for each day you miss. If you are sick, I need a doctor’s note as soon as you return for it to be excused. If you have a continuing issue that causes you to miss class, you will need to get a note from the dean or your advisor.

3. If you are more than 5 minutes late, you will be marked late. Three (3) lates will equal one absence. If you have class on the other end of campus just before this come talk to me. Fifteen (15) minutes late to class or more is marked absent.

3. Email me if you are absent. This does not mean it is excused. Please check **with other students in the class** to find out what you missed and to get class and board notes. (I teach 2 sections of this course, so my notes will not help you much.)

4. **If you are having trouble in this class or another class (or something really terrible happens), PLEASE come see before things get out of control.** I want to help you, but I can’t help you if you don’t ask. I also check email frequently and hold office hours, so please come see me.

5. You are expected to turn in both paper and electronic copies of all drafts of all essays. **I want out of class assignments typed, double-spaced, one inch margins, 12 point Arial font.** If they do not look like this, I will not read them. Major assignments must be printed *before* class (not during) and brought to class. I will let you know how many copies to make.

6. VERY important: Put your last name, assignment, and draft number in your filenames when you submit assignments electronically. Otherwise files may get lost or overwritten when I download them.
EX: Smith_CGA_draft1.docx

7. Keep your handouts in a binder and bring it to class. We will use them many times. Also bring paper, pens etc. You may bring/ use a computer or tablet, but no surfing, email or social media in class.

8a. Use of technology. Please do take pictures of the board. I am fine with the use of a tablet or laptop or tablet in class- *for academic purposes*. If you have accommodations and need additional support, please see me. I am happy to help.

8b. Using Recording Equipment in Class. If you need to voice record classroom activities, you may do so for **personal** use or for all students presently enrolled in the class. However, you may not further copy, distribute, publish or otherwise use for any other purpose without my express written consent. Do not post recordings or other class materials to the free web.

9. I expect homework to be done well. Not doing homework or doing it poorly affects your grade negatively and it means you can’t participate in class, which will also affect your grade. Sitting in the back of the room and not participating is not acceptable.

10. You do not need a perfect paper to get an A, but you do need a complete, clear, well-organized paper

with APA done well (if required). I expect directions to be followed. Sloppiness is not acceptable. First drafts will receive a grade for completeness, but revisions always need to be made. Changing the topic of your paper after the first draft without my permission will result in a grade of F. I do not accept final drafts of papers without first drafts that I have previewed.

10b. I am not your copy editor. I will not fix every error. Rather, I will mark some grammar errors and indicate patterns, and indicate content and organization problems. It is your job to correct/revise your work, and to contact me if you have questions.

11. Peer review: You will be graded on how well you give comments to others on their work and on how well you revise your own work. Do not give yes and no answers for peer review. Be specific. Explain why something is good or how it could be better. Be polite. Give both positive and “constructive” comments.

12. I love questions. So PLEASE ASK QUESTIONS, it helps me give a better class and it helps your classmates to learn. If you don't understand or need more information, ask in class or over email. I would be happy to make handouts or re-explain things.

13. I need for us to be a team. I expect that you will discuss and sometimes disagree with each other and me politely. Talking is good, it helps us to think things through.

14. Don't borrow papers from friends, turn in papers from other classes, or take them of the web. I have been teaching writing for 20 years, and I can spot these things easily. You will get an F or a 0. If you are having trouble finding/ adding information from outside sources into your paper, please ask. I know that it is not always easy, and I am happy to help.

15. I send homework reminders and handouts by email or post them in Canvas. Check your university email and Canvas at least twice a day. Be sure announcements and notifications are turned on.

16. If you go into Canvas, and you cannot find something, EMAIL ME immediately. Professors have to hit a “publish this” button at least twice for things to be visible to students. There have also been some problems with comments and scores not saving properly. So, if you don't see an assignment or reading that I have asked you to complete, tell me so I can check on things.