

CAP Research Seminar Syllabus
Shindel, 2021

Ignorance, the root and the stem of every evil. –*Plato*

You cannot teach a man anything; you can only help him find it within himself. –*Galileo*

I know nothing except the fact of my ignorance. –*Socrates*

Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it is time to pause and reflect. –*Mark Twain*

The only thing that is constant is change. –*Heraclitus*

Welcome to what I hope will be an exciting semester in CAP Research Seminar!! What exactly is CAP Research Seminar? What do we do here? The answers to those questions change each year. The main purpose of this course is to help you better understand the world and your role in it. And so in a dynamic world presently characterized by an incredible pace of change, it's important that curricula change to keep pace. We're going to dive deeply into many issues this year, but presently, there are really no set timelines, units or projects. It's my hope that empowers and liberates you, though I also know that kind of ambiguity and uncertainty may trouble students who prefer more structure, rubrics, and direction. Just keep an open mind, focus on the learning, and everything else will work itself out.

Whatever changes we make, we will continue to explore what it means to *know stuff*. Research helps us *know stuff*. Our first task this semester will be to develop good **intellectual habits of mind**. *What steps and processes are necessary to arrive at knowledge?* We will put these intellectual habits to work exploring various topics in order to help you develop your own **conceptual framework**. *What do you understand about these issues and how can you connect that knowledge into a coherent system?*

To support our research this semester, we will employ three elements that are essential to our pursuit of knowledge. We begin with **Questions**. *Only Questions* can guide our learning. Little of value is ever learned *and retained* by students without a curiosity that burns from within. The research process begins with a good question.

Once we have settled on a body of Questions to explore, there must be some mechanism through which we seek answers. Besides research, another process we will use to answer our questions is **Dialogue**. We are social beings. And thus we construct knowledge socially. Much of our class time will be spent in Dialogue. Dialogue is critical to truly understanding perspectives and ideas.

The last element of greatest importance to our work this semester is **Reflection**. While Dialogue is primarily a social endeavor, Reflection is a personal one. Reflection is the process of identifying and analyzing the source of our beliefs. We may derive and reflect on new ideas to see how they fit within our conceptual framework. Reflection helps us define our purpose. And through Reflection, we construct our collective and individual identities.

Course Content

1. Foundations of Knowledge and Habits of Mind

Epistemology, Skepticism, Inquiry, Critical Thinking, Conceptual Thinking, Creative Thinking, Dialectical Thinking, Cognitive Biases

2. Topics we will explore

Racism, Education Reform, Technology, College?, Information, Polarization, Ethics, Civil Society, Media...

3. Key concepts to always be mindful of

Truth, Reality, Complexity, Balance, Identity

4. 21st Century and Career Skills

Self-direction, Collaboration, Communication, Information Literacy, Leadership, Project Management

5. Research Methodology and Skills

Foundations of Research, Research Design, Literature Analysis and Review

Grading System:

Your grade will be based on total points. There are no categories. Assignments and activities that will require greater time and effort will be worth more than assignments that take less time and effort. *Focus on the learning and the grade will take care of itself.*

Make-up work, Late work, and Re-assessment Policy:

- A. Make-up work (absence)—To find out what assignments were missed during a legal absence, check Canvas first. If questions still exist, consult the teacher and other classmates. You will be granted a reasonable amount of time to make up missed work.
- B. Late Work—There will be due dates and deadlines for work. All work submitted after the due date will have a 10% deduction in total points. Sometime after the due date will be the deadline. No work will be accepted after the deadline and the assignment will receive a grade of 50%.
- C. Re-assessed work—Only assignments completed and submitted by the due date will be available for re-assessment. Students will be told in advance which assignments are available for re-assessment.

I care deeply about your success in this class and will do everything in my power to enable you to be successful. I will make myself available to you after school and during lunch by appointment. Make plans to get help before it's too late. You may also contact me by email at--
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