**Eureka! Accidentally Found on Purpose**

**Arts & Sciences 137, Freshman Seminar**

**Winter Quarter, 2 Credits**

**T, 11:30-12:18 Thompson 150**

**Instructor Office**

Kathy Webb Thompson Library, Room 222F

e-mail Office Hours

webb.45@osu.edu Thurs.-Friday 2-4pm

**Course Description**

"Eureka!" cried Archimedes as he jumped from the bathtub upon sudden awareness of his body's effect on water. Born was the principle of buoyancy, or so the story goes. Eureka is rooted in the Greek word *heuriskein* or heuristic which means to discover or to find things out. Scientists and mathematicians talk of the "Aha!" or of the eureka moment as a flash of inspiration leading to a solution or discovery. For writers, composers, and artists, it is "the muse" that inspires in the creative process. This type of knowing, referred to as intuition, suggests that the process of discovery is more than deliberate mental operations and calculations. In this course, we will look at examples of how intuition, creativity, and an adventuresome spirit led to sometimes amazing and often satisfying outcomes. We will also explore and apply methods of visual and heuristic thinking in developing ideas, doing library research, and responding to problems of ambiguity, doubt, and information overload.

**Required Text**

Abbott, Andrew. *Methods of Discovery: Heuristics for the Social Sciences*. W. W. Norton, 2004.

**Short, Selected Readings Available Via Carmen**

Anshen, Ruth Nanda. "Convergence." in Jonas Salk, *Anatomy of Reality: Merging Intuition and Reason*.

New York: Columbia University Press, 1983.

Basho, Matsuo. Poems, English. Trans. Jane Reichhold. New York: Kodansha International, 2008.

Barzun, Jacques and Henry F. Graff. *The Modern Researcher*. 6th ed. Thomson, 2004.

Chowder, Ken. EUREKA! *Smithsonian* 34:6 (2003): 92-94.

Eco, Umberto. *Serendipities: Language & Lunacy*. Trans. William Weaver. San Diego: Harcourt Brace,

1999.

Renella, Mark and Whitney Walton. "Planned Serendipity: American Travelers and the Transatlantic

Voyage in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries". *J of Social History* 38:2 (2004).

Roam, Dan. *The Back of the Napkin: Solving Problems and Selling Ideas with Pictures*. Portfolio, 2008.

**Course Policies**

Attendance is mandatory and participation is vital in this course and together will constitute 30% of the final grade. Excused absences are permitted only for exceptional reasons and only if requested in advance.

Each class will consist of a short lecture, discussion, and time to experiment with and apply the methods read about and discussed in class. The readings assigned each week are to be completed before the class meets. Each student will write brief (90-100 word) response to each of course reading. You can respond to, argue with, and/or explore more fully the main ideas in the readings. These must be posted to CARMEN by 8pm the evening before class meets and we will use them as the basis for our discussions. They are to be well-written, well-argued responses, free of typos and grammatical mistakes.

Students will also document their personal research ideas, processes, and experiences in a research journal. Time will be set aside in each class for a brief meeting to discuss your research with the expectation that you will meet individually with me a minimum of 3x over the course.

**Grading**

Grades will be assigned based on a 200-point scale:

A 186-200 B 166-173 C 142-153 D 128-139

A- 180-185 B- 160-172 C- 152-141 E 127 and below

B+ 174-179 C+154-159 D+ 132-140

**Assignments:**

Attendance and Participation (includes reading responses): 30%

Research Journal: 20%

Oral Presentation: 20%

Final Project: 30%

**Academic Integrity**

For all the assignments for this course, the Code of Student Conduct of The Ohio State University is in effect. Academic misconduct is defined as: Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the university, or subvert the educational process. Examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to:

1. Violation of course rules as contained in the course syllabus or other information provided to

the student; violation of program regulations as established by departmental committees and

made available to students;

2. Submitting plagiarized work for an academic requirement. Plagiarism is the representation of

another's work or ideas as one's own; it includes the unacknowledged word-for-word use

and/or paraphrasing of another person's work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use

of another person's ideas;

3. Submitting substantially the same work to satisfy requirements for one course that has been

submitted in satisfaction of requirements for another course, without permission of the

instructor of the course for which the work is being submitted;

4. For an extended version of these examples please refer to: <http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp>

**To avoid plagiarism, students must make sure that they:**

1. Always cite their sources (following the MLA format)

2. Read the guidelines for written assignments more than once

3. If in doubt consult with your professor.

**Students with Disabilities**

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the Office for Disability Services at 614-292-3307 in room 150 Pomerene Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Or visit the internet address of this office at http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu for more information.

**Weekly Schedule**

Week 1 Research is the First-Person

READ: Ken Chowder, EUREKA!(6 pages via Carmen).

IN CLASS: The Research Journal

Week 2 Introduction to Heuristics

READ: Chapter 3 in Alexander, "Introduction to Heuristics" (25 pages via Carmen).

READ: Anshen, "Convergence" ( 8 pages via Carmen)

DUE: (90- 100 word) Response to Readings via Carmen.

IN CLASS: The Annotated Bibliography (MLA style)

Week 3 Introduction to University Libraries

READ: in Barzun and Graff, Chapter 1: "Research and Report: Characteristics"

(9 pages via Carmen).

DUE: (90-100 word) Response to Reading via Carmen.

DUE: Description of Research Topic (draft with approx. 150 words)

Week 4 Rubrics of Discovery

READ: in Alexander, Chapter 4: "Search and Argument" (12 pages via Carmen).

READ: in Roam, Chapter 5: "Six Ways of Seeing "(10 pages via Carmen).

DUE: (90-100 word) Response to Reading via Carmen.

DUE: First Iteration of your Annotated Bibliography (formatted in MLA style)

Week 5: Going Beyond the Information Given

READ: in Alexander, Chapter 7: "Ideas and Puzzles" (37 pages via Carmen)

DUE: (90-100 words) Response to Reading via Carmen.

DUE: Revised Description of your Research Topic.

Week 6: Overload, Doubt, Ambiguity

READ: in Alexander, Chapter 2: "Problems, What Problems?" (8 pages via Carmen)

DUE: (90-100 word) Response to Reading via Carmen.

DUE: Annotated Bibliography (formatted in MLA style)

Week 7: Aha! Planned Serendipity

Renella and Walton, "Planned Serendipity: American Travelers and the Transatlantic

Voyage in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries" (18 pages via Carmen).

DUE: (90-100 word) Response to Reading via Carmen.

Week 8: Telling the Story

READ: Roam, Chapter 7: "Frameworks for Showing" (6 pages via Carmen)

READ: in Barzun and Graff, Chapter 8: "Organizing: Paragraph, Chapter, and Part"

(16 pages via Carmen)

DUE: ORAL REPORTS

Week 9: Research as a Living Process

READ: Selected poetry and prose

DUE: ORAL Reports

Week 10: Closure

DUE: FINAL RESEARCH PAPER

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Kathy Webb is an Associate Professor and Subject Specialist for Comparative Studies and Theatre with the University Libraries. She is author of a bibliographical guide to women poets and co-author on a guide to women writers. She has conducted ethnographic research on reflective practice in the professional setting and multimedia learning in libraries. She is a regular reviewer for Library Journal. Her research interests span constructivist approaches to learning from “learning to learn,” guided inquiry, and the role of intuition, creativity, and curiosity in research and writing.