**REVISED Freshman Seminar Syllabus**

**Eureka! Accidentally Found on Purpose**

**Freshman Seminar, 2 Credits**

**Instructor Office**

Kathy Webb Thompson Library, Room 222F

e-mail Office Hours

webb.45@osu.edu Thurs.-Friday 2-4pm, and by appointment

**Course Description**

The Greek word *heuriskein* or heuristic means to discover or to find things out. Many scientists, artists, scholars, and innovators have experienced moments of discovery that have been described as an eureka effect, a moment of "Aha!"—a flash of insight leading to a solution or discovery. This type of knowing, sometimes also referred to as intuition, suggests the act of research involves more than following procedures, formulae, and cognitive reasoning, but involves also perception, intuition, self-dialogue, and self-discovery. We will study some heuristic concepts and apply a variety of its methods and the understanding gained from them to do academic research.

**Course Objectives**

1. To recognize perception, intuition, self-dialogue, and self-discovery as important and integral

sources of knowledge;

2. To integrate an heuristic approach in the act of doing academic research;

3. To also focus heuristic understandings in the process of formulating an effective research

question, searching, choosing, and evaluating information for relevance and authority, and to

organize content to effectively communicate research findings;

4. To be aware of and to know how to reduce problems of information overload, doubt, and

ambiguity.

**Required Readings--available through the class's CARMEN site.**

Abbott, Andrew. "Ideas and Puzzles." *Methods of Discovery: Heuristics for the Social Sciences*. New York:

W. W. Norton, 2004. 211-248.

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

New York: Columbia University Press, 1983.

Barzun, Jacques, and Henry F. Graff. *The Modern Researcher*. 6th ed. Belmont, CA:

Wadsworth/Thomson, 2004.

Ladd, George W. "Artistic Research Tools for Scientific Minds." A*merican Journal of Agricultural*

*Economics* 61:1 (Feb. 1979).

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

Eco, Umberto. "The Force of Falsity." *Serendipities: Language & Lunacy*. Trans. William Weaver. San

Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1999.

Monsay, Evelyn H. "Intuition and the Development of Scientific Theory and Practice." In *Intuition:*

*The Inside Story, Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. New York, NY: Routledge, 1997. 103-118.

Moustakas, Clark. "Hueristic Concepts, Processes, and Validation." *Heuristic Research: Design,*

*Methodology, and Applications*. Newbury Park: Sage,1990. 15-37.

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

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

**Course Policies**

In-class sessions will consist of discussion on the readings and time in the library to actively practice the methods discussed in class as you locate, select, and use material and online sources. Readings will be made available in Carmen where you will be expected to respond to, argue with, and/or explore more fully the main ideas in the readings.

**Attendance**

Attendance to all classes is critical. If you are unable to attend class, for any reason, you are expected to provide official documentation of your absence (doctor's note, etc.). You will be responsible for the work missed during your absence. As the instructor, I reserve the right to decide whether an absence is excused or unexcused. More than two unexcused absences will result in failure for the course.

**Participation**

Classes will consist of discussion and hands-on practice—so participation is vital.

Before each class, it is expected that you will have:

1) completed the reading

2) contributed your thoughts on the reading in Carmen

3) initiated and/or participated in Carmen discussions

4) completed required assignments

**Assignments**

Research Journal

During our first meeting we will use the *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas* (2005) to explore topics and to help you establish a focus for your research. You will be expected to keep a journal where you will keep track of your reactions to the readings and class discussions—questions, themes and ideas that jump out to you, Aha! moments, and/or experiences while practicing a method or doing your research.

The research journal serves as a key tool in this seminar and therefore holds a significant portion of your grade. Sharing parts of your journal as we work through the research process earns participation points. We will further discuss the nature of this journal in class.

Annotated Bibliography

You will be expected to prepare one citation and annotation for a book, an article, a multimedia product or website—making a total of 3 annotated citations. These are items that you selected to use for your presentation. Each citation will be followed by a brief annotation (about 150 words) that describes and evaluates the item. The number and quality of items will be discussed in class.

Final project

For the final assignment you will be expected to report on the knowledge learned and insights gained in a 2-3 page paper and 10 minute presentation. The paper should summarize your research findings, incorporate selections from your journal, quotes from the readings and/or class discussions, and other materials that will illustrate the process you've been through and its fruits. Be Creative! We will further discuss the nature of this project in class.

At the end of each presentation, you will submit a 5-minute think piece that either includes some review of your classmates work, or reflects on one thing of significance you learned from the presentation.

**Grading**

Participation: 30%

Research Journal: 30%

Annotated Bibliography: 15%

Final Project: 25%

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

**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 "Chance Favors the Prepared Mind"

READ: Chowder, EUREKA!andAnshen, "Convergence" ( 14 pages on Carmen)

IN-Class: discussion and getting started on the research journal

ASSIGNMENT: Use the *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas* (2005) to explore ideas and

establish a focus for your research project.

Week 2 Concepts in Heuristics

READ: Moustakas, "Heuristic Concepts, Processes, and Validation" (22 pages on Carmen).

IN-Class: discussion/practice, library work

DUE: research question and its focus

Week 3 Exploring the Material Collections in OSU Libraries

READ: Abbott, "Ideas and Puzzles: Other People" (6 pages on Carmen)

READ: Ecco, "The Force of Falsity" (10 pages on Carmen)

IN-Class: discussion/practice, library work

DUE: two books on your topic

Week 4 The Annotated Bibliography (MLA Style)

READ: Abbott, "Ideas and Puzzles: Literature, Taste, Personality" (21 pages via Carmen).

IN-Class: discussion/practice, library work

DUE: two articles on your topic

Week 5: Going Beyond the Information Given

READ: Ladd, "Artistic Research Tools for Scientific Minds" ( 9 pages on Carmen)

IN-Class: discussion/practice, library work

DUE: two websites on your topic

Week 6: Information Overload, Doubt, Ambiguity

READ: Abbott, "Problems, What Problems?" (8 pages via Carmen)

IN-Class: discussion/practice, library work

DUE: Annotated Bibliography

Week 7: "Intuition, Creativity, and Exploding Chickens"

READ: Monsay, "Intuition in the Development of Scientific Theory" (12 pages) In-Class:

IN-Class: discussion/practice, library work

DUE: Project draft

Week 8: Aha! Planned Serendipity

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

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

DUE: Two-page draft of your project/presentation

Week 9: Presentations and Think Pieces

Week 10: Presentations and Think Pieces