

Course Syllabus



Course BIS 3320
Course Title **The Nature of Intellectual Inquiry**
Professor Dr. June Ann Jones
Term Spring 2026
Meetings MW 4:00-5:15pm ML2 1.218

Professor's Contact Information

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Office Hours Announced in class and by appointment

General Course Information

Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, & other restrictions

No prerequisites (This course is the upper-level writing requirement for all Interdisciplinary Studies students.)

Course Description

This course is concerned with the systematic study of science and the academic experience. Science is part of the search for knowledge and each approach to science contributes to the totality of knowledge. BIS3320 will assist students in understanding the pervasive influence of science in our culture and will increase the student's breadth of intellectual inquiry. In addition, the class is designed to assist the students in understanding the importance of clear communication, documentation, and the use of detailed information to support arguments.

Learning Outcomes

1. Students will be able to locate primary sources and evaluate the usefulness of each source based on the criteria discussed in class.
2. Students will be able to concisely paraphrase the findings of studies and properly document sources according to the guidelines set for the by the APA manual.
3. Students will be able to develop a thesis statement and write a paper that discusses the scientific studies that support their claim.
4. Students will be able to describe the differences and similarities between philosophical ideas and scientific facts and/or theories.

Required Texts

All readings will be made available for free on eLearning. Films will be accessible through digital platforms included in your student fees (i.e. Kanopy, Alexander Street, Films On Demand).

Assignments & Academic Calendar

[Topics, Reading Assignments, Due Dates, Exam Dates]

*Please follow eLearning for the most up-to-date schedule.

	Topic/Plan of day	Reading/activity and related assignments (see due dates on eLearning)
An Invitation to Critical Thinking in A Learning Community Topics: learning, connections, belonging, community, democracy		
Week 1 (W) Jan. 21	Introductions & Ice-breakers	(optional) " Writing is Thinking " by Steven Mintz (UT Austin)
Week 2 (M) 26	All Inquiry Begins in Wonder... + Introduction to the Pursuit of Truth through the Methods of Science and Philosophy Self-paced module	Read: Alberts, B., Hopkin, K., & Roberts, K. (n.d.). <i>Why Trust Science: Essay</i> . Retrieved December 30, 2025, from https://whytrustscience.org.uk/essay/ Watch: The Examined Life (2008) Assignment: Film Response (<i>The Examined Life</i>) (optional) " The Intersection of Science and Religion " (from the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine)
(W) 28	The Power of Conversation & Research as Collaborative Storytelling	Read: bell hooks, "Collaboration," "Conversation," "Telling the Story," "Sharing the Story," "Self-Esteem," "Intellectual Life," in Teaching Critical Thinking: Practical Wisdom Watch: Cornel West and Robert George
Week 3 (M) Feb. 2	"AI & AI" Workshop Writing Research Papers with Integrity + How to Use AI for Brainstorming and Organizing Purposes (Only)	Listen: Brené Brown's <i>Dare to Lead</i> podcast episode " Dr. Joy Buolamwini on Unmasking AI: My Mission to Protect What Is Human in a World of Machines " ***Sign up for Discussion Leader (for <i>Sophie's World</i>) & Journal Article Presentation ***
(W) 4	Writing Workshop Finding Scholarly Sources Location: Library MC 2.524 Guest Speaker: Library Staff Slides from Laren Anderson: BIS3320 Library Presentation - Feb. 2025.pdf	Read: UTD Library Research Guide on Literature Reviews Explore: UTD Library BIS3320 Resources

The Craft of Research: Writing Step-by-Step Topics: formatting, research questions, thesis statements, drafting, revising, editing		
Week 4 (M) 9	Writing Workshop APA Formatting & Zotero Bootcamp Guest Speakers: UTD Writing Center	<p>***(Complete <u>before</u> this class meeting) Tutorial: Academic Writer Tutorial: Basics of Seventh Edition APA Style***</p> <p>Explore: APA Style and Grammar Guide & UTD Writing Center Website</p> <p>Preview: Annotated Bibliography</p> <hr/> <p>Extra Credit Assignment: APA Practice Quizzes</p>
(W) 11	<p><i>Sophie's World+</i> Beyond! [Learning Circle 1] Topics: Self-knowledge, philosophy</p> <p>Discussion Leaders: Journal Article Presenters:</p>	<p>(Each meeting involves <i>SW Discussion Leader</i> + presentation of contemporary research articles "Journal Article Presentation")</p> <p>Sophie's World, Ch.1-9 (The Garden of Eden, The Top Hat, The Myths, The Natural Philosophers, Democritus, Fate, Socrates, Athens, Plato)</p>
Week 5 (M) 16	<p>Writing Workshop Topics, Questions, Thesis... ACTION!</p> <p>Slides: topics&questions.utd.s25.pdf [Start Workbook]</p>	<p><i>The Craft of Research</i> - PDF Ch.1: From Topics to Questions Ch.2: From Questions to a Problem In-class: Research Paper Writing Workbook (RPWW) p.2-4 Assignment: Research Proposal Form (due Monday by 9am) Extra Credit Assignment: Writing Center Consultation for Proposal</p> <hr/> <p>(optional) Anne Lamott, "Shitty First Drafts" and "Perfectionism"</p>
(W) 18	<p><i>Sophie's World+</i> Beyond! [Learning Circle 2] Topics: Empirical observation, free will, reality Discussion Leaders: Journal Article Presenters:</p>	<p><i>Sophie's World</i>, Ch.10-15 (The Major's Cabin, Aristotle, Hellenism, The Postcards, Two Cultures, The Middle Ages)</p>

<p>Week 6 (M) 23</p>	<p>Anatomy of A Research Paper: To Start and Finish Strong</p> <p>Slides: writingworkshop.i&c.utd.s25.pdf</p>	<p><i>The Craft of Research</i> - PDF Ch. 14 - Introductions and Conclusions (Context, Problem, Response) In-class: RPWW p.5-7 In-class: Zotero-APA "Cite While You Write" Practice Assignment: Paper Proposal (due Monday by 9am)</p>
<p>(W) 25</p>	<p><i>Sophie's World+</i> Beyond! [Learning Circle 3] Topics: Science, religion, belief</p> <p>Discussion Leaders: Journal Article Presenters:</p>	<p><i>Sophie's World</i>, Ch.16-21 (The Renaissance, The Baroque, Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, Hume)</p>
<p>Week 7 (M) Mar. 2</p>	<p>Writing Workshop Literature Reviews & Annotated Bibliographies (Part 1)</p> <p>Slides:</p>	<p>Read: "Writing A Literature Review" Read: Steps in the Literature Review Process (UT Austin)</p> <p><i>The Craft of Research</i> Ch. 12 - Incorporating Sources Explore: APA Style and Grammar Guide Explore: UTD Writing Center Website</p> <p>Preview: Annotated Bibliography & Literature Review</p>
<p>(W) 4</p>	<p><i>Sophie's World+</i> Beyond! [Learning Circle 4] Topics: Knowledge, ethics, meaning</p> <p>Discussion Leaders: Journal Article Presenters:</p>	<p><i>Sophie's World</i>, Ch.22- 27 (Berkeley, Bjerkeley, The Enlightenment, Kant, Romanticism, Hegel)</p>
<p>Week 8 (M) 9</p>	<p>Writing Workshop Literature Reviews & Annotated Bibliographies (Part 2)</p>	<p>In-class: Using the course APA template</p> <p>Assignment: Annotated Bibliography (with at least 6 peer reviewed journal articles) due <u>Friday by midnight</u></p>

(W) 11	Writing Work Day Instructor Consultations	
Week 9	No class – Spring Break	Extra Credit Assignment: Thinking through Film: The Challenges and Triumphs of the Examined Life List of film options provided by instructor
Week 10 (M) 23	Literature Review v. Argument (Showing Your Work before Making Your Point)	Assignment: Literature Review (due Monday <u>in class</u> for peer feedback session)
(W) 25	<i>Sophie's World+</i> Beyond! [Learning Circle 5] Topics: Human species, naturalistic observation, psychoanalysis, capitalism Discussion Leaders: Journal Article Presenters:	<i>Sophie's World</i> , Ch.28-32 (Kierkegaard, Marx, Darwin, Freud, Our Own Time)
Week 11 (M) 30	Peer Editing & Feedback Workshop	In-class Assignment: Peer Feedback #1 (On Proposal + Literature Review + APA Formatting) Read: Find the Coaching in the Criticism , Sheila Heen and Douglas Stone Watch: How to Use Others' Feedback to Learn & Grow In-class: RPWW p.10 Assignment: Literature Review (revised after Peer Feedback) due Monday by 9am)
(W) Apr. 1	Demystifying the Examined Life Self-paced module	Watch: Higher Education (film, 2018) Assignment: Film Worksheet
Week 12 (M) 6	<i>Sophie's World+</i> Beyond! [Learning Circle 6] Topics: Surrealism, reality, existentialism Discussion Leaders: Journal Article Presenters:	<i>Sophie's World</i> Ch.33-end (The Garden Party, Counterpoint, The Big Bang)
Advanced Inquiry and the Scientific Pursuit of Knowledge Topics: motive/purpose, theory, method, ethics, democratic professionalism		
(W) 8	Demystifying the Examined Life Truth & Democracy	Review: "Why Trust Science?" Read: Hannah Arendt, "Truth and Lying in Politics" _____ (Optional) Excerpts from John Stuart Mill, <i>On Liberty</i>

Week 13 (M) 13	Writing Workshop Making Good Arguments & Outlining Slides: MakingYourArgument.utd.s25.pdf	<i>The Craft of Research</i> – PDF Ch. 5 - Making Good Arguments Explore: Mind Mapping In-class: RPWW p.8-9 Preview: Rough Draft of Final Paper — (optional) " The Fine Art of Baloney Detection " by Carl Sagan
(W) 15	Demystifying the Examined Life Education & Democracy	bell hooks, "Critical Thinking," "Democratic Education," "Integrity," "Practical Wisdom" in Teaching Critical Thinking: Practical Wisdom — (optional) W.E.B. DuBois, " Of the Ruling of Men " (optional) Haidt and Lukianoff, <i>The Coddling of the American Mind</i>
Week 14 (M) 20	Demystifying the Examined Life Guest speakers: <i>TBD</i>	Explore: Texas Education Agency, " An Overview of the History of Public Education in Texas " Explore: Look up current legislation in the US and Texas related to higher education
(W) 22	Writing Work Day Instructor Consultations	Assignment: Rough Draft of Final Paper (due Monday in class)
Week 15 (M) 27	Peer Feedback & Revising	In-class Assignment: Peer Feedback #2 (On Rough Draft) Preview (extra credit): Research Poster Presentations ("no printer required" - only a <i>digital version</i> is required to project for the class)
(W) 29	Writing Work Day Instructor Consultations	
Week 16 (M) 4	Research "Show & Tell" + Learning Reflections + Course Feedback	Extra Credit: Research Poster Presentations Extra Credit: Course Feedback Surveys
(W) 6	Writing Work Day Instructor Consultations	Assignment: Final Paper (due Wednesday by midnight) *** <u>The last day to submit any and all coursework is Wednesday by midnight.</u> Without prior arrangement, missing assignments will receive a 0 at that time.***

Course Policies

Additional Information	Welcome! Perhaps you are thinking, "Intellectual inquiry. What now?" While the topic may seem a bit intimidating at first glance, what we are really learning about in this course is something you already know how to do – think, write, and use your voice! This course has been designed to holistically address the topics at hand as well as enhance your personal intellectual journey. As your instructor, I am here to walk alongside you, as you build on your existing knowledge and skills to help succeed academically, professionally, and personally, at UTD and beyond! This course
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	<p>is designed to equip students with the basic skills to engage in asking well-developed questions and finding answers in a systematic and scholarly way. Don't let the mystique of "research" put you off! You are already capable of pursuing information about a topic that interests you. So, let this course be an opportunity to learn about new approaches to help you be more successful at answering your questions, pursuing new and creative paths, and preparing to present yourself professionally to your teachers, peers, and employers.</p>
<p>Class Materials</p>	<p>The instructor may provide class materials that will be made available to all students registered for this class as they are intended to supplement the classroom experience. These materials may be downloaded during the course; however, these materials are for registered students' use only. Classroom materials may not be reproduced or shared with those not in class or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved AccessAbility Resource Center accommodation. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct. In addition to the required readings listed above, all additional readings will be made available for free on eLearning. You are welcome to purchase or print copies for your personal educational use. Films will be accessible through digital platforms included in your student fees (i.e. Kanopy, Alexander Street, Films On Demand).</p>
<p>Class Attendance</p>	<p><i>You are an important member of our classroom community. Please, join us consistently!</i> All class meetings are mandatory. Since participation is such a huge part of your grade, I recommend speaking with me early on if something comes up that may impede your ability to be present in the class, physically or mentally. The world we live in is quite demanding, so I understand if you may need to take a breather every once in a while. However, going AWOL is not an option. If you miss more than 2 classes in a row without contacting me, I will forward your information to the Graduation Help Desk so they can check with you. If you have personal difficulties, please reach out to the Dean, me, and/or the myriad resources on campus that are here to help you succeed. Radio silence will make it hard for me to help you, so <i>please, please, please</i> let me know if you are having a hard time. We can always talk and come up with a path forward together.</p>

<p>Class Participation</p>	<p>Classroom Etiquette Policy</p> <p>As a shared learning space, I view the classroom as a place where everyone is entitled to express themselves however they are most comfortable. Please remember that though we may discuss some sensitive political and ethical topics, we are all members of the same community that values civility and mutual understanding. If you are offended by another student's language, views, or behavior, please bring it to my attention so that we can try to come to a resolution that respects everyone's right to self-expression while still addressing your concerns. If a situation warrants further action, I may refer the student to the Office of Student Conduct. As a student, you also have the right to submit complaints to the Office of Student Conduct if you believe another student's behavior crosses the line of acceptability.</p> <p><i>A Note from the Provost's Office Website:</i> Texas Senate Bill 17, the recent law that prohibits diversity, equity, and inclusion programs and activities at public universities in Texas, does not in any way apply to academic course instruction. Students should not feel the need to self-censor or limit their participation in academic courses pertaining to topics of race and racism, structural inequality, LGBTQ+ issues, or diversity, equity, and inclusion, and related topics.</p>
<p>Class Recordings</p>	<p>Students are expected to follow appropriate University policies and maintain the security of passwords used to access recorded lectures. Unless the AccessAbility Resource Center has approved the student to record the instruction, students are expressly prohibited from recording any part of this course. Recordings may not be published, reproduced, or shared with those not in the class, or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved AccessAbility Resource Center accommodation. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.</p>
<p>Grading (credit) Criteria</p>	<p><i>Film Responses (4%)</i> <i>APA Formatting Quizzes + In-class Diagnostic Assessment (5%)</i> <i>Learning Circle Facilitator with Discussion Questions (10%)</i> <i>Research Proposal Form + Proposal (8%)</i> <i>Annotated Bibliography (8%)</i> <i>Literature Review (10%)</i> <i>Peer Feedback #1 (5%)</i> <i>Peer Feedback #2 (5%)</i> <i>Rough Draft of Final Paper (10%)</i> <i>Final Paper (20%)</i> <i>Attendance & Participation (15%)</i></p>
<p>Make-up Exams</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Extra Credit</p>	<p>There are several planned opportunities for extra credit throughout the semester. Opportunities will be announced in class and posted on eLearning.</p>

Late Work	<p>Late submissions are accepted but will include a standard point deduction. This is to help encourage you to establish your personal time management skills and to reward you for keeping pace with the course expectations. The late penalty is applied to all assignments. For this course, the standard late penalty is 10% per day and will be calculated by eLearning.</p> <p>***The last day to submit any and all coursework is Wednesday 5/6 by midnight. Without prior arrangement, missing assignments will receive a 0 at that time.***</p>
Special Assignments	<p>Please review all assignments posted on eLearning.</p>
Classroom Citizenship	<p>Technology Policy</p> <p>You <i>may</i> use a device to view notes and the readings. There will also be resources and activities that we do together using devices. Please be courteous and minimize distractions. We all need to put in the time and engaged effort to co-create a learning space that respects everyone’s needs. Please remember that using your device inappropriately during class can disturb other students’ (and your instructor’s!) ability to concentrate. Unless the AccessAbility Resource Center has approved the student to record the instruction, students are <i>expressly prohibited</i> from recording any part of this course. This is to help foster the environment of psychological safety needed for learning. Recording (or taking pictures or videos) of any portion of our classes without our consent is a violation not only of our privacy and trust but also of the Student Code of Conduct.</p> <p>Communication Policy</p> <p>As a courtesy, and being mindful of everyone’s work-life balance, please join me in practicing the habit of sending email communications between business hours - Monday-Friday 9am-5pm (unless it is a time-sensitive matter). During the week, I usually answer messages within a few hours. After-hours and weekend email will be answered on the next business day. Confidential matters (including specific grades) should only be discussed in a private meeting. You may schedule these by speaking with me in class or sending me an email.</p>
Comet Creed	<p><i>This creed was voted on by the UT Dallas student body in 2014. It is a standard that Comets choose to live by and encourage others to do the same:</i></p> <p><i>“As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do.”</i></p>
Accommodations for Students with Disabilities	<p><i>I want to affirm your presence and your rights.</i> The University of Texas at Dallas is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. The syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. If you are seeking classroom accommodations under the Americans with</p>

	<p>Disabilities Act (2008), please register with the AccessAbility Resource Center, located in the Administration Building (AD), Suite 2.224. Their phone number is 972-883-2098, email: accessability@utdallas.edu(opens in a new tab) and website is https://accessability.utdallas.edu(opens in a new tab) . To receive academic accommodations for this class, please obtain the proper AccessAbility Resource Center letter of accommodation. I also request that you communicate directly with me at the beginning of the semester about specific accommodations based on your letter so that I can understand your unique learning needs and ensure I can meet them in a timely manner.</p>
<p>Academic Support Resources</p>	<p>Academic Integrity</p> <p>UTD students are bound by the academic policies outlined on the university website. Sanctions vary from a failing grade to expulsion, depending on the severity of the offense. The value of a UTD degree depends on everyone taking these standards seriously. It is your responsibility to review these policies and ask questions when you are unsure about something. All suspected violations of the honor code will be referred to the Office of Undergraduate Academic Integrity. Note: The eLearning platform uses TurnItIn software which automatically alerts me to copied texts, work that matches another student’s work, and even work that matches students’ works from previous courses, years, etc...</p> <p>Artificial Intelligence</p> <p>Due to the nature of our learning goals, this course has been designated an AI-free zone. The assignments have been designed to cultivate your creative thinking and personal expression. All written and verbal assignments are expected to be completed without any assistance from artificial intelligence. While preliminary content learning, brainstorming, and outlining may be AI-assisted, all words in completed assignment must be <i>your own words</i>. If you have questions or concerns, please let your instructor know.</p> <p>Detection: This course uses TurnItIn screening for AI-generated content. Across all BIS3320 sections, if the AI score of a submission exceeds 35%, your instructor is professionally obligated to request a formal review of your submission. The Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards will handle all reviews and let your instructor know their findings. This is to ensure that all students are treated fairly in this process.</p> <p>Notice of Best Practices: To ensure that you are able to show your work is in your own words, your instructor recommends that you <u>complete all research paper tasks in a single Word document showing the version history throughout the entire semester</u>. (If you use GoogleDocs, then you will need to provide a link to your version history on the downloaded docx file.) This practice will also assist the OSCCS conduct an efficient review of</p>

	<p>your work. If you choose to ignore this recommendation, it may be extremely difficult to prove that your writing was developed over time and in your own words.</p> <p>Please visit the Academic Support Resources page to view the University's academic support resources for all students.</p>
<p>UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures</p>	<p>Please visit the Syllabus Policies page to view the University's policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus.</p> <p>Please review the catalog sections regarding the credit/no credit or pass/fail grading option and withdrawal from class.</p>

The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.