Guidelines for Special Problems Courses That Are Literature Reviews
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The Syllabus
- Before the semester starts, you must design a syllabus for the course. The syllabus includes
    - A list of readings, organized into topics and broken down week by week.
    - Each reading should include the full citation, using the Chicago Manual of Style Author-Date System.
- The syllabus should include about 40 readings. A "reading" is defined as a scholarly article or book chapter. The number 40 is based on my approach to literature-oriented graduate courses, where I usually assign about three readings a week, but none in the first and last weeks.
- For a 15-week semester, this means your syllabus will have about 3 readings a week, tapering off the last week or two to give you time to write the final essay.

Preparing the Syllabus
- Understand that it will take at least several weeks to develop a syllabus, and that the syllabus must be finalized before the start of the semester.
- Start by identifying a set of topics, in collaboration with me. Usually the topics relate to your thesis research.
- Then identify readings for each topic. These readings should be new to you; the course is an opportunity for you to do new reading, not review literature you have read previously.
- I can often suggest possible readings for topics in my areas of expertise. But you are responsible for doing background research to identify relevant readings for each topic.
- The syllabus may go through minor modifications during the semester, for instance if you discover an exciting new book that was not on the original syllabus. But it should not go through major revisions once the semester starts. This means that it should be well designed to begin with – you should have conducted sufficient background research to identify the key readings for each topic *before* the syllabus was finalized.

The Flow of the Course
1. Every week, you will write an annotated bibliography entry for each of the items you read.

2. Every two weeks, I will meet with you for an hour to talk about the readings from the last two weeks. It is best if we can come up with a regular time and day to meet. At the meeting, you will share your ideas about the readings, reflect on relationships between readings, and so forth.

3. 24-48 hours before each meeting, you will email me all the annotated bibliography entries you have written since our last meeting. That way I can read them before our meeting.

4. At the end of the semester, you will write an essay (10 or more pages) that critically reflects on the texts you have read for the course, and identifies themes and patterns across the readings. You should also relate the readings to their thesis. The essay should cite all or nearly all of the readings. This essay can form the basis for the literature review chapter of your thesis.

5. The final deliverable is a very long report that brings together, in this order:
    o The essay
    o All of the annotated bibliography entries written over the course of the class, sorted alphabetically by author's last name
    This report will be a useful resource when you write your thesis, and perhaps also later in your career.

How to Write an Annotated Bibliography Entry

- Each entry of the annotated bibliography should start with full citation information for that reading, formatted according to the Chicago Manual of Style Author-Date System.
- The citation is followed by your review of the reading. The review can range from about a paragraph to two pages. It should provide two kinds of information:
    o A summary of the reading
    o How the reading relates to your thesis research, or why it is of interest and relevance to you
- Use single spacing
- Below is a sample entry from Sally Darling's annotated bibliography, used with her permission.

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Miller, Daniel, Elisabetta Costa, Nell Haynes, Tom McDonald, Razvan Nicolescu, Jolynna Sinanan, Juliano Spyer, Shriram Venkatraman, and Xinyuan Wang. 2016. "Chapter 7: Online and Offline Relationships." In *How the World Changed Social Media*, 100-112: UCL Press.

In this piece, Miller et al. challenge the idea that online and offline relationships are separate or mutually exclusive. Instead, they argue that online spaces support the development and strengthening of offline relationships and vice versa. This idea relies on a fundamental rejection of the concept of virtual spaces being separate from the "real" world. Instead, online communications and relationships are just that: communication and relationships, mediated through online spaces rather than phone or in-person conversations. As Miller et al. write, social media offers "scalable sociality," and a concrete representation of the various relationships in a person's life.

Miller et al. note that offline communication is just as "mediated" as online communication, writing "anthropologists reject the idea of an unmediated authenticity, regarding all aspects of identity and relationships as intrinsically mediated by cultural and social rules" (102). Online conversations, they write, are not exempt from the same rules as offline communication, though the medium is different. Miller et al. suggest that we understand online and offline spaces as two

additional "frames" that shape our social interactions, with specific social media platforms as "subframes" that further refine appropriate social interactions in that space (103-104).

Miller et al. write that cultural differences impact how social media forms relationships, with kinship studies offering insights into how individual cultures use social media. Similarly, these studies can also lend clues to why specific social media platforms are adopted in some countries and not others. The "realness" of online interactions is culturally defined, too, as Miller et al. point out. For example, in a study of Chinese industrial workers, they note that "many see entirely online friendships as 'chun' ('purer') relationships since they do not incur the pragmatic demands that often feature heavily in offline relationships and are less infused by social hierarchy" (108).

Miller et al. note that participants frequently differentiate between "online" and "offline" spaces, but the definition varies, even with the same participant. This observation is essential for my research in online communities. As a researcher, I have learned not to consider online and offline spaces as exclusively virtual or "real." However, my participants will likely have their own conceptions about online and offline spaces and the relationship (or lack of relationship) between the two. The conception that offline is more "real" than online can significantly impact how participants view attempts to form online communities that complement preexisting offline ones.