

# **ENGL 120Y: Data Literacy and Writing**

## **Spring 2026 (3 units)**

Day/Time: MW 6:00-7:15 pm  
Location: Calaveras 389 (face-to-face)  
Instructor: Julian Heather  
E-mail: warpig@csus.edu  
Phone: 8-1234  
Office Hours: MW 5:00-6:30

### **Course Description**

Introduces data literacy skills to prepare students to analyze and compose data-based arguments in a variety of contexts. Building from a consideration of students' personal experiences with data, the course provides students with techniques to evaluate and critique data-based texts and arguments and with criteria to evaluate the social implications of data use.

### **Prerequisites**

GWAR certification before Fall 09; or WPJ score of 80+; or 3-unit placement in ENGL 109M or ENGL 109W; or 4-unit placement in ENGL 109M or ENGL 109W and co-enrollment in ENGL 109X; or WPJ score 70 or 71 and co-enrollment in ENGL 109X.

### **Expected Learning Outcomes**

Students will be able to:

1. Assess data literacy development
2. Explain the importance of data-based arguments & the social implications of data use
3. Evaluate data-based texts and arguments
4. Create data-based arguments

### **GE Writing Intensive Learning Outcomes**

1. The course must build on the basic skills and knowledge acquired by students in their foundation courses in General Education or the Major
2. The course must expand students' knowledge by examining complex issues
3. The course must expand students' abilities to reason logically and to write clearly in prose
4. Students must be required to write not less than 5,000 words of clear and logical prose (not to include simple narrative or diary writing)
5. Instructors must work actively with students to sharpen analytical abilities and to improve their writing styles
6. Writing assignments must be spread over the entire semester (with at least 3000 of the 5,000 words due before the last two weeks of instruction)
7. Instructors must provide timely responses and evaluation of each writing assignment, and evaluations and comments must not only be about the subject matter content but also about writing skills.

### **Required Course Texts**

Harford, T. (2022). *The data detective: Ten easy rules to make sense of statistics*. ISBN: 978-0593084663

O'Neil, C. (2017). *Weapons of math destruction: How big data increases inequality and threatens democracy*. ISBN: 978-0553418835

## Course Policies

### 1. Attendance

Attendance will not be taken, but you are expected to be prepared for and attend all classes.

### 2. Deadlines

Late assignments will be accepted at my discretion without penalty if you provide me with documentation of a true emergency **before** the deadline. Otherwise, your grade will be lowered by one point for **each day** that an assignment is late.

### 3. Incompletes

These are granted only under limited circumstances and at my sole discretion. They must be requested and are NOT automatic.

### 4. Canvas

Canvas is an integral part of this course:

- Copies of PowerPoint slides will be made available for you to download from Canvas.
- All assignments will be submitted and returned electronically through Canvas.

You must have a SacLink account to access Canvas. Questions, problems, or comments concerning SacLink should be directed to the SacLink Help Desk in AIRC, Room 2005, 916-278-7337, or [helpdesk@csus.edu](mailto:helpdesk@csus.edu)

### 5. Technology Use

Please silence phones in class. You are welcome to use personal devices for tasks related to class activities. Please do not record me without my permission.

### 6. Emails

I typically answer emails within one business day of receiving them. I do not check email in the evenings or over the weekend.

### 7. Academic Honesty

University definition: "The act of incorporating the ideas, words, sentences, paragraphs, or parts thereof, or the specific substance of another's work, without giving appropriate credit, and representing the product as one's own work" (p. 104, CSUS Catalog). The presence of plagiarism on a paper, or the act of cheating on an exam, can be grounds for failing both the work and the course. Please see "Policies and Procedures Regarding Academic Honesty" at <http://www.csus.edu/umannual/AcademicHonestyPolicyandProcedures.htm> for further information. Know your rights and responsibilities!

### 8. Classroom Expectations

All students are expected to behave in ways that contribute to an inclusive and respectful culture consistent with the [Hornet Honor Code](#).

## Course Requirements

### 1. Data Literacy Narrative (ELO 1)

You will explain your personal development of data literacy. (target length = 750 words)

### 2. Statistics Journal (ELO 2 & 3)

Journal entries will be based on a different prompt each week and will prepare you for major course assignments. (200 words each; 2000 words total)

### 3. Analysis of Data-Based Argument (ELO 2 & 3)

You will choose one of the arguments you identified for your journal and look more closely at it using the analysis framework presented in *The data detective*. (target length = 750 words)

### 4. Community-Based Research Project (ELO 4)

This is a group project in which you will choose one of the domains discussed in Weapons of math destruction and write an essay exploring the use of big data in that domain in your local community. (target length = 1000 words)

### 5. Portfolio (ELO 1, 2, 3, & 4)

You will revise assignments and compile them into a portfolio, with an accompanying cover letter (target length = 500 words) in which you explain how the contents of your portfolio demonstrate your mastery of course objectives.

## Course Grading

Assignments		Course Grade	
1. Data Literacy Narrative	10%	A = 93-100	C = 73-76
2. Statistics Journal	10%	A- = 90-92	C- = 70-72
3. Analysis of Argument	10%	B+ = 87-89	D+ = 67-69
4. Research Project	10%	B = 83-86	D = 63-66
5. Portfolio	50%	B- = 80-82	D- = 60-62
		C+ = 77-79	F = 0-59

You must complete all assignments to get a passing grade in this course.

**All work must be original to this class.**

## Resources

### Student Disability Center

Sacramento State is committed to ensuring an accessible learning environment where course or instructional content are usable by all students and faculty. If you believe that you require disability-related academic adjustments for this class, please immediately contact the [Student Disability Center](#) to discuss eligibility. A current accommodation letter from the Student Disability Center is required before any modifications, above and beyond what is otherwise available for all other students in this class will be provided.

## **Student Health, Counseling, and Wellness Services**

Your physical and mental health are important to your success as a college student. [Student Health, Counseling, and Wellness Services](#) (SHCWS) in The WELL offers medical, counseling, and wellness services to help you get and stay healthy during your time at Sac State. SHCWS offers: Primary Care medical services, including sexual and reproductive healthcare, transgender care, and immunizations; urgent care for acute illness, injuries, and urgent counseling needs; pharmacy for prescriptions and over-the-counter products; mental health counseling, including individual sessions, group counseling, support groups, mindfulness training, and peer counseling; athletic training for sports injury rehabilitation; wellness services, including nutrition counseling, peer-led health education and wellness workshops, and free safer sex supplies; violence and sexual assault support services. Most services are covered by the Health Services fee and available at no additional cost.

## **Crisis Assistance & Resource Education Support (CARES)**

If you are experiencing challenges with food, housing, financial or other unique circumstances that are impacting your education, help is just a phone call or email away. The [CARES](#) office provides case management support for any enrolled student.

## **Title IX**

“The University requires faculty and staff to report any personal disclosures of sexual misconduct including rape, dating/domestic violence and stalking to the Title IX Coordinator. Students who do not wish to report their experience to me or the Title IX Coordinator may speak to someone confidentially by contacting Student Health and Counseling Services.”

## **Other Resources**

[University Policies](#)

[University Policy Manual Page for Academic Honesty Policy and Procedures](#)

[CSUS Campus Library Webpage on Plagiarism](#)

## Course Calendar (subject to change)

DD = *The Data Detective*; WOMD = *Weapons of Math Destruction*

Week	In-Class Work	Work Due
1	Discuss <i>Data Detective</i> Intro (p. 1-20)	Statistics Journal
2	Discuss <i>Data Detective</i> Rules 1 & 2 (pp. 21-66)	Statistics Journal
3	Discuss <i>Data Detective</i> Rules 3 & 4 (pp. 67-106)  Peer Feedback on Data Literacy Narrative	Statistics Journal Draft of Data Literacy Narrative Due
4	Discuss <i>Data Detective</i> Rules 5 & 6 (pp. 107-154)	Statistics Journal Revised Data Literacy Narrative Due
5	Discuss <i>Data Detective</i> Rules 7 & 8 (pp. 155-214)  Instructor Feedback on Data Literacy Narrative returned	Statistics Journal
6	Discuss <i>Data Detective</i> Rules 9 & 10 (pp. 215-266)	Statistics Journal
7	Discuss <i>Data Detective</i> Conclusion (pp. 267-282)	Statistics Journal
8	Discuss <i>Weapons of Math Destruction</i> Intro & Ch. 1-2  Peer Feedback on Analysis of Data-Based Argument	Statistics Journal Draft of Analysis of Data-Based Argument Due
9	Discuss <i>Weapons of Math Destruction</i> Ch. 3-4	Statistics Journal  Revised Analysis of Data-Based Argument Due
10	Discuss <i>Weapons of Math Destruction</i> Ch. 5-6  Instructor Feedback on Analysis of Data-Based Argument returned	Statistics Journal
11	Discuss <i>Weapons of Math Destruction</i> Ch. 7-8	Statistics Journal
12	Discuss <i>Weapons of Math Destruction</i> Ch. 9-10	Statistics Journal
13	Work on Community-Based Research Project	
14	Work on Community-Based Research Project	Draft of Community-Based Research Project Due
15	Work on Portfolio  Peer Feedback on Community-Based Research Project and Portfolio	Revised Community-Based Research Project Due
Finals		Portfolio