

Syllabus “Wikipedia English”

This is an intensive and project-oriented course which requires you to produce real-world results. It is based on an earlier course which also was based on Wikipedia during with most over 550 and more on their TOEFL improved that score, some by as much as 30 points.

Class time will be devoted to covering cultural concepts and working with Wikipedia in the beginning, but moving more towards “assessment” and collaboration among participants in order to help you move your projects forward.

Despite the untraditional nature of the class, please be aware that this will not only require as much of your time as any other English class, it will require somewhat more and more thought and consideration. I will help you in any way that I can, but I cannot do the work for you. Please realize that your work in the second or third partial will require you to collaborate with people outside of the school, people who do not have to work with you. This means you will need to use all of the communication skills we cover, and spend considerable amount of time building the relationships you need in order to get those persons to commit to you. There are many, many in the Wiki world who are extremely helpful and want to work with you, you just need to convince them that you are serious. However, I would not have you do this if I did not have faith in you.

Partial 1 “Wikipedia as a culture”/ Culture and writing

During this partial we will explore the virtual world of Wikipedia, using the principles of “culture” and intercultural communication. We will learn how Wikipedia works, the rules to follow to be a Wikipedian, not the least of which is learning to make connections with other Wikipedians online.

Secondly, we will begin to compare and contrast writing styles between English and Spanish, primarily in the encyclopedia format. We will also contrast objective encyclopedic writing with opinion writing, namely the reflective essay.

Goals of the first partial

- Learning to participate in and contribute to Wikipedia
- Learning how to translate articles from English to Spanish, with a minimum of 2 “good,” “featured” or other approved by me translated and uploaded into Spanish Wikipedia
- One five-paragraph reflective essay on your experience in the first partial

Partial 2 “Thinking and organizing information in English”

In this partial, you will contribute to English language Wikipedia, on topic related to Mexico and/or your major. You will compose two articles. The first will be an article using English language sources as sources of information. The second will allow you to use Spanish language sources. The main difficulty here will be to not let what you read in Spanish affect how you express the ideas in English.

You will continue communicating with your contacts in Wikipedia as mentors to help you write the new articles.

Goals of the second partial

- Critical thinking in English
- Two new articles of 500 words or more in English language Wikipedia. Extra credit if it is assessed as “B” grade or higher
- One five-paragraph reflective essay on your experience from the first partial to the present

Partial 3 “Creating an independent final project”

By this time, you will have sufficient experience and cultural knowledge to know what possibilities there are in Wikipedia/Wikimedia for those of your major. You will also have a good sense of my requirements for your learning. You will need to negotiate your project of this partial with me as well as other Wikimedians and/or outside agencies such as business concerns, government agencies etc. Use contacts you have developed up to this point for this, including those from your department (major).

You will need to work out with me how the project will proceed and how much will be done for third partial evaluation and what will be finished for your final evaluation. The basic planning of the project must be completed in the first week of the partial!

Goals of the third partial

- Plan an independent study project with some kind of tangible result. Suggestions include an article for “good” or “featured” status or the creation of cooperation between an outside agency and Wikipedia, which will yield a tangible result by the end of the semester. Projects may be done solo or in groups, but be aware that the scope of the project must reflect the number of people required to do it.
- Reflective essay/progress report for the project at the end of the third partial.

Your final grade is the completion of the project set out in the third partial.