

Honors 370 V01: What is Evidence?

Spring 2024

College of Mount Saint Vincent

INSTRUCTOR	Professor Archibald and Professor Nalencz
CLASS MEETING DAY AND TIMES	MW 12:50-3:55
CLASS LOCATION	FH 304
E-MAIL	matthew.archibald@mountsaintvincent.edu, leonard.nalencz@mountsaintvincent.edu
OFFICE HOURS	Prof. Archibald FH 427: MW 11:05-12:30, TR 11:05-2:00, or by appointment. Prof. Nalencz FH Humanities Hall A321: MW 4-6pm, or by appointment.

PURPOSE of the SYLLABUS:

The course syllabus is the plan for the semester. The topics for each class are listed by date, and the reading for the class will be posted on Canvas.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

What Is Evidence? is an interdisciplinary exploration of a very old, basic problem: what is the basis for what we call knowledge? This course will consider the question of evidence in a wide variety of scientific and humanistic fields: what is evidence in journalism? What is forensic evidence, in the courtroom? What is scientific evidence—of evolution, or of climate change? We will range widely in these disciplines, but ultimately the course aspires to teach students how to do careful research, and how to identify rules of evidence in a number of fields.

(6 credits)

TEXTS AND OTHER INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS:

The readings for each class will be posted on the Canvas page for our course. Please print out the article(s), read them, and bring the hard copy to class.

Laptops and phones are **not** permitted unless specific assignments call for them. Please bring a notebook and a pen along with the assigned reading to class; you may be able to use your phone/tablet/laptop, but only for particular exercises and occasions.

COURSE OBJECTIVES and ASSESSMENT of STUDENT LEARNING:

The objective of this course is that students attain the following learning outcomes. Students will be assessed through the mechanisms listed in the right-hand column for each outcome.

Student Learning Outcome (Course)	Alignment with College/ Core Outcomes and Departmental Learning Outcomes	Course Assessment
1. Analyze data from a variety of sources to draw conclusions for arguments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analytical skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly writing assignments Class participation Group discussions
2. Build arguments using data as foundations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analytical skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group discussions Class participation Essays Research project
3. Respond to the arguments of others in writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analytical Skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Essays Research project Weekly homework
4. Communicate effectively in standard written English as demonstrated by completing writing assignments supported by relevant facts and proper citation of a range of scholarly sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analytical skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly writing assignments Essays Research project

5. Communicate effectively in oral form as demonstrated by oral presentation of a data-driven	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical thinking • Effective communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-class discussion and group leadership • Oral Presentation of Research Project
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1. **GRADING POLICIES:**

Grading is based on the quality of: two essays, a class presentation, a midterm exam, and the quality of participation in class. This is a breakdown of the final grade:

First Essay	15%
Midterm	20%
Class participation and in-class exercises	25%
Class presentation	15%
Final Essay	25%

Course Schedule:

All reading assignments on the syllabus must be completed before the class period for which they are listed. These are located in Canvas under files>readings_____

Weeks
1-2 Introduction to evidence and legal evidence

29-Jan Nalencz: Glaspell, “Trifles”

31-Jan Archibald Foundations

5-Feb Nalencz: Burnett, *A Trial by Jury*
7-Feb Archibald Advanced foundations

Week 3 Evidence and rhetoric

12-Feb Jonathan Rosenberg
14-Feb Nalencz: Oreskes, *Why Trust Science?*

Week 4 Journalistic evidence

19-Feb David Kirkpatrick: Evidence and/in Journalism
 Archibald: Evidence and
21-Feb Correction/Retraction
 Nalencz: Plagiarism and
 Method

Week 5 Psychology and social scientific evidence

26-Feb Susan Burns (1-2)
28-Feb John McCullagh (2-4)

4-Mar Lepore, The Last Archive
 (Nalencz)
6-Mar The Logic of Social Research (Archibald)

Week 7 Literary evidence

11-Mar Nalencz, The Handkerchief in
Othello

13-Mar Midterm!

Week 8 Evidence in the natural sciences

18-Mar David Gallo (archival evidence- not natural
sciences)

20-Mar Andrew Cook (chemistry)

Midterm break

Week 9 Overview and problems

3-Apr Archibald (conspiracy theories and the social world)

Week 10 Overview and problems (anti-evidence / conspiracy theories)

8-Apr David Wolfsdorf (philosophy)

10-Apr Thomas Willis (Maryvale 201- drawing and evidence)

Week 11

15-Apr Art continued (Archibald)

17-Apr Nalencz

Week 12 Legal evidence revisited

22-Apr	Guest?
24-Apr	Josh Maximon (rules of evidence in law)
Weeks 13-14	Summary
29-Apr	Class presentations
1-May	Class presentations
6-May	Class presentations

COURSE POLICIES

Academic Honesty

Academic integrity should be reflected in all aspects of student work: examinations, responses, quizzes, and any other materials submitted in fulfillment of course requirements must be the student's own work. All types of academic fraud, the illicit giving and receiving of information on tests, submissions, and plagiarism are all forms of cheating. **Plagiarism is the passing off as your own someone else's words or ideas whether from an electronic or print source.** This copying may be done intentionally or unintentionally by incorrect documentation; it still constitutes plagiarism. If students are unsure whether a specific course of action would constitute plagiarism or cheating, it is their responsibility to consult with their instructor in advance. It is also the students' responsibility to read the College's full plagiarism policy. The plagiarism policy can be found in hard copy in Humanities Hall and on line on the College's web site: www.mountsaintvincent.edu. The College of Mount Saint Vincent is committed to helping students to uphold the ethical standards of academic integrity in all areas of study. The instructor has the right to use electronic devices to help prevent plagiarism.

Students who plagiarize will fail that particular assignment, have a required meeting with the Dean of Students, and bear a permanent mention on their college record.

Academic Support Services

The College of Mount Saint Vincent offers a range of academic support services which might be helpful to students in this course; these services are described at <http://www.mountsaintvincent.edu/385.htm>.

Attendance

Students who test positive for Covid-19 will be excused for their class absences and allowed to complete make-up assignments during the period of mandatory isolation only if they submit a copy of their positive test results to stuscreen@mountsaintvincent.edu. Students who do not submit copies of their positive tests will be marked absent.

Students who have symptoms that they think might be related to a Covid-19 infection will be excused from class and allowed to complete make-up assignments only if they submit proof of taking a pcr Covid-19 test within 24 hours of reporting their symptoms to stuscreen@mountsaintvincent.edu. Students who do not submit proof of taking a pcr test for Covid-19 within 24 hours of reporting symptoms will be marked absent.

Students in isolation due to testing positive for Covid-19 will be required to complete an equivalent amount of comparable work on the scheduled class day to be considered “present” for that class session. If a student does not complete these assignments on their scheduled date, then they will be marked absent for that class session.

Students who submit proof of a positive test for Covid-19 to stuscreen@mountsaintvincent.edu will be supported without penalty through their period of mandatory isolation. Students are however advised to manage their overall number of absences throughout the semester carefully since an excessive number of missed classes due to health problems, whether Covid-19 related or not, will require a medical leave of absence.

Test positive for Covid-19?

Send a copy of your positive test results to stuscreen@mountsaintvincent.edu so Oxley can notify your professors. If you don't send in proof of your positive test, you will be marked absent from classes.

Feel sick and think you might have Covid-19?

Get tested within 24 hours and send proof that you took a pcr test for Covid-19 to stuscreen@mountsaintvincent.edu so Oxley can notify your professors. If you don't send in proof that you took a pcr test for Covid-19, you will be marked absent from your classes.

Disabilities

Students who need special accommodations or services at the College of Mount Saint Vincent must provide the College up-to-date documentation verifying their specific diagnosed disability. These students should submit their documentation to verify eligibility under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Copies of the College's Policy on Students with Learning Disabilities are available in the Office of Admission, the Office of the Dean of the Undergraduate College, the Center for Academic Advising, and the Academic Resource Center. In order for these accommodations to take effect, the student is advised to complete this process as soon as possible after admission to the College. In addition, students must sign an Authorized Release Form at the beginning of every semester that permits the College to disclose the student's special accommodations. All accommodations and services

are provided by the Academic Resource Center. Provisions may include note taking or books on tape, testing in the Center, professional tutoring, and additional services as needed. For more information, please see <http://www.mountsaintvincent.edu/1311.htm>.