Syllabus
Academic Inquiry 1XX3 [1XX3 = freshman level, 3-SCHs]
[Official course # will be assigned by UTSA when added to course inventory.]
University of Texas at San Antonio
Fall 2014

I. Course Description

This course provides an opportunity for students to develop an awareness of the ways knowledge is generated by introducing students to the tools and study of the different means, materials, methods, nature, and ethics of academic inquiry. The course presents interdisciplinary investigations through lectures, presentations, faculty-guided discussions, and collaborative learning. The course includes skills and techniques in critical thinking, empirical and quantitative analysis, investigation, problem solving, learning, and research appropriate to the acquisition of knowledge in varying fields of study. (Undergraduate Catalog)

II. Purpose

The purpose of this course is to guide student discovery of the generation and development of knowledge through various fields of inquiry. The course will examine: how questions are formulated and investigations conducted within each field of inquiry; how language influences inquiry; how context influences inquiry; and how each discipline has different means, materials, and methods of inquiry.

III. Learning Outcomes

This course contributes to the following measurable outcomes:

Learning Outcome	Addresses State Objective
1. The ability to orally and in writing, explain diverse fields of inquiry, including different ways of thinking used in critical and creative investigations across various disciplines.	Critical Thinking Communication Skills
2. The ability to describe and use general research methods and library resources.	Critical Thinking
3. The ability to identify, formulate, analyze, and evaluate a problem or issue.	Critical Thinking
4. The ability to communicate effectively, in writing and orally; the ability to interpret and explain symbolic and visual representations.	Communication Skills
5. The ability to interpret quantitative representations from a variety of disciplines.	Empirical & Quantitative Skills
6. The ability to use empirical or quantitative analysis	Empirical & Quantitative Skills

appropriate to a particular discipline.	
7. The ability to describe the ways in which the knowledge generated by academic inquiry may impact particular social groups, particularly the marginalized and disadvantaged.	Social Responsibility
8. The ability to utilize the knowledge, experiences, and values of communities and social groups as the basis for academic inquiry.	Social Responsibility
9. The ability to engage in collaborative learning with peers and faculty.	Teamwork (Optional State Objective.)

V. Course Components/Structure

A. Introduction to Course, including Library Orientation (Week 1)

B. Development of Knowledge (Weeks 2-7)

This portion of the course will expose students to a range of fields of inquiry and the various means, materials, and methods that are used to generate knowledge. Each week will focus on a particular field of inquiry as defined in the categories: natural sciences, mathematics, social sciences, humanities, literary arts, and visual/musical/performing arts. This section consists of four components:

- Presentations (live or via video) from UTSA faculty and /or other national researchers that enable students to gain insights into the investigative study and research conducted in various disciplines. Subsequent corollary discussions in the class will provide the vehicle for further exploration of the lecture topic. The presentations will introduce students to applicable research tools, materials, and methods. [Critical Thinking]
- Readings complementary to that week's presentation will be assigned from a collection of essays entitled *Academic Inquiry*. Narratives of inquiry using various methods in the different disciplines and fields of study are presented in the collection. [Critical Thinking, Empirical & Quantitative Skills]
- Class Discussions will provide the vehicle for further exploration of the presentation and readings topics. [Communication Skills]
- Workbook Assignments tied to that week's topic will be completed by each student. [Critical Thinking]

C. In-Class Midterm Exam (Week 8)

D. Inquiry Project Development and Presentations (Weeks 9-15)

Using the Development of Knowledge section as background, students will conduct their own group inquiry projects. [Critical Thinking] Each group will be expected to complete

a written inquiry paper that addresses one academic question from different perspectives—i.e., natural sciences, mathematics, social sciences, humanities, literary arts, and visual/musical/performing arts. [Critical Thinking, Communication Skills, Teamwork]

The paper should address the methodology used to look for answers/solutions, including the process used to gather information; the justification for a solution or answer; and a discussion of the analysis and synthesis of the results, to include a discussion of the merits of the results, the credibility, usefulness, and significance of the outcome of the inquiry, particularly in regard to the community at large and specific social groups. [Critical Thinking, Empirical & Quantitative Skills, Social Responsibility]

Students are encouraged to use print, websites, places, people, papers, objects and artifacts, still images and video as sources. [Critical Thinking] Particular attention should be paid to the information resources that specific communities and social groups may provide. [Social Responsibility] Final papers/presentations may include videos, images, and performances. [Communication Skills]

E. Final Exam Meeting (Final Exam Week)
There will not be a graded final exam, but students will meet to engage in a final discussion of the course experience. [Critical Thinking, Communication Skills]

VII. Course Grading

Final Class grade will be based on the following scale:

Class attendance/participation	10%
Workbook Assignments	25%
Midterm Exam	15%
Inquiry Project— Group Score	25%
Inquiry Project— Individual Score	25%