

**UNVS 125M, McNair Research Colloquium, 01**  
**Spring 2026**

<b>Instructors:</b>	<u>Maria Elena Cruz, PhD</u> <u>Taylor-Dawn Francis, MA</u> <u>Howard Tang</u>
<b>Office Location:</b>	<u>Student Services Center (SSC) 518</u> <u>SSS/McNair Office</u> <u>Directions: Enter SSC from 9th St, head up the right ramp,</u> <u>turn right, and go down the hall.</u>
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<b>Phone:</b>	<u>Dr. Cruz: (408) 924-2539</u> <u>Taylor-Dawn: (408) 924-2631</u>
<b>Office Hours:</b>	<u>By appointment <b>only</b> (please schedule at least <b>1 business day</b> in advance).</u>
<b>Class Days/Time:</b>	<u>Fridays, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm</u>
<b>Classroom:</b>	<u>Sweeney Hall 444</u>
<b>Prerequisite:</b>	<u>Acceptance into the McNair Scholars Program</u>

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**Course Introduction**

This course is designed to assist students in the SJSU McNair Scholars Program to prepare for graduate study at the doctoral level. Lecture topics will include: research methodology, research writing, and the protocols for presenting research results at conferences. Graduate school experiences and academic expectations will also be discussed. Workshops will also be tailored to

address students' academic needs. *Prerequisite: Students must be accepted into the McNair Scholars Program. Repeatable for credit. Credit/No Credit.*

## **Course Goals and Student Learning Objectives**

The goals of this course are to prepare students for conducting summer research, improve their knowledge of the graduate school application process, and increase their preparation for the Graduate Record Examination (GRE).

## **Course Content Learning Outcomes**

*Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:*

LO1: Understand the different methodologies utilized in research.

LO2: Be able to prepare a research proposal.

LO3: Develop a focused and viable research topic.

LO4: Know the criteria for choosing universities and programs to which they will apply.

LO5: Have a strategy for GRE preparation and examination.

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## **Required Texts/Readings**

*All materials are provided.*

Wayne C., Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph Williams, Joseph Bizup, and William T. Fitzgerald. 2024. *The Craft of Research*. 5th ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

### **Library Liaison:**

Carli Lowe

Email: [carli.lowe@sjsu.edu](mailto:carli.lowe@sjsu.edu)

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## **Classroom Expectations**

**All students are expected to:**

- Attend every class session.
- Arrive to class on time.
- Participate in classroom discussions and activities.
- Behave politely with classmates and observe safety rules.
- Set phones to silent.
  - *Any student using their phone for texting will be asked to leave the classroom/Zoom session. **In case of an emergency**, please step outside/leave the Zoom call.*

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## Assignments and Grading Policy

Since this is a seminar (colloquia) course, this is a **Pass/Fail** class. In order to pass this course, students must complete **all** course components. Assignments will be turned in on Canvas unless otherwise noted. *The course breakdown is as follows:*

- **Attendance - 25%**
  - *If you are unable to attend a class meeting and have notified us beforehand, you are allowed to make up these points by scheduling a class briefing with Taylor-Dawn and/or Howard the following week.*
- **Participation in all class discussions - 25%**
- **Reading the required materials - 25%**
- **Completing a journal article draft for publication - 25%**

## Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act

If you require course adaptations, or accommodations due to a disability, or if you require that special arrangements be made in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with Taylor-Dawn as soon as possible.

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## Class Schedule

*Subject to change based on students' and instructors' needs.*

### Week 1 - February 6

- Go over the syllabus.

- Introduce yourself to your fellow Scholars.
    - Give us a brief overview of the research you are currently interested in. Don't worry if you aren't entirely sure what it will be about yet. A rough idea/idea/topic is fine.
    - Discuss the imposter syndrome.
      - How has it affected your academic journey so far?
      - What are some effective strategies to help overcome/alleviate the negative feelings that are often associated with it?
  - **Class Assignment: McNair Assessments**
  - **Reading Homework: Craft of Research, pp. 21-48**
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## **Week 2 - February 13**

- Turning your Research Question into a Potential Project.
    - We will be examining how to transform your research question into a research project that you can present and publish. You will be asked to summarize your ideas, discuss their importance, and consider opposing arguments for your potential research question. Afterward, you will share **one** way that you can improve upon your current topic.
  - **Due on Canvas @ 11:59 PM: A list of all the SROPs you applied to**
  - **Due in Class Next Week: 1-Page Summary of Research Topic**
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## **Week 3 - February 20**

- Understanding the Elevator Pitch.
    - You will practice how to convey the scope of your research in 2 minutes or less.
  - Writing an effective Research Proposal.
    - You will learn how to write an effective research proposal in order for your project to be recognized by a mentor and/or receive funding.
      - What should a great proposal look like? What is the proper formatting? How long should it be?
  - **Class Workshop: Editing 1-Page Summaries of Research Topics**
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## **Week 4 - February 27**

- Carli Lowe will give a presentation on effective ways to utilize the SJSU Library databases.
  - Please be mindful of Carli's time and arrive a little early, if possible.
  - Location: MLK Library 217

- **Reading Homework: Craft of Research, pp. 53-72, 97-113**
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### **Week 5 - March 6**

- Components of a Literature Review.
    - *How should one be structured/outlined?*
    - *How should the information in a literature review be presented to the reader? What are some key dos and don'ts?*
  - **Due on Canvas: 2 Research Article Summaries**
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### **Week 6 - March 13**

- The Path to Graduate School.
    - *We will discuss the graduate school application process and general requirements.*
      - *What are the components of a graduate school application?*
      - *What are some strategies/techniques to make your application as strong as possible?*
      - *How can I stand out from other applicants?*
  - **Assignment Due on Canvas @ 11:59 PM: List of 10 Graduate Schools**
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### **Week 7 - March 20**

- Crafting an effective Curriculum Vitae (CV).
    - *We will be discussing what a CV is, how it can strategically represent your academic achievements, and how to tailor it to specific graduate school applications.*
  - **Class Workshop: Creating an outline for your CV**
  - **Reading Homework: Craft of Research, pp. 252-270**
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### **Week 8 - March 27: Personal Statement/Statement of Purpose**

- Practice Elevator Pitch.
- How to present yourself in a Personal Statement/Statement of Purpose.
  - *Since the personal statement/statement of purpose is one of the first glimpses that graduate school committees will have of you when applying to graduate school, we will discuss this very crucial element of your application.*
    - *What separates a good statement from a bad one?*

- *How should they be structured?*
  - *What is the difference between a personal statement and statement of purpose?*
  - **Class Workshop: Crafting Your Personal Statement**
  - **Assignment Due on Canvas @ 11:59 PM: Research Proposal Draft**
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### **Week 9 - April 3: Spring Break**

- No class. Have fun and get some rest!
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### **Week 10 - April 10**

- IRB fundamentals.
    - *Discuss how an IRB is essential to specific types of research. What is an IRB? Who needs to complete one? How should it be approached?*
  - **Assignment Due on Canvas @ 11:59 PM: CV**
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### **Week 11 - April 17**

- Summer research proposal and weekly timeline.
    - *We will go through your proposals and discuss individual research timelines one-on-one.*
  - **Reading Homework: Craft of Research, pp. 272-281**
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### **Week 12 - April 24**

#### **Research Presentations**

- *Each student will spend 5 - 10 min. presenting their research project/topic to the class.*
  - *If you aren't sure about your project at this stage, you can present a proposed project idea that you will continue to flesh out during the summer.*
- You are required to create a short handout or PowerPoint slides.
- Criteria for presentation:
  - **Intro:** *Give a brief overview of your topic.*
  - **Background/significance:** *Why is your research important? Has it been done before? If it has, how will your approach be different?*
  - **Research Design/Methods:** *How do you plan to carry out this project? Will you be conducting interviews, collecting data, or writing a literature review?*

- **Assignment Due on Canvas @ 11:59 PM: IRB or Literature Review Draft**
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- **Thursday, April 30 - 12:00 - 2:00 pm McNair Scholars Research Reception**

- *Meeting Room 1*

- **Prepare for Finals!**
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### **June 2-3, 2025: McNair Boot Camp**

- **Boot Camp** - a mandatory event hosted by the McNair Scholars Program which consists of informative sessions on but not limited to:
  - *Getting into graduate school,*
  - *Writing a strong personal statement/statement of purpose,*
  - *How to talk about your research interests,*
  - *Faculty and student advice about surviving graduate school and teaching.*