

# Syllabus: Student-Faculty Collaborative Research for Foster Care in the U.S., Spring 2020



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## Instructor Information

**Name:** Rachael D. Reavis, Ph.D.

**Office:** LBC 305

**Appointments:** Sign up to meet with me at [rachaelreavis.youcanbook.me](https://rachaelreavis.youcanbook.me). You do not need to email first — just sign up. Be sure to indicate what the meeting is about. If there is not a time that works for you, send me an email with **several** possible times so that we can schedule something quickly and painlessly.

**Email:** [reavira@earlham.edu](mailto:reavira@earlham.edu)

## Course Description & Goals

### Course Goals

In this Student-Faculty Collaborative Research Project, we will be working together to:

1. Learn about the foster care system in the United States
  1. The history of child welfare in the United States
  2. The effects of child abuse (including neglect), parental incarceration, and parental separation (removal from the home) on children's social, emotional, and physical development
  3. State and federal policies that govern child welfare in the United States

2. Design a course (or portions thereof) about Foster Care in the United States that will be taught for the first time in Spring 2021.
  1. Select readings, podcasts, videos, or other sources of information.
  2. Design in-class and out-of-class assignments to help students reach the assigned goals.

## Earlham Goals

1. Students will **communicate** with each other and the professor through discussion, writing, and presentation. Students will gain skills in communicating to a range of audiences, including professionals, students, and the general public.
2. Students will **investigate** a number of topics related to foster care from a wide range of sources, including academic, popular press, podcasts, and videos. Students will carefully analyze the information and evaluate which sources will be the most powerful and critical for future students.
3. Students will **integrate** their knowledge and skills across multiple sources. Students will integrate information they have learned with information shared by their team members. For students who have relevant personal or professional experience, they will integrate course material with their real-world experiences.
4. Students will **create** and innovate by designing high-quality, creative assignments for future students to gain and assess their knowledge and skills.
5. Students will **reflect** on their own career paths in light of the knowledge gained over the semester

## Assignments

This is fairly broad and will likely shift and grow as we work together this semester.

1. Sometimes students will be expected to identify potential readings, podcasts, videos, etc. that could be relevant for the assigned topic. As a group, we will identify a list of sources that we want to explore this semester.

2. Students will be expected to read, listen to, watch, etc. their source(s) and be able to present them clearly to the group. Sometimes all of us will review the same source, sometimes a subgroup will review the source, and sometimes each individual will be presenting individually.
3. Students will design assignments for future students. Students will be expected to contribute to the brainstorm table. Students will be expected to create detailed designs of approximately three assignments, at least one of which is an in-class assignment. These may be created individually or in groups, which we will decide together. We will do some of these assignments together as a class and assess them.

## Expectations

### Preparation & Reliability

For this to be successful, we all need to be able to count on each other to complete the assigned tasks. We all get behind sometimes, but this should be a rare occurrence, happening no more than once per semester. (Unless an extended sickness or other issue arises.) You should take notes or some other method for sharing information about your readings if you have to be absent. That way your knowledge can still be shared in your absence.

### Attendance

#### Attendance Policy - General

You are expected to attend each meeting, arrive on time, and be engaged. **If you miss more than five classes, you will be asked to drop the course** (if before the drop date) **or will fail the course** (if after the drop date). You were all chosen because you are dedicated students interested in this topic, so I do not anticipate this will be an issue.

#### **Athletics, the Arts, Academics, & All the life stuff that comes up**

If you have to miss class for a foreseeable reason (athletics, performances, conferences, court dates, weddings, etc.), just let me know in advance. We will

discuss what arrangements need to be made. In some cases, I will ask you to provide summaries of what you read or video introductions to some assignment. In other cases, I'll ask you to review what we worked on & provide me with a short summary via email (roughly a paragraph, with a reaction to what you learned/thought about what we did while you were away.)

## **Illness**

Don't come to class sick! I do not want your illness, so please don't come. If you feel well enough to participate, but don't want to infect the rest of us, you can video chat in (just give me a heads up). If you video chat in, it will not count as an absence. You have five absences, which should be enough to cover foreseeable absences and a sickness or two. If you develop a serious illness that causes you to miss more than the allotted classes, we can discuss options.

## **Participation**

We will all participate each day in conversation and other tasks. We will strive to balance engaged participation with the need to give space for everyone and not dominate. Again, I anticipate that everyone will participate adequately. If I notice over the course of 3-4 classes that a student is not meeting participation expectations, I will speak to the student individually and make a performance improvement plan. If you know that there is a reason you will be less participatory than usual on a given day, just let me know beforehand. As long as this is a rare occurrence, it will be fine. I would rather have you in class quietly listening than have you stay home simply because you don't feel like participating one day.

## **Communication**

We are a team and communication is key! We will decide as a team what communication platform(s) we will use and will agree to check those platforms regularly. If troublesome communication patterns arise, I will discuss them individually with students or as a group. Again, I don't anticipate this will be an issue.

## **Respect**

We will all respect each other as people, even if we deeply disagree with one another. We will discuss topics that will be personally sensitive for some. We will also discuss parenting practices and other practices that are culturally based. We must be respectful of everyone's perspectives, experiences, and cultural backgrounds, while critically examining empirical research on the topic.

## Grades

Rachael will check in individually with students roughly every 3 weeks and let them know which grade they are on target for. She will communicate earlier as needed.

## Technology Policy

### Electronic Devices in Class

You should each bring a device to class each day, because we will often be working collaboratively and should all be able to do so. However, you are expected to be on-task if using your device. If someone is speaking or presenting, please make an announcement at the beginning if you will be taking notes, etc. If you are not taking notes and need (or want) to look something relevant up, just let us know. If we don't know that you are looking something up on your phone, it can look like you are being rude. Again, communication is key!

### Protecting Your Work

**You need to protect yourself against technology problems.** You need to develop work habits that take potential technological problems into account. **These habits will serve you in your career.** Technological problems are a fact of life, and are not considered unforeseen issues. (Your dorm falling into a sinkhole would qualify as “unforeseen”.) Start early and save often. Always keep a backup of your work. Carbonite and Backblaze are two services that will automatically back your work up into a cloud. Or you can invest in an external hard drive. Or you can email yourself your work.

Computer viruses, lost flash drives, corrupted files, incompatible formats, WiFi connectivity problems – none of these unfortunate events should be considered an emergency. Take the proper steps to ensure that your work will not be lost forever. Learn the locations and operating hours of all the computer labs on campus. Do not procrastinate. The Help Desk is also available ([helpdesk@earlham.edu](mailto:helpdesk@earlham.edu)).

\*Drawn from material from George H. Williams

## Late Policy

### Late Penalty Waivers

You each have three "free" opportunities during the semester to have an assignment be one day late. If it is something that you are presenting in class, I need at least 48-hours notice that you will not have your assignment ready. If you let me know in less than that time, you will not be able to use your Late Penalty Waivers.

We will keep track of your waivers right here:

▼ Kennedy Buyer

3

2

1

▼ Mallory Crosby

3

2

1

▼ Salma Khalaf

3

2

1

▼ Esther Mano

3

2

1

▼ Grace Muma

3

2

1

▼ Emma O'Brien

3

2

1

▼ Avery Salerno

3

2

1

## Late Assignments & Penalties

Assignments later than four days will not be graded. Assignments will be graded up to 4 days late; however, they will be graded when I get a chance to do it. Thus, you may have to wait several weeks for feedback.



We will decide together how much assignments will be & what late penalties look like. For example, assignments could be individually penalized (at least 10% penalty per day) or we could have it decrease another part of the grade (such as participation).

# Earlham Policies

## Writing Center

The writing center is available to you at any point in the writing process, from idea generation to final proofing & editing. You can use the writing center for smaller assignments (like an assignment proposal) or larger assignments (like a paper).

## Counseling Services

College can be a stressful time, and can exacerbate existing issues or bring new ones up. We will also be discussing difficult topics. Please do not hesitate to reach out for help and make an appointment with counseling services:

<http://www.earlham.edu/counseling-services/>

## Students with Disabilities

Students with a documented disability (e.g., physical, learning, psychiatric, visual, hearing, etc.) who need to arrange reasonable classroom accommodations should request accommodation memos from the Academic Enrichment Center and contact their instructors each semester. For greater success, students are strongly encouraged to visit the Academic Enrichment Center within the first two weeks of each semester to begin the process. <http://www.earlham.edu/policies-and-handbooks/academic/policy-on-student-learning-disabilities/>

## Academic Integrity

All students are expected to conduct themselves with honesty and integrity in this course. The honor code is both a privilege and a responsibility, and you are expected to take it seriously. **Suspected infractions, such as plagiarism will be treated seriously and will be reported.** Furthermore, if you are aware of a violation of academic integrity, it is your responsibility to take action. Violations may result in a 0 for the assignment or failure of the course.

Learning to think for yourself, assess information judiciously, and speak and write effectively in your own voice is at the heart of a liberal arts education and global citizenship. Treasure and cultivate these skills. Papers and other work, including

digital creations, downloaded or copied from other sources, or in which words or ideas belonging to others have been deliberately misrepresented as your own, will receive an automatic F, as they thwart your learning process and damage the integrity of knowledge-discovery. If you have questions about how to find, integrate, and properly cite sources, never hesitate to ask for help.

An excellent place to find help in knowing when and how to cite others' work appropriately can be found on the Libraries page: The site also includes Earlham's full statement on academic integrity and procedures for addressing academic violations of the Student Code of Conduct.