Contact information for professor:
Name: Prof. Dr. Kate Connelly
Tel: 02/ 614 8191
E-mail: kate.connelly@vub.ac.be
Office: PL5. 0.02 – English and Math Workspace office

Class meets: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 16:30-18:30

Office hours: Mondays, 10:00-15:00
              Tuesdays, 10:00-15:00
              Wednesdays, 10:00-12:00
              Thursdays, 10:00-12:00

Course Description
Research and Presentation Skills introduces students to the academic conventions surrounding research and presentation. Students will be guided through the basic processes of academic research, beginning with the use of library resources and databases, through the creation of a research proposal, to the development of an annotated bibliography and research log. The course includes discussion of ethical issues surrounding the use and presentation of facts, statistics and images, and the evaluation of sources. Additionally, students will learn how to give (read) papers, deliver informative and persuasive speeches, use a range of visual aids (including ‘slideware’), and develop and defend their research proposal. A significant portion of the class concerns the development of time- and project-management skills that are essential for first-semester students at Vesalius College.

Objectives
Students who pass RPS should be able to:
- Make use of library resources; reference works, bibliographies, research databases, and internet search engines;
- Evaluate research sources and materials;
- Generate, express and elaborate valid, logical and legitimate ideas, propositions and thesis statements;
- Support the validity of their ideas and positions;
• Master bibliography skills (particularly MLA) and the use of style manuals
• Determine a purpose and an audience for research and a variety of presentation styles – impromptu, extemporaneous, small group; with or without visual support (PPT and etc) – and demonstrate the ability to adapt to different audiences;
• Deliver clear, effective and poised academic/professional presentations;
• Understand the requirements of academic honesty and how to avoid plagiarism.

Required materials:
  *This book is available as an e-book. I have no objection if you prefer to use the book electronically, as long as you manage to take notes and are prepared to discuss the book – without your computer open – during class.
• Course Reader (to be purchased at the university copy center)

Recommended
• Access to PowerPoint or similar ‘slide-ware’
• Access to bibliography-generating software
• Subscriptions to valid websites and online journals relating to your Final Research Project

Determination of Final Grade
The students will be evaluated on the basis of their performance as follows:

- Speeches (2 longer, prepared speeches @15% each) 30%
- Class work (short, impromptu speeches and in-class exercises) 10%
- Source Analyses/Summaries (2@10% each) 20%
- Midterm examination 15%
- Research Project (proposal, ABSL + oral defence) 15%
- Final exam 10%

Grading Scale of Vesalius College
The Vesalius College grading scale, in line with the Flemish Educational norms, is:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Scale of 100</th>
<th>C+</th>
<th>66-68</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>85-100</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>62-65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>81-84</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>58-61</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>77-80</td>
<td>D+</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>50-53</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>69-72</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-49</td>
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</tbody>
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Academic Honesty
Academic dishonesty is NOT tolerated in this course. Academic honesty is not only an ethical issue but also the foundation of scholarship. Cheating and plagiarism are therefore serious breaches of academic integrity. I expect you to do your academic work with the greatest integrity and to the highest standards possible. Equally, I expect all the work you do to be yours and yours alone. I also expect that work submitted for this class has not been submitted for any other class, whether at Vesalius or another academic institution. Plagiarism is described at length in the College Catalog, with examples. Excuses such as “I didn’t know” or “But it’s only one sentence” or “I forgot to cite that one part” are, therefore, useless.

Following the College policy (see the Vesalius College Catalog), cheating and plagiarism cases will be communicated in writing to the Associate Dean for Students and submitted to the Student Conduct Committee for disciplinary action “without passion or prejudice” – but also without mercy.

*** IMPORTANT REMARKS***

I. Attendance matters at Vesalius College: Attendance is a central focus of the first-year courses at Vesalius College. If a student is unexplainably absent, a message will be sent to the student’s academic advisor for follow-up, and then to the Associate Dean.

Students with two unexcused absences may be invited to withdraw from the course. An unexcused absence is any absence for which you cannot provide reputable, serious, written evidence (a doctor’s note; an affidavit regarding jury duty, etc.) Appointments (with doctors, city hall, the cable guy, job interviews…) are not normally excused, so please make these appointments outside of class time. There is no need to inform me of the reason for any unexcused absence. I will simply mark you as absent and inform your advisor.

Please note: An absence is NOT ‘excused’ simply because you tell a professor that you will not be in class!

We do quite a lot of work during class so it’s important to be prepared and present – both literally and figuratively! You will not be given the opportunity to turn in your assignments late, nor to make-up any missed assignments or quizzes without a legitimate, written excused absence. I do not accept retroactive doctor’s notes where the college has not been previously notified; especially when these absences fall during the first week of school, on an oral presentation day, or at either end of the Fall Recess or Spring Break.

- Being absent on a due date is counter-productive. It does not excuse you from handing in your assignments on time. If you will be absent, please ensure that one of your classmates brings your assignment – as a
hard, printed copy – to class, (not to reception; not to my mailbox) and turns it in for you.

o If you know you will be absent on a due date (i.e., a family wedding in Japan, participation in the Model UN in NY, … ) you must contact me well beforehand to organize an alternative, always earlier, submission date.

II. I do not accept late papers or assignments. (Really. Ask around.) All written assignments are due in hard copy at the beginning of class. I do not generally accept assignments by email. I do not accept assignments left at reception or left in my mailbox.

III. Preparing a reading/transcript of a speech for homework means – at a minimum – that you will have read and annotated the text, and will have established the thesis and main points, in order of importance, the author is arguing.

IV. Typing is required for all assignments not done in class. Please see the formatting guidelines appended to this syllabus.

Regarding Deportment:
• Once class has started, please do not leave the classroom.

• Feel free to bring drinks to class, but no food, please.

• I strenuously object to students regularly using laptops during class. Having computers on during class can be distracting to other students. You should not spend class time checking email/FB or doing homework for your other classes. Also, you’ll probably remember information better if you write it down in pen and ink. On the other hand, I might specifically request that you bring your laptops to class if I am planning a group exercise...