

Book Project

As you know from reading the syllabus, 12% of the course grade will be comprised of a project. Since this is an election year, the project will be different from usual. **The project deadlines and descriptions on the syllabus will be replaced by those in this document.**

The project will be broken into two phases, each representing 6% of your final course grade. Phase One was the Election Prediction project that you completed last month. Phase Two will be discussed now.

1 Phase Two: Book Review and Report

As you know, Phase Two involves a book review and reports on a text that involves statistics, mathematics, or predictive inference. You were given the choice among three texts:

1. *Dataclysm: Love, Sex, Race, and Identity—What Our Online Lives Tell Us about Our Offline Selves*, by Christian Rudder;
2. *How Not to Be Wrong*, by Jordan Ellenberg;
3. *Moneyball: The Art of Winning an Unfair Game*, by Michael Lewis.

By now, you should already have joined the group on Canvas that corresponds to your book of choice. It will be there, via the Canvas page, that assignments related to this project will be given, and prompts will be discussed each week.

1.1 Deliverables

Each week, there will be 30–50 pages of reading assigned, and you will be required to participate in an online discussion topic on Canvas. You must post something related to the prompt each week.

One of the homework assignments each week will also be a summary of the required reading; these summaries will not count toward your homework grades, but toward your project grades. The grading rubric for the summaries is given below.

There will be no final report.

1.2 Presentations

Presentations on any of the topics in the reading are optional but encouraged, and your extra effort will be reflected in your project grade. If you would like to present on any topic, please give me 24 hours' notice. Your presentation can be on the topic of your choice, and can be the length of your choice.

1.3 Writing Advice

For writing feedback and support, visit MCLA's Writing Studio in Murdock 120. There you will find trained Writing Associates who can help you at any stage of the writing process: from understanding assignments and brainstorming ideas to planning, revising and polishing final drafts. The Writing Associates are available Monday through Thursday, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. For more information and to make an appointment, go to the Writing Studio website at www.mcla.edu/writingstudio.

1.4 Grading

Your project grade will be 75% based on the average of your summary grades, and 25% based on the number and quality of your posts in the weekly book discussion page on Canvas.

Your weekly summaries will be graded on the quality of your writing and the insight of your observations. A summary should be directed toward imagined readers who have not done the reading being summarized. The purpose of a summary is to give these persons a clear overview of the reading's main points. The criteria for a summary are:

1. Accuracy of content;
2. Comprehensiveness and balance;
3. Clarity, readability, and grammatical correctness.

The specific components of your grade will be computed according to the following rubric:

- [5 points]** A 5 summary meets all the criteria. The writer understands the reading thoroughly. The main points in the reading appear in the summary with all main points proportionately developed (that is, the writer does not spend excessive time on one main point while neglecting other main points). The summary should be as comprehensive as possible and should read smoothly, with appropriate transitions between ideas. Sentences should be clear, without vagueness or ambiguity and without grammatical or mechanical errors.
- [4 points]** A 4 summary should still be very good, but it can be weaker than a 5 summary in one area. It may have excellent accuracy and balance but show occasional problems in sentence structure or correctness. Or it may be clearly written but be somewhat unbalanced or less comprehensive than a 5 summary or show a minor misunderstanding of the reading.
- [3 points]** A score of 3 means good but not excellent. Typically, a 3 summary will reveal a generally accurate understanding of the reading, but it will be notably weaker in the quality of writing. Or it may be well written but cover only part of the reading.
- [2 points]** A 2 summary must have strength in at least one area of competence, and should still be good enough to convince the grader that the writer has understood the reading fairly well. However, a 2 summary typically is not written well enough to convey an understanding of the reading to someone who has not already read it. Typically, the sentence structure of a 2 summary is not sophisticated enough to convey the sense of hierarchy and subordination found in the reading.
- [1 point]** A 1 summary is weak in all areas of competence, either because it is so poorly written that the reader cannot understand the content, or because the content is inaccurate or seriously disorganized. However, a 1 essay convinces the grader that the writer has done the reading and is struggling to understand it.
- [0 points]** A 0 summary fails to meet any of the areas of competence.