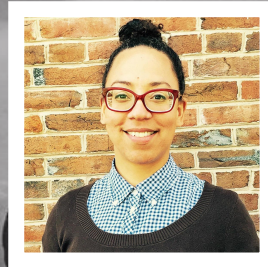# Glamping up your co-teaching to provide elegant instruction and rich learning experiences in the research and writing tent

Roger Minick. Airstream at Monument Valley, Arizona, 1979. Artstor

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This American Life

573 | November 27, 2015

Status Update

Most of the time, the updates we share about our lives are small and inconsequential. This week, status updates that interrupt daily life. We hear two friends talk about how one of them has become rich and famous. And an entire town gets a status update on itself.

Download | Share a clip | Transcript

https://www.thisamericanlife.org/573/status-update

Here's a clip we've used in our class on adolescence, take a listen.

Would Ira Glass make an episode about teenagers without teenagers being prominently featured throughout? Absolutely not. Imagine an episode with just social psychologists only talking at each other about teens. Not only boring, but an irresponsible approach to the topic.

Librarians spend a lot of time talking amongst ourselves about what we are doing/want to do in the classroom. We read articles and go to conferences, etc. But if we could spend half as much time (as we do talking to each other) talking to **students** and talking to **faculty**, it might give us a better and faster approach to achieving the learning goals we seek to deliver. Keeping this in mind, we're going to talk with you all about our own approach to collaboration and course design.

1. Librarian and Faculty Collaboration
2. Field Notes: Lessons and the Class
3. Q & A

Courtesy of Yosemite Pines RV Resort

What are the notecards for? One is for you and one is for us. We ask that you use one card to write down any questions you may have as we go through the presentation. We'll take 10 mins at the end to try and go through those questions

The other card is for you to think about and write down a strategy we discuss that you can deploy. We want you to note potential collaborators, based on some of the things we say, and also new ways in which you could approach faculty on a project like this, one that seeks to more fully embed the IL frames into writing-intensive course design.

1.

Librarian & Faculty Collaboration

How did this collaboration come to be and what do some of the lessons look like?

Both newish to campus, both with backgrounds grounded in pedagogy, Shannon had already come to Aliza's other classes to do "on-off" library sessions. We both identified shared flaw in the system, sharing
a fundamental belief that our student population was good at conducting traditional lab science research, but was often terrible at communicating that research, on the page or out loud.

If you can name anyone at your home institution with whom you share some of these features or common diagnostic complaints, please put them on your notecard as possible collaborators. These similarities and backgrounds laid the groundwork for what became a very effective partnership. Look for those people!

Collaboration Models

1. Helicopter drop in

Problem = The current model: contact by faculty, often one we've worked with before, and we set the date and put it in our calendar (i.e. Can you come do the thing you did last semester?). This kind of intervention is **"Level 1"**. It provides something valuable to students. But you are parachuting/helicoptering into the campsite and then lifting out again -- and this, therefore, doesn't give you sufficient context for what is happening with students and where they are in their process of inquiry-based research and writing (see our earlier example of student voices).

Collaboration Models

1. Helicopter drop in
2. Yes AND, Yes BUT... I could also

Next Level (Level 2 Intervention): Yes, I can come to your class *AND* I could also…
or: Yes, BUT, I could this instead...

- Leverage: Draw out faculty member for coffee, compel complaints about student products, share more meaningful collaborations (yourself, other faculty, other campus initiatives).
- "Point of need" effectiveness vs. one-shot when Professor has a dentist appointment and needs class coverage.
- Articulate known issues with student products: scoping a topic, developing viable or "right-sized" research questions, authoritative sources vs. source diversity (for shaping and entering a scholarly conversation)
- Assignment design: encourage need for **explicit (as opposed to tacit)** instruction: aka "You get what you ask for."

Take-away: Transferable Marketing for other initiatives and collaborations. If you can get to this level, you are doing great!

Collaboration Models

1. Helicopter drop in
2. Yes AND, Yes BUT... I could also
3. **Dream Team**

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LEVEL 3 (one version)

- Dream Team: Rare opportunity for full co-teaching collaborative model that we will shortly address in terms of the class itself
- Allowed us to go back and master Level 2 and also expand reach
  - Shannon's example: History Department curriculum @ Kenyon
  - Aliza's example: Developing an integrated writing curriculum with the Department of Biophysics @ JHU

How exactly did this class come into existence?

- Articulated problem in research and writing at JHU
- Decided to collaborate on Experimental Course to address the problem
- Backwards Design

- Identified shared problem, decided to work together
- Decided on topic = needed to be both **interdisciplinary** and **engaging.** Settled on ADOLESCENCE
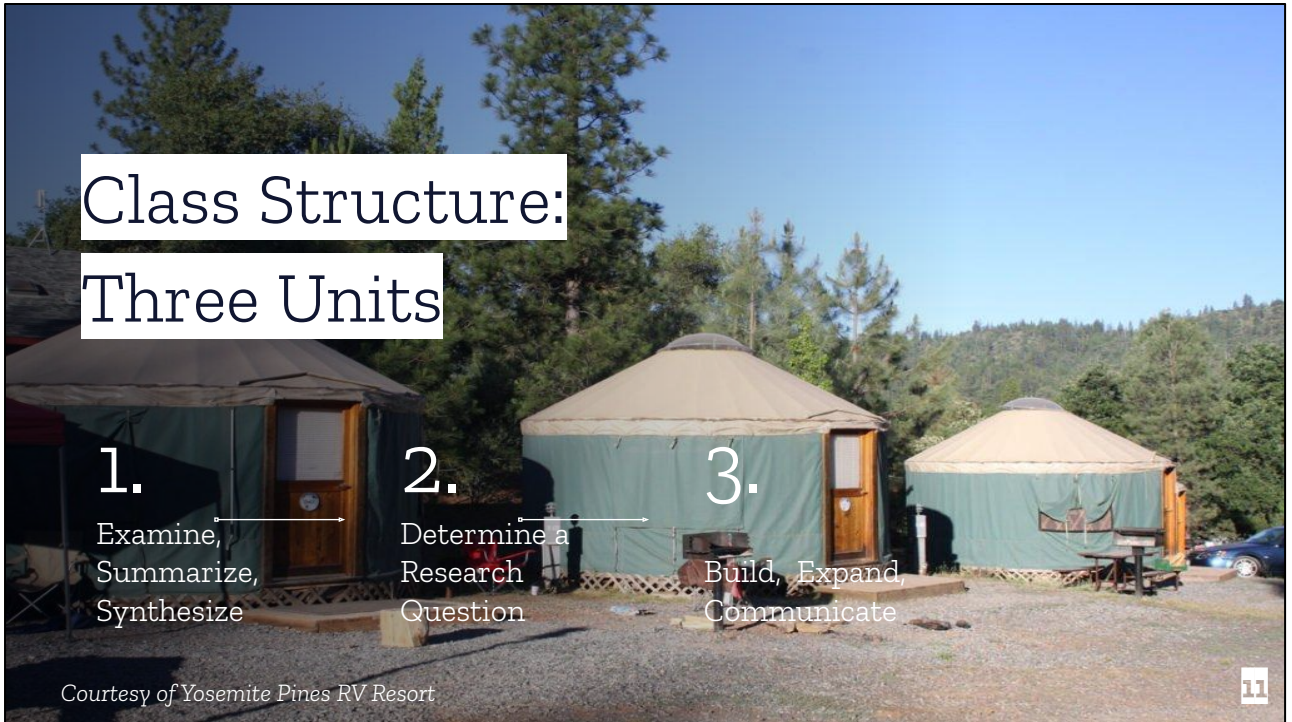- Backwards design = end with final written product (research paper) as evidence of shared learning outcomes

Shared Learning Outcomes

1. Developing bounded Research Questions
2. Creating a conversation of diverse sources
3. Evaluating sources critically to help answer the Research Question
4. Communicating arguments across contexts

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Learning outcomes that address both the IL frames and writing pedagogy

Class Structure: Three Units

1. Examine, Summarize, Synthesize

2. Determine a Research Question

3. Build, Expand, Communicate

Courtesy of Yosemite Pines RV Resort

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OVERALL STRUCTURE OF COURSE / AKA THE LEARNING SEQUENCE

- Unit 1 – Examine, Summarize, & Synthesize some views of adolescence (diff disciplinary perspectives, different KINDS of sources)
- Unit 2 – Determine a Research Question, create a conversation among sources, and BEGIN to enter that conversation
- Unit 3 – Build on Unit 2's work and write a full Research Paper by identifying gaps or holes in essay, filling or conceding them, and making original contributions
- At the end - PRESENT WORK TO THE PUBLIC via mini "ted-Talk" presentation and possible publication.

2.

Field Notes: Lesson Plans and the Class

Albert Bierstadt, Yosemite Valley, Artstor

Creator: Bierstadt, Albert, 1830-1902
Title: Yosemite Valley
Date: [n.d.]
Material: oil on canvas

Unit I.

Example Lessons

The Reminiscence Bump and Research Across the Disciplines, Source Anatomy, Sample Analysis, and Peer Review

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Image: Pixabay (no attribution required)

1. FIRST DAY
   - "Reminiscence bump" writing exercise -- share aloud (vulnerability / establish expectations of a safe space)
   - Disciplinary difference and how the sausage gets made: broke students into 3 groups for Hist / Chem / Sociology (Question: how is research CONDUCTED and then COMMUNICATED in each discipline?);
   - Set up first shared source with an evaluation framework (discipline? Audience? Evidence? assumptions?). Point: PRACTICE IDENTIFYING THE PROCESS FROM RESEARCH TO NARRATIVE, from "conducting" to communication. Goal: reveals the "man behind the curtain."

2. ANOTHER DAY
   - SOURCE WORK
   (1) Summary/Abstracts;
   (2) Source Evaluation via Source anatomies (next slide);
   (3) Synthesis (points of intersection among sources).
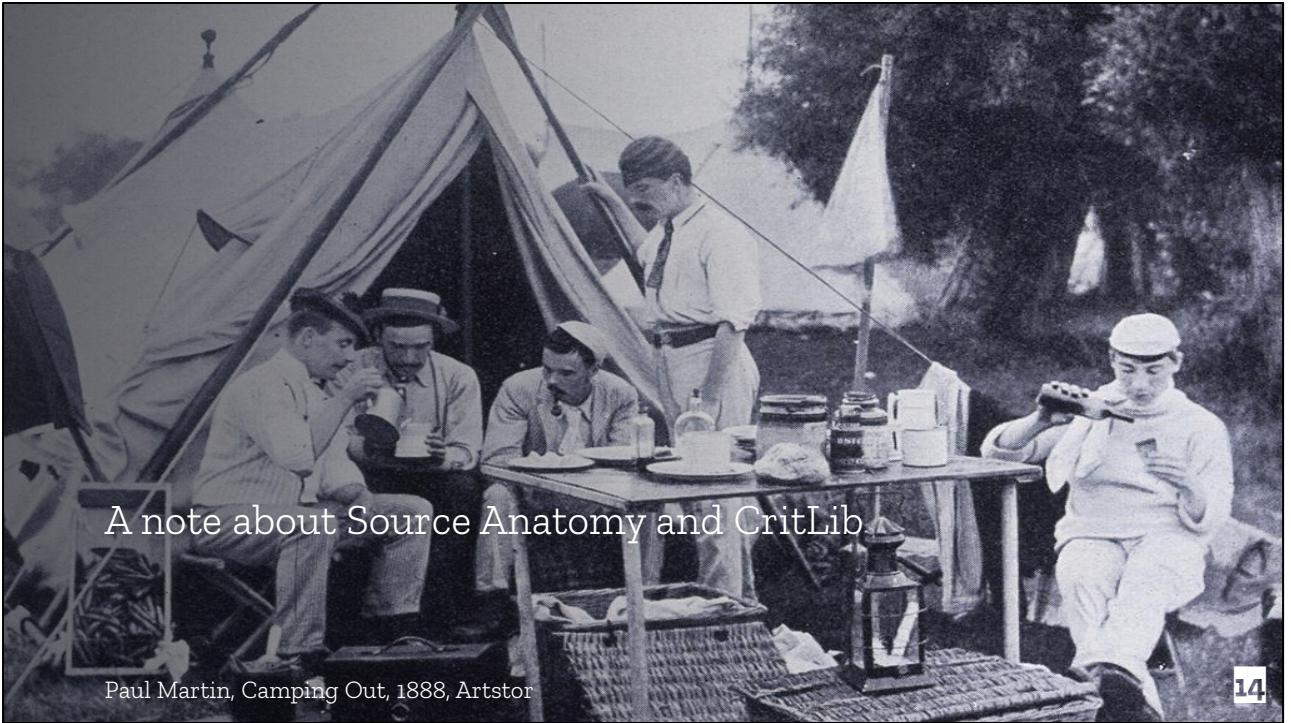
A note about Source Anatomy and CritLib.

Paul Martin, Camping Out, 1888, Artstor

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Who is at the table? Who, historically, has been at the table? At the university? Allowed and privileged enough to do research? Part of scholarship? Etc. What does that mean when you are analyzing sources to use? How can this benefit you and your argument? How can it put you or your argument at a disadvantage?

Cite:
Creator: Martin, Paul, 1864-1944
Title: Camping Out
Date: 1888

Unit II.

Example Lessons

Sample Analysis, Map Conversation and Sources

Goal: The 3 "E's" -- establish, evaluate, enter a scholarly conversation

HOW?

1.   ASK A BOUNDED RESEARCH QUESTION:
     a.   Students submit 3 possible RQs to shared Google doc; they evaluate each other's on the Google Doc and provide suggestions/feedback. Student revise.
     b.   Students meet with us in "lighting round" tutorial conferences (approximately 10 minutes each), interrogating the scope and articulation of the RQ.

2.   MAKE A MAP! (see next slide)

RESULT: A "Foundational Essay" perhaps 6-8 pages in length, which lays out the 3 E's using a small cohort of sources, or what we called "the loudest voices in the room." Not to be confused with the most authoritative...
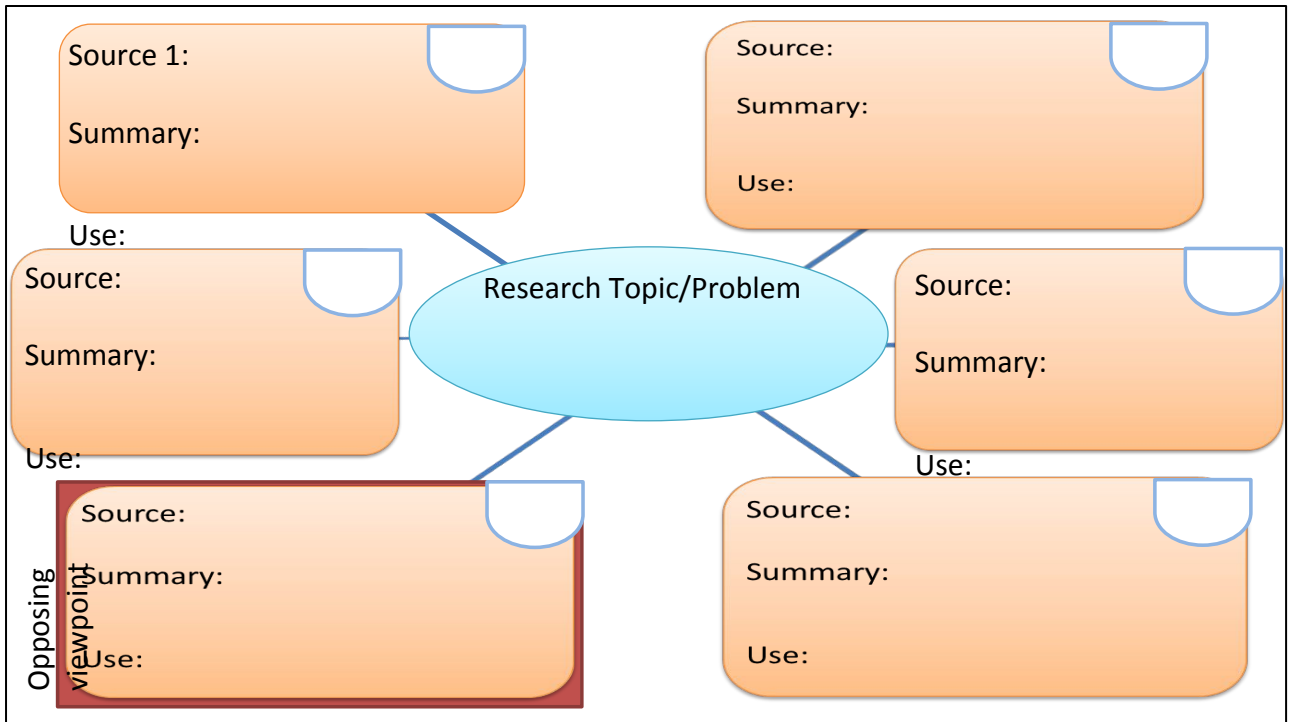
- Above is a simple example of a "Source Conversation Map" that helps students clarify the shape of the conversation they want to enter. Weaker students tend to like this, with its set boxes, etc.
- Stronger students often benefit from visualizing their own conversation maps on a BLANK PAGE (see examples on next slide).

Unit III.

Example Lessons

Filling Holes, Original Contributions, Expansion Proposals, Switching Format, New Framing, Presenting

**GOAL: DEEPEN AND EXPAND THE CONVERSATION, AND THE STUDENT'S ARGUMENT.**

HOW?

- Diagnostics: Problems with **WRITING?** (weak argumentation, unsupported claims, unaddressed counter-args) or problems with **SOURCES?** (missing voices or constituencies; key disciplinary perspective not included? missing data, etc.)
- Point: IDENTIFY WHAT'S MISSING (holes or gaps) OR UNSTEADY and then FILL or ACKNOWLEDGE.
- Challenge students to switch MODE of communication. Have them deliver quick (5-7 minute) presentations -- visual, verbal - or both.
- Do presentation **before** revising final essay.

Over-diagnosis drives over-prescription of ADHD medication

Prevalence of ADHD and ADHD Medication Use Among Children and Adolescents in United States

89% 11% 4% 7%

- Not ADHD
- ADHD, Medicated
- ADHD, Not Medicated
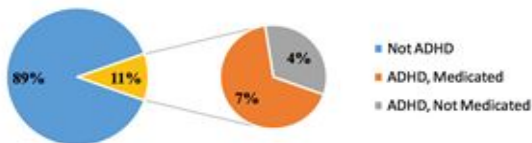
Prevalence of ADHD and ADHD Medication Use Among Children and Adolescents in Canada

95% 5% 3% 2%

- Not ADHD
- ADHD, Medicated
- ADHD, Not Medicated
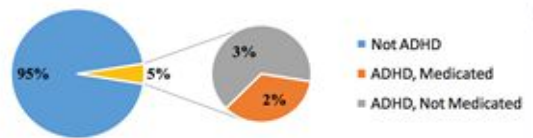
Students also added original content in Unit 3, like taking statistics and turning them into their own data visualizations (see example above). More impactful and quicker understanding of the relationship of data being discussed. Students also conducted interviews or convened focus groups.

Changing Habits of Mind

Cite: Yosemite Pines Resort website

- As the class started and we worked together, we both developed new habits of mind when it came to talking about analysis, synthesis, and sources. We both began to use each other's language and saw the importance of doing so. This allowed us to be more supple in our pedagogy, understanding better what reached students, what wasn't coming through at all, where do they tend to falter and thrive when learning these concepts, and so forth.
- SHANNON: I now almost exclusively use the term "voices" as opposed to sources. Each of these sources is a voice from a different perspective and what baggage and strength do these varied sources bring to the table? Where can you fill or account for holes in argument, given their varied backgrounds?
- ALIZA: I have fundamentally changed the way I teach students how to assess "authority" in source evaluation. But in a bigger sense, I now have an appreciation for when issues in student essays are more writing-related, or source-related, and can now direct students so much better in their research/writing process.

Glamping!

▫ Like Glamping, "camp" is set up for students in order to structure and facilitate meaningful learning experiences - transferable in the wild!

Courtesy of Yosemite Pines RV Resort

Scene setting work in advance:

- **Concluding Glamping Metapho**r: we have set up camp; we have pitched the tents and built the fire and provided all of the special devices and accoutrements along the way so that the students were not wandering around in the dark woods trying and failing to find the path to the water. The end goal is the same: set up a course campsite so that students are frustrated at the things they ***should*** be frustrated by (and often later come to appreciate) and not frustrated (or disengaged) by the elements that don't serve the end-products or goals.
- This changes the KINDS of questions we get from students / they are functioning at a higher level much earlier in the process. Example: student working on depression and social media consumption (esp. Twenge's data studies from 2014). Previous query: "I can't find things in the databases and therefore there is nothing on my topic." vs. "Twenge seems to be the only source providing some research on this topic, and it's largely correlational. So how can I move forward and do this topic justice?" Or, "this source talks about minority adolescence but doesn't include minority voices. How can I account for that?"
- This yields lots of opportunity for critical reflection when one moves past technicalities and focuses on the larger concepts.
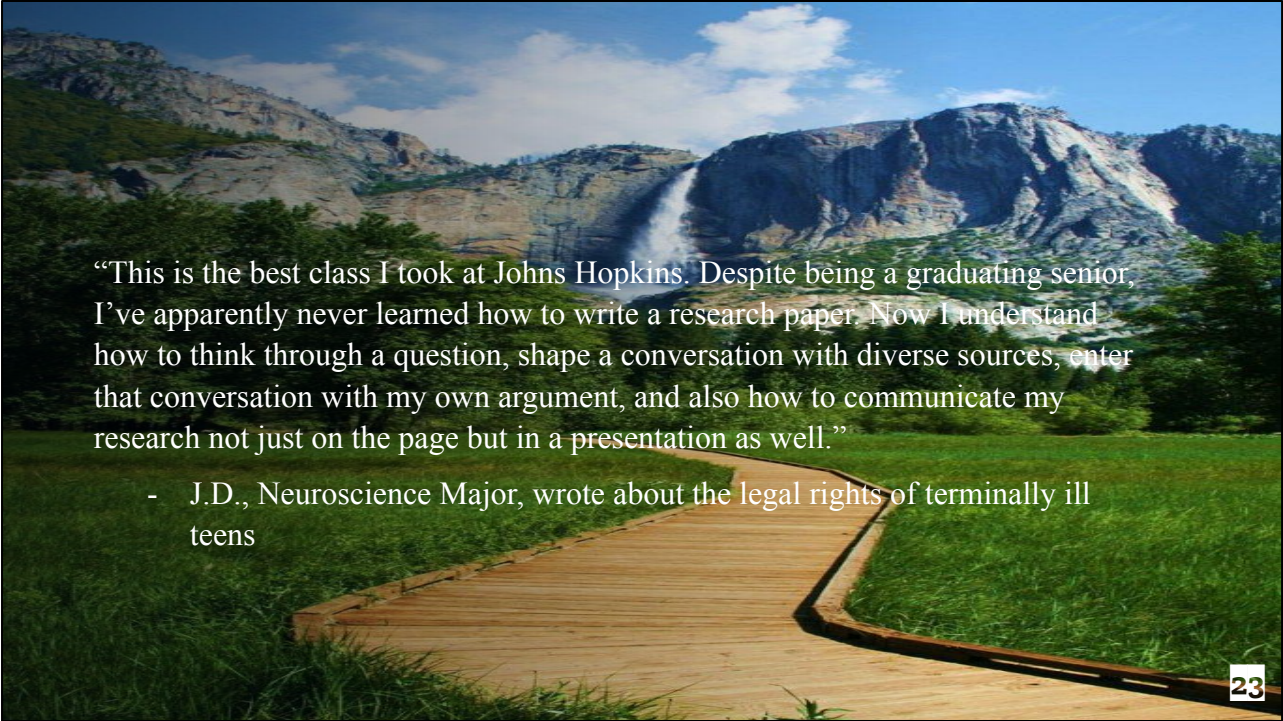- These are the kinds of conversations you can only have when **embedded into the class**!

3.

Q&A

Albert Bierstadt, Yosemite Valley, Artstor

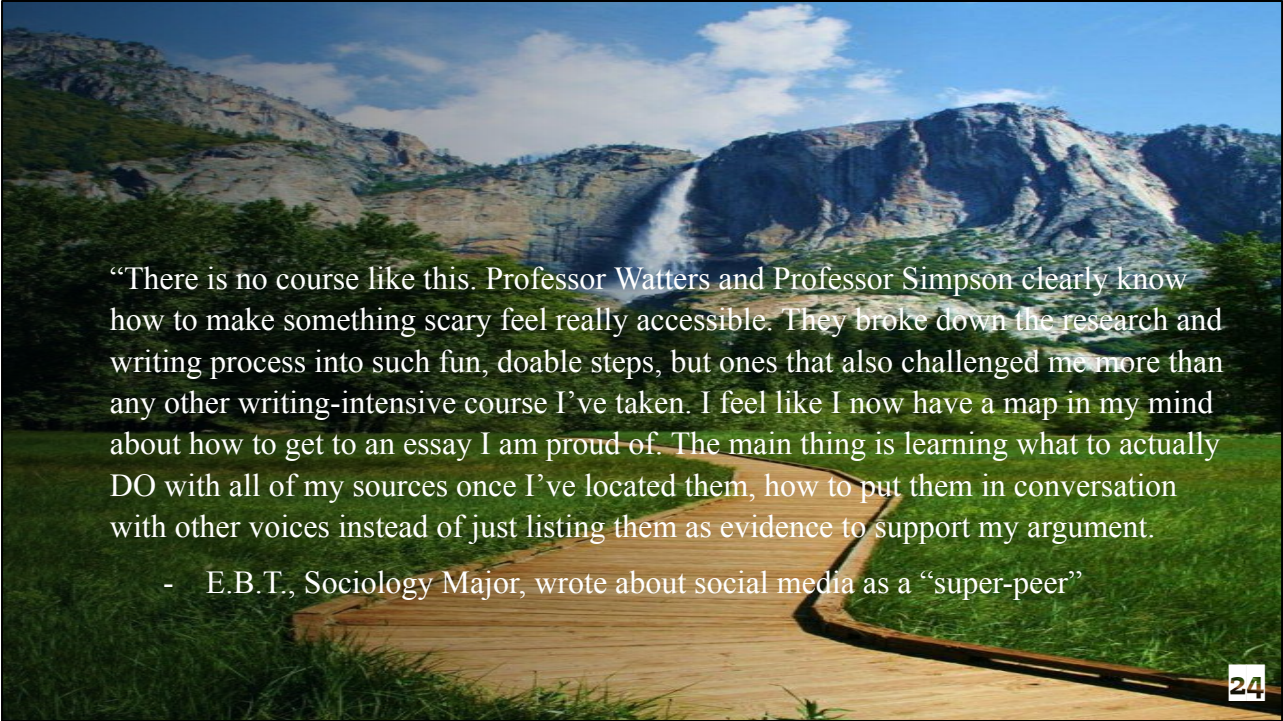Creator: Bierstadt, Albert, 1830-1902
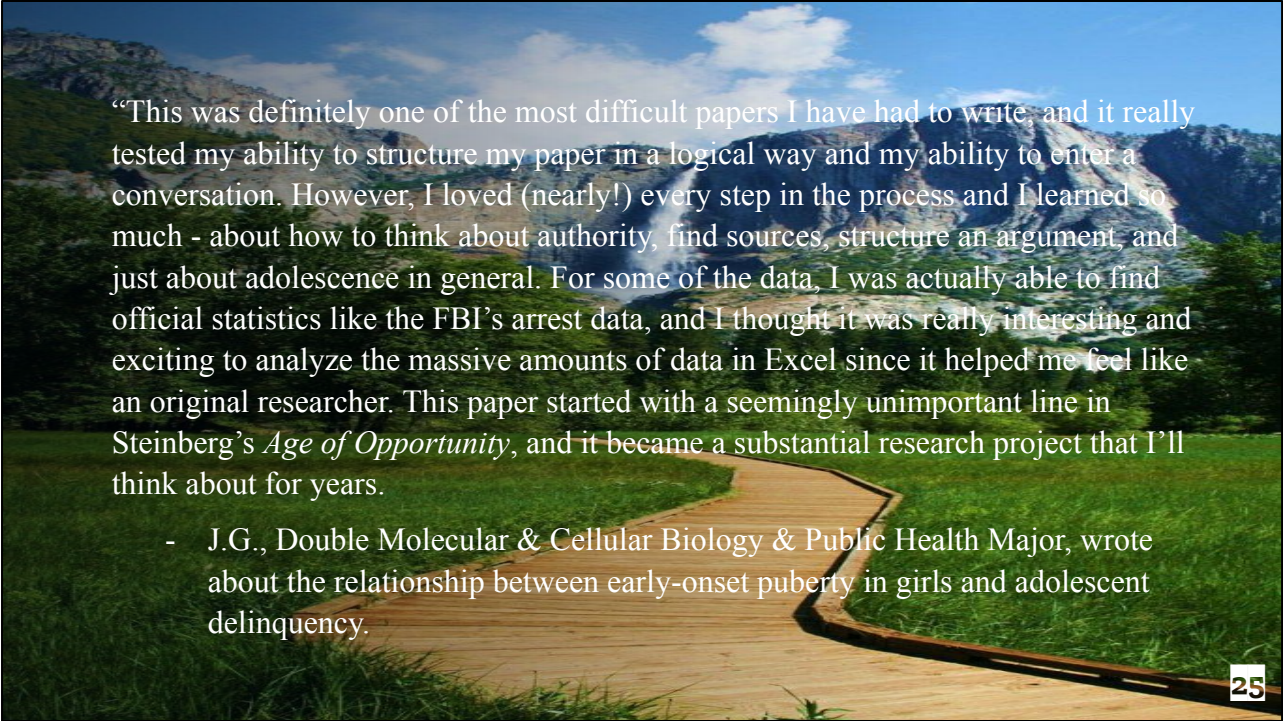Title: Yosemite Valley
Date: [n.d.]
Material: oil on canvas

"This is the best class I took at Johns Hopkins. Despite being a graduating senior, I've apparently never learned how to write a research paper. Now I understand how to think through a question, shape a conversation with diverse sources, enter that conversation with my own argument, and also how to communicate my research not just on the page but in a presentation as well."

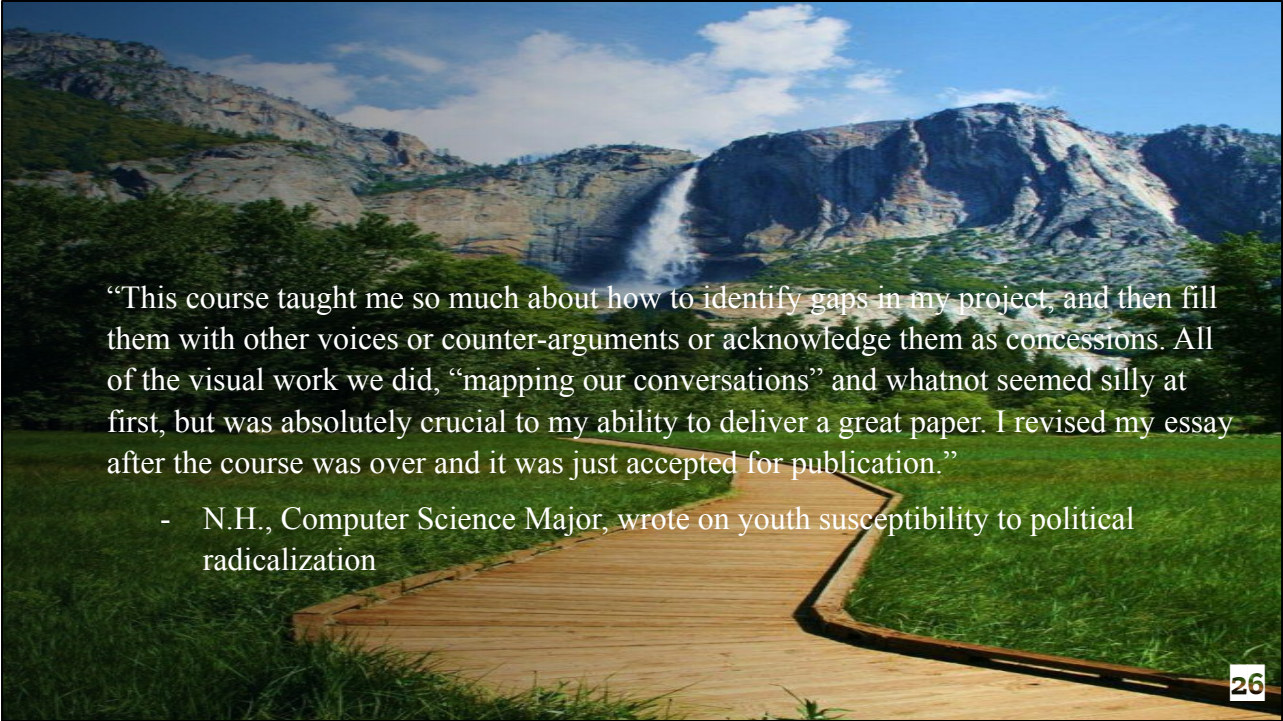- J.D., Neuroscience Major, wrote about the legal rights of terminally ill teens

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"There is no course like this. Professor Watters and Professor Simpson clearly know how to make something scary feel really accessible. They broke down the research and writing process into such fun, doable steps, but ones that also challenged me more than any other writing-intensive course I've taken. I feel like I now have a map in my mind about how to get to an essay I am proud of. The main thing is learning what to actually DO with all of my sources once I've located them, how to put them in conversation with other voices instead of just listing them as evidence to support my argument.

- E.B.T., Sociology Major, wrote about social media as a "super-peer"

"This was definitely one of the most difficult papers I have had to write, and it really tested my ability to structure my paper in a logical way and my ability to enter a conversation. However, I loved (nearly!) every step in the process and I learned so much - about how to think about authority, find sources, structure an argument, and just about adolescence in general. For some of the data, I was actually able to find official statistics like the FBI's arrest data, and I thought it was really interesting and exciting to analyze the massive amounts of data in Excel since it helped me feel like an original researcher. This paper started with a seemingly unimportant line in Steinberg's *Age of Opportunity*, and it became a substantial research project that I'll think about for years.

- J.G., Double Molecular & Cellular Biology & Public Health Major, wrote about the relationship between early-onset puberty in girls and adolescent delinquency.

"This course taught me so much about how to identify gaps in my project, and then fill them with other voices or counter-arguments or acknowledge them as concessions. All of the visual work we did, "mapping our conversations" and whatnot seemed silly at first, but was absolutely crucial to my ability to deliver a great paper. I revised my essay after the course was over and it was just accepted for publication."

- N.H., Computer Science Major, wrote on youth susceptibility to political radicalization

Thanks!

Any questions?

- Shannon Simpson:
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- Aliza Watters:
  watters@jhu.edu

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Credits

Special thanks to all the people who made and released these awesome resources for free:
- Presentation template by SlidesCarnival
- Photographs by Artstor, Pixabay