

# MIT 1025G: First Year Foundations for MIT

Winter 2022 – Online, Asynchronous

## INSTRUCTOR:

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## TEACHING ASSISTANTS:

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## Office Hours:

Office hours will be offered regularly through the semester – please check the Owl site for current days and times

## Land Acknowledgment

*Western University is located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak and Attawandaron peoples, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum.*

*With this, we respect the longstanding relationships that Indigenous Nations have to this land, as they are the original caretakers. We acknowledge historical and ongoing injustices that Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) endure in Canada, and we accept responsibility as a public institution to contribute toward revealing and correcting miseducation as well as renewing respectful relationships with Indigenous communities through our teaching, research and community service.*

## Course Description & Objectives

First Year Foundations for MIT is designed to introduce students to foundational skills they will need throughout their university careers. It focuses on the fundamentals of three key activities: critical thinking, research, and writing. Students will cover the basics of critical thinking, the interpretation of texts, finding and evaluating sources, developing arguments, presenting information, formulating research questions, and essay development and revision. Academic style, plagiarism, and other key issues pertaining to university and scholarly research and writing are also covered.

After completing this course, you should be able to:

- ✓ Critically read and understand key ideas in a variety of media texts
- ✓ Identify and analyze arguments
- ✓ Find and evaluate scholarly and mainstream sources focusing on media and media-related issues
- ✓ Construct an argument/thesis and support it with appropriate evidence
- ✓ Understand the fundamentals of essay composition and development
- ✓ Apply the basics of academic style, formatting, and citation
- ✓ Further develop acquired critical thinking and writing skills

## Course Materials

There is no textbook for this course – we will draw from a variety of sources and all material that you are responsible for reading will be provided through Owl, either directly or via web link. Many of the readings are directly linked with assignments or provide useful guidance to help you succeed in this course. Failure to do the readings is likely to result in a lower grade.

## Required Course Work and Evaluation

### 1. Content Quizzes (3 x 5% = 15%)

- These will be administered through Owl Tests and Quizzes on Weeks 4, 8 and 12 (on quiz weeks you will have from Monday at 9am until Friday at 11:55pm to submit your responses). Each quiz will only cover the 4 weeks of course content preceding (they are not cumulative) and contain up to 5 randomized questions. Quizzes are designed to be completed quickly if you are well-prepared – up to 30 minutes will be allotted for all students to complete and submit each quiz, regardless of accommodation status.

### 2. Reverse Outline (10%) Due January 28<sup>th</sup>

- You will create an outline which maps out the key arguments and structure of a piece of writing. See the detailed assignment brief on Owl for more information, including a list of reading options for this assignment.

### 3. Thesis Statements (15%) Due February 11<sup>th</sup>

- Here you will have the opportunity to develop a series of argument-based claims from which compelling essays may follow. See assignment brief on Owl for more info.

### 4. Proposal with Annotated Bibliography (20%) Due March 4<sup>th</sup>

- Your proposal and bibliography will reflect the early stages of planning for your essay (see item #5). While your proposal will outline your topic, approach and central claim, your bibliography will demonstrate your ability to select relevant, credible sources and properly format citations. See assignment brief on Owl for more information.

### 5. Essay [1500 words] (25%) Due April 1<sup>st</sup>

- You will write a research-based and argumentative essay which builds on some of the work already done in items #3 and #4. Possible topics will relate to themes and issues studied in the MIT program, such as regulating the Internet, the gig economy, conspiracy theories, or the purpose of a humanities degree. A full list of topics will be provided in the assignment brief for the Annotated Bibliography.

### 6. Participation (15%)

- This portion of your grade assesses your engagement with course material in your tutorial group. As tutorials will also run asynchronously, this may include your contributions to forum discussions and/or the completion of short exercises. Your TA will communicate their expectations with you directly.

## Course Policies

1. **Check your UWO email regularly** – this will be the primary way that I will communicate with you as a class. Announcements made from Owl will be sent to you as emails. It is your responsibility to ensure that you don't miss important communications from me. Please avoid emailing me from outside of your UWO account as messages from webmail accounts may end up in my spam folder. Please ensure that your emails contain our course number in the subject line. I try to respond to emails within 24 hours between Monday morning and Friday afternoon. I generally will not reply to emails that I receive on Friday evening, or on the weekend, until Monday morning.
2. **Communication** – I am available for consultation every week during regularly scheduled **office hours** (see our Owl site Welcome page for current days/times). Please reserve emails for brief queries. Substantial discussions about grades or assignments are better live (via Zoom or face to face if Western returns to in-person learning this semester).
3. **Deadlines are not flexible** – Submit your work on time. Written assignments should be submitted through the appropriate assignment portals on Owl. Please do not email your work to me, or your TA unless you have been granted permission to do so. Work that is submitted on time will be graded and returned within two weeks. Work that is submitted early may be graded and returned earlier. Work that is submitted late, without appropriate documentation, will be graded at our convenience and **reserve the right to apply a penalty of 3% per day late.**
4. **Self-Reported Absences and other approved deadline relief** – sometimes things happen which make it impossible to meet deadlines. If you are granted medical or compassionate accommodation for late assignments (see the appended notes from the Dean's Office) you are expected to contact me ASAP to negotiate a new deadline for missed work. If you use the [Self-Report Absence \(SRA\)](#) function, **please understand that this extends the deadline by no more than 48 hours from the end of the SRA period**, and I expect your work to be turned in within this window or it will still be considered late. If you require additional time beyond 48 hours, you should contact academic counselling in your home faculty to inquire about other forms of accommodation you might be eligible for. SRA extensions for this course will only apply until 8:30am on the morning after the final day of classes, regardless of when they are submitted.
5. **Accessible Education Accommodations** – This applies to you if you have an IEP. **All accommodations of this type need to be activated through [Accessible Education](#)** – if you aren't registered with them, then I have no way of confirming your eligibility to have accommodations applied. This needs to be done at the start of every semester and updated every time you make changes to your timetable. **If you have flexible deadlines as one of your accommodations, it is expected that you will contact me before an assignment is due to discuss possible deadline relief.** Should you fail to contact me in advance or fail to meet new negotiated deadlines, late penalties may still apply.

## Lesson Schedule

Lessons will be released each Sunday for the week ahead – all assignments will be due on Friday at 11:55pm

Release Date	Week	Lesson Topics & Assignments Due (See Owl Course Content for Weekly Readings/Viewings)
Jan. 9	1	Introduction: Reading, Writing, and Thinking Critically
Jan. 16	2	Kinds of Texts; Types of Reasoning; Ways of Seeing
Jan. 23	3	Finding, Making and Evaluating Arguments <b>Reverse outline due January 28<sup>th</sup></b>
Jan. 30	4	Reading Signs and Detecting Bias <b>Quiz 1 – complete by February 4<sup>th</sup> (covers weeks 1-4)</b>
Feb. 6	5	Writing I – Making Choices: Understanding Options <b>Thesis Statements due February 11<sup>th</sup></b>
Feb. 13	6	Research Logistics: Sources and Citations
<b>READING WEEK (February 19-27)</b>		
Feb. 27	7	Writing II – Planning <b>Annotated Bibliography due March 4<sup>th</sup></b>
Mar. 6	8	What is research? Questions, Theories and Methods <b>Quiz 2 – complete by March 11<sup>th</sup> (covers weeks 5-8)</b>
Mar. 13	9	Writing III – Process: Content, Structure and Peer Review
Mar. 20	10	<i>Virtual Writing – no lesson content this week but I encourage you to attend a scheduled virtual writing session and use the time to work on your essay (days/time will be provided closer to the time) – writing with others is a good habitual practice for finding and maintaining your focus</i>
Mar. 27	11	Writing IV – Product: Style, Format, Proofread <b>Essay due April 1<sup>st</sup></b>
Apr. 3	12	Presenting Information: Form, Content, and Knowing Your Audience <b>Quiz 2 – complete by April 8<sup>th</sup> (covers weeks 9-12)</b>

# NOTES FROM THE FIMS DEAN'S OFFICE

Winter 2022

## Rights and Responsibilities

The conditions governing a student's ability to pursue their undergraduate education at Western are ratified by Senate and can be found on the Academic Policies section of the University Secretariat:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic\\_policies/rights\\_responsibilities.html](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic_policies/rights_responsibilities.html)

## Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

## Plagiarism

Students must write their essays and assignments, including take-home exams, in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence. All papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software Turnitin under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system.

## Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#)

## Academic Consideration for Student Absence

Students will have two (2) opportunities during the regular academic year to use an on-line portal to self-report an absence during the term, provided the following conditions are met: the absence is no more than 48 hours in duration, and the assessment

for which consideration is being sought is worth 30% or less of the student's final grade. Students are expected to contact their instructors within 24 hours of the end of the period of the self-reported absence, unless noted on the syllabus. Students are not able to use the self-reporting option in the following circumstances:

- during exam periods,
- absence of a duration greater than 48 hours,
- assessments worth more than 30% of the student's final grade,
- if a student has already used the self-reporting portal twice during the academic year

If the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence are NOT met, students will need to provide a Student Medical Certificate or equivalent documentation, if the absence is medical, or provide appropriate documentation if there are compassionate grounds for the absence in question. Students are encouraged to contact the FIMS Undergraduate Student Services Office to obtain more information about the relevant documentation.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons. **All documentation required for absences that are not covered by the Self-Reported Absence Policy must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's home Faculty.**

For Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence, see [Policy on Academic Consideration For Student Absences - Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](#) and for the Student Medical Certificate (SMC), see: [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf)

In the event of a Covid-19 resurgence, it is possible that different procedures may need to be put in place on short notice.

## Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Academic Calendar](#).

## Grading at FIMS

- Normally, first year courses required for entry into an MIT or MPI module (MIT 1020E and MIT 1025F/G) are expected to have a course average between 68-72%.
- Normally, second year required courses (MIT 2000, 2100, 2200, 2500) are expected to have a course average between 70 and 75%.
- Normally, third year required courses (MIT 3000, 3100) are expected to have a course average between 72 and 77%.

**Elective courses and 4<sup>th</sup> year seminars have no recommended course averages.**

## Support Services

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

<http://www.uwo.ca/uwo.com/mentalhealth/>

## SUPPORT SERVICES – LINKS

### Office of the Registrar:

[www.registrar.uwo.ca](http://www.registrar.uwo.ca)

### Mental Health

#### Support:

<https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html>

### Accessible Education:

[http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible\\_education/index.html](http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html)

### Accessibility

#### Information:

[www.accessibility.uwo.ca/](http://www.accessibility.uwo.ca/)

### Writing Support

#### Centre:

<http://writing.uwo.ca/>

### Learning Skills

#### Services:

<https://www.uwo.ca/sdc/learning/>

### Academic Learning and Support for Online Learning:

<https://www.uwo.ca/se/digital/types/academic-and-learning-support.html>

### Indigenous Services:

<https://indigenous.uwo.ca/>

### Western International:

<https://international.uwo.ca/>

### Career Centre:

<http://careerexperience.uwo.ca/>

## Appendix A: Suggested Grade Ranges in MIT, MPI and MTP

### Guidelines to the MIT Grade Range

These guidelines are benchmarks, and are not to be followed as rigid regulations. They will be adjusted as appropriate to take into account the level of the course and any specific instructions given by a professor. As well, competency in English language usage (including spelling and grammar) may be taken into account in the assignment of grades by individual instructors. Note that the 70-79 grade range is broken into two divisions, as this is the grade range into which a large number of students fall.

#### 90-100 (Outstanding, A+)

The report shows sparkling originality and exhibits a high degree of critical analysis of the topic. Sophisticated synthesis and analysis of the theoretical and conceptual dimensions of the topic are demonstrated. Mastery of complex material and ideas is immediately evident. The topic is treated with sensitivity and subtlety of thought. The quality of the writing and background research is exemplary.

#### 80-89 (Excellent, A)

The report shows originality and exhibits a high degree of critical analysis of the topic; it gets to the heart of the matter with comments and/or questions. It is clearly focused and logically organized. The quality of writing makes the report immediately understandable. Mastery of complex material and ideas is demonstrated. The report is of appropriate length, while preserving the priorities and emphasis of the material, so that the result is meaningful, not simplistic.

#### 75-79 (Very Good, B+)

The report shows above average analysis, critical thinking and independent thought. Claims are supported by ample evidence and the components of the topic are well-researched and presented. The topic is addressed in reasonable depth and/or breadth and covers material appropriate to the course. The analysis is organized around focal points and the argument is easily followed. The report demonstrates an above average ability to write in an intelligible style and to condense material meaningfully and with a concern for priorities of that material.

#### 70-74 (Good, B)

The report shows an attempt at analysis and critical thinking. Claims are supported by reasonable evidence. The topic is addressed in some depth and/or breadth, with references to the appropriate literature and course material. The analysis is organized around focal points. The report is generally well written and well argued.

#### 60-69 (Competent, C)

The report demonstrates adequate comprehension of the topic. The report is on topic and is a reasonable summary of material covered in the course, but goes no further. Facts are stated accurately; the quality of writing is sufficiently intelligible with enough elaboration and enough connections made between ideas to permit a reader to understand the point of the report.

#### 50-59 (Marginal, D)

The report shows less than adequate comprehension of the topic and of the material covered by the course. The report is a less than adequate summary of sources and/or is considerably off-topic. Facts are stated inaccurately or ambiguously; the writing style is difficult to follow; there is insufficient elaboration to permit reader's comprehension of relations among ideas; little judgment is shown in selecting detail for inclusion in the report.

#### Below 50 (Unacceptable, F)

The report demonstrates a failure to comprehend the topic. The material is disorganized and unintelligible. The report clearly does not meet the minimal requirements of the assignment.

## Appendix B: Guidelines of Academic Appeals for FIMS Students

### Grounds for Appeal:

The Faculty of Information and Media Studies does not view the appeals process as an opportunity for students to solicit a second opinion on a grade assigned to a particular piece of work. Appeals must pertain to the final grade in a course, and will only be entertained if sufficient grounds for appeal can be met, including: medical or compassionate circumstances, a defect in the evaluation process, bias, inaccuracy or unfairness.

### Stages in the Appeals Process:

**The first stage of the process is a discussion of the disputed grade with the appropriate Teaching Assistant (if applicable), and subsequently, the course Instructor.** For grades assigned to individual assignments, essays, lab reports, projects and tests completed throughout the term, the student first must appeal to the Teaching Assistant or Instructor of the course, within three weeks of the date on which the Instructor or Teaching Assistant returned the assignments to the class. The Appeals Committee will not hear any further appeals about the final grade in any course unless this first step has been taken.

**If completion of the first stage has not resolved the matter, the student may appeal the final grade in the course to the FIMS Appeals Committee.** Appeals of final grades must be **within the time frame indicated in the Undergraduate Calendar.** It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the appeal is submitted within the deadline. The student shall submit a formal letter to the FIMS Appeals Committee outlining the grounds for the appeal, the remedy sought and relevant materials including the information about when and with whom (Teaching Assistant and/or Instructor) the student met, as described in Stage 1. If the appeal involves a request for work to be regraded, the original marked work and a clean copy (if possible) must be included. If the appeal is commenced once the deadline has passed, it will not be considered either by the Appeals Committee or by the Associate Dean.

### **The FIMS Appeals Committee has the discretion to determine whether the grounds for appeal have been met.**

If the Committee deems that the reasons for the appeal are not legitimate, the Associate Dean will be informed. The appeal will be terminated and the student will be informed.

### **If the Committee decides that the grounds for appeal have been met, the following steps will be taken:**

1. the course Instructor will be shown the appeal letter and offered an opportunity to make a written response;
2. if work is to be regraded, a reader will be appointed who is competent in the area in question and was not involved in the assignment of the original mark. The reader will consider the work in question and will arrive at an independent evaluation. If there is a large discrepancy between the original mark and the regraded mark, a second reader may be appointed by the Committee. **If the appointed reader(s) arrive at a grade within five marks of the original, the original grade will stand.**

### **The FIMS Appeals Committee will review the evidence and will make a recommendation on the case to the Associate Dean Undergraduate.**

The Associate Dean Undergraduate will consider the recommendation from the Appeals Committee, and will make a decision. The student and the instructor will be notified promptly and in writing by the Associate Dean of the decision and of the change in grade, if any. Within the Faculty of Information and Media Studies, the Associate Dean's decision on the matter is final.

Further appeals are possible under certain circumstances to the Senate Review Board Academic (for Undergraduate students) or to the Faculty of Graduate Studies (for Graduate students) but the student should carefully consult the guidelines regarding such Appeals.