Private Desires and Public Goods
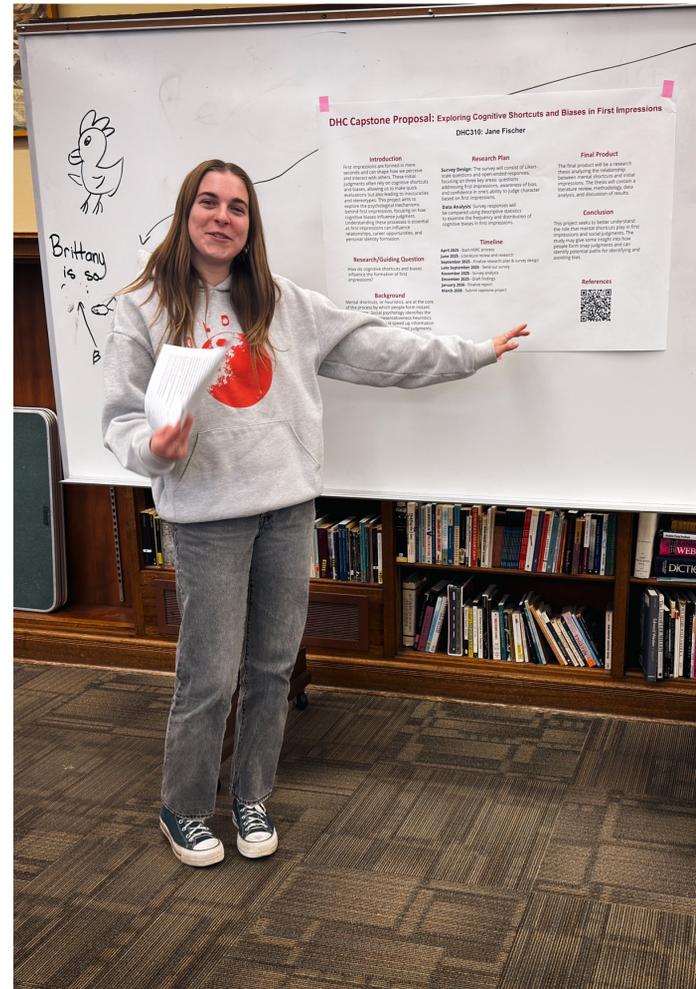
M. Shawn Reichert, Douglas Honors College

Higher Level Reading and Participation in a Seminar

I wanted to create a true seminar experience in which students would be required to read more difficult material and engage in much student led elevated course discussions with a collaborative weekly outcome. Each student was also required to write a research paper and give an oral presentation in which they demonstrated the applicability of the theories learned in this course to various subjects of their choosing.

What challenge or issue were you trying to solve or mitigate?

While students may be asked to read a substantial amount, they are rarely asked to internalize the material to the degree necessary to lead class discussions where everyone is expected to contribute thoughts, questions, and criticisms to the assigned readings. I wanted students to have an experience similar to what they might encounter at a graduate school before leaving CWU.

Student Presentation

How did the students respond?

I assessed the research papers, presentations, class discussion leaders, and participation. Every student was able to apply the primary theoretical ideas and concepts correctly to their case-studies. While the more reticent students were reluctant to interject, they did participate in the collaborative activities and discussions. I was very pleased with the variety and quality of the research papers/presentations. All the students demonstrated knowledge and ability to apply the theories and key concepts to their own case-studies.

Would you do it again? How would you modify it going forward?

There are two primary amendments I would make to this course in the future. In addition to the foundational material, I would add empirical articles that apply the theoretical material covered in class. I would also have students write the occasional reaction paper of 2-3 pages to these articles. I look forward to teaching this course again. I think it would be an excellent course outside the DHC.

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