



Master of Library and Information Science Program

Valdosta State University

MLIS 7700: RESEARCH METHODS

COURSE SYLLABUS

Spring 2013

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3 credit hours

Catalog Description: An introduction to the various approaches to social science research and research methods. Students will perform small-scale research projects and develop skills in the research uses of libraries and the needs of library patrons. **Prerequisite:** **MLIS 7000.**

Grade Requirements

All students admitted fall 2012 and thereafter must earn a grade of "B" or better in these core courses: MLIS 7000, 7100, 7200, 7300, 7700, and 7800.

Course Dates & Delivery: January 7, 2013 through April 26, 2013. This class will be conducted on the Web via BlazeView, Valdosta State University's electronic course management system. All discussion posts and assignment submissions must be sent via BlazeView. Your VSU email username serves as your BlazeVIEW login. For information and assistance with Blazeview, call the IT Help desk at 229-245-4357 or submit a help request at: <http://www.valdosta.edu/vista/forms/help.php>

Draft MLIS Program Objectives (PO)

(submitted to the Graduate Executive Committee Fall 2011)

Graduates of the MLIS Program will:

- PO 1. Perform administrative, service, and technical functions of professional practice in libraries and information centers by demonstrating skills in information resources, reference and user services, administration and management, and organization of recorded knowledge and information.
- PO 2. Use existing and emerging technologies to meet needs in libraries and information centers.
- PO 3. Integrate relevant research to enhance their work in libraries and information centers.
- PO 4. Demonstrate professionalism as librarians or information specialists.

Student Learning Outcomes (LO)

Students will:

- LO 1. Recognize the inter-relationships of theory, research, and scientific inquiry (PO 3).
- LO 2. Discuss basic ethical issues associated with conducting research (PO 3, PO 4).
- LO 3. Distinguish between qualitative and quantitative research methods (PO 3).
- LO 4. Identify the basic elements in the design of social research studies (PO 3).
- LO 5. Relate terminology, concepts, and processes of social research to studies conducted in the library and information science (LIS) field (PO 3).
- LO 6. Evaluate research methodologies from representative LIS research studies (PO 1, PO 2, PO 3).
- LO 7. Analyze research articles for ideas to be used in professional practice or to advise library patrons in their research endeavors (PO 1, PO 2, PO 3, PO 4).
- LO 8. Apply a systematic method for locating references in the research literature (PO 1, PO 2, PO 3).
- LO 9. Prepare a literature review according to a style used in research reporting (PO 3).
- LO 10. Propose a practice-based library or information science research project (PO 1, PO 2, PO 3).

Note that Learning Outcomes are associated with Program Objectives. Individual assignments, provided below, are in turn associated with Learning Outcomes.

Instructor Availability & Support

By institutional policy, instructors are asked to communicate with students online through BlazeView and VSU e-mail. E-mail messages will be answered in forty-eight hours. If the questions you ask can be answered using the syllabus or other course document, you will be referred to the pertinent document. The best place to ask questions is in a discussion forum unless the question pertains to your specific work.

Required Texts

Neuman, W. L. (2012) *Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (3rd ed.). Boston: Pearson. ISBN-10: 0205762611. ISBN-13: 9780205762613.

Nahl, D. *Strategic Research Approaches for Reference Librarians*. Kendall-Hunt, 2000.

(This is a workbook – currently out-of-print. We have permission from the author to copy the content, so chapters are available on the BlazeVIEW)

Recommended Text

All written assignments must adhere to the following style manual: American Psychological Association (APA). (2009). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. (6th ed. 2nd printing). Washington, DC: Author.

Faculty Recommendations

MLIS 7700 is a reading and writing intensive core course. Students report that they spend an average of 10 to 15 hours each week on assignments. Taking MLIS 7700 with no more than one other course is strongly recommended. Students should schedule this course toward the end of their degree requirements.

Graded Assignments & Due Dates (There is a 24-hour grace period for submission of assignments. Assignments will not be accepted after the grace period.)

Assignment	Due	Value
This list is for graded assignments only. Other tasks are listed in the section "SCHEDULE, READINGS & TASKS"		
Discussion 2 (Ethics)	February 4 th	10%
Exercise on Survey Methods	February 15 th	10%
Exercise on Research Design	March 1 st	15%
Small Group Report: Read-Observe-Analyze	March 8 th	20%
Discussion 3 (Abstract)	March 29 th	10%
Research Proposal	April 29 th	35%

GRADING

ALA and Departmental Requirements: NO grade below a "C" will be credited toward a VSU graduate degree. To receive an A in the course a student must complete every assignment.

Reminder: This is a core course, and those of you admitted fall 2012 or thereafter must earn a grade of "B" or better in this course in order to receive credit for it. Those same students must successfully complete each assignment marked as "necessary to fulfill requirements for this course."

Grading Scale: In determining the quality of completed work, the level of your submission in comparison to other students on the same assignment is a consideration. If the best works receive high marks, lower quality papers are graded commensurately. In short, simply completing an assignment within the guidelines is most often not enough to garner an "A".

Final grades will be based on the following grading scale:

Letter Grade	Number Grade	Criteria for Assignment of Grades
A	92-100	Superior. Work is creative, thorough, well-reasoned, insightful and well-written; it shows a strong grasp of course topics and demonstrates a superior ability to organize, analyze, and integrate course concepts into a cohesive whole
B	80-91	Good. Work is, to some degree, thorough, well-reasoned and well-written; it demonstrates a good grasp of course topics and an ability to organize, analyze, and integrate course concepts into a cohesive whole
C	70-79	Below Standards. Work falls short of meeting expectations for graduate level students in one or more areas; understanding of course topics is less than complete; writing needs improvement
D	60-69	Poor. Work falls far short of meeting expectations for graduate level students in one or more areas; understanding of course topics is less than complete; writing needs improvement; work shows little progress from the beginning to the end of the semester
F	Below 60	Failing

Evaluation of Performance: Unless otherwise described, grades for written assignments will be based on the average of three criteria, content, quality of writing, and scholarship.

Content

Creativity– the degree to which work is creative within the context of the assignment

Efficiency – the lack of bulk (i.e. superfluous text, unnecessary pictures, junk)

Appropriateness – the degree to which the paper addresses the assignment given

Quality of writing

Grammar – the degree to which grammar, sentence structure, punctuation, etc. meet graduate level standards

Writing – the lack of typos and misspellings

Scholarship

Structure – the degree to which you adhere to APA style 6th edition guidelines (1/3 of the grade for any assignment will be deducted for non-adherence to APA style guidelines)

Support – your ability to weave in supporting works without over-paraphrasing or plagiarizing

Sophistication – the degree to which work integrates course concepts into a cohesive whole

EXPECTATIONS & REQUIREMENTS

Basic Tenet: As graduate students, you are expected to do graduate-level work and to conduct research beyond the textbook.

Written Format: Unless otherwise instructed, all written assignments must be submitted electronically using MS Word. Please use one-inch margins, an 11- or 12-point font, and double spacing. Number each page, and include your last name in the header or footer of the document. Do not include an abstract. The list of references should start on a new page. Italics, rather than underlining, should be used for publication titles. **There is a 24-hour grace period for submission of assignments. Assignments will not be accepted after the grace period.**

Submission Requirements: All students must

- Use the following scheme to name your files: Last Name, Assignment
- Submit assignments by 11:59 p.m. of the due date
- Submit assignments via the BlazeVIEW Assignment Tool
- Submit no more than one document for each assignment. If you send an assignment in two or more parts, only one document will be reviewed and graded.

Research & Writing: You are to assume that readers of your written work are of average or above-average intelligence and do not know the assignment you've been given. You should also assume that all assignments require research. In addition, you are expected to weave in supporting work from professional and scholarly literature wherever possible. Though research should extend beyond course readings, the bulk of written work must be your own. As graduate students, it is your responsibility to know or learn the difference between plagiarism and over-paraphrasing. When in doubt, please review the section entitled "University Policies".

SCHEDULE, READINGS & TASKS

WEEK		Topics	Readings & Tasks
1	January 7 th	Introduction to Inquiry	Neuman--Chapter 1: Pages 10-18 Chapter 2: Pages 26-34 and 46-50 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit a post in response to Discussion 1 (Ungraded) • Think about a library you can observe in weeks 2 and 3
2 & 3	January 14 th & January 21 st	The Nature of Qualitative	Nahl--Chapter 9: Pages 165-170 Neuman--Chapter 9: Pages 239-249 Chapter 11: Pages 293-299 Chapter 12: Pages 333-338 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize and conduct the Read-Observe-Analyze Project • The instructor will formulate groups for the Project by January 21st • You will find useful material in this week's folder
4	January 28 th	Ethics in Social Research	Neuman--Chapter 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View material on the course site in this week's folder
5	February 4 th	Quantitative Research Design	Neuman--Chapter 4: Pages 95-110 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View material on the course site in this week's folder • Submit your post answering questions about ethics to Discussion 2 during this week
6	February 11 th	Survey Methods	Neuman--Chapter 7 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View material on the course site in this week's folder • Submit Individual Exercise A: Recognizing Good and Bad Survey Methods during this week (February 15th)
7	February 18 th	Experimental Research	Neuman--Chapter 8 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View material on the course site in this week's folder
8	February 25 th	Identifying Elements of Research Design	Neuman--Chapter 6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View material on the course site in this week's folder • Use this week to complete and submit Individual Exercise B: Identifying Elements of Research Design (March 1st)
9	March 4 th	Measuring & Analyzing Data	Neuman--Chapters 5 and 10 Nahl--Chapters 4 to 8 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View material on the course site in this week's folder • Submit your Group Report according to the formatting and grading criteria on the BlazeVIEW course site (March 8th)
	March 11 th	SPRING BREAK	
10	March 18 th	Proposal Worksheet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare and submit your Proposal Worksheet to BlazeVIEW • See Nahl workbook for possible worksheet model • Not submitting a Proposal Worksheet results in a 5 point deduction from your final proposal

11	March 25th	The Abstract for Your Proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare and submit your Abstract to Discussion 3 during this week • Not submitting an abstract results in a 5 point deduction from your final proposal. • Comment on the Abstracts submitted to your Group
12	April 1st	The Literature Review	Neuman—Chapter 4: Pages 73-88 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get started on your literature review. Material in this week’s folder will guide you. • Submit a draft of your literature review and your references list through BlazeView • Not submitting a draft of the Lit Review results in a 5 point deduction from your final proposal
13	April 8th	Research Questions & Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit a draft of your research questions and proposed methods • Not submitting this draft results in a 5 point deduction from your final proposal
14 & 15	April 15th & April 22nd	Polishing the Proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare your Research Proposal according to the formatting and grading criteria in the syllabus
16	April 29th	Proposal Preparation and Submission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit your Research Proposal (April 29th)

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic Honesty: Academic honesty requires that you submit only your own work, cite sources properly, give credit to the authors of original ideas, and complete assignments with honesty, respect and fairness. If you are caught plagiarizing, cheating, fabricating or otherwise representing an assignment untruthfully, you will be given a grade of “0” for the assignment. Additional actions may also be taken, up to and including academic dismissal. Specific regulations related to student conduct and behaviors are contained in the Student Handbook http://www.valdosta.edu/studentaffairs/documents/Student_Handbook_2009-10v1.pdf

See also: <http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/AcademicHonestyPoliciesandProcedures.shtml>

If you need help with citations and research resources and techniques, the university provides extensive resources for students. For help please start at the Odum Library’s “how to” page:

<http://www.valdosta.edu/library/learn/howto.shtml>

SafeAssign: By taking this course, you agree that all required course work may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to SafeAssign, a tool within BlazeVIEW. For more information on the use of SafeAssign at VSU see [SafeAssign for Students \(http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/SafeAssignforStudents.shtml\)](http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/SafeAssignforStudents.shtml).

Accommodations: Students with disabilities who are experiencing barriers in this course may contact the Access Office for assistance in determining and implementing reasonable accommodations. The Access Office is located in Farber Hall. The phone numbers are 229-245-2498 (V), 229-375-5871 (VP) and 229-219-1348 (TTY). For more information, please visit <http://www.valdosta.edu/access/> or email: access@valdosta.edu.

Student Success Center: <http://www.valdosta.edu/ssc/> provides free tutoring and support for distance learning students at <http://valdosta.askonline.net/>

Student Agreement: Enrollment in this class signifies that you have agreed to abide by and adhere to the policies

and regulations specified above. It is understood that the instructor may adapt or change this syllabus and the assignments contained within it according to circumstances that may arise during the course of the semester.