

**Dewar College of Education and Human Services  
Valdosta State University  
Department of Library and Information Studies**

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**MLIS 7700  
Research Methods  
Three Credit Hours**

**Guiding Principles (DEPOSITS)<sup>1</sup>**

Dispositions Principle: Productive dispositions positively affect learners, professional growth, and the learning environment.

Equity Principle: All learners deserve high expectations and support.

Process Principle: Learning is a lifelong process of development and growth.

Ownership Principle: Professionals are committed to and assume responsibility for the future of their disciplines.

Support Principle: Successful engagement in the process of learning requires collaboration among multiple partners.

Impact Principle: Effective practice yields evidence of learning.

Technology Principle: Technology facilitates teaching, learning, community-building, and resource acquisition.

Standards Principle: Evidence-based standards systematically guide professional preparation and development.

**ALA's Core Competences of Librarianship<sup>2</sup>**

1. Foundations of the Profession: The librarian understands the role of library and information professionals in the promotion of democratic principles and intellectual freedom (including freedom of expression, thought, and conscience), the legal framework within which libraries and information agencies operate; and the certification and/or licensure requirements of specialized areas of the profession.
2. Information Resources: The librarian understands the concepts and issues related to the lifecycle of recorded knowledge and information; the acquisition and disposition of resources; and the management and maintenance of various collections.
3. Organization of Recorded Knowledge and Information: The librarian understands and uses the principles involved in the organization, representation, and classification of recorded knowledge and information.
4. Technological Knowledge and Skills: The librarian understands and uses information, communication, assistive, and related technologies consistent with professional ethics and prevailing service norms and applications.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from the Georgia Systemic Teacher Education Program Accomplished Teacher Framework

<sup>2</sup> Extracted from ALA's Core Competences of Librarianship 2009, available from

<http://www.ala.org/educationcareers/sites/ala.org.educationcareers/files/content/careers/corecomp/corecompetences/finalcorecompstat09.pdf>

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5. Reference and User Services: The librarian understands and uses the concepts, principles, and techniques of reference and user services to provide access to relevant and accurate recorded knowledge and information to individuals of all ages and groups.
6. Research: The librarian understands and uses the fundamentals of quantitative and qualitative research methods to evaluate and assess the actual and potential value of new research.
7. Professionalism. The librarian understands the necessity of continuing professional development of practitioners in libraries and other information agencies; the role of the library in the lifelong learning of patrons; and the application of learning theories, instructional methods, and achievement measures in libraries and other information agencies.
8. Administration and Management: The librarian understands the principles of planning and budgeting in libraries and other information agencies; the principles of effective personnel practices and human resource development; the assessment and evaluation of library services and their outcomes; and the issues relating to, and methods for, principled, transformational leadership.

### **MLIS Program Objectives (PO)**

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. [ALA Core Competences 1, 2, 3, 5, 8]
- PO 2. Use existing and emerging technologies to meet needs in libraries and information centers. [ALA Core Competences 4]
- PO 3. Integrate relevant research to enhance their work in libraries and information centers. [ALA Core Competences 6]
- PO 4. Demonstrate professionalism as librarians or information specialists. [ALA Core Competences 7]

### **Instructors**

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## Course Description

Prerequisite: MLIS 7000. 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.

## Required Textbooks / Resource Materials

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

Hollister, Christopher V. (2013). *Handbook of Academic Writing for Librarians*. Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL, a division of ALA). ISBN-10: 083898648X. ISBN-13: 978-0838986486.

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 in PDF format on the BlazeVIEW site for this course.)

*LiveText*: All students are REQUIRED to purchase access to LiveText.com The system will be used throughout your professional program and is introduced in this course.

Please familiarize yourself with the MLIS policy that prohibits the use of VSU's Interlibrary Loan service for obtaining textbooks at

[http://www.valdosta.edu/mlis/student\\_resources/documents/ILL\\_Textbooks.pdf](http://www.valdosta.edu/mlis/student_resources/documents/ILL_Textbooks.pdf)

## Course Objectives<sup>3</sup>

Upon completion of this course, the student students will be able to:

- SLO 1. Recognize the inter-relationships of theory, research, and scientific inquiry (PO3).
- SLO 2. Discuss basic ethical issues associated with conducting research (PO3, PO4).
- SLO 3. Distinguish between qualitative and quantitative research methods (PO3).
- SLO 4. Identify the basic elements in the design of social research studies (PO3).
- SLO 5. Relate terminology, concepts, and processes of social research to studies conducted in the library and information science (LIS) field (PO3).
- SLO 6. Evaluate research methodologies from representative LIS research studies (PO1, PO2, PO3).
- SLO 7. Analyze research articles for ideas to be used in professional practice or to advise library patrons in their research endeavors (PO1, PO2, PO3, PO4).
- SLO 8. Apply a systematic method for locating references in the research literature (PO1, PO2, PO3).
- SLO 9. Prepare a literature review according to a style used in research reporting (PO3).
- SLO 10. Propose a practice-based library or information science research project (PO1, PO2, PO3).

## Course Activities/Assignments/Requirements

There are a number of assessments developed to meet ALA accreditation requirements on student learning outcomes. These assessments are part of all the MLIS core courses plus certain electives.

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<sup>3</sup> With alignment to MLIS Program Objectives, found on page 2 of this syllabus

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LiveText is the software that the MLIS Program selected for keeping track of these assessments, and all MLIS students are REQUIRED to purchase access to the LiveText system. The LiveText subscription is not tied to when you entered the program or to when you plan to graduate. Once you purchase your subscription to LiveText, it is good for up to five years. You will also have personal access to other LiveText features you may find useful once you have your subscription. Please consider the purchase of your LiveText subscription as you would the purchase of any other textbook or piece of software required for a course.

MLIS 7700 includes one assignment that partially fulfills the MLIS Program Objectives. You will find both marked as “necessary to fulfill requirements for this course” on page 4 of this syllabus. You must submit the final copies of the three assignments to your LiveText account.

### **Assignments in Brief**

The following list is a brief overview of the assignments included in this course. Complete instructions for each assignment along with grading criteria will be posted on the BlazeVIEW course site in advance of that assignment’s due date.

#### **Topic Discussions**

Post your reactions to questions related to topics.

#### **Individual Exercise A: Methods for Collecting Data**

You will identify various data collection methods looking for good qualities and flaws.

#### **Individual Exercise B: Identifying Elements of Research Design**

An exercise that involves identifying the basic components of **quantitative** research design using excerpts from actual research articles from the library and information science literature.

#### **Individual Exercise C: Analysis of a Qualitative Research Report**

An exercise that involves identifying the basic components of **qualitative** research design using an example from the library and information science literature.

#### **Small Group Exercise: Read-Observe-Analyze Project**

This exercise is designed to introduce you to elements associated with qualitative research. You will work in groups of three to investigate a construct currently of interest in the field of library and information science. To conduct your examination, you will use the tools of qualitative research (e.g., observations and a scan of the literature) to look for indicators that this construct is influencing library practice. Together, you will assemble a short, collaborative paper that reports your findings. An explanation of the construct and details on formatting the report and grading criteria will be on the BlazeVIEW course site.

#### **Pre-requisite Drafts on Research Proposal Topic**

Select a research problem related to the field of library and information science and use it as the basis for drafting the parts of your final research proposal. Four documents showing your progress on developing your proposal must be submitted – one each week. These include: a worksheet outlining the parts of your proposal idea; a second worksheet stating your research problem-questions-design-methods; a draft of your literature review; and an abstract submitted to Discussion Board 3 for instructor and peer review. Submission of these drafts is mandatory. You will receive feedback from the professor on each draft. Your final proposal is worth 35 points. **Not submitting a draft results in a 5 point deduction for each missed draft from your final proposal.**

### Final Project: Writing a Research Project Proposal

Using your preliminary drafts and the feedback on this work, refine and combine your work into a research proposal that articulates how to investigate the research problem you selected. This is a proposal specifying what you would do if you had the opportunity to conduct research on your problem. You do not actually do the research. The final proposal must include: Abstract; Literature review; Problem statement and research question(s); Explanation of the purpose of the research; Objectives or hypothesis; Type of research approach proposed (e.g., qualitative or quantitative design with details); Research design particulars (e.g., procedures on selecting materials or participants, names of variables, and data collection and analysis methods); and Potential application(s) or implication(s) of the proposed research. Details on formatting the report and grading criteria will be on the BlazeVIEW course site. **Successful completion of this project is necessary to fulfill requirements for this course.**

### COURSE GRADES

As a student in this class, you are expected to: (1) read or view all assigned background materials; (2) participate fully in discussion board activities; (3) submit all projects on time and according to the format designated by the instructor; and (4) conduct your research and composition according to the rules of academic integrity (see Academic Honesty section on page 5 of this syllabus).

Topic Discussions	15 points
Individual Assignment A	10 points
Individual Assignment B	15 points
Individual Assignment C	10 points
Small Group Assignment	15 points
Research Proposal Worksheet	Required, not graded*
Research Methods Worksheet	Required, not graded*
Liter Review Draft	Required, not graded*
Abstract Draft	Required, not graded*
Final Research Proposal	35 points

\*Not submitting these worksheets and drafts will result in 5-point deductions **each** from your Final Proposal.

Students can earn a maximum of 100 points in this course. Course grades will be awarded as follows:

- A: 90 – 100 points
- B: 80 – 89 points
- C: 70 – 79 points
- D: 60 – 69 points
- F: fewer than 60 points.

Standards for MLIS core courses: **No grade below a C will be credited toward a VSU graduate degree.** 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, or repeat the course until a grade of “B” is earned.

To be eligible for an **A** in this course, a student must complete **every** assignment.

### Course Evaluation

Students in this course are expected to: 1) Read or view all assigned materials; 2) Participate in class activities; 3) Submit all projects on time and according to the format designated by the instructor; 4) Conduct all research and composition according to the VSU Academic Honesty Policy (see page 5 of

this document). See the COEHS *Policy on Plagiarism* on page 6 and the *MLIS Guide to Ethical Conduct* at <http://www.valdosta.edu/colleges/education/master-of-library-and-information-science/documents/GuidetoEthicalConductWebversion.pdf>).

### **Attendance Policy**

All other course meetings and activities will be conducted through BlazeView, Valdosta State University's electronic course management system. Course content is delivered asynchronously according to the course calendar. It is the student's responsibility to follow the course calendar and participate via BlazeVIEW as indicated at the appropriate times. The instructor reserves the right to schedule real-time delivery of instruction using tools available inside BlazeVIEW. It is in the student's best interest to log into the BlazeVIEW course delivery system daily to check for announcements and e-mail messages related to the course.

### **Communication**

A course Faculty Office discussion board will be available for the duration of the semester. Please post course-related questions that may be relevant to your classmates on the discussion board. You are expected to read the Faculty Office discussion board regularly. If you have a personal question please send it to the instructor via BlazeView course e-mail. If you would like to speak with the instructor in person or by telephone please contact us during office hours.

### **Submitting written assignments**

All written work must be submitted as attachments to the assignment modules in the BlazeView course website using Word formats (.doc or .docx suffixes only). All written work file names should begin with your last name and first initial and include the assignment name as the file name, for example: DrouillardC\_tour.docx The university's Information Technology department provides step-by-step guides on how to use VSU's e-mail system and other resources. The IT Help Desk is at <http://ww2.valdosta.edu/helpdesk/index.shtml> Their telephone hotline is 229-245-4357.

### **Late Policy**

All course work is due inside BlazeView on the date and time indicated on the course calendar. Any exceptions without penalties must be negotiated in advance. Technological crises are not an acceptable excuse for submitting work late unless BlazeView is down at the time the work is due.

A grace period of 24 hours is offered without penalty on assignments (this does not include discussion boards – due to the interactive nature of these, each module's discussion posts must be completed according to the course schedule). After 24 hours 20% of the possible assignment grade will be deducted from the student's score for every additional 24 hours or increment thereof that the work is late up until the day the BlazeView assignment submission window closes (noon on Friday unless otherwise identified). If you need additional time to work on an assignment or if you have a scheduling conflict you must contact your instructor BEFORE the assignment is due to discuss your situation. The instructor WILL NOT accept work after the assignment submission window closes without prior consent.

### **Professionalism**

The Department of Library and Information Studies expects that MLIS students will pursue their academic endeavors and conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner. All work that a student presents to satisfy course requirements should represent his or her own efforts, including

appropriate use and acknowledgement of external sources. The student will be timely and complete with assignments and other engagements. The student will communicate in a professional manner in both speech and writing. The student will maintain a professional attitude, being respectful to others and their viewpoints, and seek to maintain objectivity. The student will exercise an awareness of the pervasiveness of the online environment and strive to maintain a professional online presence.

### **Dewar College of Education & Human Services Policy on Plagiarism**

<http://www.valdosta.edu/colleges/education/deans-office/policy-statement-of-plagiarism.php>

### **Accessibility Statement**

Valdosta State University is an equal opportunity educational institution. It is not the intent of the institution to discriminate against any applicant for admission or any student or employee of the institution based on the age, sex, race, religion, color, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation of the individual. It is the intent of the institution to comply with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and subsequent Executive Orders as well as Title IX, Equal Pay Act of 1963, Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

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](mailto:access@valdosta.edu).

### **Student Opinion of Instruction**

At the end of the term, all students will be expected to complete an online Student Opinion of Instruction survey (SOI) that will be available on BANNER. Students will receive an email notification through their VSU email address when the SOI is available (generally at least one week before the end of the term). SOI responses are anonymous, and instructors will be able to view only a summary of all responses two weeks after they have submitted final grades. Instructors will not be able to view individual responses or to access any of the responses until after final grade submission. Complete information about the SOIs, including how to access the survey and a timetable for this term is available at <http://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/vp-office/sois/welcome.php>.