

Syllabus

Department: Division of Library and Information Science

Course Number and Title: LIS 239 Research and Evaluation Methods in Library and Information Science

Bulletin Description: [25 words maximum]

This graduate-level course is an introduction to research and evaluation methods that are used by LIS practitioners and researchers as well as many patrons.

Prerequisite(s): None

Co-requisite(s): None

Course Objectives:

Through readings, online discussions, and written assessments, students completing this course will be able to:

- Discuss the importance of research and evaluation in library and information science;
- Articulate ethical concerns and issues related to research and evaluation;
- Critique published research effectively;
- Describe social science research strategies and methodologies that are applicable in Library and Information Science;
- Construct a research proposal that involves:
 - Identifying and selecting a research problem;
 - Developing research questions to address the research problem;
 - Conducting a review of the literature associated with the research problem;
- Selecting appropriate research strategies for gathering data on the identified research problem;
- Designing a methodology for implementing the selected research strategy;
- Writing a rationale that explains the contributions of the proposed research effort.

Program Goals and Outcomes:

1.A. Demonstrate knowledge of the ethics, values, and foundational principles and the role of library and information professionals in the promotion of democratic and legal principles and intellectual freedom.

1.B. Understand the history of human communication and its impact on libraries, and the importance of effective verbal and written advocacy for libraries, librarians, other library workers and library services.

1.D. Demonstrate effective communication techniques (verbal and written) used to analyze complex problems and create appropriate solutions.

3.A. Understand the principles involved and the developmental, descriptive, and evaluative skills needed in the organization, representation and retrieval of recorded knowledge and information resources.

6.A. Understand the fundamentals of quantitative and qualitative research methods, including central research findings and research literature of the field, and the principles and methods used to assess the actual and potential value of new research.

Units of Instruction:

Unit	Topic
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Nature and Process of Social Research • Social Research Strategies • Mixed Methods Research: Combining Quantitative and Qualitative Research
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing the Literature • Statement of Research Problem
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethics in Research
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Nature of Quantitative Research • The Nature of Qualitative Research
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-administered Questionnaires • Structured Observation
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Designs • Planning a Research Project and Formulating Research Questions
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sampling in Quantitative Research • Sampling in Qualitative Research
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structured Interviewing • Asking Questions • Interviewing in Qualitative Research • Content Analysis
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnography and Participant Observation • Focus Groups
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative Data Analysis • Qualitative Data Analysis • Writing Up Social Research

Learning Activities

The learning activities in this course are designed to improve students’ analytical and critical thinking skills related to evaluating and conducting research.

There will be ongoing online discussions, individual projects, and a group project to facilitate learning key research methods, strategies, and practices. A semester-long series of assignments culminating in a research proposal will demonstrate students’ research competencies for

conducting a critical literature review and selecting an appropriate research design. There will also be some collaborative group projects designed to provide students with hands-on experience using a few different research methods in order to gain basic familiarity with planning, designing and conducting research, analyzing the results and presenting a research report.

Assessment

1. Course-Level Assessment

- a) The online discussions and collaborative projects mentioned in the Learning Activities section will be designed to reinforce one or more of the course objectives listed above.
- b) A semester-long series of assignments culminating in a research project will be designed to apply to all course objectives, although some objectives may have a greater emphasis depending on the feedback from the earlier assignments. A sample rubric used for the assessment of the individual research project is appended to this syllabus (Appendix A).

2. Program-Level Assessment. The MS LIS program is re-accredited every seven years by the American Library Association (ALA). The program was last re-accredited in Fall 2011. As part of this accreditation process, all constituents (students, faculty, alumni, and employers) participate in ongoing assessments providing continuous feedback which is applied towards improving the MS LIS program. The following two assessments apply.

- a) **Faculty-Selected Assessment.** Over a four year period each course in the MS LIS program is assessed to determine how well students are learning the program goals related to the course's content. For each course, faculty will select one or more artifacts (e.g. assignment, exam, or semester project) as a representative measure of learning the course's related program goals. At the end of the course, the faculty member writes a report describing the class' performance, reviewing the artifact's role as a measure, and any course revisions prescribed as a result. Sample artifacts with their respective reviews are provided for the ALA-CoA External Review Panel (ERP) visit. A template for the report is appended to this syllabus (Appendix B). In LIS 239 Research and Evaluation Methods in Library and Information Science, the individual research project will be designed to cover the program goals and outcomes listed in the aforementioned section of the syllabus. This artifact will be used to assess the course. The instructor may elect to include additional artifacts in the assessment.
- b) **Student-Selected Assessment.** Throughout their program of study, students select artifacts (assignments, discussion posts, projects, etc.) from their coursework to include in their e-portfolios. The ePortfolio is the end-of-program assessment for the MS LIS. Students include artifacts and write explanatory reflections as evidence of satisfying each of the eight program goals of the MS

LIS. The eight program goals are based on the eight core competencies of the American Library Association (ALA). Each reflection explains how the artifact/s relate to the respective program goal and describes the artifact/s impact on their learning. In LIS 239 Research and Evaluation Methods in Information Organizations, the individual research project will be designed to cover the program goals and outcomes listed in the aforementioned section of the syllabus. Students may include this project in their e-portfolio as evidence of satisfying the program goals in LIS 239's syllabus. The rubric used for assessment is posted for the students (http://campusguides.stjohns.edu/ld.php?content_id=14727403).

Grading Scheme

The course grade will be determined from the following activities. The percent in parentheses is that of the overall course grade.

- a) Online Discussion (20%)
- b) Individual Projects (50%)
- c) Group Project (20%)
- d) Final Exam (10%)

Bibliography

Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods* (5th ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

Connaway, L. S., & Powell, R.R. (2010). *Basic research methods for librarians*. Santa Barbara, California: Libraries Unlimited.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Singleton, R., & Straits, B. (2010). *Approaches to social research* (5th ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

Wallace, D.P., & Van Fleet, C. (2012). *Knowledge into action*. Santa Barbara, California: Libraries Unlimited.

Wildmuth, B M. (2009). *Applications of social research methods to questions in information and library science*. Westport, Conn: Libraries Unlimited.

The Research Librarian Website – <http://www.researchinglibrarian.com/>

Instructional Time Requirements: 150 hours for 3 credits (10 hours per week for our 15 week semester)

- Asynchronous or synchronous Lecture
- Assigned weekly reading
- Weekly assignments (individual and group)
- Active participation in online discussions
- Research for semester-long projects (term papers, projects)
- Presentations (online or face to face)
- Academic Service-Learning projects (where appropriate)

APPENDIX A

Individual Research Project Assessment Rubric

Assessment Criteria	Points
<p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduces the problem or area of interest. • Explains the relevance of the topic to the researcher and field of knowledge. • Provides smooth transition to the next section of proposal. 	4
<p>Statement of Research Problem</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specifies clearly the problem or purpose of the research. • States concisely the research questions. • Provides smooth transition to the next section of proposal. 	6
<p>Literature Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarizes concisely at least 15 literature items (what, when, where, how). • Avoids excessive use of direct quotes. • Develops a storyline among the literature that links each item to the problem. • Critiques, analyzes, and synthesizes the literature. • Identifies the gaps, problems and issues unresolved by the literature 	15
<p>Research Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes and justifies methodology, data gathering methods and design of research. • Describes the sample, context, planned analysis, and timeline. • Justifies the methodology in relation to the research topic or problem. 	15
<p>Significance of the Proposed Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convinces the reader of the importance of the research. • Identifies the theoretical and practical significance of the research. • Speculates on implications of anticipated findings. 	5
<p>Writing Qualities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing is clear and concise. • Subheadings used to clarify organization. • Writing is in active voice, present verb tense as much as possible. • Your voice is present and distinct from article authors. • Grammar, spelling, and punctuation are correct. • APA format is followed for writing, citations and bibliography. 	5