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

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.

Credit: 3 semester hours

Course Description

This graduate-level course is an introduction to methods applicable to research/evaluation in librarianship and information science. Topics covered will include ethics, evaluation of research studies, research problems/questions, research strategy and methodology, data analysis, reporting research, and writing a research proposal.

Prerequisite(s): None
Co-requisite(s): None

Course Objectives

As outcomes of the course, students will/will be able to:

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

Program Goals and Outcomes

The course contributes towards satisfying MS LIS program goal 4:

1A. 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.

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1B. 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.

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

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

6A. 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

The table below lists the required reading in the course textbook.

Unit	Topic
1	• The Nature and Process of Social Research • Social Research Strategies • Mixed Methods Research
2	• Reviewing the Literature • Statement of Research Problem
3	• Ethics in Research
4	• The Nature of Quantitative Research • The Nature of Qualitative Research
5	• Self-administered Questionnaires • Structured Observation
6	• Research Designs • Planning a Research Project and Formulating Research Questions
7	• Sampling in Quantitative Research • Sampling in Qualitative Research
8	• Structured Interviewing • Asking Questions • Interviewing in Qualitative Research • Content Analysis
9	• Ethnography and Participant Observation • Focus Groups
10	• 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 discussions, group projects, and individual exercises are designed to reinforce one or more of the course objectives.

   b) A semester-long series of assignments culminating in a research proposal project applies to all course objectives. The project description in the course web site describes the staged development of the project, the structure of the report, and the overall assessment.

2. Program-Level Assessment. The MS LIS program is reviewed every seven years for continued accreditation by the American Library Association's (ALA) Committee on Accreditation. The program's most recent accreditation was in the Fall 2018 term. As part of this accreditation process, all students, faculty, alumni, and employers participate in periodic assessments, providing feedback for improving the MS LIS program. The two assessments below apply to every course in the program.

   a) Faculty-Selected Assessment. Over a four year period each course in the MS LIS program is assessed by the instructor to determine how well students are learning the program goal/s related to the course. For each course, faculty select one or more artifacts (e.g. assignment, exam, or semester project) as a representative measure of student learning of the related program goal/s. At the end of the course, the faculty member completes a course artifact assessment form describing the class' performance on the artifact, and any course revisions prescribed as a result. Sample artifacts with their respective reviews are included as well.

   In LIS 239 Research and Evaluation Methods in Library and Information Science, the research proposal project is used as a representative measure of student learning of the related program goals.

b) Student-Selected Assessment. The end-of-program assessment is an e-portfolio consisting of student-selected artifacts (assignments, discussion posts, projects, etc.) from their courses as evidence of satisfying each of the eight program goals. For each program goal, students write a reflection which describes the relationship of the artifact to the respective goal and their learning from the artifact.

In LIS 239 Research and Evaluation Methods in Library and Information Science, the research proposal project is suggested as the course artifact should students decide to use their work in this course as evidence of satisfying the related program goals. This is because of the comprehensive nature of the project.

Grading Scheme

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

a) Discussion (25%)

b) Individual projects (60%)

c) Group project (15%)

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)

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