Valdosta State University
Master of Library and Information Science Program
MLIS-7700-Research Methods - SP2013-MLIS-7700-IA
Syllabus--Spring Semester 2013
Three Credit Hours

Instructor:
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Catalog 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.

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.

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.

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 (SLO):
Students will:

SLO 1. Recognize the inter-relationships of theory, research, and scientific inquiry (PO 3).

SLO 2. Discuss basic ethical issues associated with conducting research (PO 3, PO 4).

SLO 3. Distinguish between qualitative and quantitative research methods (PO 3).

SLO 4. Identify the basic elements in the design of social research studies(PO 3).

SLO 5. Relate terminology, concepts, and processes of social research to studies conducted in the library and information science (LIS) field (PO 3).

SLO 6. Evaluate research methodologies from representative LIS research studies (PO 1, PO 2, PO 3).

SLO 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).

SLO 8. Apply a systematic method for locating references in the research literature (PO 1, PO 2, PO 3).

SLO 9. Prepare a literature review according to a style used in research reporting (PO 3).

SLO 10. Propose a practice-based library or information science research project (PO 1, PO 2PO 3).

Required Textbooks:

- Neuman, W. L. (2012). *Basics of social research: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. 3rd ed. Boston: Pearson; Prentice Hall. ISBN: 0205762611 (pbk) 9780205762613 0205085946 (pbk) 9780205085941

- Nahl, D. (2000). *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.)

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

Required Materials:

- A headset with attached microphone or other microphone and speakers that work with WIMBA software. Noise-canceling properties are recommended.

• Additional materials posted in BlazeView or in Odum Library Electronic Reserve.

Instructor Availability & Support
Check with your instructor for her/his policy on how frequently e-mail and telephone messages will be returned. By institutional policy, instructors are asked to communicate with students online through VSU accounts (BlazeVIEW and VSU e-mail). If you are

registered for the course as a non-degree student, a VSU email account will be assigned to you for this semester.

All discussion posts and assignment submissions for this online course must be sent via BlazeVIEW. Your VSU email username serves as your BlazeVIEW login. The BlazeVIEW password requires at least one capital letter in it. See the section on "Technical Requirements" on this syllabus for contact information in the case you need technical help.

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.

LiveText Assessment Tool
All students are REQUIRED to purchase a license to access LiveText. You are required to upload specified assignments into the LiveText system for program assessment. The LiveText system will be used throughout your professional program. You will only need to purchase a license once.

Attendance
This is a Web-delivered course. There will be two scheduled weekend WIMBA Live Classroom sessions near midterm. These sessions will provide activities that demonstrate the application of statistical methods and preparing the sections of a research proposal.

All other course communications, activities, and materials will be available exclusively through the BlazeVIEW web site and require weekly checks for assignments. The instructor will schedule real-time instruction using Live Classroom as needed.

General Course Outline:
Week 1: Introduction to Inquiry
Weeks 2 & 3: The Nature of Qualitative Research
Week 4: Ethics in Social Research
Week 5: Language of Quantitative Research Design
Week 6: Survey Design
Week 7: Experimental Research
Week 8: Identifying Elements of Research Design
Week 9: Measuring & Analyzing Data
Week 10: Conceptualizing Your Proposal
Week 11: The Literature Review
Week 12: Research Questions and Methods
Week 13: The Abstract for Your Proposal
Week 14 & 15 Polishing the Proposal

Course Activities Outline
The following list is a brief overview of the activities included in this course in order of their assignment. Look for complete instructions and grading criteria for each assignment on the BlazeVIEW course site. Note that grades for each assignment or course activity are associated with not only the quality of the response as a whole, but also with the comprehensiveness of coverage of each of the Learning Outcomes associated with the assignment.

Week 1: Discussion Board 1
Introduce yourself by answering the questions posted on the Discussion Board 1 in BlazeVIEW.

Weeks 2 & 3: Small Group Exercise: Read-Observe-Analyze Project (SLO 3, SLO 4, SLO 8, SLO 9)
Many courses on research methods save discussions of qualitative research for last. However, qualitative research lays the foundation for much of what happens in quantitative research. 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.

Week 4: Discussion Board 2 (SLO 2)
Post your reactions to questions related to ethical issues. Questions will appear on Discussion Board 2.

Week 6: Individual Exercise A: Recognizing Good and Bad Survey Methods (SLO 1, SLO 3, SLO 4, SLO 5)
You will be given sample survey questions and asked to identify flaws, correct problems, and re-write "bad" questions.

Week 8: Individual Exercise B: Identifying Elements of Research Design (SLO 3, SLO 4, SLO 6, SLO 7)
This exercise involves identifying the basic components of qualitative and quantitative research design using excerpts from actual research articles in the library and information science literature.

Weeks 9 - 13: Pre-requisite Drafts on Research Proposal Topic (LO 1, LO 2, LO 3, LO 4, LO 5, LO 6, LO 7. LO 8, LO 9, LO 10)
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. Five documents showing your progress on developing your proposal must be submitted – one each

week. These include (1) a proposal idea submitted to Discussion Board 3 for peer review, (2) worksheet outlining the parts of your proposal idea, (3) a literature review, (4) your research problem-questions-methods section, and (5) an abstract submitted to Discussion Board 4 for instructor and peer review. Submission of these drafts is mandatory. You will not be graded, but you will receive feedback from the professor on each draft, and peer review comments on Discussion Boards 3 & 4. Your final proposal is worth 35 points. **Not submitting a draft results in a <u>5 point deduction for each missed draft</u> from your final proposal.**

Weeks 14 & 15: Final Project: Writing a Research Project Proposal (LO 1, LO 2, LO 3, LO 4, LO 5, LO 6, LO 7. LO 8, LO 9, LO 10) **LIVETEXT UPLOAD REQUIRED**
Using your preliminary drafts and the feedback on this work, refine and combine your work into a research proposal that articulates how to investigate that problem. This is a proposal specifying what you would do if you had the opportunity to conduct research on your problem. You will not be asked to actually do the research. The final proposal must include:
1) your abstract;
2) literature review;
3) statement and questions
    a. problem statement and
    b. research questions;
4) explanation and application
    a. explanation of the purpose of the research (may be addressed in introduction) and
    b. its potential application (may be addressed in conclusion);
5) the objectives or hypothesis;
6) the type of research approach proposed (e.g., qualitative or quantitative with details);
7) the specifics on the proposed research design
    a. procedures on selecting materials or participants,
    b. the names of variables if applicable,
    c. data collection methods and
    d. data analysis methods); and
8) references.
Details on formatting the report and grading criteria will be on the BlazeVIEW course site.
Successful completion of this assignment is necessary to fulfill requirements for this course and indicates partial accomplishment of MLIS Program-level student learning outcomes. You are required to upload your finished assignment into your LiveText account to receive credit for this assignment. This is in addition to uploading your finished assignment through BlazeView for grading.

Assignment Calendar – *see BlazeVIEW calendar for specific dates*
Week of: *Activities:*
Week 1. Mon. January 7: **Introduction to Inquiry**
- Read Neuman textbook: Chapters 1 & 2

- Submit a post in response to **Discussion 1**. Required. Due Friday, January 11
- Read the assignment materials for Weeks 2 and 3.
- Sign up for a group. Due Friday, January 11.

Weeks 2 & 3. Mon. January 14 -- Sun. January 27:   **The Nature of Qualitative Research**
- Organize and conduct the Read-Observe-Analyze Project
- Draw upon your textbook and any other materials that you identify as germane to the assignment.
- Chapter 9 in Diane Nahl's workbook gives a simplistic, but informative overview on what qualitative research is and types of research (pp. 165-170).
- Recommended starting points in the Neuman textbook:
  Chapter 9 – section on content analysis (pp. 239-249) – for the Web site examination
  Chapter 11 – section on observing and collecting data (pp. 293-299) – for library observation
  Chapter 12 – section on using historical data (pp.333-338) – primary vs. secondary sources
- You will find Background material, Project Guidelines, and a Handout on terminology in this week's folder.
- Prepare your Group Report according to the formatting and grading criteria on the BlazeVIEW course site.
- Submit your finished Group Report using the BlazeVIEW Assignment Tool.
    DUE DATE: WED. January 30, 11:59 PM
    Later submissions lose points (1 point per day).

Week 4. Mon January 28: **Ethics in Social Research**
- Read Neuman textbook: Chapter 3
- View material on the course site in this week"s folder.
- Submit your post answering questions about ethics to **Discussion 2**.
    DUE DATE: WED. February 6, 11:59 PM
    Later submissions lose points (1 point per day).

Week 5. Mon February 4: **Language of Quantitative Research Design**
- Read Neuman textbook: Chapter 4 (pp. 95-110).
- View material on the course site in this week's folder.

Week 6. February 11:   **Survey Research & Design**
- Read Neuman textbook: Chapter 7
- View material on the course site in this week's folder.
- Submit Individual Exercise A: Recognizing Good and Bad Survey Methods using the BlazeVIEW Assignment Tool.
    DUE DATE: WED. February 13, 11:59 PM
    Later submissions lose points (1 point per day).

Week 7. February 18:   **Experimental Research**
- Read Neuman textbook: Chapter 8
- View material on the course site in this week's folder.

Week 8. February 25:   **Identifying Elements of Research Design**
- Read Neuman textbook: Chapter 6
- 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 using the BlazeVIEW Assignment Tool.
     DUE DATE: WED. February 27, 11:59 PM
     Later submissions lose points (1 point per day).

Thur. February 28 / March 1: LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW FROM A CLASS WITHOUT ACADEMIC PENALTY

Week 9. March 4   **Measuring & Analyzing Data**
- Lecture will cover concepts and terminology from Chapters 5 and 10 in Neuman.
- The Nahl workbook covers much of this same material in Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8.
- Prepare and submit your Proposal Idea to **Discussion 3**. Recommend posting your proposal idea by MON March 4 to leave time for group review and comment.
- This is mandatory for feedback.
- **Not submitting a Proposal idea results in a 5 point deduction from your final proposal.**
- Comment on the Proposal ideas submitted to your Group.
- Earn extra credit for substantive recommendations to your group-mates.
     DUE DATE: WED March 6, 11:59 PM.
     Late submissions not accepted

March 9 - 10: **WIMBA EXTENDED LIVE CLASSROOM SESSION**
- Saturday's session (ca. 10 AM to 5 PM) will focus on *variables, central tendency, measures, statistical expressions* (what the symbols and numerical values you see in research reports mean), *sampling methods*, and the concepts of *validity* and *reliability*.
- Sundays session (ca. 10 AM to 2 PM) will focus on writing your proposal abstract and questions on your proposal topics.
- Attending these sessions is optional, but highly recommended. Participation both days is the optimal arrangement, but if you can only attend on Saturday or Sunday, that is permitted.

Week 10. March 11: **Conceptualizing Your Proposal**
- **Proposal Worksheet** Prepare and submit your Proposal Worksheet to the BlazeVIEW Assignment Tool. See Nahl workbook for possible worksheet model.
- This is mandatory for feedback.
- **Not submitting a Proposal Worksheet results in a <u>5 point deduction</u> from your final proposal.**
    - **DUE DATE: WED. March 13, 11:59 PM.**
    - Late submissions not accepted
- Get started on your literature review. Material in week 11's folder will guide you.

Week of March 18 SPRING BREAK

Week 11. March 25: **The Literature Review**
- Read Neuman textbook: Chapter 4 (pp. 73-88).
- Submit a draft of your literature review and your references list using the BlazeVIEW Assignment Tool.
- This is mandatory for feedback.
- **Not submitting a draft of the Lit Review results in a <u>5 point deduction</u> from your final proposal.**
    - **DUE DATE: WED. March 27, 11:59 PM.**
    - Late submissions not accepted

Week 12. Mon. April 1 **Research Questions and Methods**
- Submit a draft of your research questions and proposed data collection and data analysis methods using the BlazeVIEW Assignment Tool.
- This is mandatory for feedback.
- **Not submitting this draft results in a <u>5 point deduction</u> from your final proposal.**
    - **DUE DATE: WED. April 3, 11:59 PM.**
    - Late submissions not accepted

Week 13. April 8: **The Abstract for Your Proposal**
- Prepare and submit your Abstract to **Discussion 4**. Recommend posting your abstract by MON April 8 to leave time for group review and comment.
- This is mandatory for feedback.
- **Not submitting an abstract results in a <u>5 point deduction</u> from your final proposal.**
- Comment on the Abstracts submitted to your Group.
- Earn extra credit for substantive recommendations to your group-mates.
    - **DUE DATE: WED. April 10, 11:59 PM.**
    - Late submissions not accepted

Weeks 14 & 15. Mon. April 15 -- Sun. April 28: **Polishing the Proposal**
- Prepare your Research Proposal according to the formatting and grading criteria on the BlazeVIEW course site.

Finals Week Mon. April 29:**Submit your Research Proposal during this week using the BlazeVIEW Assignment Tool.**
Submit your proposal to LiveText
DEADLINE: MON. April 29, 11:59 PM.
Late submissions not accepted

Graded Course Requirements
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 pages 8-9 of this syllabus).

Assignment point values:

Discussion 1 (introduction)	Required, not graded
Group Exercise: Read-Observe-Analyze Project	25 points
Discussion 2 (ethics issues)	10 points
Exercise A on Survey Methods	20 points
Exercise B on Research Design	20 points
Discussion 3 (Proposal idea)	Extra credit for feedback, if substantive
Discussion 4 (Abstract draft)	Extra credit for feedback, if substantive
Research Proposal	35 points

(Not submitting your proposal idea, proposal worksheet and drafts of your abstract, lit review, and research questions/methods will result in point deductions from your proposal)

Final Grades based on Points accrued:
99-110 points = A
88-98 points = B
77-87 points = C
66-77 points = D
Below 66 points = F

No grade below a C will be credited toward a VSU graduate degree.

Because this is a core course, a student earning less than a "B" will be required to repeat the course.

Technical Requirements
All class materials will be placed on a password-protected Web site using the BlazeVIEW course management program. If you are a new BlazeVIEW user, go to the BlazeVIEW help pages at http://www.valdosta.edu/vista/students.shtml. Then return to the BlazeVIEW page and login using your BlazeNet email ID and password.

To meet all class requirements, you should be prepared to: (1) open and save or print all documents that are required background reading - this requires the Adobe Acrobat Reader on your computer; (2) view all PowerPoints placed on the course BlazeVIEW site; (3) participate in Live Classroom sessions – login links and instructions will be available through your BlazeVIEW course homepage; (4) check discussion groups as needed; and (5) keep electronic backup copies of each assignment and project you submit.

All assignments must be submitted using computer programs that are compatible with VSU supported products. For word processed documents, Microsoft Word 2010 is the required format. If you are using a lower version of Word or some other word processor, you are responsible for converting your documents to Microsoft Word 2010 compatible format (.doc or .docx). **Work submitted in non-compatible formats will not be accepted and will not be graded. This includes work submitted as rtf documents or as Adobe Acrobat pdf format.** You can obtain a copy of Microsoft Office 2010 at a reduced student price (ca. $8.00 - $12.00) through the IT Home Use Software program (http://www.valdosta.edu/helpdesk/index.shtml). Both Windows and Mac versions are available.

You are to use the underscore " _ " instead of a space " " in your file names. Spaces in a file name translate as %20 code and a penalty will be applied. The format for assignment file names is: assignmentname_yourlastname_yourfirstname. Failure to use the specified filename format will result in a 10% grade penalty being applied.

When reading instructions for your assignments, notice whether the instructions say to paste your response into a message box or to use a file attachment. Also notice whether the instructions say to choose Reply or to create a new message.

When the directions say to paste into a BlazeView message box, compose your response in your word processor first. This will help avoid the agony of being "timed out" and losing your work.

Grammar, punctuation, and spelling count. Use spell check. The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th Edition, (APA manual) is the required style manual for all class work unless otherwise specified. Formatting and professional writing style counts. Use active voice in your writing. Your work is to be double spaced, Ariel or Times New Roman font is required, body of work font size 12, and the document head must contain your name and assignment name.

Page formatting information. Use the word processing tools.
- The word processor is not a typewriter. It has the capability to word wrap your sentences at the end of each line. Use the <Enter> key at the end of paragraphs. Do not use the <Enter> key at the end of each line.
- Use the <page break> function to control page breaks. Do not use <Enter> key to generate blank lines to separate major sections like the title page, and references from the body your paper. Use the <page break> function.

The University's Information Technology department provides step-by-step guides on how to use VSU"s email and other sources. The IT Help Desk is at http://www.valdosta.edu/helpdesk/guides/ and their phone hot line is 229-245-4357.

Academic Honesty
An overall grade of zero can be assigned to an entire paper or project if the instructor determines that its contents, or parts of its contents, were completed by a second party or copied into a paper or project from a source without proper citing. **Noncompliance with rules on appropriate use of resources will result in zero credit for those parts of the assignment affected**. If you are unsure about the parameters of an assignment, ask for clarification.

Unless an assignment is specifically designated as a group or collaborative activity, anything submitted under your name should be solely your own work. If you are unsure about the parameters of an assignment, ask for clarification.

Valdosta State University expects that graduate 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 *Guide to Ethical Conduct* is a booklet created for VSU MLIS students (http://www.valdosta.edu/mlis/student_resources/documents/GuidetoEthicalConductWebversion.pdf). It contains guidelines on appropriate conduct and outlines the ethical principles that instruct the profession of library and information science. Specific regulations related to student conduct and behavior are contained in the *Student Handbook, Student Code of Ethics*. Please acquaint yourself with the full policy at http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/AcademicHonestyPoliciesandProcedures.shtml.

It is **your responsibility** to make sure you understand how to avoid breeches of academic integrity. The instructor posts rules for citing, quoting, and appropriate use of resources for assignments that require written compositions, reviews, or commentary.

Asking librarians or staff in a library to provide answers or to conduct research to fulfill any part of a graded course requirement is an infraction of academic integrity. The same policy applies to contacting any free or commercial reference service for assistance with a graded assignment.

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 http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/SafeAssignforStudents.shtml .

Equal Opportunity Statement

Valdosta State University is an equal opportunity educational institution. It is not the intent of our institution to discriminate against any applicant for admission or any student or employee of the institution based on the sex, race, religion, color, national origin, or the handicap of the individual. It is the intent of the institution to comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and subsequent executive orders as well as the Title IX section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Special Needs Statement
From VSU's Access Office http://www.valdosta.edu/access/facresources.shtml):
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.

Compliance Statement:
Enrollment in this class signifies that the student has 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**.