

VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY
MASTER OF LIBRARY & INFORMATION SCIENCE
MLIS 7700 Research Methods
SYLLABUS
Fall Semester 2005
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.

Course Outcomes

At the conclusion of the course, the students will be able to:

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

Instructor Availability & Support

Dr. Ondrusek checks her e-mail and telephone messages at least once daily throughout normal business hours (M-F, 9-5) and extends e-mail checks to at least twice daily and on weekends during those periods when graded assignments are pending. By institutional policy, instructors are asked to communicate with students online through VSU accounts (Vista and BlazeNet e-mail). All discussion posts and assignment submissions for this online course must be sent via Vista. In the case that we encounter technical problems with the Vista software, group e-mail assignments will be routed through BlazeNet. Opening and finding the MLIS 7700 BlazeNet account is, therefore, required. For instructions on using a student BlazeNet account, go to:

http://www.valdosta.edu/blazenet/email-trans/help_stu.html.

Textbooks

Babbie, E. *The Practice of Social Research*, 10th Edition. Thomson Wadsworth, 2004. Student Edition ISBN: 0534620280. A CD-ROM for Windows containing supplementary materials comes with this textbook, but I will not require any CD-ROM usage. So, a used copy of the textbook, with or without the CD-ROM, is fine. Make sure it's the 10th edition.

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 WebCT/Vista site for this course.)

Computer Equipment Needs

Instructional materials were developed on a PC Pentium 4 system with Windows XP. Documents require a word processor and Adobe Acrobat and video excerpts require speakers and the RealPlayer plugin available free from Real.com.

Attendance

The course follows a Web-delivered format with a two-day face-to-face, non-graded laboratory session to be held on the Macon campus, Saturday, October 29, 10 AM to 5 PM, and Sunday, October 30, 10 AM to 1 PM. The sessions will provide hands-on 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 Vista and require weekly checks for assignments.

The course is organized into four modules with course materials (except for assigned chapters from the Babbie text) presented as outlined below:

Module 1: Introduction to Inquiry

- Week 1: Human Inquiry
- Week 2: Research Methods
- Week 3: Paradigms and Theories
- Week 4: Ethics Policies and Informed Consent

Module 2: The Structure of Research

- Week 5: Data Collection Distinctions
- Week 6: Basic Elements in Research Design
- Week 7: Midterm Activities

Module 3: Quantitative Research Methods

- Week 8: Descriptive Research Assessment Tools
- Week 9: Experiments and Explanatory Studies
- Week 10: Research Outcome Measures
- Week 11: Hands-on Lab in Macon

Module 4: The LIS Strategic Research Project

- Week 12: The Literature Review
- Week 13: The Research Proposal
- Week 14: Getting Funded and Getting Published
- Week 15: Final Week for Strategic Research Document Preparation

Week-to-Week Assignments

Specific assignments along with due dates are listed in the Week-to-Week Assignments folder on the MLIS 7700 Vista course page.

Graded Requirements

Group Discussion Posts and Chat Participation	20%
Research Exercises	15%
Research Article Critiques (1 Qualitative, 1 Quantitative)	20%
Midterm Exam	20%
Final Strategic Research Project	25%

[see the Graded Course Requirements document on Vista for details on these requirements]

Submitting Assignments

Deadlines for each graded activity are clearly stated on the MLIS 7700 Course Calendar posted on the course home page on Vista. Missing a deadline for any activity will result in a reduction in your grade unless you can arrange a mutually acceptable alternative with the instructor.

Grading

Exceptionally exceeds minimum standards	A
Exceeds minimum standards	B
Meets minimum standards	C
Barely meets minimum standards	D
Fails to meet minimum standards	F

Academic Dishonesty

"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."

Specific regulations related to student conduct and behavior are contained in the *Student Handbook, Student Code of Ethics*. Please acquaint yourself with the full [VSU policy on academic dishonesty](http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/Academic_Dishonesty.html) at http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/Academic_Dishonesty.html.

Special Needs 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. Students requiring classroom accommodations or modifications because of a documented disability should discuss this need with the professor at the beginning of the semester. Students not registered with the Special Services Program should contact the Access Office for Students with Disabilities located in room 1115 Nevins Hall. The phone numbers are 245-2498 (voice) and 219-1348 (tty).