

LBSC 701 / INFM 718M
Research Methods in Library and Information Studies
Spring Semester, 2011

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Course Description

This course covers the techniques and strategies of research as applied to the definition, investigation, and evaluation of information problems. It explores the nature, role and methods of scholarly research and provides a basic introduction to scientific inquiry, hypothesis formulation, and some statistical testing. Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods of research design methods are considered from the aspects of implementation, analysis, and interpretation.

Course Objectives

By the completion of this course, each student will have developed:

- Skills and concepts that allow them to be astute and discriminating consumers of research
- Appreciation for the value of conducting research and using research results
- Skills and knowledge to conduct a simple research study
- Familiarity with and appreciation for research in the field
- Awareness of the research proposal and grant processes
- Awareness of federal, state, and private grant making organizations

Week beginning	Topic	Readings & Assignments
1/24 1	Introduction to research	Powell, Chapter 1; Creswell, Chapter 1 Research methods knowledgebase (optional) http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/contents.php
1/31 2	Developing research studies	Powell, Chapter 2 & 3 Kuhn, Thomas. The Structure of scientific revolutions. Chapters 2 & 3.
2/7 3	Review of the literature	Creswell, Chapter 2 Assignment 1 due Friday, 2/11
2/14 4	Writing Strategies and Ethical Considerations	Creswell, Chapter 3

2/21 5	Introduction to a Research Proposal: The Purpose Statement	Creswell, Chapter 4 & 5
2/28 6	The Use of Theory Formulating Research Questions	Creswell, Chapter 6 & 7 Kuhn, Thomas. Chapter 7 Assignment 2 due Friday, 3/4
3/7 7	Survey Research Data Collection Techniques	Powell, Chapter 4 & 5 Trochim, W. (2006). Survey research. http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/survey.php
3/14 8	Definitions, Limitations, and Significance Quantitative Methods Introduction to statistics	Creswell, Chapter 8 & 9 Hull (1954, 1993). Chapters 1,2 & 3
3/21 9	Spring Break – no classes	
3/28 10	Experimental & Quasi-experimental Research	Powell, Chapter 6 Assignment 3 due Friday, 4/1
4/4 11	Qualitative Research	Powell, Chapter 7 Creswell, Chapter 10 Lincoln, Y. (2002). Insights into library services and users from qualitative research.
4/11 12	Mixed Methods Procedures	Creswell, Chapter 11
4/18 13	Historical Research	Powell, Chapter 8 Assignment 4 due Friday, 4/22
4/25 14	Data Analysis	Powell, Chapter 9
5/2 15	Writing a Research Proposal Writing a Research Report	Powell, Chapter 10 & 11 Assignment 5 due Friday, 5/6
5/9 16	Summary of the course Semester project due Saturday, 5/14	“Five Grand Challenges for Library Research.” Buckland (2003) "Domain assumptions in Research" Glazier (2004). in Powell, Ronald R. Basic Research Methods for Librarians. 4th ed. Pages 281-297 “Research Methods in LIS Dissertations” Blake (2003)

Graded Assignments

All assignments are to be submitted to the instructor as e-mail attachments by midnight on the dates indicated.

- **Assignment 1.** (due at midnight, Friday, February 11th)

Isaac Newton spoke of his work as “standing on the shoulders of giants”. How would you interpret this statement in view of how scholarship is conducted today? Be sure to explain the role of the literature review and the need to cite the work of others when research results are reported/published.

Write no more than 2 pages in 12 point font size.

This assignment is worth 10% of your final course grade.

- **Assignment 2.** (due at midnight, Friday, March 4th)

Explain the various roles of theory in social science research. Bear in mind Kuhn's statement that there can be no understanding without theory.

Write no more than 2 pages in 12 point font size.

This assignment is worth 10% of your final course grade.

- **Assignment 3.** (due at midnight, Friday, April 1st)

Researchers conducting experimental or quasi-experimental research will often try to demonstrate causality in their results. Explain what they must do to make the assertion of causality credible. You may use an example to assist in your explanation

Write no more than 2 pages in 12 point font size.

This assignment is worth 10% of your final course grade.

- **Assignment 4.** (due at midnight, Friday, April 22nd)

Qualitative research has been criticized by some as being *subjective* – that its results are just the researcher's subjective description of the phenomena under study. If that is so, it suggests that different conclusions will be drawn by different researchers observing the same phenomenon without any judgement of which is “true”.

Refute this view of qualitative research by presenting arguments that support the validity and credibility of qualitative research.

Write no more than 2 pages in 12 point font size.

This assignment is worth 10% of your final course grade.

- **Assignment 5** (due at midnight, Friday, May 6th)

Carefully read the research article by Linda Cooper (posted on the course website in the Graded Assignments folder). Then write a critical review of the article using the template for evaluating research articles to guide you in the process. Be succinct in your comments and don't summarize the article – your paper should be a critique, not a summary.

Write no more than 2 pages in 12 point font size.

This assignment is worth 10% of your final course grade.

- **Semester project:** (due at midnight, Saturday, May 14, 2011).

Formulate and write an abbreviated research proposal on a research topic of your choice. Please submit your topic and specific research question(s) to the instructor by April 15th. Your proposal must include a short literature review but you can limit this to 5 scholarly citations. An interactive live discussion to elaborate the required elements of the project will be held using the ELMS Live Audio facility – date and time to be announced. Your proposal should not be longer than 5 pages in 12 point font size. (the project is worth 40% of your grade).

- **Actively participate** in weekly online discussions (worth 10% of your grade).

You will not be graded on the quality of your contribution but if you fail to participate you will have 1% deducted for each week missed – up to a maximum of 10% for the course).

Due Dates

All assignments are due as scheduled. A request for an extension may be granted only if discussed with the instructor and the instructor is satisfied that you have a legitimate reason for being late. Otherwise, late assignments will receive a lower grade or may not be accepted.

Class Participation

The majority of this class will be conducted in an online seminar format. Therefore, your online participation is needed and valued.

Plagiarism

All work must be the student's own, done independently unless specifically designated as the work of a group. The university rules for academic honesty will be followed to the letter. This means that any irregularities, including plagiarism of published or unpublished work, will be reported to the Dean for further action. If you are not aware of the University Honor Pledge, become familiar with it. Excuses based on a claim of ignorance will not be accepted.

Religious or Cultural Observances

Some course activities may be in close proximity to religious or cultural observances. If dates for parts of this course are in a conflict, please inform the instructor in advance so we can make appropriate arrangements.

Americans with Disability Statement

In the spirit of the Americans with Disability Act (ADA), I will work with students who have a disability that impacts their learning. Students with a documented disability should contact the instructor as soon as possible to discuss academic accommodations.

Course Evaluation

Students will have a formal opportunity to evaluate the course and instructor at the end of the course. Suggestions and feedback from students throughout the course are welcomed.

Required Readings

- Creswell, John W. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 2nd Edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2003. (paperback)
- Powell, Ronald R. *Basic Research Methods for Librarians*. 4th ed., Libraries Unlimited, 2004. (paperback)

- Kuhn, Thomas S. *The Structure of scientific revolutions*. 3rd ed., 1996. Read chapters 2, 3 & 7 only. (available in McKeldin Library and 2nd ed. online at: <http://experiment.iitalia.com/librarysplit2/Thomas%20S%20Kuhn,%20The%20Structure%20Of%20Scientific%20Revolutions%202Nd%20Ed.pdf>)
- Huff, Darrell. *How to Lie With Statistics*. (1954 or 1993 Reissued edition) New York:W.W. Norton, 1993. (This very short book is available in McKeldin Library. You do not need a personal copy. It is also held by a number of campus libraries.)
- Foundation Center. "A Proposal Writing Short Course" on their Web page <http://fdncenter.org/learn/shortcourse/prop1.html> as of June 28, 2004.
- National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Engineering, Institute of Medicine. *On Being a Scientist: Responsible Conduct in Research*, 2nd edition 1995. Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 40 pages. Online at <http://www.nap.edu/books/0309051967/html/index.html>. as of June 28, 2004.
- University of Maryland, Office of Research and AA (ORAA), Institutional Review Board (IRB) is their Web page for information on the review of research involving human subjects. <http://www.umresearch.umd.edu/IRB/index.html> IRB Initial Application Form is located on their Web page http://www.umresearch.umd.edu/ORAA/forms/HSRCDEPT_21NOV03.doc as of June 28, 2004.
- *Grant Proposal Guide*. Arlington: National Science Foundation, Effective October 1, 2003. (NSF 04-2) copy online, see <http://www.nsf.gov> and search using the following string, *grant proposal guide*. You may read online or download a copy.

Recommended but not required Textbook

- Cozby, Paul C. *Methods in behavioral research*. Mayfield Publishing, 1997 (paperback)
- Research methods knowledgebase. (optional online reading) File is located in the Week 1 folder of the course website.

Other Readings

- Agosto, D. E., & Hughes-Hassell, S. (2006). Toward a model of the everyday life information needs of urban teenagers, Part 1: Theoretical model. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science*, 57, 1394-1403. Available through Research Port
- Agosto, D. E., & Hughes-Hassell, S. (2006). Toward a model of the everyday life information needs of urban teenagers, Part 2: Empirical model. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science*, 57, 1418-1426. Available through Research Port
- Applegate, Rachel (1993) "Models of user satisfaction: Understanding the false positives," *RQ* 32(4):525-539.
- Blake, Virgil L. P. (2003) "Research Methods in LIS Dissertations" in the *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science*, Vol.4 2513-2523.
- Buckland, Michael K. (2003) "Five Grand Challenges for Library Research." *Library Trends* 51(4):675-687.
- Bushallow-Wilbur, Lara; DeVinney, Gemma;Whitcomb, Fritz. (1996) Electronic mail reference service: a study. *RQ* 35(3):359-371.

- Carter, David. Janes, Joseph (2000) "Unobtrusive data analysis of digital reference questions and service at the Internet Public Library: An exploratory study" *Library Trends* 49(2):251-265.
- Collaborative Digital Reference Service (CDRS) <http://www.loc.gov/rr/digiref/> These pages provide an overview of CDRS's history, participants, projects, news, comments, and literature.
- D'Elia, George; Walsh, S. (1983). User satisfaction with library service-a measure of public library performance? *Library Quarterly* 53(2), 109-133.
- Garnsey, Beth A.; Powell, Ronald R. (2000) Electronic mail reference services in the public library. *Reference & User Services Quarterly* 39(3): 245-254.
- Lincoln, Y. (2002). Insights into library services and users from qualitative research. *Library & Information Science Research*, 24(1), 3-16. Available through Research Port