

VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY  
MASTER OF LIBRARY & INFORMATION SCIENCE  
MLIS 7700 Research Methods  
Syllabus - Fall Semester 2006  
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 WebCT/Vista. In the case that we encounter technical problems with the WebCT 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](http://www.valdosta.edu/blazenet/email-trans/help_stu.html).\*

## **Textbooks**

Babbie, E. *The Practice of Social Research*, 10<sup>th</sup> Edition or 11<sup>th</sup> Edition. Thomson Wadsworth.

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 21, 10 AM to 5 PM, and Sunday, October 22, 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 as outlined below:

### Module 1: Introduction to Inquiry

- Week 1: Human Inquiry
- Week 2 & 3: Research Paradigms and Methods

### Module 2: The Structure of Research

- Week 4: Data Collection Distinctions
- Weeks 5: Ethical Considerations in Research
- Week 6: Basic Elements in Research Design
- Week 7: Read, Write, Chat

### Module 3: Quantitative Research Methods

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

### 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**

Combination Exercise 1 & Discussion 1	15%
Discussions 2 & 3	20%
Research Exercises (2-5)	20%
Research Article Critiques (1 Qualitative, 1 Quantitative)	20%
Final Strategic Research Project	25%

### **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**

On individual course requirements, the instructor may assign plus and minus grades using this numerical scale:

A = 4.0   A minus = 3.7   B plus = 3.5   B = 3.0   B minus = 2.7   C plus = 2.5   C = 2.0

Your final grade will be one of these letter grades:

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

### **Technical Requirements**

All class materials will be placed on a password-protected Web site using the Vista/WebCT course management program. If you are a new Vista user, go to the Vista help pages at <http://www.valdosta.edu/vista/>. \* On the right margin are "Self Help" links. View the "Getting Started" tutorial first. Then return to the Vista page and login using your BlazeNet email ID and password.

To meet all class requirements, you should also be prepared to: (1) check the Vista/WebCT course homepage several times a week, sometimes daily, if a course discussion is in progress; (2) locate additional course readings using the GALILEO databases and download or print these out (this requires the Adobe Acrobat Reader on your computer); and (3) keep electronic backup copies of each assignment and project you submit.

All assignments must be submitted using a program compatible with VSU supported products. MS Word is the preferred document format. The OpenSource project makes available a free set of programs called the OpenOffice suite which includes a word processing program compatible with MS Word. You can download the entire OpenOffice Suite from the Web site <<http://www.openoffice.org/>>. WordPerfect 12 allows you to save your documents as Word documents. If you are using a lower version of WordPerfect or the OpenOffice word processor, save your documents in Rich Text Format (rtf).

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.

### **Distance Learning Support**

A VSU reference librarian, Ms. Shiloh Smith, is responsible for coordinating library services for off-campus VSU students. She may be reached by email at [shismith@valdosta.edu](mailto:shismith@valdosta.edu) or by phone at 229-245-3717. An online guide for distance education students is on the Odum Library Web site at <http://books.valdosta.edu/dist/dmain.html>.\* A brochure for off-campus students provides valuable links to the reference desk and to the library's rather new reference chat service.

### **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](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 Special Services in Nevins Hall, Room 2164, 229-245-2498 (tx).

### **Student Agreement**

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.

\* These URL's are scheduled to change during the fall semester 2006.