VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY
MASTER OF LIBRARY& INFORMATION SCIENCE
MLIS 7700 Research Methods
Syllabus--Fall Semester 2008
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

Instructor checks his 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 (WebCT 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 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 IT Helpdesk at http://www.valdosta.edu/helpdesk/ .

Textbooks

Required: Neuman, W. L. (2007) *Basics of Social Research:Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (2nd ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.   -   ISBN: 0205484379

Optional**:** Cresswell, J. (2002). *Research Designs: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications. - ISBN: 0761924426

Attendance

The course follows a Web-delivered format with two optional face-to-face sessions to be held on the Macon campus, on Saturday (dates and times [late September and mid-November] will be posted on the Calendar tool on WebCT Vista). The sessions will provide hands-on activities that demonstrate preparing the sections of a research proposal. All other course communications, activities, and materials will be available exclusively through WebCT Vista and require weekly checks for assignments.

The course is organized into four parts as outlined below (see Study Schedule for updates):

- Part 1: Foundations
- Part 2: Conducting Quantitative Research
- Part 3: Conducting Qualitative Research
- Part 4: Writing a Research report

Assignments & Quizzes

Specific assignments and quizzes along with due dates are listed in the Assignments directory on the MLIS 7700 WebCT Vista course page.

Grading

- Participation & Discussions: 5 pts
- Assignments: 60 pts
- Research Proposal: 35 pts
- Quizzes: 3 pts (bonus)

Final grades will be assigned as follows:

- A   90 - 100
- B   80 - 89
- C   70 - 79
- D   60 - 69
- F   0 - 59

Course Requirements:

Participation & Discussions (5 pts)

- Students should participate in face-to-face/online meetings (Live Classroom) to discuss and share their opinions of the week's topics, assignments, and readings.
- Date and time information for online meetings will be made available on WebCT Vista.
- All questions regarding content, assignments, quizzes, and readings should be posted to class discussion board on WebCT Vista.
- Students are expected to answer or contribute to questions posted by their classmates.

Assignments (60 pts)

- Assignments consist of review of scholarly articles, qualitative and quantitative data analyses, and an assessment of a survey instrument.
- The scholarly articles cover broad areas of qualitative and quantitative research in the field. These articles will be made available to students as PDF files or links to original material on WebCT Vista.
- Assignments must be submitted through WebCT assignment drop box as an attachment for grading purposes and a summary should be posted to designated places on the discussion board for other students to review.
- Collaboration on assignments is encouraged. You may consult outside reference materials, other students, or the instructor. However, your answers should reflect your understanding of the subject matter at the time of writing.

Research Proposal (30 pts)

Individual research proposal must include an Abstract, Introduction, Literature Review, Methods (e.g., proposed research methods and data-analysis techniques), and References sections. A typical research paper should be about 15 pages (double-spaced at font size of 12pt) and use the 5th edition of the APA (American Psychological Association) style guide when citing sources. (see http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/)

- Selected topic must have an LIS focus.
- Students are free to choose the topics of personal interest.
- Instructor approval is required to start the Individual Research Project.
- Research Proposals will be presented at the last class meeting (Live Classroom).

Quizzes (3 pts)

- ▪ Students will complete several small scale research assignments that provide an opportunity to demonstrate familiarity with the course content.
- ▪ Quizzes are self-administered and designed to help students measure their understanding of the course content

Submitting Assignments

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

Technical Requirements

All class materials will be placed on a password-protected Web site using the WebCT Vista course management program. If you are a new Vista user, go to the WebCT 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 WebCT Vista 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 97/2003 (.doc) and Rich Text Format are preferred file formats for assignments. Use MS Power Point (.ppt) format for Live Classroom presentations. At this time MS 2007 formats (.docx , .pptx) are not compatible with WebCT and Live Classroom.

Online meetings will be held in Live Classroom, a web-conferencing tool available in WebCT. Broadband connection is preferred (min. 56K dial-up connection is required) and all students must have a headset (w/ microphone) to participate in discussions and make presentations. See MLIS Technology Requirements page for more information.

As this is an online course that also focuses its attention on online information services, students must have almost daily access to the Internet. That access will use email and the web (through the student's browser) for class-related communication. As mentioned above, it is expected that each student will be capable of dealing with pdf files and Word documents (doc files).

Course communications will use . . .

1. WebCT Vista email system and discussion board are official means of communication in this class. In addition, VSU email system may be used alternatively in case WebCT Vista fails.
2. A WebCT Vista website, used by the instructor to make links available for each unit of the topical units

Distance Learning Support:

To help address concerns of off-campus and online students, the library maintains the Library Services and Resources for Distance Education Student webpage at http://www.valdosta.edu/library/services/distancestudents.shtml . If at any time you have general questions about the library or specific questions about library resources, please call the Odum Library Reference Desk at (229) 333-7149 or email at http://www.valdosta.edu/library/forms/disted.php . Chat reference is available at http://www.valdosta.edu/library/ask.shtml .

VSU Policies:

Please become aware of and be guided by these VSU policies.

- Access Office for Students with Disabilities: http://www.valdosta.edu/access/
- Academic Dishonesty, p. 269 of Graduate Catalog, 2008/09: http://www.valdosta.edu/catalog/0809/grad/documents/grad266-296.pdf
- Student Code of Conduct, p. 56: http://www.valdosta.edu/studentaffairs/StudentHandbook.shtml
- Equal Opportunity Statement: http://www.valdosta.edu/eopma/aboutus/eos.shtml
- Sexual Harassment: http://www.valdosta.edu/legal/shp.shtml

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.