INLS 581
Research Methods Overview

Description
An introduction to research methods used in information and library science, exploring the design, interpretation, analysis and application of published research.

Goals
I want us to have fun while exploring and learning about research methods. I hope you will gain an understanding of the concepts and terminology used in ILS research and of the methods used to perform this research. I have organized this course around published research (as opposed to a research methods textbook) to better acquaint you with different research specialties and approaches in ILS. I want to help you improve your abilities to consume research and also establish a foundation for you to do your own research in the future.

Requirements
Reading, thinking, discussing, listening, researching and writing.

- You are expected to read the assigned readings by the dates listed on the schedule. This is a very reading-intensive course, so please schedule accordingly.
- You should have access to the readings during class.
- This is a small class so your participation is critical. Be prepared to ask questions and discuss the readings in class.
- Please let me know in advance if you will not be able to attend class.

Evaluation
Your major assignments for this course include: Participation (30%), Mid-term Exam (25%), Research Reviews (20%) and Final Exam (25%).

Materials
Readings will be placed in the Sakai site or you will need to obtain them from UNC Library’s online collections.

We will read many chapters from:


This book is available for purchase at UNC Book Stores and online. It is also on reserve in the SILS Library.

Milestones

September 4, 2013
Research Review.

October 30, 2013
Mid-term Exam

November 25, 2013
Last day to submit your second Research Review.

December 6, 2013 (Friday, Noon)
Final Exam
Assignments

Participation (30%)
You are an important part of this course. There are few things worse than teaching to a half-empty classroom. One thing worse than teaching to a half-empty classroom is teaching to a room full of people engaged in conversations with others or with their eyes glued to their computers! Because your presence is key to a successful class, your participation will be ‘graded.’ Your grade is based on several things: attendance, behavior, general participation, and reflective journaling.

- **Attendance.** You are expected to attend all classes and to arrive to class before it starts. You will lose participation points for excessive and unexcused absences and for arriving late to class. You should be seated and ready to start at 11:00 AM. *You can miss one day for any reason, no questions asked and without penalty.* After this, I will notice when you miss class.

- **Behavior.** Be courteous to your classmates and course instructor by not conversing with others during class lectures. Turn off cell phones, pagers, and other devices that might disrupt class. Use laptops and other devices to support current course activities only. Pay attention. Daydream infrequently.

- **General Participation.** Class participation consists of doing the following: being prepared for class, making observations about the readings, asking questions, taking notes and actively listening.

- **Reflective Journaling:** You will be asked to create a journal entry for each class period about the daily readings and subsequent class discussion. The journal entries will be private (only I will see them). Each journal entry should contain two parts. The first part should be done after you have finished the readings and before coming to class (Post-Reading Reflection). The second part should be completed after class discussions (Post-Class Reflection). Your journal entries should be printed and brought to class. Use the template provided at the end of this syllabus. Make sure you have access to this template during class; we might, on occasion, do the second part at the end of class. Your Post-Reading Reflections are due at the start of each class. Your Post-Class Reflections are due either at the start of the next class period or at the end of class (if we do them in class). If you are absent, you can still submit a Post-Reading Reflection if you have made prior arrangements with me, but it is not possible for you to submit a Post-Class Reflection.

Mid-term and Final Exams (25% each)
Exams?! Yeah, I know ... scary. But they don’t have to be! It is important to me that you internalize some of the content of this class and exams are good assessment methods for evaluating knowledge of a range of topics and issues.

You will take the mid-term exam on your own time – I will make the exam available to you online during a specified window of time and you will have up to three hours to complete it once you open it. The Final Exam will be administered during class. It will be the same format as the mid-term exam, but you will take it at the same time in a predetermined location since we have a 3-hour block of time reserved for this purpose.

Exams will be closed-book and closed-note. The final exam will be cumulative and integrative. The format of the exam questions will be varied. I like open-ended questions; in particular, I like to present stimuli (for example, a passage from a piece of research) and ask you questions about the stimuli (for example, what type of sampling was used). You might also have a few multiple-choice questions and statistics problems to work.

Research Reviews (10% each)
You will select two empirical research articles from the ILS literature to present, discuss and share in written and oral format. You will prepare two short reports (one for each article) of approximately 2 pages in length (single-spaced). In your report, you should start by describing the research: what was done, why it was done, how it was done, what was found. This should be a neutral description without any of your analysis. Then, discuss the research. (I hesitate to use the word ‘critique’ because sometimes people think that means to shred something!) Your discussion should be balanced, pointing out what you see as the strengths and weaknesses of the work. Once you’ve done this, you should upload your review to the designated directory in Sakai and send an email to the entire class (via Sakai) with the citation to the article and a 2-3 sentence summary of the article. Be prepared to spend about 2-3 minutes telling us about your review during class.
The first review is due on September 4. The second review is due on a rolling basis – do it when you want, but you submit it by November 25th. Presumably, your second review will be slightly more informed than your first since you will have had the benefit of class readings and discussions.

**Grading**

Based on UNC Registrar Policy for graduate-level courses (http://regweb.unc.edu/resources/rpm24.php), both assignment and semester grades will be H, P, L or F. Few students will obtain an "H," which signifies an exceptionally high level of performance (higher than an "A" in an A-F systems). The following is a more detailed breakdown:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Superior work: complete command of subject, unusual depth, great creativity or originality</td>
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<tr>
<td>P+</td>
<td>Above average performance: solid work somewhat beyond what was required and good command of the material. Note: The university does not recognize this grade, but I use it for work that is better than P, but not quite at the level of H.</td>
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<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Satisfactory performance that meets course requirements (expected to be the median grade of all students in the course)</td>
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<tr>
<td>P-</td>
<td>Acceptable work in need of improvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Unacceptable graduate performance: substandard in significant ways</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Performance that is seriously deficient and unworthy of graduate credit</td>
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# Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Content</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 21</td>
<td>Introductions and Course Overview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 26</td>
<td>Overview of Research; Research in Information and Library Science; Research Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Neuman, W. L. (2005). <em>Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches</em> (6th Edition). Allyn and Bacon Publishing [Ch. 1; parts of Ch. 2; boxes from Ch. 6]. <em>(Readings Directory)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 28</td>
<td>No class: Diane in Finland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2</td>
<td>No class: Labor Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 4</td>
<td>Bibliometrics: An ILS Original!</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Research Review Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 9</td>
<td>Theory</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 11</td>
<td>Theory</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Example Theory: Petty and Cacioppo’s Elaboration Likelihood Theory <em>(Readings Directory)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 16</td>
<td>Variables and Hypotheses</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Independent Variable</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Dependent Variable</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Confounding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 18</td>
<td>Variables and Hypotheses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Salkind, N. J. (2010). Encyclopedia of Research Design. Sage Publications, Inc. Read the following entry:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Levels of Measurement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
September 23: Literature Reviews, Research Synthesis and Meta-Analysis
  - Literature Review

September 25: Descriptive Statistics
  - Statistic

September 30: Measurement, Scale Construction and Factor Analysis
  - Likert Scaling

October 2: Measurement, Scale Construction and Factor Analysis

October 7: Experimental Design
  - Experimental Design

October 9: Quantitative Data Analysis
  - P-value
  - Degrees of Freedom

October 14: Log Studies and Quantitative Data Analysis
- Dumais, S., Jeffries, R., Russell, D. M., Tang, D. & Teevan, J. (forthcoming). Understanding user behavior through log data and
October 16: Log Studies and Quantitative Data Analysis


October 21: Sampling for Quantitative Studies


  - Sampling
  - Sample Size Planning
  - Sample Size
  - Effect Size, Measures of

October 23: Sampling Issue: “Crowdsourcing” and Automatic Classification


October 28: No class: Diane in Germany

October 30: No class: Diane in Germany

- Mid-Term Exam

November 4: Surveys


November 6: Surveys and Social Network Analysis


November 11: Interviews

November 13: Focus Group Interviews

November 18: Interview Design & Sampling

November 20: Qualitative Data Analysis

November 25: “Ethnography,” Diaries and Experience Sampling
- **Second Research Review Due**

November 27: No class: Thanksgiving Holiday

December 2: Ethics

December 4: Wrap-up

December 6: Final Exam: 12:00-3:00 PM

Research Methods Overview
**Journal Page**

Name: ________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post-Reading Reflection</th>
<th>Date:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What stood out for you? What did you learn?</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

| What questions do you have? What connections did you make? |       |

| What can you conclude? |       |
Name: ________________________________

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post-Class Reflection</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How has your thinking changed after class? What did you learn in class?</td>
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</table>

What questions do you still have? Do you have any new questions?

What are some possible applications of this research or research method to the information professions?