
INLS 151 Retrieving & Analyzing Information

Spring 2015 Course Syllabus

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| Logistics | Mondays & Wednesdays, 3:35 pm – 4:50 pm Manning Hall, Room 208 |
| Course Website | http://ils.unc.edu/courses/2015_spring/inls151_003/ |
| Discussion Forum in Sakai | https://sakai.unc.edu >> INLS151.003.SP15 |
| Instructor | Rachael Clemens email: rclemens@unc.edu cell: 714.926.1098 (ancient phone plan, no text) |
| Office Hours | Mondays 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm in the SILS Library (first floor of Manning) and by appointment |

DESCRIPTION FROM CATALOG

Introduction to and application of the processes that can be used in seeking information, evaluating the quality of the information retrieved, and synthesizing the information into a useful form.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Through this course you will:

- Consider the meaning(s) and role(s) of information in contexts of scientific research, decision-making and everyday life
- Develop an understanding of information retrieval principles, systems and sources; enhance your skills to use them effectively; examine information sources such as bibliographic databases, primary sources in a variety of formats (data sets, archives, special collections, etc.)
- Identify and apply traditional, nuanced, and emerging criteria for assessing the quality of information
- Clarify your understanding of the scholarly communication cycle; learn to consume and engage effectively with the variety of resulting information products
- Develop your confidence and expertise in addressing issues of ethics and integrity surrounding the use of information
- Learn about unique and specialized resources available through the University of North Carolina

COURSE MATERIALS

- There is no textbook for this course. Required readings and other material are available through our course website (most are accessible via UNC library which requires onyen/password off camps and some via open web).

ASSIGNMENTS & EVALUATION

This class has a significant reading component; you should expect to spend at least 3 hours per week carefully reading and reflecting on the assigned material. I have made substantial efforts to select only highly relevant, authoritative, well written, timely, and engaging material for our class. The investment you make in engaging with the material both in preparation for class and during classroom discussion will be reflected in your participation grade, discussion questions and discussion leadership role. Classroom discussions are so much more enjoyable with you present and prepared – so please read the materials before class and bring your reactions and ideas.

| ASSIGNMENT | BRIEF DESCRIPTION | DUE DATE | POSSIBLE POINTS TOTAL = 100 |
|------------------------|---|--|-----------------------------|
| In-class participation | <p>We will be reading a variety of works and watching several videos in support of the diverse topics we will discuss in class. You are responsible for reading/viewing all of these. Your participation in class is critical to the success of this class. Contributing your ideas, reactions and questions to the topic at hand will nurture your skills and comfort at presenting your thoughts orally. In addition we all benefit from a dialogue that includes diverse and even occasionally conflicting perceptions.</p> <p>Plan to attend class and arrive on time. You will be penalized for excessive absences and tardiness (more than 2). Be courteous to your classmates and course instructor by not conversing with others during class lectures. Turn off cell phones and other devices that might disrupt class. Use laptops and other devices to support current course activities only. During the 1 hour and 15 minutes you are in class, your attention should be completely devoted to the course.</p> <p>Your participation grade is based on my perception of your participation in and out of class. Class participation consists of doing the following: attending class, arriving to class on time, being prepared for class, making observations about the readings, asking questions, taking notes, actively working on in-class exercises and actively listening. If an unexpected problem arises for you during the course of the semester (serious illness, etc.), please let me know so that we can discuss an appropriate schedule for you. If you need to miss class because of a religious holiday, then we can make alternative arrangements for this as well.</p> | Every class (avg 3 status reports) | 10 |
| Discussion questions | <p>At least three times during the semester you should submit a discussion question related to a specific required reading. These <i>thoughtful and well-written</i> questions should be questions/challenges/points-to-ponder related to the reading that we could discuss in class. For example, do you agree or disagree with the certain points – why? You are encouraged to integrate ideas from other classes or your own personal experiences - how do they relate to things we are discussing in our Retrieving & Analyzing Information class? Will you think about things differently based upon the reading – is so, how? The comments/questions should be well thought out and may even be provocative. But they may also express tentative and exploratory thoughts – we won't hold you to any hard and fast opinions.</p> <p>These discussion questions should be posted to the forums section in our class Sakai account by 9:00 PM on the DAY BEFORE the reading/media is to be discussed for the first time. I also encourage you to read questions/observations posted by your colleagues and respond appropriately. Please make sure to identify yourself by name (to ensure proper credit) and note to which reading you are responding.</p> | 3 <i>quality</i> questions in total (up to 2 points possible for each) | 6 |
| Quizzes | <p>Throughout the course of the semester, five short pop quizzes will be administered at the start of class. Quiz questions will be about the day's readings. Quizzes cannot be made-up for any reason. If you arrive late to class and the quiz is still 'in session' then you can start the quiz. However, you will not receive extra time to complete it. Your paper will be collected along with everyone else's. There will be a total of 5 quizzes, each worth up to 2 points.</p> | Up to 2 points possible for each quiz | 10 |
| Mid-term exam | Due via email by Thur March 5 at 5:00 pm | March 5 | 14 |

| ASSIGNMENT | BRIEF DESCRIPTION | DUE DATE | POSSIBLE POINTS TOTAL = 100 |
|---|---|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| Data to Story Project <i>[Detailed description at end of syllabus]</i> | <p>Through this multi-step project you will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore, manipulate and carefully examine an existing structured data set to identify a topic(s) of interest to you and your team partners. We will be utilizing the General Social Survey GSS, a nation-wide, bi-annual, personal interview survey that collects responses to core demographic, behavioral, and attitudinal questions. It is frequently used to track societal and opinion trends in the U.S. 2. Analyze the data to identify/uncover some interesting information, comparisons or findings. We will focus on only two or three variables and look for interesting correlations. From selected data, we will create a few charts/graphs that effectively communicate the relationship(s) between the variables. 3. Based upon the selected data, your team will search for background and contextual information, scholarly research material, historical or archival material, and popular/consumer news coverage in order to develop some sort of story. You will log your search strategies, parameters, processes, and results (both successful and dead-ends) throughout this information search. 4. After evaluating the material your team collects, you will select items that are most relevant, trustworthy and supportive of your overall story. You will document these sources in an annotated bibliography in APA format describing how you evaluated the material and why you decided to include each item. 5. To share your team's interesting news-type story and findings (you are welcome to approach any aspect of the topic) each team will craft and present a visual presentation in the form of a PechaKucha (presentation format that is based on a simple idea: 20 slides x 20 seconds). We'll discuss details in class. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project outline (include selected variables, plan for information search to support the story, responsibilities of each team member, timeline): 8 points possible, <u>DUE MON MARCH 2</u> • Information search logs: 8 points possible, <u>DUE MON APRIL 6</u> • Annotated bibliography: 8 points possible, <u>DUE MON APRIL 13</u> • PechaKucha presentation: 8 points possible, <u>APRIL 13, 15, OR 20</u> • Contribution to team: 8 points possible <p>[Teams of 1, 2, 3 or 4 may be self-formed or assigned; concept approval required by instructor]</p> | | 40 |
| Final exam | <p>The Final Exam is cumulative. The Final Exam is scheduled for MONDAY, MAY 4 AT 4:00 PM in our regular classroom. I expect you to be there. If you do not attend you will receive an F, no questions. If you anticipate some problem with taking the exam on this day or in this location (e.g., you have a conflict with another scheduled exam or you typically take your exams in the LDS office), then you need to let me know at least 2 weeks in advance. You will need to provide documentation of why you cannot take the exam during the regularly scheduled period and we will make alternative arrangements.</p> | Mon May 4 @ 4:00 pm | 20 |

GRADING RUBRIC

A = 94-100 points
A- = 90-93 points
B+ = 87-89 points

B = 84-86 points
B- = 80-83 points
C+ = 77-79 points

C = 74-76 points
C- = 70-73 points
D+ = 67-69points

D = 64-66 points
D- = 60-63 points
F = 0-59 points

POLICIES & HONOR CODE

Each student is expected to abide by the UNC Honor Code available via: <http://honor.unc.edu/> The UNC Honor Code is found within the *Instrument of Student Judicial Governance for the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill* an important document which discusses issues of student and faculty conduct, values and integrity. From the Preamble:

This Instrument of Student Judicial Governance for the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (*"Instrument"*) is adopted in furtherance of the University community's shared commitment to the pursuit of truth, and the dissemination of knowledge to succeeding generations of citizens devoted to the high ideals of personal honor and respect for the rights of others. These goals can only be achieved in a setting in which intellectual honesty and personal integrity are highly valued; other individuals are trusted, respected, and fairly treated; and the responsibility for articulating and maintaining high standards is widely shared.

Late assignments will be accepted for up to a week after due date but will receive a 10% reduction automatically.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

In addition to the UNC Honor Code, I expect that you will demonstrate integrity and professionalism in your participation in this course, and in the fulfillment of all of your course assignments. This includes completing the assigned readings on the dates they are due, dedicating adequate time for your participation (both in-class and out-of-class), and putting forth effort, care and thought in preparing for exams. I also expect you to show respect for all members of this course and all comments and questions posed by them.

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

In order to cultivate a classroom environment where opportunity for learning and growth is paramount I expect the following from both you and myself:

- Arrive on time and prepared to participate fully in class
- Demonstrate inclusive respect and courtesy to everyone in our classroom
- Engage exclusively and completely with our class during session (i.e. leave Facebook, email, Twitter, texting and other tasks until after class)

EMAIL EXPECTATIONS:

- Email is a great way to communicate with me outside of class. It is particularly well suited for short-answer and clarification questions. However, if you need assistance understanding a concept or an assignment, or have another potentially complicated question, then I ask that you talk with me during office hours or make an appointment to talk with me in-person. I am on campus quite a bit and can usually work around your schedule. If you ask a question via email that I believe is better suited for in-person discussion, then I will ask you to come in and speak with me. If you have questions about how your assignment was evaluated, then you must visit me in-person to have this discussion. I will not discuss your grades and my evaluation of your work via email.
- It is also important to set appropriate expectations about how quickly I can respond to your email. I will try my best to respond to your email within a 24-hour period, but in some cases it may take 2-3 days. Please keep this in mind when you are scheduling your own activities, especially those related to assignments. If you wait until the day before an assignment is due to ask us a clarification question about the assignment, there is a good chance that you will not receive a response before the assignment is due.

INLS 200 Retrieving & Analyzing Information: Data to Story Project

PROJECT STEPS:

- 1) Explore, manipulate and carefully examine an existing structured data set, the General Social Survey, 2012* (see description on page 3), to find an interesting and relevant to a topic of interest to you and your group partners. During our workshop at the Odum Institute** on **TBD** we will look at a slice of the 2012 data; I have selected 147 variables (out of 5000+) that I hope you will find interesting (variable labels to be handed out in class). You will explore different combinations to identify an interesting relationship among the variables. For example you might look at AGE and POLITICAL PARTY AFFILIATION or CAPPUN and RELIG (views on capital punishment and religious preference). There are lots of potential issues to examine – try several combinations and see what would make for an interesting story.

For this project you may choose 2-4 variables to compare. Since we are using only one survey we cannot do any trend analysis over time – just this particular snapshot of opinions in the United States in 2012.

During the workshop Dr. Cathy Zimmer will walk us through the use of the statistical software, SPSS***, to learn how to examine and manipulate the survey data. We will focus primarily on descriptive statistics – look at averages, means, standard deviations, etc. The first workshop will be your introduction to the statistical software – and the second lab (**TBD**) will be your opportunity to refine and polish your analysis with help from Dr. Zimmer.

- 2) Analyze the data to identify/uncover some interesting information, comparisons or findings; focus on only two or three variables and create a few charts/graphs that effectively communicate the interesting relationship between the variables. Examples from the GSS might involve particular demographic information and related social attitudes or experiences. Remember we cannot assume any causal relationship between variables – we're just looking for some interesting relationships.
- 3) Conduct a literature search on the topic to add relevant contextual information (research articles focusing on the topic – supporting and/or conflicting, historical perspectives on the topic, definitions and elaboration on the variables, explore how the topic is expressed in the media, etc.). This is your opportunity to take the topic in almost any direction...using the demographics and/or attitudes you identified in the data – build a story around it – an interesting one that will engage your colleagues.

Document your search strategies, parameters, processes and results (tell us where you looked for information, how you identified and evaluated information, and how you decided what information to include). You will want to focus on reputable sources – but not all selected sources need be scholarly research studies. Consider specialized encyclopedias, CQ Researcher, newspaper articles, etc.

In mid-March we will have a class workshop with a reference librarian to help you refine your database search skills and point you to quality resources on your topic.

- 4) Craft an annotated bibliography in APA format describing the most relevant and authoritative literature (at least 5 different sources). Your group will turn this in along with the description of how you conducted your searches, how you evaluated the information and how you decided what items to include or exclude.

- 5) Create a presentation to describe to the class the initial survey data that you identified (use charts/graphs here) and “tell the story” you built with the contextual information you found. Each group will design a PechaKucha (presentation format that is based on a simple idea: 20 slides x 20 seconds) and **deliver in-class on April 13, 15 or 20**. We’ll discuss details in class.

DELIVERABLES:

1. **Project outline and description** of the topic your group will focus on for the project. The topic should stem directly from the General Social Survey dataset that we are examining. Select 2-4 variables that provide an interesting relationship and on which you can develop a story. As a group craft 1-2 clear and focused paragraphs describing your intended project. Be sure to include the selected variables, findings from GSS data (correlations, charts/graphs) and your plan for information search to support the story.
Due Mon March 2.
2. **Log and analyze your literature search** – walk me through your information searching processes. What pathways did you follow? What databases and resources did you consult? What search strategies did you use? What subject headings and keywords did you try? What worked well in your process – and what did not work well? How did you divide up the project? What areas was each team member responsible for? The information search documentation and analysis should be compiled into one sequential document for the group.
Due Mon April 6.
3. **Annotated bibliography in APA format** describing the resources you selected to create and support the “story”. As a group determine which resources best support your “story” and come to an agreement about which information sources should be included or excluded. Identify each source in proper APA format. Each annotation (1-2 paragraphs) should explain what the resource contributes to the story in terms of contextual information and provide an evaluation of the quality/authority of the resource.
Due Mon April 13.
4. Tell your “story” through a PechaKucha presentation in class. As a team share with us the original topic you identified (use those charts/graphs from SPSS here) and the supporting contextual information you selected. Timing is important in this presentation format so you will need to write a script and rehearse to get it right and communicate effectively. You may pre-record your presentation but your entire team must be in class for the presentation.
Presentation April 13, 15 or 20.

[Teams of 1, 2, 3 or 4 may be self-formed or assigned; concept approval required by instructor]

*The General Social Survey (GSS) conducted by that National Opinion Research Center, is widely regarded as the single best source of data on societal trends. Except for the U.S. Census, the GSS is the most frequently analyzed source of information in the social sciences. The GSS has been conducted since 1972 – at first every year and since 1994, every other year. We will be using the data collected in the 2012 survey. The survey is conducted as an interview (usually face-to-face interview) lasting about 1.5 hours with English-speaking persons 18 years of age or over, living in non-institutional arrangements within the United States. The 2012 GSS provides data from 4510 respondents.

The GSS contains a standard 'core' of demographic, behavioral, and attitudinal questions, plus topics of special interest. Many of the core questions have remained unchanged since 1972 to facilitate time-trend studies as well as replication of earlier findings. The GSS takes the pulse of America, and is a unique and valuable resource. It has tracked the opinions of Americans over the last four decades.

Read more about the GSS and access the data at: <http://www3.norc.org/GSS+Website/>

**The Odum Institute computer lab is open and available to you as a UNC student. You are welcome to use the statistical software, SPSS, there during open lab hours. Lab assistants are available for help.

Regular Lab Hours

Odum Institute Primary Laboratory, Davis Library, Room 295

Monday - Friday: 9:00 am – 6:00 pm

Lab assistant available for consultation during open lab

<http://www.odum.unc.edu/odum/home2.jsp>

***SPSS (official name is IBM SPSS Statistics) is a software package used for statistical analysis. As a UNC student you have access to this software on the computers in the Odum Institute Lab (in Davis Library) and through the ITS Virtual Lab <https://virtuallab.unc.edu/Citrix/ITSLabsSFWeb/>.