INLS 581: Research Methods Overview

**Instructor: Amelia N. Gibson**

**Email:** [**angibson@email.unc.edu**](mailto:angibson@email.unc.edu)

**Office: 205 Manning Hall**

**Class meetings: Tuesday & Thursday, 12:30 – 1:45 pm, 001 Manning Hall**

**Office hours by appointment**

**Course Overview**

**Course description:**

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

**Course objectives:**

* To have fun while exploring and learning about research methods
* Help students gain an understanding of the concepts and terminology used in ILS research and of the methods used to perform this research.
* Acquaint students with different research specialties and approaches in ILS.
* Improve students’ abilities to read, evaluate and appreciate research.
* Improve students’ quantitative, logical and analytical thinking abilities.

**Course Materials:**

***Required text***: Wildemuth, B. M. (2009). *Applications of Social Research Methods to Questions in Information and Library Science*. Westport, Conn: Libraries Unlimited. [Available at UNC bookstore and online. Also on reserve in the SILS library.]

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

**Requirements:**

* You are expected to read the assigned readings before class. Topics and readings are available on the weekly class schedule.
* You are expected to have access to readings during class.
* Class participation is critical. Be prepared to ask questions, discuss readings, and participate in activities during class.
* Attendance is expected, and will be counted toward the participation grade.

**Assignments and evaluation:**

Your major assignments for this course include the following: participation [15%], reflective journaling [15%], research reviews [20%: first review - 5%, second review - 15%], midterm exam [25%], and final exam [25%].

**Honor Code*.***

The Honor Code, which prohibits giving or receiving unauthorized aid in the completion of assignments and exams is in effect in this class. Whenever you use the words or ideas of others, they should be properly marked as a quotation (and referenced) or the source of the ideas should be cited. APA citation format is required for assignments in this class.

Please contact the instructor if you have any questions about the application of the Honor Code to your work in this class. You can learn more about the UNC Honor Code at <http://honor.unc.edu> and about the Instrument of Student Governance at <http://instrument.unc.edu>.

I also expect that students will give proper credit to other researchers through proper use of citation. APA citation style will be used for this course.

**Additional Course Policies**

Assignments are due at the beginning of the class period on the specified due date. With the instructor's permission, late assignments will be accepted with a penalty of .5 points per day.

Laptops and mobile devices are welcome in class, but should be used only for legitimate purposes related to this course. There will be times when students will be asked to close all laptops and devices.

You will be using SILS [library](http://library.unc.edu/sils/) and [IT services](http://sils.unc.edu/it-services) during the course of the semester. Please remember that many of your fellow students also need to use the same equipment and materials. Follow the proper checkout procedures and return materials promptly to be a good SILS citizen.

Email is the most efficient way to communicate with the instructor outside of class, for brief questions or notes. Normally, you should expect a response within 24 hours. I am also happy to schedule a meeting with you; office hours are by appointment. If you come by the office and my door is open, then I'm available for a conversation.

Assignments

**Participation (15%)**

This class is a cooperative venture toward which we are all expected to contribute. This includes preparing for class by completing the readings, and **actively participating in class discussions and activities in a way that demonstrates your knowledge of the material**. The purpose of class discussions is to help you attain basic knowledge of a variety of research methods, and to be able to apply that knowledge to the reading, evaluation, and planning of research. Full participation in classroom activities will not be possible without the basic common understanding that results from reading the course material. Attendance is mandatory, and absences will affect the participation grade. Students are also expected to be on time, courteous to classmates and the course instructor, and to follow guidelines regarding use of electronics in class.

**Reflective Journaling/Blog Entries (15%)**

You will be asked to create a journal entry for each of **10 class sessions\*** about the daily readings and subsequent class discussion. One of the most important things I’d like you to do in this course is carefully read and engage with the assigned readings. One of the best for me to evaluate the extent to which you do this is to read reading journal. This reading journal will help you synthesize, integrate, and retain the material in preparation for class. You will use the blog function in Sakai as your journal. Your blog entries will be private, and will not be viewable by anyone but me.

**\*\*This is an alteration from the initially posted assignment**. A pre- and post-class reflection must be done for 10 class sessions. This will result in a total of 20 posts for the semester. Pre and post class reflections must be paired (meaning that you cannot elect to do only a pre- or post-class session for any given session – you must do both). Any split sessions will not be counted.

Each blog entry should contain two parts. The first part should be done after you have finished the readings, before you come to class. This is your pre-class reflection. The second part should be completed within 24 hours after class discussions. This is your post class reflection. Use the template provided at the end of the syllabus to structure your entries. If you have an excused absence (you have informed me ahead of time and we have made arrangements), you may submit a pre-class reflection, but not to post class reflection. These entries should be around 300 to 400 words. **Pre-class reflections will begin on January 15.**

**Research Reviews (20%)**

You will conduct two research reviews. For each review you should select two empirical research articles from the ILS literature to present, discuss and share in written format. Your review should be about two pages in length single-spaced.

In your review you should begin 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 commentary or analysis. Then discuss the research. The discussion should be balanced, pointing out what you see a strengths and weaknesses of the work.

Once you have done this, you should upload your review to the designated directory AND forum in Sakai (name your file like this: firstname\_lastname). During the course of the week following the due date of the review, you should read and comment on two other people’s reviews (you are not required to read the papers these people reviewed). If someone asks you a question about your review, please respond. Pick reviews that discuss topics that interest you; it is okay if the review you want to read has already been read by many other people. Comment on the research presented in the review not the quality of the review.

**Midterm and Final exams (25% each)**

It is important that you internalize some of the content of this class, and exams are good assessment methods for assessing basic competency.

You will take the midterm exam on your own time. I will make it available for four days during the middle of the semester (please see the schedule for dates), and you will have three hours to complete it once you open it. The final exam will be administered during class. It will have the same format as the midterm, but you will take it at the same time in a predetermined location, as we have a three 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 exam questions will vary.

Grading

UNC-CH graduate students are graded on the H/P/L/F scale. The following definitions of these grades will be used for this course. While assignments are not graded "on a curve," most students should expect to get a P, if they fully complete the course assignments.

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| **Letter grade** | **Numeric range** | **Description of grade** |
| H | 95-100 | High Pass: Clear excellence; beyond expectations for the course. |
| P | 80-94 | Pass: Entirely satisfactory; fully meets expectations for the course. |
| L | 70-79 | Low Pass: Minimally acceptable; clear weaknesses in performance. |
| F | Below 70 | Fail: Unacceptable performance. |
| IN | NA | Work incomplete. |

Schedule

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| **January 8: Introductions and Course Overview**   1. Skim Course Syllabus prior to class 2. Figure out your name and your interests. |
| **January 13: Overview of Research in Information and Library Science**   1. Neuman, W. L. (2009). *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (7 edition.). Boston: Pearson. [Chapter 1; parts of Ch. 2] 2. Wildemuth, B. M. (2009). *Applications of Social Research Methods to Questions in Information and Library Science*. Westport, Conn: Libraries Unlimited. [Chapter 2-3] |
| **January 15: Theories and Models**   1. Bates, M. (2005). An Introduction to Metatheories, Theories and Models. In K. Fisher, S. Erdelez, & L. Mckechnie (Eds.), *Theories of information behavior*. Information Today Inc. [Chapter 1] 2. Kumasi, K. D., Charbonneau, D. H., & Walster, D. (2013). Theory talk in the library science scholarly literature: An exploratory analysis. *Library & Information Science Research, 35*(3), 175–180. doi:10.1016/j.lisr.2013.02.004 (UNC Journals) 3. *Skim*: Adler, R. F., & Benbunan-Fich, R. (2013). Self-interruptions in discretionary multitasking. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *29*(4), 1441–1449. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2013.01.040 |
| **January 20: Hypotheses and Variables**   1. Neuman, W. L. (2009). *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (7 edition.). Boston: Pearson. [pgs. 160-166: The Language of Variables and Hypotheses; pgs. 181-188: Conceptualization and Operationalization] 2. Adler, R. F., & Benbunan-Fich, R. (2013). Self-interruptions in discretionary multitasking. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *29*(4), 1441–1449. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2013.01.040 |
| **January 22: Measurement and Scale Construction**   1. Wildemuth, B. M. (2009). *Applications of Social Research Methods to Questions in Information and Library Science*. Westport, Conn: Libraries Unlimited. [Chapter 27-28] 2. Neuman, W. L. (2009). *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (7 edition.). Boston: Pearson. [pgs. 198-­‐200: Levels of Measurement] 3. O’Brien, H. L., & Toms, E. G. (2010). The development and evaluation of a survey to measure user engagement. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology, 61*(1), 50–69. doi:10.1002/asi.21229 [UNC Journals]   **Due: Research Review 1** |
| **January 27: Descriptive Statistics (and Factor Analysis)**   1. Wildemuth, B. M. (2009). *Applications of Social Research Methods to Questions in Information and Library Science*. Westport, Conn: Libraries Unlimited. [Chapter 33-34; 36] 2. Sugimoto, C. R., Tsou, A., Naslund, S., Hauser, A., Brandon, M., Winter, D., Behles, C., & Finlay, S. C. (2012). Beyond gatekeepers of knowledge: Scholarly communication practices of academic librarians and archivists at ARL institutions. College & Research Libraries, crl12–398. [Preprint @ <http://crl.acrl.org/content/early/2012/09/10/crl12-398.full.pdf+html>] |
| **February 3: Experiments**   1. Wildemuth, B. M. (2009). *Applications of Social Research Methods to Questions in Information and Library Science*. Westport, Conn: Libraries Unlimited. [Chapters 11-12] 2. Shachaf, P., & Horowitz, S. (2006). Are virtual reference services color blind? *Library & Information Science Research, 28(*4), 501–520. doi:10.1016/j.lisr.2006.08.009 |
| **February 5: No class** |
| **February 10: T-Tests and Anovas (Guest Lecture: S. Kaplan)**   1. Wildemuth, B. M. (2009). *Applications of Social Research Methods to Questions in Information and Library Science*. Westport, Conn: Libraries Unlimited. [Chapter 37] 2. Arguello, J., Wu, W.-C., Kelly, D., & Edwards, A. (2012). Task Complexity, Vertical Display and User Interaction in Aggregated Search. In *Proceedings of the 35th International ACM SIGIR Conference on Research and Development in Information Retrieval* (pp. 435–444). New York, NY, USA: ACM. (ACM Digital Library) |
| **February 12: Log Analysis**   1. Wildemuth, B. M. (2009). *Applications of Social Research Methods to Questions in Information and Library Science*. Westport, Conn: Libraries Unlimited. [Chapter 18] 2. Dumais, S., Jeffries, R., Russell, D. M., Tang, D., & Teevan, J. (2014). Understanding User Behavior Through Log Data and Analysis. In J. S. Olson & W. A. Kellogg (Eds.), *Ways of Knowing in HCI* (pp. 349–372). Springer New York. 3. Taghavi, M., Patel, A., Schmidt, N., Wills, C., & Tew, Y. (2012). An analysis of web proxy logs with query distribution pattern approach for search engines. *Computer Standards & Interfaces, 34*(1), 162–170. [UNC Journals] |
| **February 17: Sampling for Extensive Studies**   1. Wildemuth, B. M. (2009). *Applications of Social Research Methods to Questions in Information and Library Science*. Westport, Conn: Libraries Unlimited. [Chapter 13] 2. Banerjee, A., Chitnis, U. B., Jadhav, S. L., Bhawalkar, J. S., & Chaudhury, S. (2009). Hypothesis testing, type I and type II errors. *Industrial Psychiatry Journal*, *18*(2), 127–131. doi:10.4103/0972-6748.62274 |
| **February 19: Snow Day** |
| **February 24: Research Synthesis and Meta-Analysis (Field Trip/Guest Lecture: Health Science Library/Rachael Posey) – CLASS WILL BE AT THE HEALTH SCIENCES LIBRARY**   1. Kelly, D., & Sugimoto, C. R. (2013). A systematic review of interactive information retrieval evaluation studies, 1967–2006. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 64(4), 745–770. doi:10.1002/asi.22799 [UNC Journals] 2. Hornbæk, K. (2006). Current practice in measuring usability: Challenges to usability studies and research. *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*, 64(2), 79–102. doi:10.1016/j.ijhcs.2005.06.002 |
| **February 26:Snow day** |
| **March 3: Sampling for Intensive Studies**  Wildemuth, B. M. (2009). *Applications of Social Research Methods to Questions in Information and Library Science*. Westport, Conn: Libraries Unlimited. [Chapter 14] |
| **March 5: Midterm Review/Catch up (Midterm opens March 5 – March 9 – you must complete the exam in a 3 hour window)** |
| **Spring Break (March 6-16) NO CLASS** |
| **March 17: Surveys Sampling and Design (Guest Lecture: Teresa Edwards)**   1. Wildemuth, B. M. (2009). *Applications of Social Research Methods to Questions in Information and Library Science*. Westport, Conn: Libraries Unlimited. [Chapter 26] 2. Dillman, D. A., Smyth, J. D., & Christian, L. M. (2014). *Internet, Phone, Mail, and Mixed-Mode Surveys: The Tailored Design Method (4 edition.)*. Hoboken: Wiley. [Chapters 3-5] |
| **March 19: Bibliometrics**  Larivière, V., Sugimoto, C. R., & Cronin, B. (2012). A bibliometric chronicling of library and information science’s first hundred years. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, *63*(5), 997–1016. doi:10.1002/asi.22645 [UNC Journals] |
| **March 24 : Usability studies**  Battleson, B., Booth, A., & Weintrop, J. (2001). Usability testing of an academic library Web site: a case study. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, *27*(3), 188–198. doi:10.1016/S0099-1333(01)00180-X [UNC Journals] |
| **March 26: Grounded Theory and Analytic Induction**   1. Wildemuth, B. M. (2009). *Applications of Social Research Methods to Questions in Information and Library Science*. Westport, Conn: Libraries Unlimited. [Chapter 32] 2. Corbin, J. M., & Strauss, A. (1990). Grounded theory research: Procedures, canons, and evaluative criteria. *Qualitative Sociology*, *13*(1), 3-21.   Skim: Suddaby, R. (2006). From the editors: What grounded theory is not. *Academy of Management Journal*, 49(4), 633-642. |
| **March 31: Content and Collection Analysis**   1. Wildemuth, B. M. (2009). *Applications of Social Research Methods to Questions in Information and Library Science*. Westport, Conn: Libraries Unlimited. [Chapter 29-30] 2. Hughes-Hassell, S., Overberg, E., & Harris, S. (2013). Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (LGBTQ)-Themed Literature for Teens: Are School Libraries Providing Adequate Collections? *School Library Research*, *16*. Retrieved from <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1012828> 3. Sood, S., Antin, J., & Churchill, E. (2012). Profanity Use in Online Communities. In *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (pp. 1481–1490). New York, NY, USA: ACM. doi:10.1145/2207676.2208610 |
| **April 2: Diaries**   1. Wildemuth, B. M. (2009). *Applications of Social Research Methods to Questions in Information and Library Science*. Westport, Conn: Libraries Unlimited. [Chapter 22] 2. Bolger, N., Davis, A., & Rafaeli, E. (2003). Diary methods: Capturing life as it is lived. Annual review of psychology, 54(1), 579-616. [UNC Journals] 3. *Skim*: Hyldegård, J. (2006, October). Using diaries in group based information behavior research: a methodological study. In Proceedings of the 1st international conference on Information interaction in context (pp. 153-161). ACM. [UNC Journals] |
| **April 7: Interviews and Focus Groups**   1. Wildemuth, B. M. (2009). *Applications of Social Research Methods to Questions in Information and Library Science*. Westport, Conn: Libraries Unlimited. [Chapter 23-25] 2. Smith, J. A. (1995). Semi-Structured Interviewing and Qualitative Analysis. In *Rethinking Methods in Psychology* (pp. 10–26). London: SAGE Publications Ltd. [UNC Database] 3. Agosto, D. E. (2002). Bounded rationality and satisficing in young people’s Web-based decision making*. Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 53(1), 16–27. doi:10.1002/asi.10024 |
| **April 9: Think Aloud and Observation**   1. Wildemuth, B. M. (2009). *Applications of Social Research Methods to Questions in Information and Library Science*. Westport, Conn: Libraries Unlimited. [Chapter 19-21]. 2. Capra, R., Chen, A. T., McArthur, E., & Davis, N. (2013). Searcher Actions and Strategies in Asynchronous Collaborative Search. In Proceedings of the 76th ASIS&T Annual Meeting: Beyond the Cloud: Rethinking Information Boundaries (pp. 75:1–75:10). Silver Springs, MD, USA: American Society for Information Science. Retrieved from <http://dl.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=2655780.2655855> 3. Elsweiler, D., & Ruthven, I. (2007). Towards Task-based Personal Information Management Evaluations. In *Proceedings of the 30th Annual International ACM SIGIR Conference on Research and Development in Information Retrieval* (pp. 23–30). New York, NY, USA: ACM. doi:10.1145/1277741.1277748 (ACM Digital Library)   **Due: Research Review 2** |
| **April 14: Research Ethics: History and Basic considerations**   1. **Complete or Review UNC CITI Training module :** [**http://research.unc.edu/offices/human-research-ethics/getting-started/training/**](http://research.unc.edu/offices/human-research-ethics/getting-started/training/) |
| **April 16: Research Ethics: Application and Practical considerations**   1. Neuman, W. L., & Neuman, W. L. (2006). Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches. [pp. 129-147 – Readings folder] 2. Williams, P., Block, L. G., & Fitzsimons, G. J. (2006). Simply asking questions about health behaviors increases both healthy and unhealthy behaviors. Social Influence, 1(2), 117–127. doi:10.1080/15534510600630850 |
| **April 21: Final Exam Review** |
| **April 23: Wrap Up**  **Due: End of Term Meta-Reflection** |
| **Final Exam: Friday May 1, Noon** |

Blog Entries in Sakai

You will post your blog entries in Sakai. From our course Sakai page, you should click on the link labeled “Blogs,” and then “Add Blog Entry” (see below).



From the next window (see below), you can enter your blog post. In the “title” area, just use the class date.

It is VERY IMPORTANT that you click the button that limits who can see the message. You should click the button next to, “Only site administrator and I can see this entry.” I am the site administer so this means that only you and I can see the post. This is NOT the default option, so you’ll have to select this each time you post an entry. If you accidentally forget to do this, send me an email and I’ll remove the post as soon as I possible. Once you are ready to submit, click “Publish entry.” Unfortunately, there is no way to change the default setting to make everything private (I checked).

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**Pre-Class Reading Reflection**

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| What stood out for you? What did you learn? |
| What questions do you have? What connections did you make? |
| What can you conclude? |

**Post Class Reflection**

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| How has your thinking changed after class? What did you learn in class? |
| Do you still have questions? Do you better understand your pre-class questions? Did you make new connections? |
| What are some possible applications of this research or research method to the information professions? |