

## **INLS 778: Research Methods & Proposal Development**

Fridays 9:05am – 11:50am

Manning 304

Professor: Francesca Tripodi, PhD (she/her)

Office: Manning 202 (and [on Zoom](#) as needed)

Office Hours: Wednesdays from 1pm – 3pm

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If you are having trouble learning for any reason, please come and see me or the Dean of Students.

### **Course Description**

This is an introductory course for graduate students learning how to conduct research in the field of information and library science. The course was created to allow students to explore, interpret, analyze, and apply published research so that they can design their own research proposal. In the first part of the class, students will get to know the research SILS faculty are working on, figure out how to “talk to” the literature, learn about a breadth of research methods, create an annotated bibliography, and secure a faculty advisor. The second half of the course will focus on how to analyze data once it is collected, provide time to refine your research question, and write a research proposal. You should leave this course fully prepared to begin an independent research study and be able to repurpose components of this proposal as part of your master’s paper.

**Course Objectives:** By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Identify the ethical concerns surrounding research with human subjects.
- Improve your ability to read, evaluate, and appreciate research.
- Expand your ability to engage in research-based practice.
- Conduct a literature review.
- Formulate a concise and focused research question.
- Select and justify which method (qualitative, quantitative, and mixed) best matches the research question you want to ask.

**Class engagement & expectations:** On the first day of class, we will set our communal expectations for our classroom. Afterward, I will update this syllabus and then upload it to Canvas for your signature.

**Evaluation:** The most frequent grade for graduate classes is P (Pass). P represents work and effort that meets all stated requirements. “H” grades are reserved for exceptional work and are very rare. There are 180 total points available across all course assignments. Course grade ranges are as follows based on UNC Registrar policy for graduate-level courses:

H (Exceptional work that goes beyond the expectations for the course): 171-180points

P (Work that meets all expectations of the course at an acceptable level): 144-170points

L (Work that represents substandard performance in significant ways): 126-143points

F (Deficient performance unworthy of graduate credit): <126 points

At the graduate level, grades are superfluous. The point of coursework is to learn and cultivate professional relationships. I do not “round up,” change, or justify final grades – please don’t ask.

**Academic Honesty:** Academic honesty and trustworthiness are important to all. Official UNC policy is available at <http://www.unc.edu/depts/honor/honor.html> and contains information and procedures pertaining to the student honor system. We encourage your full participation and observance of this important aspect of the University.

**ChatGPT:** You’ve probably heard about this little thing called generative AI that’s currently revolutionizing our world. Here’s the thing – we aren’t sure how it works in terms of where it gets its data and how it uses our own. If you decide to use tools like OpenAI for assignments you turn in, you’re still responsible for the output if the answers are wrong.

Likewise, it's not appropriate to rely on AI to read and write for you as much as it's cheating to use CliffsNotes instead of read the book or pay a person to write your paper. I will make some space in class for ways in which I think generative AI can be helpful in writing/research process and we will also talk its ethical implications in more detail. These resources created by the UNC Generative AI committee might also be of use (<https://provost.unc.edu/student-generative-ai-usage-guidance/>)

**Student Support:** Please utilize me as a resource if you are having difficulty with the material or there are outside circumstances impeding your ability to learn (e.g., housing/food/emotional insecurity, or need physical or mental health services). **You should also know that I am a mandatory reporter if you choose to confide in me.**

**Mental Health:** CAPS is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, whether for short or long-term needs. Go to their website: <https://caps.unc.edu/> or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Services building for a walk-in evaluation to learn more. (source: *Student Safety and Wellness Proposal for EPC, Sep 2018*)

**Accommodations:** The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability, or pregnancy complications resulting in barriers to fully accessing University courses, programs, and activities. Accommodations are determined through the Office of Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS) for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. See the ARS Website for contact information: <https://ars.unc.edu> or email [ars@unc.edu](mailto:ars@unc.edu).

**Title IX:** Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Please contact the Director of Title IX Compliance (Adrienne Allison – [Adrienne.allison@unc.edu](mailto:Adrienne.allison@unc.edu)), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office ([reportandresponse@unc.edu](mailto:reportandresponse@unc.edu)), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators ([gvsc@unc.edu](mailto:gvsc@unc.edu); confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at [safe.unc.edu](http://safe.unc.edu).

**Diversity & Inclusion** - My intention as an educator is to provide a safe and inclusive environment for all learners. I work hard to include course materials and activities that promote diversity but Information & Library Science (and most disciplines in the academy) were founded by those from a privileged background. As a cisgender, straight, white, able-bodied woman, my standpoint may exclude important points of view. It is also possible that I will make unintentional mistakes. If this happens, speak to me about your concerns directly. I promise to acknowledge your frustrations, learn from critiques, and try to meet the needs of all my students. Likewise, I'm always looking for new scholarship by women, Latine, LGBTQ+, non-white, and non-Western thinkers – please share resources you think would be useful. Suggestions and improvements are encouraged and appreciated.

**Email Policy** - It's very difficult to explain course material via email. Therefore, if you need help with course content or assignments, I request that you first come to office hours if there is something you need to discuss (Fridays from 8:30-11:30am). Unless you have an emergency that requires immediate assistance, I request that students only e-mail me to set up a 1:1 meeting outside of office hours (in person or via Zoom). I love emails that share interesting information (videos, news as it relates to class) or if you have a concern that you think I should know about. Masks are requested for in-person meetings. If you are not comfortable meeting in person, I'm available to meet via Zoom.

## COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

- **LABS (25 points):** You will be assigned five take-home "labs" that introduce, reinforce, or extend topics covered in class. The format of these assignments will vary and specific instructions for each will be provided to you at

least one week ahead of the due dates (which are listed in the “Class Schedule and Readings” table at the end of this document). These assignments will be graded as pass/fail.

- **GETTING TO KNOW SILS FACULTY (20 points):** As graduate students engaging in higher-level academic work, it is important to know which faculty are working on subjects that pertain to your professional goals. During the first half of the semester, you will take the time to familiarize yourself with three SILS faculty members (via ask me anything talks, going to their office hours, and reading their publications). The goal of this assignment is to figure out who best matches your research interests so that you can secure an advisor. This assignment will be graded as pass/fail.
- **CITI ETHICS TRAINING (10 points):** Students will complete the CITI ethics course training through UNC-Chapel Hill. This assignment will be graded as pass/fail.
- **ANNONTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY (50 points):** Midway through the semester you will submit an annotated bibliography showcasing your understanding of and commitment to evidence-based practice, situated within the context in which you want to work. This will then turn into your literature review.
- **RESEARCH PROPOSAL (65 points):** The final deliverable for this class will be a research proposal. This proposal should include the following major sections:
  - Introduction (1pg) – Provides an overview of the problem you’ve identified, the state of the research thus far, what is “missing” from this research, and a specific research question that helps “fill the gap.” (*hint: it’s sometimes best to write this last*)
  - Literature Review (2pgs) – A fluid summary of your annotated bibliography.
  - Research Design/Project Design (3pgs) – describes the research question/problem you aim to address, what data you will collect and how you will analyze this data. This section should also indicate which faculty member at SILS has agreed to be your advisor
- **PARTICIPATION/ATTENDANCE (10 points):** I expect everyone to come to class ready to discuss the assigned readings. I recognize that participation comes in many forms so active listening, talking, sharing posts before class are all welcome. Missing more than two classes (**unexcused**) will result in a failing grade.

## SILS DIVERSITY STATEMENT

In support of the University’s diversity goals and the mission of the UNC School of Information and Library Science, SILS embraces diversity as an ethical and societal value. We broadly define diversity to include ability, age, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, gender expression, immigration status, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status. As an academic community committed to preparing our graduates to be leaders in an increasingly multicultural and global society we strive to:

- Ensure inclusive leadership, policies, and practices
- Integrate diversity into the curriculum and research
- Foster a mutually respectful intellectual environment in which diverse perspectives and experiences are valued
- Recruit and retain students, faculty, and staff from traditionally underrepresented groups
- Participate in outreach to underserved groups in North Carolina and beyond

The statement is our commitment to the ongoing cultivation of an academic environment that is open, representative, and reflective of the concepts of equity and fairness. *The Faculty and Staff of the UNC School of Information and Library Science*

## COURSE SCHEDULE

<p><b>Week One</b> <b>8/25</b></p>	<p><b>Introduction/Research Philosophies and Approaches</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create our norms and classroom expectations.</li> <li>• Introduction to metatheories and how to form a research question.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Review revised syllabus. Sign and upload to Canvas.</i></p>
<p><b>Week Two</b> <b>9/1</b></p>	<p><b>Research Ethics, ChatGPT, and Standpoint Theory</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Punch, K. F. (2014). Ethics in social science research. In Punch, K. F. <i>Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches</i> (pp. 35-56). Los Angeles, CA: SAGE. (Hint: read this before you take the CITI Ethics Course.)</li> <li>• Hill Collins, P. (1986). Learning from the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought. <i>Social Problems</i>. 33(6).</li> <li>• Conroy, G. (2023). Scientists used ChatGPT to generate a whole paper from data. <i>Nature</i>.</li> </ul>	<p>Complete <a href="#">CITI Ethics Course</a> upload confirmation of CITI course completion in assignments</p>
<p><b>Week Three</b> <b>9/8</b></p>	<p><b>Getting to know SILS Faculty *remote learning day*</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Choose three faculty that align with your research interests.</li> <li>2. Watch their Ask Me Anything Videos (Videos <a href="#">found here</a>)</li> <li>3. Find one research article or book chapter of theirs to read for this week. <i>If you are having trouble finding accessible content, please let me (or them!) know.</i></li> <li>4. Write a recap of the faculty you selected. One thing you learned about them from their AMA and a short (three sentence) summary of their research article. Identify their research question and methods used.</li> </ol>	<p>Submit to Canvas under assignments.</p>
<p><b>Week Four</b> <b>9/15</b></p>	<p><b>Research Questions and Research Conversations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Luker, K. (2008) <i>Salsa Dancing into the Social Sciences: Research in an Age of Info-glut</i>. Chapter 4 – What is this a Case of, Anyway?</li> <li>• Luker, K. (2008) <i>Salsa Dancing into the Social Sciences: Research in an Age of Info-glut</i>. Chapter 5 – Reviewing the Literature</li> </ul>	<p>Lab 1: What is this a case of? Drawing your Daisey.</p>
<p><b>Week Five</b> <b>9/22</b></p>	<p><b>What drives my research? Why am I here?</b></p> <p>Bring Daisey into class. Workshop with a peer and identify who within the faculty conducts research on what you care about. Find two articles/book chapters/article reviews they have written (these can count in your annotated bibliography).</p>	<p>Fill out excel sheet with research and faculty interest.</p>

<p><b>Week Six</b> 9/29</p>	<p><b>Data Collection: Sampling, Surveys, Interviews, and Case Studies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daniel, J. (2012). Choosing between nonprobability sampling and probability sampling. In <i>Sampling essentials: Practical guidelines for making sampling choices</i> (pp. 66-80). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.</li> <li>• Wilson, V. (2016).</li> <li>• Dillman, D. A., Smyth, J. D., &amp; Christian, L. M. (2009). <i>Internet, Mail and Mixed-Mode Surveys</i> (3rd Edition). John Wiley &amp; Sons, Inc.: Hoboken, NJ. (Chapter 2)</li> <li>• Martin, E. (2006). Survey questionnaire construction. U.S. Census Bureau Research Report Series (Survey Methodology #2006-13).</li> <li>• Brinkmann, S. (2012). Interviewing. In Given, L. M. (Ed.). <i>The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods</i> (p. 471-472). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.</li> <li>• Flybergg, B. (2010). Five misunderstandings about case study research. In Atkinson, P., &amp; Delamont, S. (Eds.), <i>SAGE Qualitative Research Methods</i> (pp. 220-245). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.</li> </ul>	<p>Lab 2: Surveys/Sampling</p>
<p><b>Week Seven</b> 10/6</p>	<p><b>Data Collection: Ethnography, Focus Groups, and Research Diaries</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tavory, I. and Timmermans, S. (2009). Two cases of ethnography: Grounded theory and the extended case methods. <i>Ethnography</i></li> <li>• Vannini, P. (2012). Research diaries. In Given, L.M. (Ed.), <i>The SAGE encyclopedia of qualitative research methods</i> (pp. 764-765). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE</li> <li>• Morgan, D. L. (1997). Focus Groups as Qualitative Research (Chapters 1 &amp; 2). SAGE Publications.</li> </ul>	<p>Lab 3: Ethnography in Action</p>
<p><b>Week Eight</b> 10/13</p>	<p><b>Mixed Methods, Triangulation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creswell, J. W. (2009). <i>Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches</i>. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. (Chapter 10)</li> <li>• Wilson, V. (2016). Research Methods: Triangulation. <i>Evidence Based Library and Information Practice</i>, 11(1(S)), 66-68</li> <li>• Tripodi, F.(2021). Ms.Categorized: Gender, notability, and inequality on Wikipedia. <i>New Media &amp; Society</i></li> </ul>	
<p><b>Week Nine</b> 10/20</p>	<p>Fall Break – No Class</p>	

<b>Week Ten</b> <b>10/20</b>	<b>Data Evaluation: Research Quality and Finding the Gaps</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Step-by-step guide to critiquing research part 1: Quantitative research" by Michael Coughlan, Patricia Cronin, and Frances Ryan.</li> <li>• "Step-by-step guide to critiquing research part 2: Qualitative research" by Frances Ryan, Michael Coughlan, and Patricia Cronin</li> </ul>	
<b>Week Eleven</b> <b>10/27</b>	Synthesis and Proposal Workshop: Methods Template – come prepared to conduct in class.	Annotated Bibliography Due
<b>Week Twelve</b> <b>11/3</b>	<b>Qualitative Analysis – Part 1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gibbs, G. R. (2007). Thematic coding and categorizing. In Gibbs, G., <i>Analyzing Qualitative Data</i> (pp. 38-55). London: SAGE.</li> <li>• Brewer, J. (2003). Content analysis. In Miller, R. J. &amp; Brewer, J. (Eds.), <i>The A-Z of Social Research</i> (pp. 44-45). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.</li> </ul>	Lab 4: content analysis
<b>Week Thirteen</b> <b>11/10</b>	<b>Quantitative Analysis Part 1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Banerjee, A., Chitnis, U. B., Jadhav, S. L., Bhawalkar, J. S., &amp; Chaudhury, S. (2009). Hypothesis testing, type I and type II errors. <i>Industrial Psychiatry Journal</i>, 18(2), 127-131.</li> <li>• Neuman, W. L. (2005). <i>Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches</i> (6th Edition). Allyn and Bacon Publishing, pp. 160-166: The Language of Variables and Hypotheses; pp. 181-188: Conceptualization and Operationalization; pp. 198-200: Levels of Measurement.</li> </ul>	
<b>Week Fourteen</b> <b>11/17</b>	<b>Quantitative Analysis Part 2</b> <i>No new reading, finish up from last week.</i>	Lab 5: Complete and upload Methods Template to Canvas
<b>Week Fifteen</b> <b>11/24</b>	Thanksgiving Recess – No Class	
<b>Week Sixteen</b> <b>12/1</b>	Proposal Workshop	

**Final Proposal Due: Tuesday, December 12 at 4pm – Date of final exam, no extensions possible.**

After we complete the syllabus together on the first day, please sign, scan, and upload this document to Canvas. By signing this syllabus, you state that you understand and agree to the expectations for this course and will meet the deadlines outlined in the syllabus.

Name: - \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_