INLS 778: Research Methods & Proposal Development
Online, Asynchronous

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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 learn about a breadth of research methods, figure out how to "talk to" the literature, and secure a faculty advisor. The second half of the course will unpack 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:
- Develop 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 that will guide your master's paper work.
- Select and justify which method (qualitative, quantitative, and mixed) best matches the research question you want to ask.

Class engagement & expectations
The course will be delivered asynchronously over Canvas. The main text for this course will be the SAGE Research Methods Project Planner, available online via the UNC Library and linked in Canvas (you will need to sign in using your ONYEN to access this resource). We will all read the foundational topics of this planner, and you will also read the sections that are relevant to your chosen research methodology. All other course readings will be linked within Canvas within each week's lesson page. In addition, to complete the literature review and methods sections for your final proposal, you will use other UNC Library resources to find other chapters and articles that relate to your chosen research or project methodology and to your topical area of interest.

All course materials are organized for you in Canvas**.** Under the "Modules" tab you will see each week's "lesson" as well as all of the course documents. It will be your responsibility to complete all of the components of each week's module. This will include watching video lectures, reviewing slides, reading assigned articles, chapters, etc. and participating in discussion forums that will be based on the learning content. Each week you will be expected to contribute your own posts and directly engage with the posts of your colleagues (classmates) with honest, constructive, and kind feedback. Help one another with making our project better (peer support/feedback received in a timely fashion and using constructive criticism). Feel comfortable repeating ideas and asking others to repeat themselves. This is a learning community! Listing of major assignments/due dates is also included in Canvas as well as the Expanded Course Schedule document. Dates for lessons and assignments is subject to change based on our progress.

Additionally, there will be a peer-review component to this course where certain assignments are designated as "peer review". For these, you will meet with your chosen partner during the week of the assignment to discuss ideas over Zoom, in-person, or virtual chat/email. You will decide how and when to meet for each designated assignment. We will select peer-review partners during the very first week.

Any changes in assignments/readings will be made clearly by me with enough time to modify. This is the first time delivering this course in Canvas, so there may be some bumps along the way but feel free to reach out if there is any confusion or if you have questions about timelines, assignments, etc.

Grading
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 that go above and beyond expectations and are very rare. There are 186 total points available across all course assignments – all categories are listed further down with additional details for each. 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): 176-186 points
> P (Work that meets all expectations of the course at an acceptable level): 150-175 points
> L (Work that represents substandard performance in significant ways): 130-149 points
> 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. Grades are based on the following:

- Five lab assignments (8 points each) = 40 possible points
- Four proposal assignments (20 points each) = 80 possible points
- Final proposal = 40 possible points
- Discussion participation = 26 points possible. There are 13 weeks and two forums each week that require response and colleague reply. Each forum is worth one point if you meet both requirements.

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 (for example, housing insecurity, food insecurity, 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.

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), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (reportandresponse@unc.edu), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators (gvsc@unc.edu; confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at 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. Suggestions and improvements are encouraged and appreciated.

Academic Honesty

Academic honesty and trustworthiness are important to all of us as individuals and are encouraged and promoted by the honor system. More information is available at http://www.unc.edu/depts/honor/honor.html. The web site identified above contains all policies and procedures pertaining to the student honor system. We encourage your full participation and observance of this important aspect of the University.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS (186 points possible)

- Lab Assignments (5 total, each worth 8 points)
  - Labs are designed to give you hands-on experience with the methods we are learning in the course. In general, labs relate to a particular method and will be graded for completion only (full credit or no credit). Where applicable, answer keys will be shared after the due date for each lab. One of the lab assignments will be to complete the CITI ethics course training through UNC-Chapel Hill.
- Proposal Development Assignments (4 total, each worth 20 points)
  - Assignments in this category are designed to facilitate your progress toward the final research proposal. These assignments will be submitted in Canvas, and you will receive individual feedback on them from the instructor and likely your peer review partner.
- Final Proposal (Worth 40 points)
  - The final deliverable for this course is a proposal for a research study, which you will implement next semester in INLS 992 under the supervision of a faculty advisor. Examples of high quality proposals from previous semesters of this course are provided in the Course Resources section of Canvas. Your proposal will include an introduction, comprehensive literature review, a methodology section describing the data collection and analysis, methods to be used in your study, and an impact and limitations section. Most students find it easiest to follow APA (6th or 7th Ed.) style for citations and formatting. Another style is acceptable if you prefer, however if you plan to use another style, please let me know. A rubric will be provided describing H-, P-, and L-level work on the final proposal, and this assignment will be graded on a 0-100 scale.
- Participation (Worth 26 points)
  - In this category you will be responsible for responding to weekly discussion forum prompts for each week's learning content. There will be two forums each week and thus two points available for discussion participation. For each forum you will be required to respond to the overall discussion prompt (one point) and also respond thoughtfully to a colleague's post (one point). If you meet both requirements you will receive one point for the forum.

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 (Dates and Topics are subject to change)

Week One 8/21-8/27	**Introduction/Research Philosophies and General Methods Vocabulary**	*See Canvas for Assignments and Activities .*
Week Two 8/28-9/3	**Research Questions and Sampling**	*Proposal assignment #1 due: estimated time 20 minutes*
Week Three 9/4-9/10	**Research Quality in Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Studies; Literature Reviews**	*Proposal assignment #2 due: estimated time 20 minutes*
Week Four 9/11-9/17	**Data Collection 1: Surveys**	*Lab assignment #1 due: estimated time 60 minutes*
Week Five 9/18-9/24	**Data Collection 2: Interviews & Focus Groups; Observation**	*Lab assignment #2 due: estimated time 60 minutes*
Week Six 9/25-10/1	**Data Collection 3: Content Analysis**	*Lab assignment #3 due: estimated time 30 minutes*
Week Seven 10/2-10/8	**Data Collection 4: Experiments and Think-Alouds; Case Studies**	*Proposal assignment #3 due: estimated time 180 minutes*
Week Eight 10/9-10/15	**Data Collection 5: Diaries; Participatory and Action Research**	*Lab assignment #4 due: estimated time 60 minutes*
Week Nine 10/16-10/22	**Fall Break**	*Work on literature review*
Week Ten 10/23-10/29	**Data Analysis 1: Qualitative Coding**	*Work on literature review*
Week Eleven 10/30-11/5	**Data Analysis 2: Quantitative Analysis Part 1**	*Proposal assignment #4 due: estimated time 180 minutes*
Week Twelve 11/6-11/12	**Data Analysis 3: Quantitative Analysis Part 2**	*Optional quantitative analysis lab and*

		answer key released in Canvas
Week Thirteen 11/13-11/19	**Research Ethics and IRB**	*Lab assignment #5 due: estimated time 120 minutes*
Week Fourteen 11/20-11/26	**Thanksgiving Break**	
Week Fifteen 11/27-12/3	**Continue Work on Final Proposals**	
Week Sixteen 12/4-12/10	**Final Proposals Due**	

Final Proposals Due: Sunday, December 10, 2023 at 11:59 PM – *no extensions possible.*