Business Information
INLS 709 SPRING SEMESTER 2023

Course Information:
INLS709.001.SP24, SILS, Spring 2024
Class Meeting:
   Tues/Thurs 8-9:15 am
   Manning Room 303
Instructor:
   Nancy Lovas
   I hold office hours by appointment: go.unc.edu/meet-with-nancy
   By default meetings are virtual (MS Teams) but may be able to meet you
   in-person by request.
   ● I am best reached via email or MS Teams. Make sure to include INLS
     709 in your subject line so I don’t miss your message.
Target Audience:
   This course is intended for graduate students in library and information
   science.
Course Prerequisites:
   Prerequisite, INLS 501.

I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus. These changes will be announced as
early as possible.

Learning Goal:
The goal of this course is to provide a foundation of the many components of business
information so that you are confident in your ability to do reference and research in many
contexts. Business information includes and is relevant to government statistical data,
nonprofit research, economic development, entrepreneurship and small business, public
policy research and analysis, data literacy, and more.

Learning Outcomes:
Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:
   1. Demonstrate understanding of how business information is used in the context of
      other subjects (interdisciplinary) and in different types of libraries and information
      services contexts;
   2. Find business information and critically evaluate various business
      sources;
   3. Apply knowledge of potential sources for specific types of information to real-
      world business research problems.
   4. Communicate resource and search strategy suggestions clearly and
      concisely.
Learning Objectives:

1. Identify and implement business information research and analysis techniques and strategies.
2. Compare and contrast business reference interactions and services in special, academic, and public libraries, and other information services contexts.
3. Understand the information requirements of the disciplines within business and wider applications (industry and company analysis, marketing, investment and finance, economics, nonprofit, economic development, entrepreneurship, and public policy research, etc.).
4. Practice and describe research strategies and search techniques that aid in finding relevant business information sources.
5. Develop and apply evaluation criteria for business resources and convey the importance of resource evaluation to clients.

Free and fee based text, statistical, and data information resources in electronic formats from commercial, organizational, and governmental providers will be covered.

Readings & Resources:

All class readings will be posted in Canvas.

  - Ebook available online from UNC Libraries: https://catalog.lib.unc.edu/catalog/UNCb10183243
  - Print copy on reserve: https://catalog.lib.unc.edu/catalog/UNCb11243326

  - Ebook available online from UNC Libraries: https://catalog.lib.unc.edu/catalog/UNCb11252991
  - Print copy on reserve: https://catalog.lib.unc.edu/catalog/UNCb9781899

  - Ebook available online from UNC Libraries: https://catalog.lib.unc.edu/catalog/UNCb8072249
  - Print copy on reserve: https://catalog.lib.unc.edu/catalog/UNCb5745651

Other Readings:
  - ALA BRASS Business Guides: https://brass.libguides.com/businessguides
  - Core resources & best websites across business subjects
  - BizLibratory, https://bizlibratory.wordpress.com/

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Policies & Expectations for Students
INLS 709 Business Information will be a student-centered, inclusive, and affirmative learning space. Students are encouraged to bring their whole-selves to their learning and to shape their reflections and course projects around their own interests.

Participation:
This course is a mix of lecture, discussion, and applied practice. This means it is important that each member of the learning community come to class prepared; having read and reflected on the readings for the week, completed any reference practice or weekly assignment, and brainstormed questions for guest speakers (when applicable).

Attendance:

Official University Policy:
As stated in the University's Class Attendance Policy, no right or privilege exists that permits a student to be absent from any class meetings, except for these University Approved Absences:

1. Authorized University activities
2. Disability/religious observance/pregnancy, as required by law and approved by Accessibility Resources and Service and/or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (EOC)
3. Significant health condition and/or personal/family emergency as approved by the Office of the Dean of Students, Gender Violence Service Coordinators, and/or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (EOC).
University Approved Absence Office (UAAO): The UAAO website provides information and FAQs for students and faculty related to University Approved Absences.

Note: Instructors have the authority to make academic adjustments without official notice from the UAAO. In other words, it is not required for instructors to receive a University Approved Absence notification in order to work with a student. In fact, instructors are encouraged to work directly with students when possible.

Class Policy:
Because the quality of the learning environment is based directly on student-participation, it is important that you attend each week. If you are unable to attend for reasons of illness, religious observance, participation in University activities at the request of University authorities, or compelling absences beyond your control, please let me know prior to class [for non-emergencies].

If you need to miss a class for any reason, please let me know as soon as you can that you will not be there.

Please talk with me if you’re having trouble, whether with a particular assignment, with the course generally, or with everything.

Classroom Environment:
Our classroom environment will be respectful and collegial. I ascribe to the bell hooks’ school of learning and believe that, “as a classroom community, our capacity to generate excitement is deeply affected by our interest in one another, in hearing one another’s voices, in recognizing one another’s presence.” Arriving late, leaving early, or failing to participate fully in the learning community impacts our collective ability to hear, recognize, acknowledge, and support one another. I understand that emails need to be sent, texts read, and there will be days when circumstances outside of your control will make it difficult to focus. I ask that you make every attempt to be present, empathetic, and engaged in the learning space. If something calls your attention away from this experience, please return (mentally or physically) as quickly and respectfully as possible. I recognize that this class is early in the morning; please feel free to bring snacks and drinks.

Classroom Communication
We have a class page in Canvas which will be an important forum for class communication. I have posted the syllabus there, as well as readings, assignments, discussions, etc. All learning assessments must be submitted in Canvas as Word documents.

Mental Health Resources
All students should be aware they may seek support for any issue from Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) in Student Health. To speak to someone immediately about an urgent emotional or mental health concern:

- Call CAPS 24/7 at 919-966-3658
- Call or text the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 988, or
- Text HOME to the Crisis Text Line at 741741 from anywhere in the United States, anytime.

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Peer2Peer is a student-led group that advocates for the mental well-being of the members of the UNC student community through peer support. They offer free one-to-one sessions to talk with a peer responder with the option of remaining anonymous, and you can choose to connect with the same person each time you reach out. The organization is open to any graduate and undergraduate student at UNC.

In addition, there is another peer chat service staffed by student volunteers, LSN (Listen, Support, Navigate; pronounced listen). Be aware, though, it is NOT 24/7. The service is limited to email outside of service hours, when classes are not in session, and when volunteers are not available, with a resulting longer response time.

Please reach out to one of these resources if you need help.

Here is a resource guide for anyone experiencing sexual or gender-based harassment, sexual assault, sexual violence, interpersonal (relationship) violence, or stalking.

See more resources available through the Heels Care Network at https://care.unc.edu/.

**Accessibility/Accommodations**

Lots of help is available on campus if you have learning or physical challenges. If you need assistance, please contact and register with the Accessibility Resources and Service Office at https://accessibility.unc.edu/register. Specific accommodations are determined by that office on a case-by-case basis. The web site offers a wealth of information about accommodations and services, including an FAQ (https://ars.unc.edu/students/FAQs) and links to various campus offices’ services (https://accessibility.unc.edu/students/registered-students/unc-campus-resources) like the University Libraries’. If you think you might not qualify for formal accommodations but you think there’s a way I can help, please let me know anyway.

Also, the observance of religious holidays is respected, and flexibility around class attendance and assignments may be negotiable. Where flexibility is not possible, however, students may request religious accommodations pursuant to the University’s Policy on Religious Accommodations and Procedures by completing the University’s Religious Accommodations Advisory Committee’s Request Form and sending it to religiousaccommodations@unc.edu for consideration. This process allows the University to consider each student’s needs, based on their religious beliefs and practices.

**Honor Code**

The UNC Honor Code prohibits giving or receiving unauthorized aid in the completion of assignments. Students are strongly encouraged to cooperate and assist one another and share insights and respective expertise in this course. I expect that you will acknowledge the support you receive from your colleagues (this may be done in acknowledgements at the end of assignments or projects). It is crucial, however, that in every case where you use the actual written words of others, that these be properly quoted and cited. When you build arguments upon the ideas of others, the originators of those ideas should also be cited. To learn more about what plagiarism is (and how it is that one might plagiarize oneself), complete the tutorial at http://www2.lib.unc.edu/instruct/plagiarism/.
Extensions:
In this course, you will be setting your own deadlines for some of the learning assessments. I ask that you consider responsibilities, schedule, and available bandwidth before committing to a deadline. Extensions will be granted on a case-by-case basis. If circumstances impact your ability to complete a learning assessment on time, please contact me as early as possible to discuss alternative arrangements. Unless you are facing an emergency situation or you receive an extension, late work will automatically be graded down by one point (e.g., 10 points will become 9 points) for each day that it is late. Learning assessments more than seven (7) days late will not be accepted.

Written Work:
All written work should be proofread before you submit it. Use Times New Roman 12-point font, double-space, and one-inch margins. Although it is recommended that you use APA Style for in-text citations and reference lists, you may use any citation style, provided that it is consistent. See OWL at Purdue for help with APA formatting: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/.

Submitting Coursework:
Learning assessments are due (officially) at 11:59pm on the indicated due date through our Canvas site (“INLS709”). I will download submissions from Canvas the morning after the due date. Please name your file using the following convention: LastName_ Assign>Date (e.g. ‘Smith_BusinessResourceAssessment_1.10.2023’). Doc or Docx are required.

Grades:
Grades are determined by your performance on the learning assessments in the course. All assessment scores will be posted on the course Canvas page. If you would like to review any of your grades, or have questions about how something was scored, please email me to schedule a time to meet. I am happy to discuss any of your grades with you, and if I made a mistake I will immediately correct it.

Please see the last pages of this syllabus for specific instructions regarding each of the learning assessments. The weighted average of your grades on all of the learning assessments (including your course participation grade) will be converted to the graduate student grades of H, P, L, or F according to the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate Grade</th>
<th>Weighted Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H (high pass)</td>
<td>93-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P (pass)</td>
<td>75-92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L (low pass)</td>
<td>70-74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F (fail)</td>
<td>&lt;70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Learning Assessments

### Personal Deadline Selection (Complete / Incomplete)
You will be selecting some of your own deadlines for this course. This accomplishes two goals. First, it allows you to select due dates that complement your existing work, academic, and personal schedules. Second, it models professional practice. As a librarian or information professional, many of your deadlines may be self-imposed and enforced. This is an opportunity to practice setting and keeping personal deadlines. The last possible date for submission is **11:59 pm on the last day of classes (April 30th).**

Although these deadlines are self-imposed, you should take them as seriously as any other deadline or due date for the course. Please fully consider your schedule, personal and professional commitments and available bandwidth before committing to deadlines. You are welcome (and encouraged!) to come to me with questions about these assignments.

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### Generative AI Usage Guidelines & Policy
Throughout the semester, we will be exploring the use of generative AI as well as examining how information professionals can learn about and integrate emerging technology into their workflows. (You will not need to pay for any AI access.) The relevant assignments will provide details about how AI can be used each time.

If you choose to use generative AI for any permitted assignments, you must also cite it. In this case, “citing” is more involved: You must not only indicate that you have used it, but *how*. Include the prompt you started with and discuss in 2-3 sentences how you then tweaked it to get the result you wanted. You must also describe in 2-3 sentences how you checked its veracity. (So using AI may be more work than not.) Ultimately, you are responsible for what you turn in, including any inaccuracies, biased or unethical content, or “hallucinatory” content. Trying to pass off AI-generated content as your own will be considered cheating.

Use of generative AI is **not permitted** for weekly pre-work discussion boards.
By **Tuesday, January 30th**, please complete the “Project Selection and Personal Deadlines” quiz in Canvas. This will let me know the dates that you plan to submit the Business Resource Assessment & Proposal, Business Research Project, and the Professional Development Activity/Reflection.

**Attendance / Participation** (15 points)

Unless prior arrangements have been made, or emergency circumstances arise, students will be present in class and will contribute to group discussions and class activities. These points are earned by attending class and completing Weekly Pre-Work (see below).

**Weekly Pre-Work (1 point each)**

*Canvas Discussion Board*

Each week, students will post a brief (1 paragraph or less) reflection on the week’s readings and/or learning activities, including at least one question for class discussion. When a guest speaker is scheduled, include at least 1 question for the guest speaker. (Due Sunday, 11:59 pm)

Use of generative AI is **not permitted** for these discussion boards.

Weekly Pre-Work is graded as part of attendance and participation.

**Information Problem Sets (3 points each, 15 points total)**

Students will complete five information problem sets of real-world questions in small groups (“reference group”) of 2-3 students. For each problem set, group members will divide up the questions so that each student is responsible for writing an initial response to one question, and all questions are claimed. After the initial responder answers the question, each group member will reply to at least one other question with a reply that enhances the initial response.

By Monday at 11:59 pm of the first week, students will post their response to their question to their reference group’s Canvas discussion board. Responses should include links to resources that address the questions as well as descriptions of the approach and search strategy.

By Monday at 11:59 pm of the second week, students will have posted at least one reply to a classmate that enhances the initial response.

Use policy for generative AI will be discussed and decided as a class in the Week 2 (Business Information Landscape) Module. The syllabus will be updated accordingly.

**Business Resource Assessment & Proposal (27 points total)**

Managing resources and collections is a major component of many business information jobs. The specialized nature of business information sources means that your expertise will be crucial to ensuring stakeholders understand what resources your user population needs and why those particular sources are important.

The course text *Business cases for info pros: Here’s why, here's how* will be helpful in approaching this project.

**Background**

*NC LIVE* is North Carolina’s statewide library cooperative, supporting 200+ public and academic libraries across North Carolina. A major service provided by NC LIVE is licensed electronic resources, including 1.6 billion full-text articles, eBooks, streaming videos, digitized newspapers, language learning tools, and more. NC LIVE has a 3-year
resource selection cycle: every three years, the Resource Advisory Committee undergoes a process to recommend resources to license for the next 3-year timespan. The goal of resource selection is to “Support education, enhance economic development, and improve the quality of life of North Carolinians by procuring as much relevant, high-quality digital content as possible.”

For many years, NC LIVE subscribed to SimplyAnalytics, a web mapping and data tool. In the 2020-2023 cycle, this subscription was not renewed. Business librarians and information specialists across the state faced the issue of how, if possible, to continue providing access to the type of information contained in SimplyAnalytics.

Scenarios
Select one of the scenarios below. Think of yourself as a business information professional in that scenario. You must decide a course of action for your institution and make an official proposal of your recommendation to your organization’s decision makers. Present your proposal using the Business Case Memorandum outline as described in the Business Cases for Info Pros: Here’s Why, Here’s How.

1. Public Libraries
   a. Large Public Library
      Total budget for business subscriptions: $5,000.
      Current subscription costs: $3695.
      User population examples: “Main Street” entrepreneurs, economic development workers, local small business owners
      Example institution: Greensboro Public Library
   b. Rural Public Library
      Total budget for business subscriptions: $500.
      Current subscription costs: $150.
      User population examples: “Main Street” entrepreneurs, economic development workers, local small business owners
      Example institution: Wayne County Public Library

2. Academic Libraries
   a. State Flagship University
      Total budget for business subscriptions: $500,000.
      Current subscription costs: $488,000.
      User population examples: undergraduate and graduate students, research faculty, technology commercialization office
      Example institution: UNC Chapel Hill
   b. Small independent/private college
      Total budget for business subscriptions: $80,000.
      Current subscription costs: $78,000
      User population examples: undergraduate and graduate students, college’s innovation/entrepreneurship office and programs
      Example institution: Elon University

3. Special Libraries
   a. Market Research Consulting Firm
      Total budget for business subscriptions: $35,000.
      Current subscription costs: $33,000.
User population examples: life science or tech startups, local mid-size business owners, businesses wanting to expand into NC

Example institution: NC Biotech Center

**Simplified Fictional Pricing Structure**

The pricing structure for SimplyAnalytics varies based on type of institution, size of institution, number of concurrent users, and number of premium data packages (if any) beyond the standard package.

Use this simplified fictional pricing structure for your analysis and decision making. Prices are the same regardless of institution type and size, and premium data packages have all the same prices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 user</th>
<th>3 users</th>
<th>5 users</th>
<th>10 users</th>
<th>20 users</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Standard Data</strong></td>
<td>5000</td>
<td>6500</td>
<td>7800</td>
<td>9250</td>
<td>12000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Historical Census Data</strong></td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>3275</td>
<td>4000</td>
<td>5250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Company Data</strong></td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>3275</td>
<td>4000</td>
<td>5250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Market Research Survey Data</strong></td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>3275</td>
<td>4000</td>
<td>5250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Market Segmentation Data</strong></td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>3275</td>
<td>4000</td>
<td>5250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tips/Suggestions**

Resource evaluation is typically a compare/contrast of content: what do different resources cover and to what depth?

Also consider the needs of your user population.

Budget is always a factor: can you afford an individual subscription? Do you need to cancel a resource in favor of a new subscription?

What resources, subscription or free, provide similar content? What do you already have access to?

**Business Research Project (28 points total)**

You will do a deep dive into a U.S. public company and an industry. Part #1 is a Company Analysis Report in which you will research and describe various aspects of a U.S. public company. In Part #2’s Economic Development Analysis report, you will research and write a report that makes the case why your company from Part #1 should increase its business activity in the state of North Carolina. Thus, for Part #1 you should choose a company that you will be able to successfully complete Part #2.

**Company Analysis Report**

Select a U.S. public company to analyze and prepare a short report. Business reports are succinct and focused, so keep this in mind as you do your research and writing. See below for tips on selecting a company.

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You will locate and check out various business information resources including the company websites, annual reports, the company’s SEC filings (10-K of the past two years+ 10-Q of the last quarter), analyst reports, media coverage on the company, industry reports on the industry (if available), etc. You will also search business databases (available through UNC Libraries), general article databases, and/or library catalogs to find information on the company. You will need to search your favorite business information database, the company's website, and you will also need to use standard business information sources including Orbis, Business Source Premier, ABI/Inform, Factiva, etc. for additional information.

Your report should include the following information:

- Name and headquarters location
- the nature of the company itself
- number of employees
- product or service the company generates
- the extent of its operations
- its involvement with the government (if any)
- special internal or external programs related to social responsibility, training and development, etc.
- a SWOT analysis

Use the following sections:

1. Title page
2. Executive Summary (no more than 1 page)
3. Company Profile (a brief information on founder(s), Lines of business/products, Segments, Subsidiaries, and Operations, etc.)
4. Management Profile (Key Executives)
5. Financials
6. Market Summary
7. Corporate Strategy
8. Marketing Strategies
9. Social Responsibility
10. Training and Development
11. Key Competitors
12. SWOT Analysis
13. Reference List
14. Appendices (if available)

Some of the sections above may be skipped, or a new section(s) might be added, depending on the availability of the data.

Follow guidelines for written work. All written work should be proofread before you submit it. Use Times New Roman 12-point font, double-space, and one-inch margins. Although it is recommended that you use APA Style for in-text citations and reference lists, you may use any citation style, provided that it is consistent. See OWL at Purdue for help with APA formatting: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/.

Business writing is concise and to-the-point. Write enough to complete a thorough analysis, but remember to be focused and succinct. Your report should be no longer than 5 pages. There is no word limit and no page minimum.
**Tips on Using the Sources**
You may search the business databases first and find reports on the company to make yourself familiar with the format of the company reports. The company's annual reports are typically very long and for the most part, the reports are written in the way the company wants to be viewed. So are the press-releases of the company. Remember, for this assignment, you need to be brief and selective.

**Economic Development Report**
**Scenario**
You are an analyst with the state economic development office. The office wants to lure new businesses to North Carolina, and the latest efforts are to incentivize increased business activity in the state. You are tasked with writing a persuasive analysis report that addresses the question: How can/Why should your company from Part #1 be incentivized to increase its economic activity/business footprint in North Carolina? You may focus your analysis on a specific region of North Carolina or the state in general.

First, you should use the primary and/or secondary NAICS codes for your company of choice to determine which industry sector you will analyze. Then, consider these questions:
- What is the national outlook for this sector?
- What is the competitive landscape in your geographic region of interest?
- What might be the impact to local industry/business?

Your report should include:
1. Title Page
2. Executive Summary
   (National outlook)
3. A brief overview of your chosen industry sector (A brief history, definition, major products/services, etc.)
4. Economic features of the industry (Estimated size of the industry, growth rate, levels of profitability, established trends in sales over recent years, etc.)
5. Supply chain
6. Industry Conditions/Government regulations
   (Local competitive landscape)
7. Leading businesses in the industry sector
8. Characteristics that differentiate the companies (Services, quality/price, geographic coverage, product line breadth, etc.)
9. Local industry conditions/regulations
   (Potential impact to local industry/business)
10. what’s happened to business/industry in other regions where this company has entered the market?

Follow [guidelines for written work](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/). All written work should be proofread before you submit it. Use Times New Roman 12-point font, double-space, and one-inch margins. Although it is recommended that you use APA Style for in-text citations and reference lists, you may use any citation style, provided that it is consistent. See OWL at Purdue for help with APA formatting: [https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/).
Business writing is concise and to-the-point. Write enough to complete a thorough analysis, but remember to be focused and succinct. Your report should be no longer than 6 pages. *There is no word limit and no page minimum.*

**Professional Development Activity & Reflection (5 points total)**

Locate and participate in a business information professional development activity. Possibilities include participating in a webinar, workshop, or event from professional associations (BLINC, BRASS, SLA, etc), conducting an informational interview or job shadowing, or another activity of choice.

After participating in your chosen activity, write a 3-4 paragraph review describing the activity and your reflections. Post to the discussion board in Canvas. Reflective questions to spark your thinking: What did you learn? What surprised you? How is this relevant to your learning/professional goals? What questions do you have? Use of generative AI is **not permitted** for this assignment.

**Final Presentation**

Prepare a 15-20 minute informal presentation on one of the following topics:

1. pitch your resource proposal (from Resource Assessment & Proposal project),
2. pitch your economic development recommendation (from Business Research Project),
3. present your company analysis (from Business Research Project),
4. reflect on your class experience and learning journey from the semester.

Create some sort of visual to accompany your presentation (e.g. slide deck, infographic, etc). Upload your visual to Canvas.

Presentations will take place on April 25th and April 30th.
Course Schedule and Topics

Week 1 Course Introduction
Week 2 Business Information Environment
Week 3 Company & Industry Research
Week 4 Company & Industry Research
Week 5 Entrepreneurship
Week 6 Introduction to Licensing & Resource Evaluation; well-being day
Week 7 Market Research & Marketing
Week 8 Government Information & Census Bureau Data
Week 9 Economic Development & Emerging Technology
Week 10 SPRING BREAK
Week 11 Patents; Networking
Week 12 Social Innovation/Entrepreneurship
Week 13 Data
Week 14 Catch-up & Guest Speaker
Week 15 Guest Speakers
Week 16 Class presentations

Acknowledgements
I am grateful to the many colleagues who shared their expertise, course materials, and suggestions.