

**Dewar College of Education and Human Services  
Valdosta State University  
Department of Library and Information Studies**

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**MLIS 7700  
Research Methods  
Three Credit Hours**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Prerequisite: MLIS 7000. An introduction to the various approaches to social science research and research methods. Students will perform small scale research projects and develop skills in the research uses of libraries and the needs of library patrons.

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS / RESOURCE MATERIALS**

Neuman, W. L. (2012) *Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (3rd ed.). Boston: Pearson. ISBN-10: 0205762611. ISBN-13: 9780205762613.

Hollister, Christopher V. (2013). *Handbook of Academic Writing for Librarians*. Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL, a division of ALA). ISBN-10: 083898648X. ISBN-13: 978-0838986486.

Nahl, D. *Strategic Research Approaches for Reference Librarians*. Kendall-Hunt, 2000.  
(This is a workbook – currently out-of-print. We have permission from the author to copy the content, so chapters are available in PDF format on the BlazeVIEW site for this course.)

**Note:** Please familiarize yourself with the MLIS policy that prohibits the use of VSU’s Interlibrary Loan service for obtaining textbooks at <http://www.valdosta.edu/colleges/education/master-of-library-and-information-science/documents/MLISPolicyonILLRequestsforTextbooks.pdf>

**COURSE OBJECTIVES** (*with alignment to MLIS Program Objectives*)

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to meet these Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs):

- SLO 1. Recognize the inter-relationships of theory, research, and scientific inquiry (PO3).
- SLO 2. Discuss basic ethical issues associated with conducting research (PO3, PO4).
- SLO 3. Distinguish between qualitative and quantitative research methods (PO3).
- SLO 4. Identify the basic elements in the design of social research studies (PO3).
- SLO 5. Relate terminology, concepts, and processes of social research to studies conducted in the library and information science (LIS) field (PO3).

**COURSE ACTIVITIES/ASSIGNMENTS/REQUIREMENTS**

MLIS 7700 includes an assignment called **Writing a Research Project Proposal** that fulfills the Program Objective 3. You will find it marked as “necessary to fulfill requirements for this course” on page 4 of this syllabus. You will need a subscription to LiveText and must submit the final copy of the Research Proposal to your LiveText account.

There are a number of assessments developed to meet ALA accreditation requirements on student learning outcomes. These assessments are part of all the MLIS core courses plus certain electives. LiveText is the software that the MLIS Program selected for keeping track of these assessments, and all MLIS students are REQUIRED to purchase access to the LiveText system. The LiveText subscription is not tied to when you entered the program or to when you plan to graduate. Once you purchase your subscription to LiveText, it is good for up to five years. You will also have personal access to other LiveText features you may find useful once you have your subscription. Please consider the purchase of your LiveText subscription as you would the purchase of any other textbook or piece of software required for a course.

### **Assignments in Brief**

The following list is a brief overview of the activities included in this course in order of their assignment. Look for complete instructions and grading criteria for each assignment on the BlazeVIEW course site.

#### **Discussion Board 1 (Required, not graded)**

Introduce yourself by answering the questions posted on the Discussion Board 1 in BlazeVIEW.

#### **Small Group Exercise: Read-Observe-Analyze Project**

**15 pts.**

Many courses on research methods save discussions of qualitative research for last. However, qualitative research lays the foundation for much of what happens in quantitative research. This exercise is designed to introduce you to elements associated with qualitative research. You will work in groups of three to investigate a construct currently of interest in the field of library and information science. To conduct your examination, you will use the tools of qualitative research (e.g., observations and a scan of the literature) to look for indicators that this construct is influencing library practice. Together, you will assemble a short, collaborative paper that reports your findings. An explanation of the construct and details on formatting the report and grading criteria will be on the BlazeVIEW course site. [SLOs 4, 5]

#### **Individual Exercise A: Analysis of a Qualitative Research Report**

**10 pts.**

An exercise that involves identifying the basic components of qualitative research design using an example from the library and information science literature. [SLOs 4, 5]

#### **Discussion Board 2: Ethics (Includes submission of your CITI certificates)**

**10 pts.**

Post your reactions to questions related to ethical issues. In addition, you are required to complete an online tutorial on human subjects and institutional review board procedures. Submit certificates to the CITI Certificate Assignment tool. [SLOs 2, 5]

#### **Individual Exercise B: Methods for Collecting Data**

**15 pts.**

You will identify various data collection methods looking for good qualities and flaws. [SLOs 4, 5]

#### **Individual Exercise C: Identifying Elements of Research Design**

**15 pts.**

An exercise that involves identifying the basic components of quantitative research design using excerpts from actual research articles from the library and information science literature. [SLOs 3, 5]

### **Pre-requisite Drafts on Research Proposal Topic**

Select a research problem related to the field of library and information science and use it as the basis for drafting the parts of your final research proposal. Four documents showing your progress on developing your proposal must be submitted – one each week. These include: a worksheet outlining the parts of your proposal idea; a second worksheet stating your research problem-questions-design-methods; a draft of your literature review; and an abstract submitted to Discussion Board 3 for instructor and peer review. Submission of these drafts is mandatory. You will receive feedback from the professor on each draft. Your final proposal is worth 35 points. **Not submitting a draft results in a 5 point deduction for each missed draft from your final proposal.**

### **Final Project: Writing a Research Project Proposal**

**35 pts.**

Using your preliminary drafts and the feedback on this work, refine and combine your work into a research proposal that articulates how to investigate the research problem you selected. This is a proposal specifying what you would do if you had the opportunity to conduct research on your problem. You do not actually do the research. The final proposal must include: Abstract; Literature review; Problem statement and research question(s); Explanation of the purpose of the research; Objectives or hypothesis; Type of research approach proposed (e.g., qualitative or quantitative design with details); Research design particulars (e.g., procedures on selecting materials or participants, names of variables, and data collection and analysis methods); and Potential application(s) or implication(s) of the proposed research. Details on formatting the report and grading criteria will be on the BlazeVIEW course site. **Successful completion of this project is necessary to fulfill requirements for this course. [SLOs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5]**

### **COURSE GRADES**

Students can earn a maximum of 100 points in this course. Course grades will be awarded as follows:  
100 – 90 points = A    89 – 80 points = B    79 – 70 points = C    69 – 60 points = D    Below 60 points = F

Standards for MLIS core courses: **Must earn a grade of B or higher in this course or repeat it.**

**To be eligible to receive an A in this course requires completing every assignment.**

An overall grade of zero can be assigned to an entire paper or project if the instructor determines that its contents, or parts of its contents, were completed by a second party or copied into a paper or project from a source without proper citing. Noncompliance with rules on appropriate use of resources will result in zero credit for those parts of the assignment affected. If you are unsure about the parameters of an assignment, ask for clarification.

Your final grade will be one of these letter grades:

Exceptionally exceeds minimum standards	A
Exceeds minimum standards	B
Meets minimum standards	C
Barely meets minimum standards	D
Fails to meet minimum standards	F

## **COURSE EVALUATION**

As a student in this class, you are expected to: (1) read or view all assigned background materials; (2) participate fully in discussion board activities; (3) submit all projects on time and according to the format designated by the instructor; and (4) conduct your research and composition according to the rules of academic integrity. See the COEHS *Policy on Plagiarism* on page 7 and the *MLIS Guide to Ethical Conduct* at <http://www.valdosta.edu/colleges/education/master-of-library-and-information-science/documents/GuidetoEthicalConductWebversion.pdf>

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

This is a Web-delivered course, with no required online presentations. The instructor will schedule real-time instruction using tools such as the Collaborate conferencing program if needed. All live lectures are archived for those who cannot attend the sessions in real time.

## **COMMUNICATION**

Please post course-related questions that may be relevant to the class on the Faculty Office discussion board. You are expected to read the discussion boards regularly. If you have a personal question please send it to the instructor via BlazeView course e-mail. If you would like to speak with the instructor in person or by telephone please make contact during office hours.

## **SUBMITTING WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS**

All written work must be submitted as instructed on the BlazeView course website using Word formats (.doc or .docx suffixes only) or other formats designated by the instructor. The university's Information Technology (IT) department provides step-by-step guides on how to use VSU's e-mail system and other resources. The IT Help Desk is at <http://www.valdosta.edu/administration/it/helpdesk> course learning system. D2L provides 24/7 support 365 days a year. To contact D2L, go to <https://D2LHelp.view.usg.edu> or call the hotline at 855-772-0423.

## **LATE POLICY**

Most graded assignments are due Tuesday. You have a one-day grace period to submit assignments for full credit – Wednesday, 11:59 pm is the deadline. Assignments received after Tuesday, 11:59 pm, lose points. Completely skipping an assignment is not acceptable in graduate school. To be eligible to receive an A in this course requires completing every assignment and submitting within the specified deadlines.

A grade of Incomplete is not an option unless a non-academic situation interferes with completion of assignments after the option to withdraw without academic penalty expires (Noon, Thursday, March 9). A petition for an Incomplete must be submitted with documentation to the professor at the time an assignment is missed. Withdrawal from a course after March 9 requires a petition for hardship withdrawal. Follow-up regarding the hardship withdrawal process is the responsibility of the student, and questions on how to proceed must be directed to Dr. Marsha Walden ([mwalden@valdosta.edu](mailto:mwalden@valdosta.edu)) in the Centralized Advising Center (229-245-4378).

## **PROFESSIONALISM**

The Department of Library and Information Studies expects that MLIS students will pursue their academic endeavors and conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner. All work that a student presents to satisfy course requirements should represent his or her own efforts, including appropriate use and acknowledgement of external sources. The student will be timely and complete with assignments and other engagements. The student will communicate in a professional manner in both speech and writing. The student will maintain a professional attitude, being respectful to others and their viewpoints, and seek to maintain objectivity. The student will exercise an awareness of the pervasiveness of the online environment and strive to maintain a professional online presence.

## **DEWAR COLLEGE OF EDUCATION & HUMAN SERVICES POLICY ON PLAGIARISM**

<http://www.valdosta.edu/colleges/education/deans-office/policy-statement-of-plagiarism.php>

## **ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT**

Valdosta State University is an equal opportunity educational institution. It is not the intent of the institution to discriminate against any applicant for admission or any student or employee of the institution based on the age, sex, race, religion, color, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation of the individual. It is the intent of the institution to comply with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and subsequent Executive Orders as well as Title IX, Equal Pay Act of 1963, Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Students with disabilities who are experiencing barriers in this course may contact the Access Office for assistance in determining and implementing reasonable accommodations. The Access Office is located in Farber Hall. The phone numbers are 229-245-2498 (V), 229-375-5871 (VP) and 229-219-1348 (TTY). For more information, please visit <http://www.valdosta.edu/access> or email: [access@valdosta.edu](mailto:access@valdosta.edu).

## **STUDENT OPINION OF INSTRUCTION**

At the end of the term, all students will be expected to complete an online Student Opinion of Instruction survey (SOI) that will be available on BANNER. Students will receive an email notification through their VSU email address when the SOI is available (generally at least one week before the end of the term). SOI responses are anonymous, and instructors will be able to view only a summary of all responses two weeks after they have submitted final grades. While instructors will not be able to view individual responses or to access any of the responses until after final grade submission, they will be able to see which students have or have not completed their SOIs, and student compliance may be considered in the determination of the final course grade. These compliance and non-compliance reports will not be available once instructors are able to access the results. Complete information about the SOIs, including how to access the survey and a timetable for this term is available at <http://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/sois/directions-for-accessing-and-completing-sois.php>