LIS 505: Introduction to Research in Library and Information Studies

Course Outline
Fall 2017

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Office hours: By email appointment

Calendar Description:
An introduction to the fundamental concepts, approaches, methodologies and uses of research in library and information environments. This includes research design, proposal writing, identifying and defining research problems, critically evaluating and analyzing research, and applying research findings to solve practical problems in libraries and information centers. Required course.

Course Objectives:
1. Understand the importance of research in library and information studies and in various library and information environments; (PLLO 1, 2, 3, 8)
2. Become intelligent readers and producers of research, which involves the ability to critically analyze relevant research literature in library and information studies; (PLLO 2,3, 5, 8)
3. Become familiar with the research process and the contexts in which research is carried out in order to assist users who are themselves engaged in research; (PLLO 2, 3,5) 
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the research process by preparing a research proposal to study a problem relevant to library and information studies. (PLLO 1, 2, 3, 5,8)

Measurable Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs):
1. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the structures and features of a scholarly research article by writing a critical evaluation and comparison of articles published in an LIS or discipline related journal.
2. Students will explore the LIS literature, hone their understanding of a topic of interest, and be able to explain why their topics are significant for furthering research efforts in our field.
3. Students will engage in an in-depth review of ethics associated with research, as well as ethics that support LIS professional work in order to be able to conduct high caliber research and offer high caliber service as information professionals. Students will demonstrate understanding by completing the TCPS 2 Tutorial
Course on Research Ethics tutorial and a reflection on professional ethics.

4. Students will demonstrate their ability to locate, evaluate, and synthesize LIS and related research by writing an annotated "retrospective" bibliography and a literature review with accompanying research problem statement.

Course Format:

This course is conducted online through eClass. No onsite meetings are required.

Course Relationships:

LIS 501 is a prerequisite for this course. LIS 505 is a prerequisite to LIS 597, LIS 599 and THES 900.

Required Text:

Wildemuth, B. M. (Ed.). (2016). Applications of social research methods to questions in information and library science. ABC-CLIO.


Assignments and Weighting:

The assignments in this course have been designed to work together to help inform your stance as an LIS professional who will need to draw on and engage in research to enrich or illuminate understanding of our field. Because this is an introductory and overview course and a semester does not allow time to develop and execute a research design, you will work with the literature on LIS research and with the ethical positions of our discipline to shape your understanding of research practices and to construct a foundation for future work.

Also, because this course is presented entirely online, participation and discussion are vital components and have been weighted accordingly.

Assignment 1 Critically evaluate and compare LIS research articles (10%)

Assignment 2 Examining Ethical perspectives (20%)

Assignment 3 Retrospective Annotated Bibliography (20%)

Assignment 4 Literature review / research problem statement (20%)

Initial Discussion Posts (10%)

Group Discussion / Participation Posts (20%)

If an extension is required, please email the instructor in advance to make those arrangements; otherwise late assignments will not earn full credit. Five percent (5%) will be deducted for every day (24) hours, including weekends an assignment is late to a maximum of three days. Without prior notification and request for extension, assignments submitted more than three days (72 hours) after the due date will not be accepted.
School of Library and Information Studies Grading Statement:

Grades reflect professional judgements of student achievement made by instructors. These judgements are based on a combination of absolute achievement and relative performance in class. The instructor should mark in terms of raw scores, rank the assignments in order of merit, and with due attention to the verbal descriptions of the various grades, assign an appropriate final letter grade. Grades are calculated in accordance with the SLIS Grading Procedure.

Academic Integrity:

The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/ ) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University. Students should also be mindful of the SLIS Copyright Policy (http://www.slis.ualberta.ca/Resources/~/media/slis/Documents/Resources/SLISPoliciesandDocuments/SLIS_Copyright_Policy.pdf ).

Inclusive Language and Equity:

The Faculty of Education is committed to providing an environment of respect for all people within the university community and to educating faculty, staff, and students in developing teaching and learning contexts that are welcoming to all. The Faculty recommends that students and staff use inclusive language to create a classroom atmosphere in which students’ experiences and views are treated with equal respect and value in relation to their gender, racial background, sexual orientation and ethnic background. Students who require accommodations in this course due to a disability affecting mobility, vision, hearing, learning, or mental or physical health are advised to discuss their needs with Specialized Support and Disability Services.

Recording of Lectures:

Recording of lectures is permitted only with the prior written consent of the professor or if recording is part of an approved accommodation plan.

Policy about course outlines can be found in Section 23.4(2) of the University Calendar.