STUDENTS ENROLLED IN LS 502 ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR READING AND UNDERSTANDING THIS SYLLABUS IN ITS ENTIRETY.

Catalog Description

Required course introducing research design and statistical techniques used in library, media, and information science. At the conclusion of the course, the student should be able to comprehend and utilize research reports in these fields and to design and carry out basic research projects.

Learning Objectives

On successful completion of this course, the student will be able to

1. define research and provide examples of research goals and procedures in library and information science;

2. evaluate reports of research and relate them to other research efforts;
3. identify major research methodologies, describe advantages and disadvantages of each and the circumstances under which each is most appropriate, and provide examples of each;

4. prepare research proposals using a variety of methodologies;

5. define and provide examples of the use of a variety of statistics and statistical procedures;

6. provide examples of possible sources of funding for library and information science research; and

7. relate research findings in library and information science to practical issues of library and information system management.

Teaching/Learning Methods

This course will employ lecture and demonstration, group discussion, and individual learning activities. Assignments will be designed for application as well as analysis of concepts and issues.

Student Evaluation

There will be six assignments. Assignments are designed to build upon one another toward a final product, which will be a complete research proposal. The assignments are as follows:

1. A detailed analysis of one published article. (15 points)
2. A problem statement and rationale for a proposed research study. (10 points)
3. A specific research question and hypothesis for the study. (10 points)
4. A complete literature review. (15 points)
5. A description of the methodology and data analysis plan for the proposed study. (15 points)
6. A proposal for a conference presentation. (25 points)

There will be no exams.
Assignment Instructions

Problem Statement (due no later than 4:30 pm, Monday, February 3).

Describe in general terms a problem that can be addressed through completion of a research project. The problem must have the following characteristics:

1. It must be related to library and information studies.
2. It must represent a real problem in need of solution or understanding.
3. It must provide for expansion of general professional understanding, not just local problem solving.
4. The domain within which the problem falls must have been explored well enough to support a literature review.
5. The scale of the problem must be such that a single researcher could expect to complete the project in a reasonable period of time.

The problem statement must include three structured paragraphs:

1. A description of the problem and its context, including the contribution of exploration of the problem to expansion of general professional understanding. (4 points)
2. A preliminary description of a methodological approach (historical, descriptive, experimental) to researching the problem. (3 points)
3. A prediction of the impact of the research project on professional understanding and professional practice. (3 points)

Expected length: The problem statement paper will be no more than one page long and will include the three structured paragraphs described above. The problem statement accounts for 10 percent of the grade for the course.

Research Question and Hypothesis (due no later than 4:30 pm, Monday, February 24)

Write one research question and one directional hypothesis derived from the approved problem statement. The research question and hypothesis must conform to the guidelines provided in the course lecture for January 27 (“The Research Process”).

Expected length: The research question and hypothesis will each be one sentence long. The research question and hypothesis account for 10 percent of the grade for the course.

Article Analysis (due no later than 4:30 pm, Monday, March 10)

The article analysis must address the following elements:

1. Relevance of the topic to the reader’s needs. (1 point)
2. Adherence to the research process. (1 point)
3. Logic and sense of the problem statement. (1 point)
4. Completeness, thoroughness and adequacy of the general methodology. (1 point)
5. Soundness of the specific methodology. (1 point)
6. Integrity of data. (1 point)
7. Appropriateness of analysis. (1 point)
8. Clarity of the relationship of conclusions to results. (1 point)
9. Strength of the relationship of the results and conclusions to the problem statement. (1 point)
10. Analysis of the relationship of results and conclusions to the literature review. (1 point)
11. Evidence of bias, dishonesty, or error. (1 point)
12. Comparison to similar studies. (1 point)
13. Qualifications of researchers. (1 point)
14. General literary qualities: logic, clarity, economy, simplicity, etc. (1 point)
15. Overall assessment of the article. (1 point)

Expected length: The article analysis will be approximately eight-to-twelve pages long. The article analysis accounts for 15 percent of the grade for the course.

**Literature Review** (due no later than 4:30 pm, Monday, March 21).

Write a narrative essay summarizing and synthesizing the existing literature relevant to the topic defined by the problem statement. The literature review will be evaluated in terms of its support for the following elements:

1. Confirmation of need for the study identified in the problem statement, research question, and hypothesis. (3 points)
2. Establishment of an appropriate focus for the proposed research project. (3 points)
3. Identification of the specific subject and context of the proposed research project. (2 points)
4. Establishment of an appropriate theoretical base for the proposed research project. (2 points)
5. Establishment of an appropriate methodological base for the proposed research project. (2 points)
6. Persuasiveness of the literature review. (2 points)
7. General literary qualities of the literature review. (1 point)

Expected length: The literature review will be approximately ten-to-fifteen pages long. The literature review accounts for 15 percent of the grade for the course.

*Methodology and Data Analysis Plan* (due no later than 4:30 pm, Monday, April 14)

Describe in detail the specific methodology that will be used to conduct the research project described in the approved problem statement, literature review, and research question/hypothesis. The methodology and data analysis plan must include:

1. A statement of the general methodological area (historical, descriptive, experimental) to provide an overall understanding of the focus of the research project. (1 point)
2. Identification of the population to be studied. (1 point)
3. Selection of a sample. (2 points)
4. Definition of terms, including both conceptual and operational definitions. (2 points)
5. Delineation of assumptions related to the project. (2 points)
6. Description of a data gathering plan. (4 points)
7. Description of a data analysis plan. (3 points)

Expected length: The methodology and data analysis plan will be approximately eight-to-twelve pages long. The methodology and data analysis plan accounts for 15 percent of the grade for the course.

*Conference Proposal* (due no later than 4:30 pm, Monday, April 28)

The conference proposal must meet the requirements for Contributed Papers proposals for the 2014 Annual Conference of the Universal Library and Information Association. The following is excerpted from the Call for Contributed Papers for the Conference.

The Universal Library and Information Association is seeking proposals for Contributed Papers Sessions for its Annual Conference, to be held Septober 32-33, 2014 at the University of Outer Alabama campus in Tuscatighta. Successful proposals will address an essential research need in the library and information domains. Contributed Papers may describe completed research studies or works in progress, including studies that are at the proposal stage for which work has not yet been initiated.

Essential proposal components include:
1. A title that is indicative of the focus of the study and suitable for publication in the Conference Program.
2. The name(s) and affiliation(s) of the author(s) of the study.
3. A problem statement that provides a clear definition of the problem and its context and includes an appropriate problem statement or hypothesis.
4. A description of the audience for whom the paper is most suited.
5. A literature review that confirms the need for the study, reinforces the context for the study, establishes a contextualized focus for the study, and provides insight into the theoretical and methodological bases of the study.
6. An overview of the methodology that includes the general methodological area of the study, the population studied, sample selection, delineation of key definitions and assumptions, the research environment, the nature of the data examined in the study, and procedures for gathering and analyzing data.
7. For a completed study, data analysis, discussion, conclusions, and implications for further study; for a work in progress, a discussion of anticipated results and their potential implications.
8. A list of references used in the literature review.

Technical requirements for proposals:

1. Contributed Papers proposals may be no more than 2,000 words in length, not including the title, author name and affiliation, and references.
2. Proposals must use a standard font no smaller than 10-point; 12-point Times New Roman is preferred.
3. Margins must be no smaller than 1 inch on all sides.
4. Pages should be numbered consecutively at the bottom of each page.
5. The title and author(s)'s name(s) and affiliation(s) must be placed on a separate cover page; the title, but not author name(s) or affiliation(s) must be repeated on the first page of the proposal text.

Review criteria:

1. Originality of the research idea. (4 points)
2. Demonstration of need for the proposed research. (4 points)
3. Clarity of research questions, hypotheses, and research design. (4 points)
4. Quality and persuasiveness of the literature review. (4 points)
5. Adequacy of data definition and processes for data gathering and analysis. (2 points)
6. Meaningfulness of actual or anticipated results as explained in the proposal. (2 points)
7. General literary and technical qualities of the proposal. (5 points)

Contributed Papers Proposals are due no later than December 10, 2013; papers received after the due date will not be considered.

The conference proposal accounts for 25 percent of the grade for the course.

Class Participation

Each student is required to submit at least ten substantive contributions to classroom discussion. Substantive contributions include questions, answers, comments, viewpoints, explanations, elaborations, and other contributions directly related to the content of the course. Questions or comments about assignments, due dates, readings, class meetings, and other structural contributions are important and welcome additions to the list discussion but are not considered substantive for purposes of class participation points. Individual participation accounts for 10 percent of grade for the course.

DISTRIBUTION OF POINTS AND DUE DATES:

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<td><strong>TOTAL POINTS</strong></td>
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Style

All work for LS 502 must conform to a standard style manual. Two style manuals are recommended: 1) Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th ed. Rev. by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M.
Williams, and University of Chicago Press editorial staff (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); 2) *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th Ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010). Turabian is essentially a simpler-to-use and substantially less expensive synthesis of *Chicago* and is the recommended style manual for this course. Bibliographic references must conform to appropriate style – bibliographic references copied and pasted from databases without accommodating Turabian, *Chicago*, or some other standard style manual are not acceptable. A summary of commonly used bibliographic forms using the Turabian style is available at [http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html](http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html). A summary of commonly used bibliographic forms using *Chicago* is available at [http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html).

Assignments must be double-spaced with the first line of each paragraph indented. A standard 12-point font must be used. Margins must be one inch on all sides. Pages must be numbered consecutively. Each paper must have a title indicative of the research problem and the name of the assignment. Resources used in preparing the paper must be appropriately, accurately, and completely attributed using one of the style manuals described above. The student’s name must appear at the top right of the first page of each assignment.

The Master of Library and Information Studies degree program consists of a structure and curriculum for preparing students to enter professional careers in libraries and other information environments. Library and information professionals must be capable of writing in a competent and professional manner. Assignments that do not adequately conform to the principles of style stated in the course syllabus will be returned for correction and will be graded in accordance with the policy on late assignments.

**Due Dates and Submission of Assignments**

Assignments are due no later than 4:30 pm on the stated due date. Each assignment must be submitted as a standard word processor file (Microsoft Word is recommended) and submitted in Blackboard Learn. File names must follow the format “lastnamefirstinitialnameofassignment” (for instance, jonesjproblem). PDF files are not acceptable.

**Late Assignments**

Assignments will be accepted later than the due date only by prior arrangement with the instructor or in the case of a documented illness or emergency. Assignments submitted later than the due date for reasons other than documented illness or emergency will be subject to an automatic reduction of ten percent of the grade for the assignment.
Grading

Letter grades will be assigned according to the following percentage distribution:

- 90 % or above = A
- 80 % - 89 % = B
- 70 % - 79 % = C
- 60 % - 69 % = D
- 59 % or below = F

Fractional percentages will be rounded upward.

A grade of A implies that all requirements have been met and substantially exceeded.

A grade of B implies that all requirements have been fully met.

A grade of C implies that all requirements have been minimally met.

Grades below "C" are counted in computing scholastic averages, but they do not carry credit toward a degree.

A grade of D implies that some or all of the requirements have not been minimally met.

A grade of F implies failure to meet minimal requirements.

Technological Literacy

Students enrolled in LS 502 are expected to be familiar with fundamental computer operations and basic productivity software and to have reliable access to necessary hardware, software, and connectivity. Students must be familiar with the University of Alabama Blackboard Learn course management system available at http://mybama.ua.edu.

Attendance

Excerpt from The University of Alabama Graduate Catalog, Section 4.5

“Graduate students are subject to the same rules regarding class attendance, the performance of assigned tasks, and course examinations as undergraduate students.”

Attendance in graduate courses is especially important: graduate study is a combination of learning content and learning the social and professional expectations of the discipline and profession.
Students With Disabilities

Excerpt from The University of Alabama Student Handbook, Rights & Responsibilities of Students in the Academic Community

The Office of Disability Services (ODS), 133-B Martha Parham East, serves as the University’s central contact point for students with disabilities. The goal of ODS is to ensure that University programs and services are accessible to otherwise qualified students with disabilities. ODS works with students to provide necessary individualized academic accommodations while promoting student responsibility and self-advocacy. Students with disabilities are responsible for informing the University about their need for accommodations and services. The self-identification process requires the student to register with ODS and to present appropriate documentation verifying the disability as per the documentation requirements at www.ods.ua.edu. Self-identification is voluntary. Typically, students will self-identify at matriculation, but students who choose not to self-identify initially do not forfeit their right to identify themselves and request accommodation at a later date. However, the obligation of the University to accommodate applies prospectively only (i.e., accommodations are not retroactive). On-campus students must submit a written request for accommodation in person each semester through ODS.

Students with disabilities are responsible for meeting the same qualifications and maintaining essential institutional standards for courses, programs, services, and activities as are all UA students. Students are also responsible for the timely reporting of any dissatisfaction they may have with the implementation of an accommodation. Concerns should be presented to ODS. If concerns are not resolved through established procedures, complaints alleging violations of The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, including failure to provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations, may be filed with the ADA/504 Coordinator within the Office of Equal Opportunity Programs (http://eop.ua.edu/). If a satisfactory resolution is not achieved within University channels, complaints may be directed to the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html).

For more information on eligibility and services, contact ODS at (205) 348-4285; TTY (205) 348-3081; visit the Web site at http://ods.ua.edu; or write The University of Alabama, Office of Disability Services, Box 870185, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0185.
Academic Conduct

Excerpt from The University of Alabama Student Handbook, Codes of Conduct

A. General Policy

The preservation of freedom of discussion, inquiry, and expression is possible only in an environment in which the privileges of citizenship are protected and the obligations of citizenship are understood. Accordingly, the University has developed regulations and policies pertaining to students and to student organizations. Any student or organization violating an established policy or regulation of the University is subject to disciplinary action according to the provisions outlined in these Codes of Student Conduct. Personal Conduct on University-owned or University-controlled property or at University-sponsored events is subject to University jurisdiction. The University may also enforce its own disciplinary policy and procedures, regardless of where misconduct occurs, when personal or organizational conduct directly, seriously, or adversely interferes with or disrupts the educational missions, programs, or other functions of the University. In addition to the guidelines of conduct set forth elsewhere in the Handbook and other official University publications, acts of misconduct for which disciplinary action may be taken and the disciplinary procedures, which apply for the fair adjudication of alleged violations, follow.

B. Code of Academic Conduct

• Academic Honor Code

• All students in attendance at The University of Alabama are expected to be honorable and observe standards of conduct appropriate to a community of scholars. The University of Alabama expects from its students a higher standard of conduct than the minimum required to avoid discipline. At the beginning of each semester and on tests and projects, at the discretion of the course instructor, each student will be expected to sign an Honor Pledge.

• The Academic Honor pledge reads as follows: I promise or affirm that I will not at any time be involved with cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, or misrepresentation while enrolled as a student at The University of Alabama. I have read the Academic Honor Code, which explains disciplinary procedures that will result from the aforementioned. I understand that violation of this code will result in penalties as severe as indefinite suspension from the University.

• Academic misconduct by students includes all acts of dishonesty in any academically related matter and any knowing or intentional help or attempt to help,
or conspiracy to help, another student commit an act of academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to, each of the following acts when performed in any type of academic or academically related matter, exercise, or activity.

- Cheating—using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, study aids, or computer-related information.
- Plagiarism—representing the words, data, pictures, figures, works, ideas, computer program or output, or anything not generated in an authorized fashion, as one's own.
- Fabrication—presenting as genuine any invented or falsified citation or material.
- Misrepresentation—falsifying, altering, or misstating the contents of documents or other materials related to academic matters, including schedules, prerequisites, and transcripts.

**Textbook and Readings**


**Office Hours and Communication**

The official office hours are Mondays, 3:00 – 5:00. The instructor can also be available via e-mail or via telephone or Skype by appointment. E-mail is the preferred mode of communication for this course. All e-mail communication regarding the course should contain a subject line beginning with LS 502 and continuing with a brief description of the nature of the e-mail (example: “LS 502 Question About Article Analysis Assignment”). Submission of e-mail that does not conform to that pattern incurs the risk that the e-mail will not be read. Students should not expect responses to e-mails or other communication outside normal University business hours.

**Schedule and Readings**

**January 13**  
*Research and knowing*


**January 20**  
*NO CLASS – Martin Luther King, Jr., Birthday*
January 27  The research process


February 3  Problem Statement due no later than 4:30 pm, Monday, February 3 (file name = “lastnamefirstinitialproblem”)

Ethics and politics in library and information studies research


February 10  Research reports and the professional as consumer

Wallace and Van Fleet, *Knowledge into Action: Research and Evaluation in Library and Information Science*, Chapter 4, “Published Reports and the Professional as Consumer.”

February 17  The research proposal

February 24  Research Question and Hypothesis due no later than 4:30 pm, February 24 (file name = “lastnamefirstinitialquestion”)

*Measurement, populations, samples, and sampling*


March 3  *Historical methods; Descriptive methods – Interviews*


March 10  *Article Analysis due no later than 4:30 pm, Monday, March 10* (file name = “lastnamefirstinitialarticle”)

*Descriptive methods – Questionnaires and observation*


March 17  *Experimental methods*


March 24  *NO CLASS – Spring Holidays*

March 31  *Literature Review due no later than 4:30 pm, Monday, March 31* (file name = “lastnamefirstinitialreview”)

*Bibliometrics and citation analysis*

Wallace and Van Fleet, *Knowledge into Action: Research and Evaluation in Library and Information Science*, Chapter 11, “Bibliometrics and Citation Analysis.”
April  7  Data analysis and presentation

Wallace and Van Fleet, Knowledge into Action: Research and Evaluation in Library and Information Science, Chapter 12, “Data Analysis and Presentation.”

April  14  Methodology and Data Analysis Plan due no later than 4:30 pm, Monday, April 14 (file name = “lastnamefirstinitialmethod”)

Descriptive and inferential statistics

Wallace and Van Fleet, Knowledge into Action: Research and Evaluation in Library and Information Science, Chapter 13, “Descriptive and Inferential Statistics.”

April  21  Funding for research; Research and Change


April  28  Conference proposal due no later than 4:30 pm, Monday, April 28 (file name = “lastnamefirstinitialproposal”)
