THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
iSchool (Library, Archival & Information Studies)
Faculty of Arts

We acknowledge that we are on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the hən̓q̓əmin̓əm̓ speaking Musqueam people.

The mission of UBC iSchool is to enhance humanity's capacity to engage information in effective, creative and diverse ways, through innovative research, education and design.

LIBR 507: Methods of Research and Evaluation in Information Organizations – Course Syllabus (3)

*This .pdf version of the syllabus is preliminary. The Canvas course pages will be the 'document' of record starting first day of class.

Program: MLIS
Year: 2018-19, Winter Term 1
Course Schedule: Thursday, 2:00 – 4:50 pm
Location: IKBLC 155
Instructor: R. Kopak
Office location: Barber 495
Office phone: (604) 822-2898
Office hours: Wednesday, Thursday 1-1:45pm, or by appointment
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Learning Management Site: canvas.ubc.ca

Course Goal:

Research, in support of assessment and evaluation, is a core component of the information professions, and essential to good information practice. Information professionals not only aid others in carrying out research, but also rely on the research literature to improve their own evidence-based practice, and knowledgeably employ research methods in assessing and evaluating programs and services provided by the information organization to its users.

The goal of this course, therefore, is to ground students in the theory and practice of social science research methods, and to show how these methods can be usefully employed in addressing important issues within information organizations. The course provides a framework for problem solving that can be used to achieve solutions in everyday practice to challenges of many kinds in a variety of organizational environments. Emphasis is on the techniques and knowledge required to carry out research for creation, assessment and evaluation of programs and services, and also on acquiring skill in critically engaging with relevant research literature.

Course Objectives:

Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

- Identify, analyze, and assess the information needs of diverse individuals, communities and organizations, and consider how to respond to those needs through the design, provision and assessment of information resources, services and systems; [1.1]

- Critically assess and employ the results of published and unpublished research studies. [4.1]
- Contribute to the advancement of the field through evidence-based practice. [5.3]
- Reflect in a critical and informed manner on the role that research plays in the information professions, as well as in society more generally. [1.4]
- Effectively communicate the results of research to the profession and to the community at large [2.1]
- Design a detailed research plan including: assessment of existing literature, problem identification and selection, clear statement of research questions, choice of sampling method. [4.1]
- Carry out research using appropriate research methodologies and methods relevant to the identified research problem. [4.2]
- Recognize and respond in an appropriate manner to ethical issues relevant to the research process. [5.1]

Course Topics:

- Role of research in the information professions
- Evidence-based practice
- Design thinking and the applied research design process
- Critical evaluation of published research
- Valid and Reliable research
- Quantitative and qualitative research strategies
- Questionnaire design
- Observation methods
- Interviewing
- Content analysis
- Focus groups
- Data analysis

Prerequisites:

MLIS and Dual students: Co-requisites LIBR 508, LIBR 509

Format of the course:

Lectures, labs, guest speakers, in class exercises.

Required and Recommended Reading:

Required:

- Bryman, A. (2012). Social Research Methods, 4th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

  - Note that there is a new 5th edition available, but we will be using the 4th edition in class

this year again. The changes are not substantial, but include more material on e-research, big data, Skype interviewing, and several other interesting additions. If you prefer to have the newest version there will be no problem in matching them to chapters assigned in the schedule.

- Several copies of the 4th edition of the text, and several copies of earlier editions, are available on the bookshelf outside my office and intended for local use within the School. There is also a copy of the 4th edition available on reserve.
- If you wish to purchase a copy, it is cheapest to do so through an online source. No copies have been ordered through the bookstore, as they cannot supply the UK edition which is the preferred one.
- If you do order, please make sure it is either the 4th or 5th UK edition (not the Canadian edition).
- Since the edition has not changed, you might try obtaining a copy from someone in last term's class.

Recommended:
- Hernon, P., Dugan, R. and Matthews, J.R. (2014) Getting Started with Evaluation. Chicago, IL.: ALA Editions.

- Available online via UBC Library

Course Assignments:

Assignment Name	Due Date	Weight
Participation • In-class attendance, contribution to class discussion	Throughout term	10%
Identification/Specification of Research Problem • Individual reflection and application of research question framework	Week 3 – September 20	10%
Evidence-based research review • Individual reflection and application of EBP framework	Week 7 – October 25	25%
Research Design • Done with one partner (optional)	Week 14 – November 29	35%
Research Minis (in-class) -tentative a. Self-completion questionnaire b. Structured observation c. Content analysis d. Focus Group Interview • 5% each • Done in groups of 4 or 5	Throughout Term	20%

Course Schedule [week-by-week]:

Class	Date	Topic
1	September 6	Introduction to Research in Relation to Professional Practice • Bryman: 1-3
2	September 13	Design Thinking, Research Designs and the Research Process Reading and Using Research • Bryman: Chpts. 4, 5
3	September 20	Principles of Evidence Based Practice (EBP) The Role of Evaluation and Assessment in Information Organizations • Hernon: Chpts. 1, 2, 3
4	September 27	The Nature of Quantitative Research Asking Questions • Bryman: Chpts. 7, 11, 26 • Hernon: Chpt. 4
5	October 4	Asking Questions (questionnaires and interviews) • Bryman: Chpts. 9, 10, 20 • Hernon: Chpt. 5
6	October 11	Sampling: Choosing who to study • Bryman: Chpts. 8, 18 • Hernon: Chpt. 6
7	October 18	Participant Observation • Bryman: Chpt. 12 • Hernon: Chpt. 7
8	October 25	The Nature of Qualitative Research • Bryman: Chpt. 23 Content Analysis • Bryman: Chpt. 13 • Hernon: Chpt. 8
9	November 1	Discussion of Final Assignment Focus Groups

		• Bryman: Chpts. 17, 19, 21 (review Chpts. 20, 26, 27) • Hernon: Chpt. 9
10	November 8	Research Ethics • Bryman: Chp. 11
11	November 15	Analysis of Quantitative Data • Bryman: Chpt. 15
12	November 22	Analysis of Qualitative Data • Bryman: Chpt. 24
13	November 29	Publishing Research • Bryman: Chpt. 29 • Hernon: Chpt. 10

Attendance:

- Attendance at every class is required. If you know you are going to be absent be sure to inform me beforehand.
- Prolonged absence will require a note from a healthcare provider or an accommodation notice from Access and Diversity. Failure to provide this documentation could result in a lower course mark.
- Any penalties imposed for excessive absences are at the discretion of the instructor.

Evaluation: All assignments will be marked using the evaluative criteria given on the SLAIS web site.

For late assignments, a deduction of ½ letter grade will be made for each 3 day period in which an assignment is handed in past the due date. For example, if an assignment is handed in (posted to Canvas) on the Friday, Saturday, or Sunday after a Thursday due date, the mark given to the assignment will be reduced from, e.g., A- to B+. If handed in on the following Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday, a further ½ mark deduction will be made.

Please see sections below on A&D and religious accommodations for exceptions to the late deduction rule. Be sure to inform the instructor beforehand if either of these apply to you.

Access & Diversity: Access & Diversity works with the University to create an inclusive living and learning environment in which all students can thrive. The University accommodates students with

disabilities who have registered with the Access and Diversity unit: [https://students.ubc.ca/about-student-services/access-diversity]. You must register with the Disability Resource Centre to be granted special accommodations for any on-going conditions.

Religious Accommodation: The University accommodates students whose religious obligations conflict with attendance, submitting assignments, or completing scheduled tests and examinations. Please let your instructor know in advance, preferably in the first week of class, if you will require any accommodation on these grounds. Students who plan to be absent for family obligations, or other similar commitments, cannot assume they will be accommodated, and should discuss with the instructor before the course drop date. UBC policy on Religious Holidays: http://equity.ubc.ca/days-of-significance-calendar/

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism

The Faculty of Arts considers plagiarism to be the most serious academic offence that a student can commit. Regardless of whether or not it was committed intentionally, plagiarism has serious academic consequences and can result in expulsion from the university. Plagiarism involves the improper use of somebody else's words or ideas in one's work. The UBC policy on Academic Misconduct is available here: http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/Vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,959.

It is your responsibility to make sure you fully understand what plagiarism is. Many students who think they understand plagiarism do in fact commit what UBC calls "reckless plagiarism." The UBC Learning Commons has a resource page on how to avoid plagiarism, with policies on academic integrity and misconduct found here: [http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/resource-guides/avoid-plagiarism/

If after reading these materials you still are unsure about how to properly use sources in your work, please ask your instructor for clarification.