



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 hən̓q̓əmiñəm speaking Musqueam people.*

**iSchool Mission: Through innovative research, education and design, our mission is to enhance humanity's capacity to engage information in effective, creative and diverse ways.**

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

**Program:** MLIS

**Year:** 2019-20, Winter Term 2

**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

**E-mail address:** r.kopak@ubc.ca

**Learning Management Site:** [canvas.ubc.ca](https://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- Critically assess and employ the results of published and unpublished research studies.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: LIBR 508, LIBR 509 [for full-time students these are co-requisites]

### Format of the course:

Lectures, labs, guest speakers, in class exercises.

### Required and Recommended Reading:

#### Required:

- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social Research Methods*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
  - Note that this is the newer 5<sup>th</sup> edition. The changes from the 4<sup>th</sup> edition are not substantial, but include more material on e-research, big data, Skype interviewing, and several other interesting topics. If you have access to the 4<sup>th</sup> edition there will be no problem in mapping the chapters to the readings from the 5<sup>th</sup> edition that appear in the



weekly 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 are intended for local use within the School. There is also a copy of the 4th edition available on reserve at Koerner Library.
- 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 the bookstore 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). There is a US edition as well, but I am not as familiar with it, though it appears very similar to the UK edition (the examples may be different).

**Recommended:**

- Herson, 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	Graduate Competencies
Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-class attendance, contribution to class discussion</li> </ul>	Throughout term	5%	2.1, 5.1
Identification/Specification of Research Problem <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual reflection and application of research question framework</li> </ul>	Week 3 – January 23	10%	1.1, 1.4, 2.1, 4.1
Evidence-based research review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual reflection and application of EBP framework</li> </ul>	Week 6 – February 13	35%	1.4, 2.1, 4.1
Research Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Done with one partner (optional)</li> </ul>	Week 13 – April 9	35%	1.4, 2.1, 4.1, 4.2
Research Minis (in-class) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Done in groups of 4 or 5</li> </ul> a. Self-completion questionnaire (/4) b. Structured observation (/4) c. Content analysis (/4) d. Focus Group Interview (/3)	Throughout Term	15%	3.1, 4.1



Course Schedule [week-by-week]:

Class	Date	Topic
1	January 9	Introduction to Research in Relation to Professional Practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bryman: Chpts. 1-3</li></ul>
2	January 16	Design Thinking, Research Designs and the Research Process Reading and Using Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bryman: Chpts. 4, 5</li></ul>
3	January 23	Principles of Evidence Based Practice (EBP) The Role of Evaluation and Assessment in Information Organizations <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Heron: Chpts. 1, 2, 3</li></ul>
4	January 30	The Nature of Quantitative Research Asking Questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bryman: Chpts. 7, 11, 26</li><li>• Heron: Chpt. 4</li></ul>
5	February 6	Asking Questions (questionnaires and interviews) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bryman: Chpts. 9, 10, 20</li><li>• Heron: Chpt. 5</li></ul>
6	February 13	Sampling: Choosing who to study <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bryman: Chpts. 8, 18</li><li>• Heron: Chpt. 6</li></ul>
7	February 27	Structured Observation <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bryman: Chpt. 12</li><li>• Heron: Chpt. 7</li></ul>
8	March 5	The Nature of Qualitative Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bryman: Chpt. 17</li></ul> Content Analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bryman: Chpt. 13</li><li>• Heron: Chpt. 8</li></ul>



9	March 12	Ethnographic Research Focus Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bryman: Chpts. 19, 21 (review Chpts. 20, 26, 27)</li><li>• Hernon: Chpt. 9</li></ul>
10	March 19	Research Ethics <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bryman: Ch. 6</li></ul>
11	March 26	Analysis of Quantitative Data <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bryman: Ch. 15</li></ul>
12	April 2	Analysis of Qualitative Data <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bryman: Chpt. 24</li></ul>
13	April 9	Publishing Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bryman: Chpt. 28</li><li>• Hernon: Chpt. 10</li></ul>

**Attendance:**

- Attendance at every class is expected. If you know you are going to be absent be sure to inform me beforehand.
- Chronic absence from class will require a note from a healthcare provider or an accommodation notice from Accessibility Services. 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 [iSchool 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 a half letter grade, e.g., A- to B+. If handed in on the following Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday, a further ½ mark deduction will be made, e.g., B+ to B.

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



**Policies and Resources to Support Student Success:** UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious and cultural observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions. Details of the policies and how to access support are available here (<https://senate.ubc.ca/policies-resources-support-student-success>)

**Centre for Accessibility:** Centre for Accessibility 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 Centre for Accessibility unit: <https://students.ubc.ca/about-student-services/centre-for-accessibility>. 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.