

Research Methods

No Prerequisites

3 credit hours

Location: Weekly: Pangborn G023 Tuesday, 5:10 – 7:40 p.m.

Instructor contact information:

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Office location: Marist Hall Room 243

Office Hours: Wednesday 1:30-3:00
and by appointment

Course Description:

Covers the analysis and evaluation of research studies in library and information science and the application of analytical and evaluative techniques. Surveys research processes, including problem definition, design, sampling, measurement, data collection and analysis, and the applications of research findings to solving practical problems of libraries and information centers. Includes research design and proposal writing. No previous statistical or research background required. Instructional method: lecture complemented by in-class group projects, homework, exams, and a final project.

READING MATERIAL

Required Text:

Practical Research Methods for Librarians and Information Professionals. by Susan E. Beck. (2007) (4th ed.). Neil Schuman Publishers. ISBN: 155570591X.

Highly Recommended:

Statistical Methods for the Information Professional: A Practical, Painless Approach to Understanding, Using, and Interpreting Statistics. by Vaughan, L. (2001). Medford, NJ: Information Today. ISBN: 1573871109

Other materials: Additional readings may be assigned as the course progresses.

Worth consulting:

Asking questions. by Seymour Sudman & Norman M. Bradburn. (1982) Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Handbook of research methods: a guide for practitioners and students in the social sciences. by Natalie L. Sproull. 2nd ed. (1995) Scarecrow Press.

The practice of social research. by Earl Babbie. Wadsworth Publishing Company. The 11th edition was published in 2006. ISBN: 0495093254

Statistical Analysis: An Interdisciplinary Introduction to Univariate and Multivariate Methods. by Kachigan, Sam. (1986) Radius Press.

COURSE GOALS. This course will provide the student with:

- A solid introduction to the nature and paradigms of research as a type of scientific inquiry
- Ability to construct meaningful research questions and research hypotheses within library and information science
- Awareness and comprehension of a variety of qualitative and quantitative methodologies allowing for the selection of appropriate research design and data collection technique for any given research question
- Understanding of the process and iterative nature of research
- A basic understanding of descriptive and inferential statistics, and familiarity with a sampling of specific statistical methods for data analysis.

Professional Standards Addressed in this course:

American Library Association http://www.ala.org/ala/accreditationb/Draft_Core_Competencies_07_05.pdf

- Understands the nature of research, research methods and research findings within the library and information fields and has an awareness of current literature in these and related areas.
- Is familiar with the fundamentals of research, survey and data collection designs of current or potential value to library and information entities.
- Has basic knowledge of the concepts and processes related to the assessment and evaluation of the specifications, economic impact and efficacy of technology-based products and services.

Special Library Association <http://www.sla.org/content/learn/comp2003/index.cfm>

- Gathers the best available evidence to support decisions about the development of new service and products, the modification of current services or the elimination of services to continually improve the array of information services offered.
- Conducts market research of the information behaviors and problems of current and potential client groups to identify concepts for new or enhanced information solutions for these groups. Transforms these concepts into customized information products and services.
- Researches, analyzes and synthesizes information into accurate answers or actionable information for clients, and ensures that clients have the tools or capabilities to immediately apply these.
- Develops and applies appropriate metrics to continually measure the quality and value of information offerings, and to take appropriate action to ensure each offering's relevancy within the portfolio.
- Employs evidence-based management to demonstrate the value of and continually improve information sources and services.
- Assesses, selects and applies current and emerging information tools and creates information access and delivery solutions

Medical Library Association <http://www.mlanet.org/education/platform/skills.html#6>

"In order to conduct and interpret research, the health sciences librarian is called upon to apply knowledge, skills, and understanding of

- theoretical bases of health sciences information, education, and clinical practice;
- information structure, transfer, and processing;
- analysis, evaluation, and application of research results;
- methods for evaluation of system effectiveness and efficiency;
- statistical theory; and
- research methodologies.

Course Requirements

1.) Two Quizzes (each worth 5% of grade) and a final exam (worth 10% of grade)

2.) Partial term project (worth 10% of grade)

Write a research proposal OR literature review on a topic relevant to research methods in LIS
Preliminary document: 4 pages.

3.) Homework assignments (worth 40% of grade)

Critique a published research paper

Development of a survey instrument

Applications of qualitative method

Applications and use of a quantitative method

4.) Full term project (worth 20% of grade)

5.) Class participation (every week) (worth 10% of grade)

EXPECTATIONS AND POLICIES

Academic honesty:

Academic honesty is expected of all CUA students. Faculty are required to initiate the imposition of sanctions when they find violations of academic honesty, such as plagiarism, improper use of a student's own work, cheating, and fabrication.

The following sanctions are presented in the University procedures related to Student Academic Dishonesty (from <http://policies.cua.edu/academicundergrad/integrityprocedures.cfm>): "The presumed sanction for undergraduate students for academic dishonesty will be failure for the course. There may be circumstances, however, where, perhaps because of an undergraduate student's past record, a more serious sanction, such as suspension or expulsion, would be appropriate. In the context of graduate studies, the expectations for academic honesty are greater, and therefore the presumed sanction for dishonesty is likely to be more severe, e.g., expulsion. ...In the more unusual case, mitigating circumstances may exist that would warrant a lesser sanction than the presumed sanction."

Please review the complete texts of the University policy and procedures regarding Student Academic Dishonesty, including requirements for appeals, at <http://policies.cua.edu/academicundergrad/integrity.cfm> and <http://policies.cua.edu/academicundergrad/integrity.cfm>.

Other Policies or Expectations.

University resources.

- Know your NT (CUA network) account information and be able to log on to the CUA network. Contact the Center for Planning and Information Technology at 202/ 319-4357 for assistance.
- Know how to use the CUA library resources, including the ALADIN online system. Visit the CUAT library homepage at <http://libraries.cua.edu> for assistance.

Email.

- Provide a meaningful subject tag in all your emails about this class.
- Begin each subject line with *lsc553*, or risk a delayed response or potentially no response.
- I will make every effort to get back to you within 2 days of receiving your email.

Assignments.

- Place your name on the first page of each assignment.
- Submitted work must have a professional appearance and not be handwritten.
- Use staples to securely fasten together any multi-page assignments.
- Save your work frequently and in multiple places.
- If you encounter a problem with your home computer you are expected to use one of the many other computers in our environment to submit your work on time. For example, the numerous computers on campus and the surround area's public libraries.

Participation & Conduct:

- *Attendance is mandatory.* Attendance is required, in keeping with university policy. Students may miss up to 3 classes without a penalty. Your participation grade will drop by 10 points for every absence after 3 missed classes.
- *Late work.* The instructor will not accept late work except by prior arrangement. If accepted, it will be graded at the end of the term.
- *Makeup work.* If a student has a legitimate reason, such as a family emergency, the instructor might allow a student to do makeup work. The amount and nature of the work is up to the instructor's discretion. It will be graded at term's end.
- *Behave respectfully.* Students are expected to behave respectfully in our class's online site. Participation grades will reflect a student's maturity level and professionalism, and whether the student actively participates in class discussions.

- *Arrive on time.* Chronic lateness can negatively affect class participation grades.
- *No emailing or surfing the web during class.* You are expected to give your full attention to the class. If you would rather be online, then you will be asked to leave.
- *No phone calls during class.* Turn off or silence cell phones and pagers. Students leaving the room for calls are not allowed to return to that class session.
- *No grade discussions in class.* Instructor will not discuss grades in class. First consider why the instructor deducted points. If you still disagree, explain your disagreement in an e-mail to the instructor.

Syllabus:

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus if circumstances warrant such change. All changes will be provided to students via BlackBoard

Campus Resources for student support:

CUA Center for Academic Success
<http://success.cua.edu>

CUA Counseling Center
<http://counseling.cua.edu/services/>

Mullen Library
<http://libraries.cua.edu/welcome.html>

Career services resources
<http://slis.cua.edu/people/career.cfm>

Accommodations for students with disabilities:

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss specific needs. Please contact me as soon as possible, preferably within the first week of class. Also, please contact Disability Support Services (at 202 319-5211, room 207 Pryzbyla Center) to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. To read about the services and policies, please visit the website: <http://disabilitysupport.cua.edu>.

Assessment

Grades for this course will be based upon the following:

Homework assignments (4 graded @ 100 points each)	40%
Partial term project (100 points)	10%
Term project: (200 points)	20%
Quizzes: (2 @ 50 points each)	10%
Final Exam (100 points)	10%
Participation in class (100 points)	10%
TOTAL (1000 points)	100%

NOTE: Late work will not be accepted with the exception of those cases noted above in the “Participation & conduct”.

Course Schedule - This calendar is subject to change dependent on class needs.

Week	Class Dates	Topic	Readings	Assignment Due
1	Jan 13	Introduction	Chapter 1	
2	No Class Jan 20	No Class		
2	Jan 27	Developing a research study	Chapter 2	
3	Feb 3	Selecting a research method	Chapter 3	Assignment #1 critique
4	Feb 10	Survey research	Chapter 4 & selections from Sudman and Bradburn	
5	Feb 17	Data collection techniques	Chapter 5	
6	Feb 24	QUIZ #1 Data collection tech (cont.)	Chapter 5	Assignment #2 Survey
7	No Class March 3	NO CLASS Spring Break		
8	March 10	Writing Research papers & Writing research proposals	Chapter 10 & 11	Partial Term Project
9	March 17	Experimental research	Chapter 6	

10	March 24	Data analysis	Chapter 9	
11	March 31	Data analysis (cont.)		
12	April 7	Qualitative research	Chapter 7	Assignment #3 Quantitative
13	April 14	Historical research	Chapter 8	
14	April 21	QUIZ #2 & Data analysis (cont.)		Assignment #4 Qualitative
15	April 28	Summary & Presentations of term projects		Full term projects due
16	May 5	FINAL EXAM		