Introduction to Research Methods in Information Studies  
(799) Syllabus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructor:</th>
<th>Dr. Jin Zhang, Professor</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office Location:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office Hours:</td>
<td>By Appointment</td>
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1. DESCRIPTION:

This course introduces students to basic research concepts, methods, and evaluation in library and information science, and applications of research in the information professions.

2. CREDITS:

It is a required/core course with 3 credits.
According to the SOIS policy, the minimum grade requirement for a core course like 591 is B (It does not include B-)

3. PREREQUISITES:

Grad st; InfoSt(L&I Sci) 501(P); 511(P); 571(P), or cons instr.
Basic computer literacy as outlined in the SOIS policy is required.
4. OBJECTIVES AND COMPETENCIES:

4.1. Objectives

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Critique research of theory and practice in library and information science (Final project)
2. Apply data analysis techniques to research problems in library and information science research (Projects 2 and 4)
3. Evaluate the merits of published research in library and information science (Final project)
4. Design and conduct a research project (Final project)
5. Evaluate services in libraries or information professional centers (Project 2)
6. Assess diversity and equality issues related to research topics, research design, and interpretation of research findings in library and information science (Projects 1, 2, 3, 4, and final project as well)
7. Use a statistical tool to conduct basic data analysis (Project 4)
8. Employ an online survey tool to conduct a survey study (Project 2)

4.2 COMPETENCIES ADDRESSED:

1. The techniques used to analyze complex problems and create appropriate solutions.
2. The methods of assessing and evaluating the specifications, efficacy, and cost efficiency of technology-based products and services.
3. The fundamentals of quantitative and qualitative research methods.
4. The principles and methods used to assess the actual and potential value of new research.
5. WORKLOAD:

In order to achieve the learning objectives of this course, and in accordance with the UWM campus credit hour policy, the average student should expect to devote a minimum of 144 hours over the course of the semester to attend lectures and complete all the required readings and assignments.

6. METHOD:

Lecture/Discussion

7. TEXTS:


All other reading materials are listed in the D2L.

8. SOFTWARE:

Required software packages:


Students must have the EXCEL 2010 version installed in their computers. It will be used in weekly projects or final project.


*Qualtrics* is an online tool for creation of a survey. It is used to create a survey in a weekly project.
[3] Other software packages like Microsoft *WORD* for weekly projects and final project, and *POWERPOINT* for the final project presentation will also be used.

9. **COURSE SCHEDULE:**

**Detailed weekly course schedule**

**Week 1. Research and Librarianship**
Reading: Chapter 1 of *Basic Research Methods for Librarians*

**Week 2. Developing the research study**
Reading: Chapter 2 of *Basic Research Methods for Librarians*

**Week 3. Selecting the research method**
Reading: Chapter 3 of *Basic Research Methods for Librarians*

**Week 4. Survey and sampling**
Reading: Chapter 4 of *Basic Research Methods for Librarians*

**Week 5. Data collection techniques**
Reading: Chapter 5 of *Basic Research Methods for Librarians*

*Project 1: Survey form design for investigation of an OPAC system*

**Week 6. Experimental research**
Reading: Chapter 6 of *Basic Research Methods for Librarians*

*Project 2: Experimental study design on thesaurus retrieval effectiveness*

**Week 7. Qualitative research methods**
Reading: Chapter 7 of *Basic Research Methods for Librarians*

*Project 3: Investigation of users’ reading behavior by using the coding method*

**Week 8. Historical research**
Reading: Chapter 8 of *Basic Research Methods for Librarians*

**Week 9. Library service evaluations**
Reading: See the D2L reading folder
Week 10. Analysis data I: Data Types and Graphic Display
   Reading: Chapter 9 of Basic Research Methods for Librarians
   Chapters 2 - 3 of Statistical Methods for the Information Professional

Week 11. Analysis data II: Descriptive Statistics
   Reading: Chapter 4 of Statistical Methods for the Information Professional

Week 12. Analysis data III: Inferential Statistics
   Reading: Chapter 5 of Statistical Methods for the Information Professional

Project 4: Inferential statistics analysis by using the t-test

Week 13. Writing the research proposal
   Reading: Chapter 10 of Basic Research Methods for Librarians

Week 14. Writing the research report
   Reading: Chapter 11 of Basic Research Methods for Librarians

Week 15. Final Project Presentation and Discussion
   Final projects are presented and discussed by students in the D2L forum

Note: Each week may include other readings and these weekly readings are listed in the D2L

(Note: The weekly schedule and projects are subject to change)

10. POLICY FOR ASSIGNMENTS AND FINAL PROJECT

   Written assignments are due on the specified dates. Without a legitimate reason, grades will be reduced for late papers. If a weekly assignment has 15 points, the reduction for a submission of one week late is 2 points, the reduction for a
submission of two weeks late is 4 points, the reduction for a submission of three weeks late is 6 points, etc.

If a submission of a weekly project is 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, or 7 days late, it is considered as a submission of a week late.

If the final project, without a legitimate reason, is submitted after the deadline, all points (25) are reduced.

If the final project presentation, without a legitimate reason, is submitted one day late, 1 point is reduced; two days late, 2 points are reduced; three days late, 3 points are reduced.

Written assignments are to be typed, preferably word-processed. Papers are to be one and half-spaced using a 12-point font with 1 to 1.25 inch margins and 1.5 line spacing. You may not resubmit work that has already been used in fulfillment of the requirement of this or any other course. Rules of academic conduct require that you not use the work of others without clearly indicating it as such. Academic misconduct may result in a lowered grade, no credit for a given assignment, or removal from the course.

It is expected students will consult and appropriately cite the research and professional literature where merited. Grades will also be reduced for papers that include irrelevant content to “fill up space” to meet the length specifications for a paper. Please rely on a commonly used style manual for your submissions (e.g. Turabian, Chicago, APA, MLA, But I prefer APA). These are available in the UWM Bookstore or may be purchased through online book vendors. If you are uncertain about how to cite electronic sources, consult one of the many electronic guides to citing electronic sources available on the net. Minimal reference content includes: author (if known), date (if given), title, URL, and date accessed.

11. WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS/PROJECTS

Project 1: Survey form design for investigation of an OPAC system.

Project 2: Experimental study design on thesaurus retrieval effectiveness

Project 3: Investigation of users’ reading behavior by using the coding method

Project 4: Inferential statistics analysis by using the t-test
12. **FINAL PROJECT REQUIREMENTS:**

**Final project paper**

Identify a research problem in information studies and develop an action-oriented research proposal.

13. **CLASS PARTICIPATION**

Class participation includes:

A. Answer the discussion questions prepared by the instructor. The instructor prepares 2-3 discussion questions for students each week and these questions help students understand and digest concepts and theories introduced. Students are supposed to answer these questions;

B. Make comments on the posts from others; and

C. Make comments on final paper presentations in the last week.

Students must answer at least 2 discussion questions prepared by the instructor each week to meet the minimum class participation requirement, and please DON’T submit more than 5 posts in a regular week. During the last student final project presentation week, students have to make at least 2 comments on presentations and can submit more than 5 posts. Be aware that if students don’t meet the minimum class participation requirement, there is a penalty. It is students’ responsibility to make sure that the minimum class participation requirement is met.

**Online weekly participation penalty point deduction table:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The number of the weeks that the online discussion requirement is not met</th>
<th>Point reduction</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 and over</td>
<td>10</td>
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14. EVALUATION

Student’s final grade in this class is based on assignments, final project, and online participation. The detailed information is shown in the following table.

Summary of weekly assignment points, final project points, and online participation points:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignments (Weekly projects)</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project 1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project 2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project 3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project 4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Project</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments on final project presentations</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Report</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly online discussion</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total points</td>
<td>100</td>
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Credit points and grade conversion table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>96-100</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>74-76.99</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Minimum Score</td>
<td>Maximum Score</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-95.99</td>
<td>70-73.99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-90.99</td>
<td>67-69.99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-86.99</td>
<td>64-66.99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-83.99</td>
<td>60-63.99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79.99</td>
<td>Below 60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74-76.99</td>
<td>Below 60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>73-76.99</td>
<td>Below 60</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>70-73.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>67-69.99</td>
<td>Below 60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 60</td>
<td>Below 60</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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*Note: If you are pursuing an MLIS degree, you need to earn at least a B to pass a required course.*

Students with special test and note-taking needs should contact the instructor as early as possible for accommodations.

15. **UWM AND SOIS ACADEMIC POLICIES**

The following links contain university policies affecting all SOIS students. Many of the links below may be accessed through a PDF-document maintained by the Secretary of the University: [http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/SyllabusLinks.pdf](http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/SyllabusLinks.pdf). Undergraduates may also find the Panther Planner and Undergraduate Student Handbook useful ([http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/OSL/DOS/Handbook2005-06.pdf](http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/OSL/DOS/Handbook2005-06.pdf)). For graduate students, there are additional guidelines from the Graduate School ([http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/Grad_Sch/StudentInfo/](http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/Grad_Sch/StudentInfo/)), including those found in the Graduate Student and Faculty Handbook: [http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/Grad_Sch/Publications/Handbook/](http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/Grad_Sch/Publications/Handbook/).

**Students with disabilities.**

If you will need accommodations in order to meet any of the requirements of a course, please contact the instructor as soon as possible. Students with disabilities are responsible to communicate directly with the instructor to ensure special accommodation in a timely manner. There is comprehensive coverage of issues related to disabilities at the Student Accessibility Center ([http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/DSAD/SAC/MainOffice.html](http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/DSAD/SAC/MainOffice.html)), important components of which are expressed here: [http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/DSAD/SAC/SACltr.pdf](http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/DSAD/SAC/SACltr.pdf).

**Religious observances.**

Students’ sincerely held religious beliefs must be reasonably accommodated with respect to all examinations and other academic requirements, according to the following policy: [http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin_policies/S1.5.htm](http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin_policies/S1.5.htm). Please notify your instructor within the first three weeks of the Fall or Spring Term (first week
of shorter-term or Summer courses) of any specific days or dates on which you request relief from an examination or academic requirement for religious observances. Students called to active military duty. UWM has several policies that accommodate students who must temporarily lay aside their educational pursuits when called to active duty in the military (see http://www3.uwm.edu/des/web/registration/militarycallup.cfm), including provisions for refunds, readmission, grading, and other situations.

**Incompletes.**

A notation of “incomplete” may be given in lieu of a final grade to a student who has carried a subject successfully until the end of a semester but who, because of illness or other unusual and substantial cause beyond the student’s control, has been unable to take or complete the final examination or some limited amount of other term work. An incomplete is not given unless the student proves to the instructor that s/he was prevented from completing course requirements for just cause as indicated above (http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin_policies/S31.pdf).

**Discriminatory conduct (such as sexual harassment).**

UWM and SOIS are committed to building and maintaining a campus environment that recognizes the inherent worth and dignity of every person, fosters tolerance, sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect, and encourages the members of its community to strive to reach their full potential. The UWM policy statement (http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin_policies/S47.pdf) summarizes and defines situations that constitute discriminatory conduct. If you have questions, please contact an appropriate SOIS administrator.

**Academic misconduct.**

Cheating on exams and plagiarism are violations of the academic honor code and carry severe sanctions, ranging from a failing grade for a course or assignment to expulsion from the University. See the following document (http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/OSL/DOS/conduct.html) or contact the SOIS Investigating Officer (currently the Associate Dean) for more information.

**Complaints.**

Students may direct complaints to the SOIS Dean or Associate Dean. If the complaint allegedly violates a specific university policy, it may be directed to the appropriate university office responsible for enforcing the policy.

**Grade appeal procedures.**

A student may appeal a grade on the grounds that it is based on a capricious or arbitrary decision of the course instructor. Such an appeal shall follow SOIS appeals procedures or, in the case of a graduate student, the Graduate School. These procedures are
available in writing from the respective department chairperson or the Academic Dean of the College/School (http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin_policies/S28.htm).

**Examinations, Finals.**

The Secretary of the University is authorized to prepare the final examination schedule. The time of the final examination for an individual or a class may be changed only with the prior approval of the dean or director of the respective college/school. The change will involve a postponement to a later date. For individuals with exam conflicts, a separate week at the very end of the exam week will be reserved to take one of the conflicting exams (http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad+admin_policies/S22.htm).