Introduction to Library Research

Instructor

Melissa Mallon

Virtual (via chat or Skype) & In-Person Office Hours:
Monday 9:00-10:00 am & **Tuesday 2:00-3:00 pm** or by appointment.

Course Description & Objectives

This course focuses on each step in the research process, with an emphasis on identifying appropriate sources and critically analyzing information in order to apply it to a research topic. Assignments will take students through the steps of preparing a research paper or project including refining a topic, selecting a variety of appropriate sources, and organizing information. The concepts taught in Introduction to Research are meant to be transferable and used across disciplines. In order to more thoroughly practice the concepts taught in class, students are encouraged to use topics from research papers in their other classes for assignments in Introduction to Research.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Select relevant and appropriate information sources for a topic.

- Construct an effective search strategy in order to find information on a topic.

- Synthesize and analyze information from different sources in order to create an outline for a research project.

- Identify the parts of a citation and write a bibliography in a recognized citation style.

My Teaching Philosophy

I view learning as a connected process. Not only are we all learning individually, everyday, we're also learning from one another. Research is very much the same - you can do a lot of the work on your own, but never forget how much you can learn from others. Communication and engagement is very important in learning, especially in online courses, so I expect you to stay involved in the course. There will be opportunities for engaging with your classmates, and I expect you to take advantage of these chances to learn about research from your peers' perspectives. I want this course to be as useful to you as possible, so please stay in contact and let me know if you have questions or suggestions about the course content. I'm here to help you any way I can!

Policies

1. When it's due, it's due. Since this is only an 8-wk course, we're on a tight schedule. Let me know right away if there are extenuating circumstances, or you feel yourself falling behind.

2. Participation is required. You'll gain the most by collaborating and engaging in discussions about the research process with your classmates.

3. Ask questions! If there is something you don't understand, don't agree with, or would like to explore more thoroughly, let's talk!

Academic Integrity

Students are responsible for knowing and following the Student Code of Conduct and the Student Academic Honesty policy.

Special Needs

If you have a physical, psychiatric/emotional, or learning disability that may impact on your ability to carry out assigned course work, I encourage you to contact the Office of Disability Services (DS). DS will review your concerns and determine, with you, what academic accommodations are necessary and appropriate for you. All information and documentation of your disability is confidential and will not be released by DS without your written permission.

Time Commitment

Please plan to spend about one hour per week reading the material and viewing videos or any instructional materials. Discussion board posts and assignments should take an additional hour per week. This will be more or less, depending on your experience level doing research activities. Please let me know as soon as possible if you are having difficulty keeping up with the course activities.

Grading Scale

Assignment	Points Possible
Participation	20
Module 1	15
Module 2	15
Module 3	15
Module 4	15
Final Project	25
TOTAL POINTS	**100**

90-100% = A

80-89% = B

70-79% = C

60-69% = D

59% and below = F

Course Schedule (subject to changes)

Module 1 (weeks 1-2) : Getting Started on Research

- The research process

- Topic development & background information

- Concept mapping

Assignment: Create a concept map for your topic.

Module 2 (weeks 3-4) : Finding Quality Sources

- Peer review

- Discipline-specific sources

- Academic search tools (SmartSearch, article databases, books)

Assignment: Find at least 3 scholarly articles and 1 book related to your topic.

Module 3 (weeks 5-6) : Critical Thinking & Ethics in Research

- Evaluating sources

- Avoiding plagiarism

- Citing sources

Assignment: Compile an annotated bibliography for the sources you found in module 2.

Module 4 (weeks 7-8) : Putting It All Together

- Synthesizing information

- Outlining

Assignment: Construct an outline for your topic and work on the final project.

Assignment Overviews

The modules will become available on Blackboard as we proceed throughout the course. Details on all assignments will be in Blackboard, either in the corresponding module folder or in its own section. Each module builds upon the previous one, culminating in a final project that pulls it all together.

Participation - Class participation will be graded throughout the 8 weeks via responses in the discussion forum and interaction with classmates (to earn full participation points, you'll need to not only post your own reflections but comment on others' experiences as well). I'll look for thoughtful responses: quality over quantity! **(20 points)**

Module 1 - Create a concept map for your topic. Your map should include both potential search terms and synonyms. **(15 points)**

Module 2 - Find four sources (3 articles and 1 book) for your topic using the research tools we discuss. You will complete a worksheet that explains where you found your sources. **(15 points)**

Module 3 - An annotated bibliography is a list of sources and a brief summary/explanation of each source. For your annotated bibliography, format the sources you find in module 2 in a proper citation style (use either MLA or APA; please indicate which style you are using). Also include 2-3 sentences about the quality of the source and why you feel it fits your topic. **(15 points)**

Module 4 - Create an outline for a potential research paper for your topic (**you won't actually write a paper!**). The outline will be based on the sources you found and evaluated in modules 2 and 3. Your outline will help organize your thoughts for your final project that reflects on how your sources help support your topic. **(15 points)**

Final Project - Your final project is a creative chance to put together everything you've done in this course. It should incorporate everything you learned in the module assignments and in the discussion forum. Think of this as a final reflection on the research process - let your fellow students and I know what you've learned this semester and how the strategies you employed affected your research and will in the future. The way you present this information is up to you. You can create a video, a podcast, a Prezi or PowerPoint presentation, or even a graphic novel (more information is in Blackboard). The rubric in Blackboard will provide more information on criteria for the project and how you will be graded. **(25 points)**

Extra Credit - There may be extra credit awarded throughout the course. Keep an eye out on the Blackboard announcements for extra credit opportunities.