LSCI 121: Library Research Skills
Syllabus, Spring 2017

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

"Library Research Skills is a course focusing on both the concepts and skills needed to conduct library research with an emphasis on electronic information sources. The purpose of the course is to provide individuals with a basic understanding of the library research process and the skills by which they can successfully find information for research, presentations, and other class assignments" (from the **course catalog**).

The general work of the course will be about exploring the scholarly conversation and contributing to the dialogue with your own research and writing. We will also ask broad questions about information: what it is, why it is important, and how we can use information to build knowledge. The class is structured to be a student-centered, inquiry-based learning community. In terms of assigned work, there will be weekly discussions on D2L, 3 worksheets, and 2 self-evaluations throughout the term (more on this below). The final project for the course will be a literature review in which you synthesize and cite the scholarly conversation around a topic of your choice.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Understand and become comfortable with the research process
- Think critically about information sources and the broad scholarly conversation
- Contribute to the scholarly dialogue through your own research and writing.
- For a full list of learning outcomes, see page 8.

D2L

This is a fully online course with no regular meeting time. You will access class materials and assignments on your own time. You can log in to D2L at https://ecat.montana.edu/. In order to access the D2L component of this course, you need to know your NetID and

password. For help, see the password help page at http://password.montana.edu/. For D2L help, you can call the main support telephone line at 406-994-3255 or email D2L Help at ecat@montana.edu. If you need any assistance during the course that D2L support cannot provide, please let me know.

REQUIRED TEXTS

There is no required text to purchase. Our course readings will be provided through the syllabus, and are subject to change as the semester progresses.

OFFICE HOURS

I am available to meet by appointment—either in-person, by phone, or via Google Hangouts or WebEx. I'm always happy to meet with you to discuss the course or just to chat. This is the most effective way for me to give you individual attention and get to know you better. I encourage you to meet with me as early in the semester as possible, especially if you have any particular questions or concerns. I'm also always available by email.

ASSIGNMENTS

Weekly discussion posts and replies: The class will have weekly online discussions, during which we'll share ideas, perspectives, and experiences relating to the topics each week. By connecting with a small community of classmates via your weekly discussion groups, I hope you'll be able to build rapport and feel comfortable voicing your opinions.

Worksheets: There will be three worksheets throughout the semester. The worksheets aim to help you put into practice the concepts you learn from our readings.

Self Evaluations: You'll complete a midterm and final self-evaluation in which you'll reflect on your experience in the class. Additional details below.

Final Project: Your final project will be a short literature review that summarizes and synthesizes the scholarly conversation around your topic of choice. I'll provide more details on the final project as the semester progresses.

WEEKLY THEMES

Week 1. January 11-17	Introductions, set learning goals, review the syllabus. Discussion posts due by 11:59pm on Sunday, January 15 Replies due by 11:59 on Tuesday, January 17
Week 2. January 18-24	The information landscape/data deluge. Discussion posts due by 11:59pm on Sunday, January 22 Replies due by 11:59 on Tuesday, January 24
Week 3. January 25-31	Types of resources Discussion posts due after spring break by 11:59pm on Sunday, January 29 Replies due by 11:59 on Tuesday, January 31
Week 4. February 1-7	Developing a research topic No discussion post this week. Worksheet 1: Narrowing your research question for the final project. Due by 11:59pm on Tuesday, February 7
Week 5. February 8-14	Research with Google Scholar and citation managers Discussion posts due by 11:59pm on Sunday, February 12 Replies due by 11:59 on Tuesday, February 14
Week 6. February 15-21	Refining your search strategy, searching Library databases Discussion posts due by 11:59pm on Monday, January 20 Replies due by 11:59 on Tuesday, February 21
Week 7. February 22-28	Evaluating information sources Discussion posts due by 11:59pm on Sunday, February 226 Replies due by 11:59 on Tuesday, February 28 Worksheet 2: Identifying and evaluating sources for your research question. Due by 11:59pm on Monday, February 28

Week 8. March 1-7	Midterm self-evaluation. Due by 11:59pm on Tuesday, March 7
Week 9. March 8-10	Reading academic articles Discussion posts due after spring break by 11:59pm on Sunday, March 19 Replies due by 11:59 on Tuesday, March 21
Week 10. March 11-19	Spring break
Week 11. March 20-28	Digital dualism Worksheet 3 assigned (due at the end of week 12—11:59pm on Tuesday, April 4) Discussion posts due by 11:59pm on Sunday, March 26 Replies due by 11:59 on Tuesday, March 28
Week 12. March 29-April 4	Synthesizing resources for your literature review Discussion posts due by 11:59pm on Sunday, April 2 Replies due by 11:59 on Tuesday, April 4 Worksheet 3: Literature review synthesis matrix and bibliography. Due by 11:59pm on Tuesday, April 4
Week 13. April 5-11	Copyright Final project assigned (due at the end of week 15—by 11:59pm on Tuesday, April 25) Discussion posts due by 11:59pm on Sunday, April 9 Replies due by 11:59 on Tuesday, April 11
Week 14. April 12-18	Ethics and privacy Discussion posts due by 11:59pm on Sunday, April 16 Replies due by 11:59 on Tuesday, April 18
Week 15. April 19-25	Final Project: Literature review. Due by 11:59pm on April 25

Final week. April 26-May 2	Final self-evaluation. Due by 11:59pm on May 2

GRADING

For this class, you will make a recommendation to me for your final grade (A, B, or C, with lower grades at my discretion), based on the completion of certain conditions outlined below. While I am responsible for assigning final course grades, you will evaluate your own work throughout the semester. Your self-evaluations are important components of my calculations for final course grades. Therefore, I encourage you to be thoughtful, constructively critical, and detailed in all of your self-evaluations.

I ask each student to meet briefly with me in January or February to define personal learning goals that will serve as general guides through the semester.

At the middle of the term, you will write a midterm self-evaluation that reflects on your work and contributions throughout the course. You will complete a similar self-evaluation at the end of the term. The self-evaluations are intended to serve as helpful reflective exercises in which you document your process and overall progress. Your self-evaluations are key to informing my evaluation of your work. Your self-evaluations will also inform adjustments to the course as we progress together.

Throughout the course I will not be putting letter or number grades on individual assignments. I will add questions and comments that engage with your work. You will be reflecting carefully on your own work and engaging thoughtfully with the work of your peers. The intention here is to create a more open and organic learning experience rather than a prescriptive grade-driven experience. If this process causes more anxiety than it alleviates, contact me at any point to talk about your performance in the course to date. If you are worried about your grade, the best approach is to actively join the discussions, do the reading, and complete the projects with sincere interest. You should consider this course a "busy-work-free zone." If an assignment does not feel productive, please talk with me—we'll work together to modify the assignment to fit your needs.

GRADE CONDITIONS
An "A" Grade
- Miss a maximum of one discussion post and 2 replies
- Participate with good faith and generosity in all discussions

- Complete all three worksheets on time, demonstrating excellent critical engagement with each topic.
- Complete the midterm and final self-evaluation with sincere self-reflection and reflecting an excellent grasp of course readings and discussions
- Complete a final project that: (1) demonstrates excellent critical engagement with class discussions, readings, and assignments; (2) shows that you've mastered new research skills
- Meet with me at least once over the course of the semester to discuss your performance in the class, areas of improvement, and any questions you may have

A "B" Grade
- Miss a maximum of two discussion posts and 4 replies
- Participate with good faith and generosity in all discussions
- Complete all three worksheets and submit at least two of them on time, demonstrating good critical engagement with the topic.
- Complete the midterm and final self-evaluation with sincere self-reflection and reflecting a good grasp of course readings and discussions
- Complete a final project that: (1) demonstrates good critical engagement with class discussions, readings, and assignments; (2) shows that you have a solid understanding of new research skills

A "C" Grade
- Miss a maximum of three discussion posts and 6 replies
- Participate with good faith and generosity in most discussions
- Complete all three worksheets, demonstrating moderate critical engagement with the topic
- Complete the midterm and final self-evaluation with some amount of self-reflection and reflecting a moderate grasp of course readings and discussions.
- Complete a final project that: (1) demonstrates some critical engagement with class discussions, readings, and assignments; (2) shows that you are on the path to learning new research skills

Midterm Self-evaluation
Due: Submitted through D2L by 11:59pm on Tuesday, March 7

1. Evaluate your participation in the class discussion. What aspects of your posts are the strongest? What could have used more work? Did you reply to classmates' posts with sincerity and thoughtfulness? How has your thinking evolved from one week to the next?

2. Evaluate your coursework so far (readings, worksheets, discussion posts, replies to classmates). Have you completed all of the readings and assignments on time? How well do you think you engaged with the class content? How much effort have you put into course work?

3. What letter grade would you give yourself for the first half of this course and why? Consider preparedness, the strength of your written work, your participation in discussion, and your goals for the semester.

4. How is this course meeting your personal learning goals?

5. Do you have any questions for me at this point? About the topics of the class? About the structure of the class? About your work/progress this semester?

Final Self-evaluation
Due: Submitted through D2L by 11:59pm on Tuesday, May 2.

Note: The questions here are less prescriptive than on the midterm self-evaluation, in order to give you the opportunity to reflect on the course in a way that feels appropriate to you.

1. Write a short evaluation of your performance in this class (250-500 words), addressing the following sorts of questions: Did you contribute to the discussion on D2L by writing entries and responding to your classmates? Did you do all of the required readings and worksheets? How would you characterize your overall effort, interest, and commitment to the class? Did your engagement increase or decrease as the semester went along? How did you meet your goals for the course?

2. What letter grade would you give yourself for the semester and why? Consider preparedness for class, the strength of your written work and other assignments, and your participation in discussions.

LATE WORK POLICY

Late work will be accepted on a case-by-case basis. Please contact me if you're having trouble finishing a discussion post or assignment on time, and we can discuss options.

DISABILITY

I aim to make this class accessible to all. To request accommodation for a disability, please contact me or MSU Disability Services.

UNIVERSITY CONDUCT POLICIES

This course will adhere to the [MSU Conduct Guidelines](#).

CREDIT

This syllabus is adapted from those of [Amy Bekkerman](#), [Jesse Stommel](#), and [Scott W. H. Young](#).

FULL LIST OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

Getting Started with Research and Inquiry:
- Determine an appropriate scope of investigation and narrow/broaden topic and inquiry questions based on personal interest, findings, assignment details and timeline.
- Recognize options for help and display willingness to seek help from appropriate experts.
- Gather information on a topic from multiple sources.
- Understand that research is an open-ended process.

Exploring Strategically:
- Design and refine needs and basic search strategies as necessary, based on search results.
- Recognize and assess the value of distinctness of information resources (e.g., website resources, online journals, print material).
- Match information needs to appropriate search strategies and tools.
- Translate inquiry questions into different types of search language (e.g., natural language, keywords, controlled vocabulary) that are effective for searching.
- Use different types of search language (e.g., controlled vocabulary, keywords, natural language) appropriately.
- Apply a range of effective strategies to find related sources.
- Utilize divergent (e.g., brainstorming) and convergent (e.g., selecting the best source) thinking appropriately when searching.
- Recognize and explain issues of access or lack of access to information sources.
- Persist in information searches despite challenges and sometimes conflicting information.

Evaluating Authority and Value:
- Use research tools and indicators of authority to critically evaluate information, assessing the reliability, validity, accuracy, authority, timeliness, impact and point of view or bias of information sources.
- Trace citations and links back to original sources.
- Acknowledge biases that may privilege some sources of authority over others.

Contributing to the Scholarly Conversation:
- Recognize that as new academics you are becoming contributors to the ongoing scholarly conversation.
- Give credit to the original ideas of others through proper attribution and citation.
- Accurately summarize the content of a resource.
- Organize information in meaningful ways, appropriate to audience and context.
- Demonstrate the ability to find resources and utilize services both virtually and face-to-face via the MSU Library or another library.