

LSCI 121: Library Research Skills Fall 2016 Syllabus

Welcome to LSCI 121 – Library Research Skills!

It is very important that you read the syllabus carefully and understand all of the information provided. If you have any questions, please contact me right away for clarification. I highly recommend that you print this syllabus so that you can refer to it often during the semester.

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Office hours:	At the Renne Library Research Center Desk, (hours vary) or by appointment.

Course Schedule: This section is online only. Content, assignments, etc. will be available online through D2L.

Course Description (from the [Course Catalog](#)): “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.”

Course Information: This asynchronous online course is taught through the Desire2Learn (D2L), the University’s learning management system. This means that you will need to access the class on your own time; there are no regularly scheduled class meetings. If you need assistance anytime during the course, please email me directly.

The online format for this course will require you to be diligent in keeping up with the readings, assignments, and discussions on your own. Time management can be challenging, especially if you’ve never taken an online course before. If you see that you are falling behind or you don’t understand something, please let me know right away.

You can log in to D2L at <https://ecat.montana.edu/>. In order to access D2L, 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.

Because this course is managed online, you will need consistent access to a computer. If you are not familiar with D2L, check out the support page at <http://www.montana.edu/ecat/help/>. It is your responsibility to become comfortable in the course’s online environment.

Required Materials: William Badke. *Research Strategies, Finding Your Way through the Information Fog* (5th ed., iUniverse, 2014). Copies are available at the MSU Bookstore and on reserve at Renne Library. We will also use readings, videos, discussions, and exercises that will be linked from D2L.

Student 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 they 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.

Course Policies:

Communication Etiquette and Style: Good grammar and spelling will count toward my evaluation of all exercises, formal assignments, and the final project. Please use spellcheckers, dictionaries, and writing guides. You may also want to consult the MSU Writing Center (406-994-5315 or <http://www.montana.edu/writingcenter/>) for help.

For online discussions, please think before posting any discussion messages. Read each discussion question carefully before answering and proofread each response carefully before posting. Everyone in the class will be able to read your discussion postings. As a courtesy to the rest of class, include your name and the topic or assignment in the subject line. Typing your response in a word processing program (and taking advantage of spellcheck and other options for proofreading) and then cutting and pasting it in D2L is a good strategy.

Attendance and Participation: Since this is a collaborative course with a significant focus on discussion, you are responsible to yourself and your classmates to prepare for discussion by reading and carefully considering the assigned articles each week. Discussion participation is central to the work of the course. In order for the class to work together as a community, it is important that you read the assigned work for each week's class.

The course materials, activities, and assignments have been designed to build on one another to culminate in the final project. Your evaluation and grade depend upon your participation, completion of assignments, and the quality of those assignments. It is your responsibility to track updates, be aware of deadlines, and submit work on time. If you can't finish the assigned work for any reason, please discuss this with me in advance so that we can find a solution together.

Due Dates: All required assignments (with the exception of the annotated bibliography final project) will be due by midnight on Friday. Original discussion posts will be due by Wednesday at midnight, with two follow-up posts due by Friday at midnight.

Late Policy: Your success in this class requires your involvement and participation. Being late with assignments will jeopardize your success. You are responsible for knowing when assignments, exercises, and discussion input are due and submitting them on time. No late final projects will be accepted, and I will not send out reminders about missed assignments.

Returning Assignments: I will do my best to return comments on assignments within one week of submission.

Final Project: The final project has two parts: a research methodology report and an annotated bibliography, which will draw on the knowledge and information gathered from other assignments throughout the semester. You will create this project in assigned phases, including steps such as topic selection and statement, broad source identification, and source evaluation and annotation. These assigned steps are crucial to your final project. The annotated bibliography will be due by midnight on Monday, December 5. The research methodology report will be due by midnight on Friday, December 9. A detailed description of the final project is posted in D2L.

Final Exam: There is no final exam for this class.

Grading: I will not grade individual assignments. Rather, I will offer feedback in the form of questions and comments that engage with your work rather than assign a number value to it. You will also 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, 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 confer about your performance in

the course to date. If you are worried about your grade, your best approach will be to join the discussions, do the reading, and complete assignments.

Your final grade will be based on the completion of certain conditions, outlined below. While I will assign final grades, you will evaluate your own work throughout the course. In the middle of the semester, you will write a midterm self-evaluation that reflects on your work and contributions to the course's learning environment. 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. The self-evaluations will not only inform my own evaluation of you but will inform how I adjust the course itself as we progress together.

An "A" Grade

- Student demonstrates mastery of core information literacy concepts and course learning outcomes through assignments and final project:
 - Effectively defines the scope of the research question. Effectively determines key concepts. Types of information (sources) selected directly relate to concepts or address the research question.
 - Accesses information using effective, well-designed search strategies and most appropriate information sources.
 - Thoroughly analyzes own and others' assumptions and carefully evaluates the relevance of contexts when presenting a position.
 - Communicates, organizes, and synthesizes information from sources to fully achieve a specific purpose, with clarity and depth.
 - Correctly demonstrates all of the following information use strategies (use of citations and references; choice of paraphrasing, summary, or quotation; using information in ways that are true to original context; distinguishing between common knowledge and ideas requiring attribution).
- Student participates in class discussions:
 - Shows original thought and serious contemplation of readings in discussion posts, indicated by correct use of terminology, precise selection of the pieces of information required to make a point, correct and appropriate use of examples and counterexamples, and explanations that are concise and to the point.
 - Responds to classmates with a concerted and honest effort to engage by asking thoughtful questions and reflective comments that advance discussion beyond the obvious or simple agreement.
 - Misses a maximum of one weekly discussion.
- Student demonstrates timeliness and thoroughness:
 - Completes all required assignments on time
 - Completes all assignments thoroughly and thoughtfully
 - Attends an in-person tour of the library. Students who are not in Bozeman may choose to tour a local library
 - Demonstrates sincere self-reflection in both midterm and final self-evaluations
 - Prose (in assignments, discussion posts, and final project) is clear, precise, and articulate with correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling

A "B" Grade

- Student demonstrates familiarity with core concepts and course learning outcomes:
 - Defines the scope of the research question. Can determine key concepts. Types of information (sources) selected relate to concepts or address research question.
 - Accesses information using a variety of search strategies and some relevant information sources. Demonstrates ability to refine search.
 - Identifies own and others' assumptions and several relevant contexts when presenting a position.

- Communicates, organizes, and synthesizes information from sources. Intended purpose is achieved.
- Correctly demonstrates most of the following information use strategies (use of citations and references; choice of paraphrasing, summary, or quotation; using information in ways that are true to original context; distinguishing between common knowledge and ideas requiring attribution).
- Student participates in class discussions:
 - Shows that reading was completed and addresses most of the prompt's questions. Ideas are reasonably clear, but readers may need to make some assumptions about what was meant.
 - Responds to classmates in a way that moves beyond the obvious
 - Misses a maximum of two weekly discussions
- Student demonstrates timeliness and thoroughness:
 - Misses no more than two required assignments.
 - Completes most assignments thoroughly and thoughtfully.
 - Attends an in-person tour of the library. Students who are not in Bozeman may choose to tour a local library.
 - Demonstrates self-reflection in both midterm and final self-evaluations.
 - Prose (in assignments, discussion posts, and final project) is reasonably well written but may contain minor errors of grammar, punctuation, or spelling that do not detract from overall meaning.

A "C" Grade

- Student demonstrates understanding of core concepts and course learning outcomes:
 - Defines the scope of the research question incompletely (parts are missing, remains too broad or narrow, etc.). Can determine key concepts. Types of information (sources) selected partially relate to concepts or partially address research question.
 - Access information using simple search strategies, retrieves information from limited or similar sources.
 - Questions some assumptions. Identifies several relevant contexts when presenting a position. May be more aware of others' assumptions than one's own (or vice versa).
 - Communicates and organizes information from sources. Information is not yet synthesized, so the intended purpose is not fully achieved.
 - Correctly demonstrates some of the following information use strategies (use of citations and references; choice of paraphrasing, summary, or quotation; using information in ways that are true to original context; distinguishing between common knowledge and ideas requiring attribution).
- Student participates in class discussions:
 - Lacks depth of knowledge or reasoning, relies primarily on summary or generalization, or provides obvious information without further analysis of the concept. Response may indicate that readings were not completed or fully understood.
 - Interacts minimally with classmates, either summarizing what others have said without contributing to the discussion or showing minimum effort (e.g., "I agree with Bill.").
 - Misses a maximum of four weekly discussions.
- Student demonstrates timeliness and thoroughness:
 - Misses no more than three required assignments.
 - Completes most assignments thoroughly and thoughtfully.
 - Completes both midterm and final self-evaluations.
 - Prose is frequently sloppy or includes multiple errors of grammar, punctuation, or spelling.

Work that fails to meet these guidelines will receive either a D or an F, depending largely on participation.

Course Design and Structure:

In the spirit of citing one's sources, the design of this course borrows from the Association of American Colleges and Universities [Information Literacy VALUE Rubric](#) and fellow educator Jesse Stommel. Please view similar syllabi for his courses [Hypertext and Electronic Literature](#), [Digital Humanities](#), and [The Posthuman](#).

Office Hours: I am occasionally at the Research Center Desk in Renne Library, and I will keep you apprised of my availability there through the News feed in D2L. Other office hours will be by appointment via Google Hangouts, Facetime, or by telephone. If you are local in Bozeman, we can also meet face-to-face. 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 very easy to reach by e-mail. You can send questions or comments to me at amy.bekkerman@montana.edu.

University Policies:

Academic Integrity: It is my expectation and that of the university that students follow guidelines described in the Montana State University Conduct Code.

MSU's Plagiarism Policy. Copying someone else's work without giving them credit is plagiarism and unacceptable at MSU. Plagiarism is a serious infringement of the rules of conduct. Review the consequences of plagiarism in the Student Academic & Conduct Guidelines at http://www2.montana.edu/policy/student_conduct/cg400.html. You can easily avoid this problem by doing your own work and correctly giving credit to all sources used in this, and in every, class. We will be discussing academic integrity in more detail during the course of this class.

Adds and Drops. Students can add the course during the first ten days of the semester and drop the course during the first fifteen days of the semester. The last day to withdraw from LSCI 121 without a grade is September 19. The last day to withdraw with a W, rather than a grade, on your transcript is November 22.

Accommodations for Disabilities. If you have a documented disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation(s), you are encouraged to contact me and Disabled Student Services (DSS) as soon as possible. You can find additional information relating to accommodations provided through DSS at <http://www.montana.edu/wwwres>.

Incomplete Grades: The University takes the position that when students register, they commit themselves to completing their academic obligations as their primary responsibility. The instructor may assign an "I" grade only in cases when students have suffered extreme personal hardship or in unusual academic situations.