



**FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
COLLEGE OF COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION  
*School of Information*

**LIS5271 – RESEARCH METHODS IN INFORMATION STUDIES**

**SECTION(S)**

**TERM 20XX, COURSE MEETING DAY/TIME, COURSE MEETING LOCATIO**

**MODE OF INSTRUCTION:**

**Instructor:**

**Email:**

**Office:**

**Phone:**

**Course Location/Website:**

**Office Hours (in office, online or via phone):**

**Teaching Assistant:**

**Email:**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This is an introductory course in applied research methods in the social sciences with a particular emphasis on information studies. It will provide an overview of the basic issues and methods that information professionals should consider when collecting, analyzing, and evaluating data regarding information programs and services. The course covers scientific inquiry, research ethics, problem formulation, measurement, as well as quantitative and qualitative methods and analysis. It will also provide a foundation for evaluating a variety of scientific, technical, business, and government information and for conducting applied research in information-based organizations. The course is appropriate for students with no background in research or analytical methods.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

The objectives of this course are to enable the students to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the nature of scientific inquiry.
2. Analyze the manner in which research is conducted.
3. Analyze and apply the concepts of multiple methods of collecting, managing, and analyzing evidence.
4. Evaluate the relationship between theory, method, and evidence.
5. Evaluate research literature in information studies and assess, interpret, and report research results.
6. Identify, describe, and understand elementary quantitative statistical analyses found in research in the field of information studies.

7. Analyze the foundation for designing and conducting future research in the field of information studies, including user assessment and the evaluation of information programs and services.
8. Manage virtual teams to design a research study and articulate how this study could be implemented.
9. Create a practical research proposal within the field of information studies.
10. Complete a critical analysis of qualitative and quantitative research conducted in the field of Information Studies as found in electronic and print resources.

### **COURSE MATERIALS:**

- Babbie, E. (2012) *The Practice of Social Research*. 13<sup>th</sup> Edition, Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing. (ISBN: 9781133049791)
- Weekly course readings and the detailed descriptions of all assignments are available on in the course website.
- Selected articles, book chapters, and other materials from the literature of information studies will be chosen by the instructor and identified in the course calendar as required readings.
- In addition, students are required to identify articles that reflect their own research interests in order to complete several assignments in this course. Students should verify early in the course that they are able to access article databases via the university's library.

### **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION:**

#### **Journal article critique (200 Points)**

Students will choose a journal article and will assess it in a five-page paper.

#### **Team research proposal topic paper (200 Points)**

Students will work in teams to propose a topic for research in a preliminary paper that identifies the topic, proposes a research problem (including a discussion of the significance of the research and potential research questions), and includes a preliminary literature review.

#### **Team research proposal paper (350 Points)**

Students will work in teams to prepare a formal research proposal based on their preliminary topic paper. This proposal will take a significant amount of time.

#### **Team discussion papers/exercises (150 Points)**

Most classes will be divided into two parts. The first part will be an instructor-led discussion of the topic. The second part of the class will be a team discussion. During this portion of the class, small teams of students will

discuss an aspect of that night's topic, complete a learning exercise, or work on their research proposal. There will be approximately 5 graded team assignments that will be turned in by 11:59 pm on the Tuesday following the class that it was assigned. Each member of the team will receive the team grade. For example, you may be asked to complete a discussion summary of approximately 300 words in length. Students who do not participate in an assignment will not receive a grade for that assignment. All teams will have their own Collaborate sites and Blackboard resources to facilitate communication, file sharing, and interaction.

**Participation (100 Points)**

Participation during the class discussion and the team sessions is extremely important. Teams may need to meet online more often than Wednesday nights in order to produce high quality products. Near the end of the semester students will assess their own participation during the team sessions and the participation of each of their peers. A student's average participation score will be used to determine the number of participation points received. Students who do not complete a peer evaluation for themselves and/or their peers will have points deducted from their own participation score. Students who do not complete any evaluations will not receive any points for participation. Similarly, failure to participate in activities or to contribute to team assignments may result in omission of all points for those assignments.

**GRADE CALCULATION:**

Journal Article critique	200 points
Team research proposal topic paper	200 points
Team research proposal paper	350 points
Team discussion papers/exercises	150 points
Participation (peer evaluations)	100 points
Total possible points	1000 points

**GRADING SCALE:**

A	930-1,000
A-	900-929
B+	880-899
B	830-879
B-	800-829
C+	780-799
C	730-779
C-	700-729
F	699 and below

**COURSE SCHEDULE:**

Class Date	Topic
Week 1	Introduction to the Course and Introduction to Inquiry

<b>Week 2</b>	Paradigms, Theory, and Social Research Introduction to Reading and Writing Social Research
<b>Week 3</b>	Research Ethics
<b>Week 4</b>	Research Design
<b>Week 5</b>	Conceptualization, Operationalization, and Measurement
<b>Week 6</b>	Indexes, Scales, and Typologies and Sampling
<b>Week 7</b>	Experiments
<b>Week 8</b>	<b>Asynchronous Assignment</b> - Survey Research
<b>Week 9</b>	Qualitative Field Research
<b>Week 10</b>	Unobtrusive Research
<b>Week 11</b>	<b>Asynchronous Assignment</b>
<b>Week 12</b>	Evaluation Research
<b>Week 13</b>	Qualitative Methods
<b>Week 14</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Holiday</b>
<b>Week 15</b>	Quantitative Methods & Course Recap

**COPYRIGHT STATEMENT:**

Some of the materials in this course are possibly copyrighted. They are intended for use only by students registered and enrolled in this course and only for instructional activities associated with, and for the duration of, the course. They may not be retained in another medium or disseminated further. They are provided in compliance with the provisions of the *Technology, Education, And Copyright Harmonization* (TEACH) Act (refer to the 3/7/2001 TEACH Act at [www.copyright.gov/legislation/archive/](http://www.copyright.gov/legislation/archive/)).

**SEXUAL HARRASSMENT POLICY:**

It is the policy of the University that its employees and students neither commit nor condone sexual harassment in any form. [http://registrar.fsu.edu/bulletin/grad/info/university\\_notices.htm](http://registrar.fsu.edu/bulletin/grad/info/university_notices.htm)

**SCHOOL OF INFORMATION HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE REQUIREMENTS:**

A list of all hardware and software requirements for students participating in the School of Information courses can be found at the following location: <http://ischool.cci.fsu.edu/academics/online/requirements/>

**STUDENT ELIGIBILITY FOR AN INCOMPLETE GRADE:**

Incomplete (“I”) grades will not be assigned, except in the case of exceptional unforeseen circumstances that occur within the last three weeks of the semester and your work has otherwise been satisfactory (C average).

**University Attendance Policy:**

Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.

**Academic Honor Policy:**

The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University’s expectations for the integrity of

students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to “. . . be honest and truthful and . . . [to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University.” (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at <http://fda.fsu.edu/Academics/Academic-Honor-Policy>.)

**Americans With Disabilities Act:**

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should:

- (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; and
- (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class.

This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request.

For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the:

Student Disability Resource Center  
874 Traditions Way  
108 Student Services Building  
Florida State University  
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167  
(850) 644-9566 (voice)  
(850) 644-8504 (TDD)  
sdrc@admin.fsu.edu  
<http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/>

**Free Tutoring from FSU**

On-campus tutoring and writing assistance is available for many courses at Florida State University. For more information, visit the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) Tutoring Services' comprehensive list of on-campus tutoring options - see <http://ace.fsu.edu/tutoring> or contact [tutor@fsu.edu](mailto:tutor@fsu.edu). High-quality tutoring is available by appointment and on a walk-in basis. These services are offered by tutors trained to encourage the highest level of individual academic success while upholding personal academic integrity.

**Syllabus Change Policy**

"Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice."