SCHOOL OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION STUDIES
University of Alberta

LIS 597
**SEMINAR IN ADVANCED RESEARCH METHODS FOR
LIBRARY AND INFORMATION STUDIES**

(First Term, 0-3s-0)

Instructor: Dr. Alvin M. Schrader, Professor

Calendar   In-depth examination of research methodologies relevant to the field of library and
Description: information studies and to the research interests of students pursuing doctoral
                    programs, thesis-route master's programs, or other advanced projects.

Objective: Upon completion of the course, a student should be able to:

                    1. Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of selected research methodologies that
                    are suitable for the major research areas in library and information studies.

                    2. Conduct a research project using a methodology related to the student's specific area
                    of inquiry for a master's thesis, doctoral dissertation, or other advanced project.

Content: This seminar provides an opportunity for in-depth examination of research
                    methodologies related to student research interests. Methodologies will include both
                    qualitative and quantitative approaches to research. Examples are: interviews, focus
                    groups, mailed questionnaires, case study, bibliometrics, transaction log analysis,
                    experimental design, content analysis, evaluation research, and systems analysis.
                    Computer-based statistical packages for data processing and analysis will also be
                    examined.

Methods: Seminar discussion, presentations, practical exercises, readings, lectures, and guest
                    lectures.

Inclusive   The Faculty of Education is committed to providing an environment of equality
Language   and respect for all people within the university community. Accordingly, staff
and Equity: and students should adhere to the principles of inclusive language so that students'
                    experiences and views are treated with equal respect and value in relation to their
                    gender, racial background, sexual orientation, and ethnic background.

Course   Prerequisites: LIS 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, and 506.
Relationships: Prerequisite to the MLIS Thesis option.

Assignments:

1. Research methodology - seminar presentation 30-45 minutes including 15 minutes for discussion; paper 7-10 pages using 1.5 spacing. Class handout 1 page, with 3-4 item list of suggested resources. 2 copies of paper. Paper due at class time.

> *Suggested content: purpose/definition, typical applications, historical perspective (major innovators), philosophical underpinnings, strengths and weaknesses, limitations, ethical considerations, contentious issues, steps in how-to-do-it. Include a brief analysis of the use of the methodology in the most recent two years of issues of one research journal in library and information studies such as LISR, CRL, JASIS, LQ, or CJILS (formerly CJIS).*

2. Research project - seminar presentation 30-45 minutes including 15 minutes for discussion; paper 8-12 pages using 1.5 spacing plus pages for abstract, table of contents, appendices, and references. Class handout 1 page. 2 copies of paper. Paper due at class time.

> *Suggested content: typical research report, problem statement and description, review of relevant research literature, research design, data analysis and findings including comparison with previous studies, discussion and conclusions.*

Evaluation:

1. Research methodology   -   35%
2. Research project   -   65
                                    100%

Assignment weightings: seminar presentations (25%), papers (75%). Raw scores are totalled at the end of term and converted to the 9-point scale.

> *Evaluation criteria for seminar presentations: evidence that important concepts have been identified; evidence that relevant literature is discussed and synthesized; quality of organization; quality of oral presentation (speaking not reading to audience, eye contact, clarity, time limits); quality of class handout; presentation at scheduled time.*

> *Evaluation criteria for papers: evidence that important concepts have been identified; evidence that relevant literature is discussed and synthesized; quality of organization and presentation of ideas including appropriate section headings; quality of writing; submission on time.*

Course Plan and Assignments, Fall 1998 (tentative)

Sept   9   Course introduction
             - discussion of research interests and research project ideas

        16   Research proposals and ethics reviews (S:\Ethics or S:\Courses\LIS 597)
             Overview of research methodologies in library and information studies
             - selection of research projects and methodologies for seminar presentations

        23   Creating research instruments: covering letters/introductions and questions
             - discussion of research proposal drafts and ethics review requirements

        30   - seminar presentation and submission of research proposals and ethics review
             requirements
             - discussion of data collection instruments for research projects

Oct   7   Anticipating data analysis: creating "dummy tables" from research proposals and
             research instruments
             - presentation of data collection instruments for research projects

        14   Interpreting data, drawing conclusions, preparing written and oral research
             reports
             - status reports on research projects

        21   Seminar presentation of research methodology

        28   (continued)

Nov   4   Quantitative data analysis using statistical software packages
             - mid-term feedback

        11   No class

        18   Historical evolution of research in library and information studies, current issues
             in research, sources of research grants, publishing opportunities

        25   Seminar presentation of research project

Dec   2   (continued)

Assignments:
Sep 30   Seminar presentation and submission of research project proposal and
                    ethics review request
Oct 21, 28   Research methodology - seminar presentation
Oct 28   - paper due
Nov 25, Dec 2   Research project - seminar presentation
Dec 2   - paper due

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Research Project Proposal

Submitted by _____

Date _____

1.   PROJECT TITLE:

2.   INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM:

3.   OBJECTIVE, QUESTION, OR HYPOTHESIS:

4.   RELATED LITERATURE (3 or 4 items):

5.   METHODOLOGY FOR SOLVING THE PROBLEM:

6.   ANTICIPATED CONTRIBUTION OF THE RESEARCH:

7.   ETHICS REVIEW AND OTHER APPROVALS OR PERMISSIONS NEEDED:

8.   PROJECT TIMELINES:

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Criteria for Evaluating Seminar Presentations
(25% of assignment)

Student _____ *Topic*
_____

Ratings: *excellent, very good, good, satisfactory, improvement needed*

Presentation:

- *content*
- *organization*
- *clarity*
- *appropriate length*
- *speaking voice*
- *nonverbal cues*

Handout:

- *content*
- *organization*
- *clarity*
- *visual*
- *on time*

Overall assessment:
_____

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