

VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY  
MASTER OF LIBRARY & INFORMATION SCIENCE  
MLIS 7700 Research Methods  
SYLLABUS  
Fall Semester 2012  
Three Credit Hours

**Instructor:**

Changwoo Yang, PhD.  
Assistant Professor-MLIS Program  
Odum Library - 1500 N. Patterson Street  
Valdosta, GA 31698-0150

Phone: (229) 333-7185  
Fax: (229) 259- 5055  
E-mail [cyang@valdosta.edu](mailto:cyang@valdosta.edu)

**Course Description**

Prerequisite: MLIS 7000. An introduction to the various approaches to social science research and research methods. Students will perform small scale research projects and develop skills in the research uses of libraries and the needs of library patrons.

**MLIS Program Objectives (PO)**

Graduates of the VSU MLIS Program will:

PO 1. Perform administrative, service, and technical functions of professional practice in libraries and information centers by demonstrating skills in information resources, reference and user services, administration and management, and organization of recorded knowledge and information.

PO 2. Use existing and emerging technologies to meet needs in libraries and information centers.

PO 3. Integrate relevant research to enhance work in libraries and information centers.

PO 4. Demonstrate professionalism in their work in libraries and information centers.

**Learning Outcomes (LO)**

Students will:

SLO 1. Recognize the inter-relationships of theory, research, and scientific inquiry (PO3).

SLO 2. Discuss basic ethical issues associated with conducting research (PO3, PO4).

SLO 3. Distinguish between qualitative and quantitative research methods (PO3).

SLO 4. Identify the basic elements in the design of social research studies (PO3).

SLO 5. Relate terminology, concepts, and processes of social research to studies conducted in the

library and information science (LIS) field (PO3).

SLO 6. Evaluate research methodologies from representative LIS research studies (PO1, PO2, PO3).

SLO 7. Analyze research articles for ideas to be used in professional practice or to advise library

patrons in their research endeavors (PO1, PO2, PO3, PO4).

SLO 8. Apply a systematic method for locating references in the research literature (PO1, PO2, O3).

SLO 9. Prepare a literature review according to a style used in research reporting (PO3).

SLO 10. Propose a practice-based library or information science research project (PO1, PO2, PO3).

## **Textbooks**

Neuman, W. L. (2012) *Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (3rd ed.). Boston: Pearson. ISBN-10: 0205762611. ISBN-13: 9780205762613.

Nahl, D. *Strategic Research Approaches for Reference Librarians*. Kendall-Hunt, 2000. (This is a workbook – currently out-of-print. We have permission from the author to copy the content, so chapters are available in PDF format on the BlazeVIEW site for this course.)

**Note:** Please familiarize yourself with the MLIS policy that prohibits the use of VSU's Interlibrary Loan service for obtaining textbooks at

[http://www.valdosta.edu/mlis/student\\_resources/documents/ILL\\_Textbooks.pdf](http://www.valdosta.edu/mlis/student_resources/documents/ILL_Textbooks.pdf)

## **Course requirements and resources**

This course assumes that you are familiar with Valdosta State University's online learning technologies. The course is designed for the online learning environment and all course activities will take place inside the course website in BlazeView. Distance learning support is available from VSU. Please see: <http://www.valdosta.edu/vista/students.shtml>

All required readings are summarized on the course calendar and listed in full on the reading list and in the weekly folders. All readings other than the textbook chapters are accessible through Valdosta State University's Odum Library online journal access **or** through public access websites **or** will be provided inside the course website in pdf format.

Students are expected to be able to obtain materials from the Odum Library's electronic collections and resources or their equivalents as part of their successful participation in this course. An online services guide for distance education students is on the Odum Library web site at <http://www.valdosta.edu/library/services/distanceducation.shtml> .

Supplemental readings and resources may be listed on the course website by topic. They are, by definition, not required but can help you broaden and deepen your understanding of topics of interest to you and of the subject area of the course in general. They may be of great help to you in successfully completing the course assignments.

**Assessment Portfolio:** All students are **REQUIRED to purchase** access to the MLIS Program technology-driven assessment system(LiveText). The system will be used throughout your professional program and is introduced in this course.

## **Faculty Recommendations**

MLIS 7700 is a reading and writing intensive core course. Students report that they spend an average of 10 to 15 hours each week on assignments.

Taking MLIS 7700 with no more than one other course is strongly recommended. Students should schedule this course toward the end of their degree requirements.

## **Attendance**

This is a Web-delivered course. All other course communications, activities, and materials will be available exclusively through the BlazeVIEW web site and require weekly checks for assignments. The instructor will schedule real-time instruction using Live Classroom as needed.

## **Course Activities Outline**

The following list is a brief overview of the activities included in this course. Look for complete instructions and grading criteria for each assignment on the BlazeVIEW course site.

### **Weekly Exercise (20 points)**

Post your reactions to questions related to topics.

### **Small Group Assignment: Read-Observe-Analyze Project (15 points)**

This exercise is designed to introduce you to elements associated with qualitative research. You will work in groups of three to investigate a construct currently of interest in the field of library and information science.

### **Individual Assignment A: Recognizing Good and Bad Survey Methods (15 Points)**

Using sample survey questions, you will identify flaws, correct problems, and re-write “bad” questions.

### **Individual Assignment B: Identifying Elements of Research Design (15 Points)**

This exercise involves identifying the basic components of qualitative and quantitative research design using excerpts from actual research articles in the library and information science literature.

### **Pre-requisite Drafts on Research Proposal Topic (Not submitting a draft results in a **5 point deduction** for each missed draft from your final proposal.)**

Select a research problem related to the field of library and information science and use it as the basis for drafting the parts of your final research proposal. Four documents showing your progress on developing your proposal must be submitted. These include a worksheet outlining the parts of your proposal idea, an abstract, a draft of your literature review, and a draft of research methodology. Submission of these drafts is mandatory.

### **Final Project: Writing a Research Project Proposal (35 Points)**

Using your preliminary drafts and the feedback on this work, refine and combine your work into a research proposal that articulates how to investigate that problem. This is a proposal specifying what you would do if you had the opportunity to conduct research on your problem.

(Successful completion of this assignment is necessary to fulfill requirements for this course and indicates partial accomplishment of MLIS Program-level student learning outcomes. Your finished assignment must be uploaded to the designated online portal.)

### **Graded Course Requirements**

As a student in this class, you are expected to: (1) read or view all assigned background materials; (2) participate fully in discussion board activities; (3) submit all projects on time and according to the format designated by the instructor; and (4) conduct your research and composition according to the rules of academic integrity (see Academic Honesty section on page 5 of this syllabus).

Students can earn a maximum of 100 points in this course as indicated above. Course grades will be awarded as follows:

- A – 90-100
- B – 80-89
- C – 70-79
- D – 60-69
- F – Fewer than 60 points

**NO grade below a C will be credited toward a VSU graduate degree.** To be eligible to receive an A in the course a student must complete every assignment.

Reminder: This is a core course, and those of you admitted fall 2012 or thereafter must earn a grade of “B” or better in this course in order to receive credit for it. Those same students must successfully complete each assignment marked as “necessary to fulfill requirements for this course.”

**An overall grade of zero can be assigned to an entire paper or project if the instructor determines that its contents, or parts of its contents, were completed by a second party or copied into a paper or project from a source without proper citing. Noncompliance with rules on appropriate use of resources will result in zero credit for those parts of the assignment affected.** If you are unsure about the parameters of an assignment, ask for clarification.

### **Late or Missing Submissions**

All written work is due on the date and time specified in the course calendar. Any exceptions must be negotiated in advance. Technological crises are not an acceptable excuse for submitting work late unless BlazeView is down.

**Late work:** 10% will be deducted from the student’s score for every additional 24 hours or increment thereof that the work is late.

## **Technical Requirements**

All class materials will be placed on a password-protected Web site using the BlazeVIEW course management program. If you are a new BlazeVIEW user, go to the BlazeVIEW help pages at <http://www.valdosta.edu/vista/students.shtml>. Then return to the BlazeVIEW page and login using your BlazeVIEW ID and password.

To meet all class requirements, you should be prepared to: (1) open and save or print all documents that are required background reading - this requires the Adobe Acrobat Reader on your computer; (2) view all PowerPoints placed on the course BlazeVIEW site – these are saved to **Powerpoint 97-2003** and will open in all higher versions; (3) participate in Live Classroom sessions – login links and instructions will be available through your BlazeVIEW course homepage; (4) check discussion groups as needed; and (5) keep electronic backup copies of each assignment and project you submit.

Unless otherwise stated, assignments must be submitted using a word processing program compatible with Microsoft (MS) Word. BlazeVIEW accepts attached documents in **MS Word 97-2003 or higher**. If you are using WordPerfect or sharing documents with classmates who have a different version of Word, save your documents in Rich Text Format (rtf). The instructor returns documents that cannot be opened on VSU equipment.

The university's Information Technology department provides step-by-step guides on how to use VSU's email and other sources. The IT Help Desk is at <http://www.valdosta.edu/helpdesk/guides/> and their phone hot line is 229-245-4357.

## **UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

**Academic Honesty at Valdosta State University:** “Valdosta State University expects that graduate students will pursue their academic endeavors and conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner. All work that a student presents to satisfy course requirements should represent his or her own efforts, including appropriate use and acknowledgement of external sources. Specific regulations related to student conduct and behaviors are contained in the Student Handbook, Student Code of Conduct.” See also:

<http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/AcademicHonestyPoliciesandProcedures.shtml>

It is your responsibility to make sure you understand how to avoid breeches of academic integrity. If you are unsure about the parameters of an assignment, ask for clarification. If you need help with citations and research resources and techniques, the university provides extensive resources for students. For help please start at the Odum Library's “how to” page:

<http://www.valdosta.edu/library/learn/index.shtml>

By taking this course, you agree that all required course work may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to SafeAssign, a tool within BlazeVIEW. For more information on the use of SafeAssign at VSU see <http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/SafeAssignforStudents.shtml>

**Accommodations statement:** From VSU's Access Office: Students with disabilities who are experiencing barriers in this course may contact the Access Office for assistance in determining and implementing reasonable accommodations. The Access Office is located in Farber Hall. The

phone numbers are 229-245-2498 (V), 229-375-5871 (VP) and 229-219-1348 (TTY). For more information, please visit <http://www.valdosta.edu/access> or email: [access@valdosta.edu](mailto:access@valdosta.edu).

If you have a documented disability please contact the Access Office. Once your request for accommodation is submitted please contact the instructor to discuss accommodations or modifications of course content and delivery.

**Student Conduct:** All interactions related to this class are to be conducted respectfully and professionally whether during face to face meetings, online interactions, small group work, e-mail or telephone communication according to the Student Code of Conduct as presented in the Valdosta State University Student Handbook, beginning on page 60:

<http://www.valdosta.edu/studentaffairs/StudentHandbook.shtml>

**Student Success Center:** <http://www.valdosta.edu/ssc/> provides free tutoring and support for distance learning students at <http://valdosta.askonline.net>

**Student Agreement:** Enrollment in this class signifies that you have agreed to abide by and adhere to the policies and regulations specified above. It is understood that the instructor may adapt or change this syllabus and the assignments contained within it according to circumstances that may arise during the course of the semester.