Graduate Program of Library and Information Science
Faculty of Information and Media Studies
Western University

GRADLIS 9004: Research Methods
Winter 2021

Instructor: Dr. Nafiz Zaman Shuva
Office hours: Thursdays from 12.00 pm to 1.00 pm via Zoom or by appointment.
Email: nshuva@uwo.ca
Mode of instruction: **Online (mainly asynchronous)**
Course Credit: 0.5
Owl site: https: https://owl.uwo.ca/x/H45wdA [to be published soon]

Communicating with the Instructor
Feel free to email me at nshuva@uwo.ca if you have any concerns about the course including if you need further information regarding any assignment. You can expect a response from me within 24 hours during the work week. Email sent on the weekend may receive a response the following week. If I do not respond within 24 hours Monday through Friday, this means I did not receive your email, or your email went to my junk/spam folder. In this case, please resend the email. I expect you to check your university email @uwo.ca regularly as you will be receiving announcements about this course to your university email.

Course Description
This course provides an introduction to qualitative and quantitative research methods. Topics covered include: the research process from finding a researchable question through data gathering and analysis to dissemination of results; qualities of well-designed research; ethical considerations in research; and basic concepts and techniques in qualitative and quantitative data analysis.

Course-Level Learning Outcomes
Upon successful completion of the course requirements, students will be able to:
1.   Design
        a. Ask: Construct research questions to explore specific scholarly and/or professional problem-solving, user needs assessment, and evaluation in library and information fields (Program-level learning outcome 1)
        b. Design: Identify the best approach for a research project in library and information studies; explain decision making processes at each step of the research process (Program-level learning outcome 1,2,3)
2.   Collect
        Identify and collect appropriate data to address a specific research question. (Program-level learning outcome 2)
3.   Analyze and interpret
        a. Analyze: Apply qualitative and quantitative methodological frameworks to analyze data (Program-level learning outcome 2)
        b. Interpret: Interpret findings by discussing implications for practice and/or theory in library and information studies. (Program-level learning outcome 2)

4. Critique
   a. Evaluate. Critically evaluate qualitative and quantitative research in library and information studies. (Program-level learning outcome 2)
   b. Align. Articulate ethical concerns associated with library and information studies research and their significance for practice; conduct research that aligns with ethical standards for research and professional practice (Program-level learning outcome 3)
5. Mobilize
   a. Communicate: Effectively communicate research findings through speaking, writing, and presenting about them to diverse audiences in formal and informal professional and scholarly domains. (Program-level learning outcome 9)
   b. Apply: Critically apply basic principles and techniques of research to problem-solving, user needs assessment, and evaluation in library and information fields, forming sound opinions based on critical analysis of valid and reliable data. (Program-level learning outcomes 4, 6, 7, 8).

Course Approach

In Winter 2021, this course is offered only in online mode (mainly asynchronous with a few synchronous activities throughout the term, pre-scheduled by me). You will be signed up for times that works best for you. As an instructor, my goal is to provide effective online teaching environment where you can develop critical thinking skills (e.g., ability to critically analyze various areas of research methods) and become active learners. I believe that in effective teaching, both students and the instructor regularly interact and exchange their views on different areas of learning resulting in a teaching environment where both instructor and students are learners.

I believe in the power of practical hands-on experiences which I will provide through orienting you all with various data collection and analysis tools such as data analysis software SPSS, NVivo 12; transcription tools such as "Transcribe". I also invite guest lecturers if deemed suitable for the course I am teaching. In this course, I will invite some guest lecturers who will talk about their study and the research method they employed in their study as well as the challenges they faced conducting their studies. During Winter 2021, instead of live lectures, all the guest lectures will be recorded and links to the audio/video lectures will be shared with the class.

Course Outline

Week	Areas to be covered
Week 1 January 14, 2021	Introduction to research methods
Week 2 January 21, 2021	Literature review and ethics in research
Week 3 January 28, 2021	Sampling
Week 4 February 4, 2021	Data collection: Surveys and interviews
Week 5 February 11, 2021	Data collection: Participant observation and ethnography
Week 6 February 18, 2021	Data collection: Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), visual methods, and experiments
Week 7 February 25, 2021	Reading week: No class
Week 8 March 4, 2021	Data collection: Content analysis and unobtrusive measures
Week 9 March 11, 2021	Making sense of research design & data analysis: Quantitative Data-Part 1
Week 10 March 18, 2021	Making sense of research design & data analysis: Quantitative Data-Part 2
Week 11 March 25, 2021	Making sense of research design & data analysis: Qualitative data
Week 12 April 1, 2021	Qualitative, quantitative, or mixed method?

| Week 13 April 8, 2021 | Sharing the results of research and evaluation of research |
| Week 14 April 15, 2021 | Research in action, course summary, and review |

Methods of Evaluation

To complete this course, you must do the followings:

Assignment	Weight	Dates
Participation	30%	Throughout the term: online participations including contributions to online forums, quizzes, reflections on readings, and individual, and group activities
Online survey questionnaire design	5%	Submission due: 5.00 pm, Thursday, February 11 (Week 5)
Individual research proposal	40%	1. Literature search/review matrix (10%) Submission due: 5.00 pm, Thursday, February 4 (Week 4) 2. Research object and synchronous research showcase (15%) Submission due: 5.00 pm, Thursday, April 1 (Week 12; Showcase dates/times to be scheduled around to student availability) 3. Proposal matrix (15%) Submission due: 5.00 pm, Thursday, April 15 (Week 14)
Data analysis and presentation	25%	Submission due: Week 9-Week 11 [three data analysis and presentation assignments; two individual, one group assignment]

Course Requirements

Students are required to actively participate in the online class activities, read required readings, occasionally reflect on their learning, and participate in group discussions/presentations.

Grading follows the grading guidelines published in the MLIS Graduate Student Handbook.

Late submissions: Late submissions will be penalized (5% penalty per day) unless there are legitimate and documented grounds.

Course materials

All required readings are accessible electronically through Western Libraries.

Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

Support Services

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/ for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.