

1. Course Information

GRADLIS 9004-250: Research methods Summer 2024

Classes Tuesdays 9-11 AM, University College 1110 for F2F students, via Zoom for online students.

Please contact Pam as soon as possible if you wish to take the course online.

Synchronous class lengths will vary; this period will include both class time and optional office hours.

2. Instructor Information

Pam McKenzie, pmckenzi@uwo.ca.

Graduate Teaching Assistant: At the time of writing, the Graduate Teaching Assistants are on a legal strike. If a GTA will be joining us for the Summer term, I'll share their contact information.

3. 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 aligned with the program's 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).

Enrollment restrictions: Enrollment in this course is restricted to graduate students in the Master of Library and Information Science program, as well as any student that has obtained special permission to enroll in this course from the course instructor as well as the Graduate Chair (or equivalent) from the student's home program.

Course format: The course will run in a "flipped classroom" blend of asynchronous online and synchronous face-to-face activities. Students are expected to watch videos and complete readings, assignments, and preparatory individual activities before joining the class physically or virtually on Tuesdays 9-11:00. Each student will be assigned to a Community of Practice, a small group they will work with throughout the semester. In class, we'll engage in collaborative Community of Practice and full-class activities and discussion. This will be followed by an optional office-hour period for which students may stay to ask questions, talk informally, and/or work in small groups.

Course timeline: The course is organized into four modules:

Module 1: Asking and evaluating (4 classes)

- 1. Introduction, asking questions
- 2. Searching the literature, reading like a researcher
- 3. Research ethics
- 4. Proposal writing and presenting research data

Module 2. Analyzing and interpreting (2 lessons)

- 5. Quantitative approaches to data analysis
- 6. Qualitative and Indigenous approaches to data analysis

Module 3. Collecting (5 classes)

- 7. Survey research
- 8. Interviews
- 9. Observing people's behaviour
- 10. Observing what people leave behind I: Physical trace measures
- 11. Observing what people leave behind II: Documents as data

Module 4. Communicating (2 classes)

- 12. Using research: Evidence-based practice, Doing research for scholarly and practical purposes, Consuming research: Serving researchers and other users
- 13. Communicating research: synchronous research showcase (synchronous session will likely be longer, depending on the number of students in the class)

4. Course Materials

All materials will be available electronically via OWL or library reserves. Some will also be available in hard copy in the FIMS Graduate Library.

5. Methods of Evaluation

To successfully complete this course, you must complete asynchronous content including viewing lectures and completing readings and activities, participate in synchronous class activities, and complete the following assignments. Assignments are due 30 minutes before class begins (ie, by 8:30 AM on Tuesdays) with a small number of exceptions, highlighted below.

Group assignment (with your Community of Practice)

Research proposal assignment (30% total, due throughout the term)

- a. Part 1: Research proposal due by 8:30 AM Tuesday August 6 15%
- b. Part 2: Research poster/FIMS research showcase. Poster must be complete 8:30 AM Tuesday August 6, research showcase will take place during class time that day 15%

Individual assignments

1. Individual forum post introducing yourself and your research interests, due by 8:30 AM May 7. Ungraded.
2. Literature search/evaluation assignment due by 8:30 AM May 14 15%
3. Research article analysis assignment due by 8:30 AM May 28 15%
4. Qualitative data analysis assignment. Part 1 due by 8:30 AM June 11, part 2 due by **12 PM Wednesday June 12** (The day after class. There will be in-class time to complete Part 2). 15%
5. Developing and testing interview questions assignment due by 8:30 AM June 25 15%
6. Self- and peer-assessment of course preparation, engagement, and learning (feedback on each component, graded end of term only) 10%
 - a. Initial goal-setting exercise due 8:30 AM May 7
 - b. Midterm self-assessment due 8:30 AM June 18
 - c. End-of-term self/peer assessments due **12 PM Wednesday, August 7** (the day after the synchronous showcase, to give you a chance to include it in your reflection).

6. 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

Information academic appeals and discipline: More information is available at this link:

<https://grad.uwo.ca/administration/regulations/13.html>

7. Support Services

Health/Wellness 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.

Accessible Education Western (AEW): Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program.

Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are strongly encouraged to register with **Accessible Education Western (AEW)**, a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both **AEW** and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction.