DISCLAIMER: This syllabus is provided for informational use only. Content and assignments may change before the start of the course and may differ between course sections. Students enrolled in this course are to retrieve the official version from the McGill course management site.

General information

Instructor: Prof. Ilja Frissen, ilja.frissen@mcgill.ca, phone: 398-4684.
Office hours: After class (11:30-1pm) or by appointment. SIS mansion (3661 Peel), rm. 210.
Always use your McGill address to communicate with us via e-mail (see email policy below).

Learning outcomes

At the end of the course you will be able to
- Think critically about research in library and information studies (LIS)
- Distinguish quantitative and qualitative research methods used in LIS
- Identify the various stages of the research process
- Evaluate and synthesize published research
- Compute and interpret basic descriptive and inferential statistical techniques using MS Excel
- Conduct basic planning, conducting, and reporting of research

Course content

- Foundations of research: theories, observation, assumptions, limitations, and ethics.
- Steps in the research process: select topic, focus question, design study, and collect, analyze and interpret data.
- Research principles in quantitative and qualitative research: hypothesis, variables, measurements, validity, and reliability.
- Communicating research: the research proposal, research report, and publication process.
- Data collection, management, and analysis
- Statistical description and analysis

Suggested texts
There is no required textbook. The following texts are suggested reading. Other readings will be provided or sought out by the student.

Research methods

Statistics

Writing and style

1/4
Instructional method

At the core of the course is an actual scientific survey conducted by the class. Throughout the course we will be investigating whether there is a relationship between library anxiety and someone’s personality using a combination of two surveys commonly used in LIS and psychology.

Instruction features a combination of lectures, seminars, and in-class activities. In addition, there are several required activities to be completed before class. The (guest) lectures are reserved for introductions to major themes, such as (scientific) research principles, ethics, and statistics. Seminars are meant to create a platform for discussing issues arising from the scientific study.

Overview

### Lecture

- Jan 11: Discuss S1
- Jan 18: Discuss H1
- Jan 25: Discuss A1 & H2
- Feb 1: Descriptive Statistics
- Feb 8: Discuss S2
- Feb 15: Descriptive Statistics
- Feb 22: Last lecture

### Seminar

- Survey questions
- Literature review
- Research Questions
- Descript. Stats in Excel
- AE1
- AE2

### In-class activity

- To prepare for class activity
- Reading
- Survey Assign.

### MS Excel

Some of the in-class activities involve exercises with MS Excel, it is therefore recommended to bring your laptop to class on those occasions. If you don’t have a laptop, or you do not have Excel (or equivalent software), small groups can be created.

### Useful materials

1. Why Basic Research is Important: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6gnsQjPCC78](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6gnsQjPCC78)
2. [https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2015/06/02/value-basic-research](https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2015/06/02/value-basic-research)
4. Strategies for Synthesis: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c7HtCHtQ9w0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c7HtCHtQ9w0) (12:09)
5. Tips on Scientific Writing - Part 1: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=91jo4kX7Cq0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=91jo4kX7Cq0) (3:46)
6. Tips on Scientific Writing - Part 2: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-NZFSrqHB0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-NZFSrqHB0) (2:12)
7. Science Writing: Practice Makes It (Almost) Perfect: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZPZtgVQSfc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZPZtgVQSfc) (25:00)
8. How to Write a Great Research Paper: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g3dkRsTqdDA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g3dkRsTqdDA) (34:24)
GLIS 611-W2017: RESEARCH PRINCIPLES AND ANALYSIS


10. Qualitative and quantitative research: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2X-QSU6-hPU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2X-QSU6-hPU)

11. Reliability and validity: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ltvDNAsO-I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ltvDNAsO-I)

**Assignments and evaluation**

There is a substantial practical component. Beside the Survey, there are in-class activities and assignments aimed at developing and practicing skills such as evaluating research articles, synthesizing literature, as well as processing, summarizing, and describing raw numeric data using various statistical and graphical techniques.

More detailed information and descriptions will be provided at an appropriate time.

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<tr>
<td>Assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>Mini literature review</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>A2</td>
<td>Article evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>Literature review</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Can become part of A5</td>
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<td>A4</td>
<td>Descriptive statistics &amp; visualization</td>
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<tr>
<td>A5</td>
<td>Final report of research activities</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Meets submission standards</td>
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<th>Activity (Pass/Fail)</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AE</td>
<td>Article evaluation</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Can be combined with A1</td>
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<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td>Search for Survey pitfalls</td>
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<td>H2</td>
<td>Find ex. of good and bad synthesis</td>
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<td>H3</td>
<td>Collect interview data</td>
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<td>For lecture Prof. Joan Bartlett</td>
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| Survey                | S1 Fill out survey                              | 0  |                              |
|                       | S2 Collect survey data from 6 participants       |    |                              |

**Papers for AE activity (tentative)**

**AE1**


**AE2**


Wirth, W., Sommer, K., Pape, T., & Karnowski, V. (2016). Success in online searches: Differences between evaluation and finding tasks. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology, 67*(12), 2897–2908.
Email Policy

To ensure that your emails are properly filed for prompt reading, be sure to include [611] in the subject line of your email. If you send your email from myCourses the subject line will be correctly annotated for you. Note that it is my policy to not read or respond to work related emails over the weekend. Please consider this when preparing for assignments.

Questions of a non-confidential nature (e.g., clarification on assignments, or course content) should be submitted to the discussion group. Typically many students have the same question. Using the discussion board not only reduces the number of emails I must manage (which indirectly helps you by freeing up my time to better respond to your questions), but also benefits the students in the class who are more shy and do not as readily seek out help.

McGill Policy Statements

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism, and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information).

In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded. Conformément à la Charte des droits de l’étudiant de l’Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être note.

If you have a disability please contact the instructor to arrange a time to discuss your situation. It would be helpful if you contact the Office for Students with Disabilities at 514-398-6009 before you do this. Additional policies governing academic issues, which affect students, can be found in the McGill Charter of Students' Rights (The Handbook on Student Rights and Responsibilities is available at www.mcgill.ca/files/secretariat/Handbook-on-Student-Rights-and-Responsibilities-2010.pdf).