

IDS 240 Interdisciplinary Research Methods

Course Description

IDS 240 provides students with the tools they will need to approach a research topic from an interdisciplinary perspective. This course teaches students how to craft productive research questions and introduces them to the practical and ethical issues involved in a variety of primary research methodologies. It also introduces students to useful strategies for searching for and evaluating relevant secondary source material in the library and online. At its core, IDS 240 helps students develop a well-informed, rigorous, and realistic interdisciplinary research plan they will carry out in their future IDS classes.

Course Goals

The lectures, readings, and assignments are intended to cultivate the growth and development of a research "skill set" geared for interdisciplinary projects. This "skill set" includes but is not limited to:

- refining strategies for searching for, obtaining, and evaluating primary and relevant secondary source material in the library and online
- developing a writing voice as an interdisciplinary scholar
- expanding analytical skills for understanding scholarship relevant to an area of study

The main goal is to equip students with a working knowledge of multiple research methods they can critically and systematically apply toward the completion of their IDS Capstone research projects. Therefore, students will be required to not simply study a wide range of basic disciplinary research methods and perspectives — but to *practice* techniques and identify those methods most appropriate for their particular investigations.

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:

- demonstrate knowledge of a wide range of disciplinary research methods and perspectives
- demonstrate critical and reflexive thinking about the strengths and weaknesses of different research methods
- identify an interdisciplinary topic that integrates their areas of study and generate productive research questions about that topic
- articulate a research methodology for their individual project
- access and collect necessary information from appropriate primary and secondary sources
- communicate ideas clearly in writing

Required Texts

Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *The Craft of Research*, 3rd Edition. 2008.

Khan, Shamus and Fisher, Dana R. *The Practice of Research: How Social Scientists Answer Their Questions*. 2014. All other required reading assignments will be available on WebCampus.

Course Topics

Module 1	What is (Interdisciplinary) Research?
Module 2	What are Methods?
Module 3	Working with Quantitative Data
Module 4	Archival Research
Module 5	Analyzing Texts and Images
Module 6	Ethnographic Methods
Module 7	Qualitative Interviewing
Module 8	Putting It All Together: Creating a Research Plan

Assignments

Activity	Percent of Grade
Preliminary Research Proposal	5%
Individual Meeting	5%
Active Reading Exercise	5%
Check-In Assignments (3)	15%
Midterm Exam	15%
Critical Annotated Bibliography	25%

Methodology Reflection	5%
Project Plan and Methods Rationale	25%

Expectations

“Education is one of the few things a person is willing to pay for and not get.” ~ *William Lowe Bryan, 10th president of Indiana University*

- You are responsible for meeting all deadlines. Late assignments will lose 5% per day.
- All the assignments have been created with specific learning objectives in mind. Failure to complete assignments, then, means that you are not fulfilling these objectives. For this reason, assignments are not optional. Students must complete ALL assignments (including individual meetings) to receive a grade and credit for the course. Failure to do so will result in a grade of "incomplete," even if you have earned enough points for a passing grade.
- Each student will receive a letter grade at the end of the course. Your success in this class will depend entirely on your effort and ability demonstrated on the assignments listed above.

Preliminary Research Proposal

You will be required to submit a 2-3 paragraph description of an interdisciplinary problem that will guide their research for the rest of the semester. This preliminary proposal must include:

1. An unbiased description of a specific topic you would like to research
2. A list of at least 4 research questions that will guide your search for information about your proposed research topic
3. An explanation of how this topic is relevant to each of your own areas of study
4. An explanation of your topic's significance: *Why should others care about the answers to your questions?*

You will find more detailed information in "Guidelines and Grading Criteria for Course Assignments" under "Syllabus & More." Be sure to go over Module 1 before completing this assignment.

*Note: You will need to include a copy of this assignment in your IDS Portfolio in IDS 495.

Individual Meeting

You will be required to meet with me at least once **between Tuesday, September 6 (Monday is Labor Day- NO Class) and Monday, October 3** of the semester **after** you have submitted your Preliminary Project Proposal to discuss your research ideas via SKYPE (or a similar alternative). Please set up your meeting day and time at: <https://jenniferreed.youcanbook.me/>. Detailed information on scheduling an appointment can be found under "Let's Get Started."

Active Reading Exercise

For this assignment, you will find one *scholarly, peer-reviewed* source that is relevant to your proposed research topic, and you will practice reading with purpose. You will find more detailed information in "Guidelines and Grading Criteria for Course Assignments" under "Syllabus & More." Be sure to go over Module 2 before completing this assignment.

Check-In Assignments

There will be several Check-in assignments throughout the semester. Each assignment is meant to give you the opportunity to practice a specific primary research method or to reflect on how other researchers have used that method in their own work. You are required to complete a total of **THREE** of these assignments, which means you don't have to do all of them. If you do more than three, the one(s) with the lowest grades will be dropped. Guidelines

for each assignment can be found in the individual modules. You will post each assignment to the appropriate discussion forum on WebCampus.

Midterm Exam

The midterm exam will cover all the materials in Modules 1-7. You will have a one week window to take the exam with two attempts available.

Critical Annotated Bibliography

For this assignment, you will find, evaluate, and annotate 8-10 scholarly, peer-reviewed sources, giving particular attention to the methods used by researchers who have studied their topic (or related topics) in the past. You will find more detailed information in "Guidelines and Grading Criteria for Course Assignments" under "Syllabus & More." Be sure to go over Module 8 before completing this assignment.

*Note: You will need to include a copy of this assignment in your IDS Portfolio in IDS 495.

Methodology Reflection

For this assignment, you will brainstorm what types of evidence they will need to address their current research questions. Drawing on what you have learned in this course, you will also offer feedback to your classmates as they prepare to write the Project Plan and Methods Rationale. You will find more detailed information in "Guidelines and Grading Criteria for Course Assignments" under "Syllabus & More." Be sure to go over Module 8 before completing this assignment.

Project Plan and Methods Rationale

Based on the research you do for the annotated bibliography, you will revise your Preliminary Research Proposal and identify a focused research topic and set of research questions that will guide your work in IDS 494 and 495. You will also identify the primary methods you might use to address your research questions, explaining in detail why those methods are well suited to your research goals. You will find more detailed information in "Guidelines and Grading Criteria for Course Assignments" under "Syllabus & More." Be sure to go over Module 8 before completing this assignment.

*Note: You will need to include a copy of this assignment in your IDS Portfolio in IDS 495.

Grading Scale

Percentage of Earned Points	Grade
93-100%	A
90-92%	A-
88-89%	B+
83-87%	B
80-82%	B-
78-79%	C+
73-77%	C
70-72%	C-
68-69%	D+
63-67%	D
60-62%	D-
59% and below	F

Course Policies

Syllabus Updates

I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus as I deem necessary to meet the needs of the class. No changes will be made without sufficient prior notice, but it is your responsibility to keep track of any changes that may occur during the semester. I will announce these updates via email through WebCampus. You will need to check WebCampus email regularly to keep track of these updates.

Late Assignments

You are responsible for meeting all deadlines, regardless of any technology issues you may encounter. For this reason I highly recommend that you not wait until the last minute to turn in assignments or complete discussion posts. Late papers will lose 5% per day.

Style Guide Requirements

Because you all come from different disciplines, there is no one required style guide for this course. However, you must select one style guide that you will use consistently throughout the semester, particularly when you cite other sources. You may choose to follow either the MLA or the APA style guided. For more information, go to <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/> and <http://owl.massey.ac.nz/main/referencing.php>.

Learning Online

Your success in this course depends on your active participation.

- You should log in four times per week at a minimum and spend a minimum of nine hours per week on course activities.
- Ask any questions you have.
- Master our learning management system, WebCampus. If you have any technical questions, contact the IT help desk at 702-895-0777. Phone support is available from 7am - 11pm, seven days a week, including holidays. You may leave voice mails 24 hours a day or submit help requests at ithelp@unlv.edu.
- Check out the Office of Online Education's website for helpful information at <http://online.unlv.edu/content/students>. It offers tips on using WebCampus and for thriving as an online student.
- You may need to refine strategies that have helped you succeed in classroom-based courses: schedule your time for reading, writing and participation, as in **prevent procrastinating**; use the world's greatest research tool already at your finger tips to seek additional information and perspectives; take breaks; and maintain your computer and connectivity. For more practical and time management tips, see [Tips for Online Students](#).

Academic Misconduct—Academic integrity is a legitimate concern for every member of the campus community; all share in upholding the fundamental values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility and professionalism. By choosing to join the UNLV community, students accept the expectations of the Student Academic Misconduct Policy and are encouraged when faced with choices to always take the ethical path. Students enrolling in UNLV assume the obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with UNLV's function as an educational institution.

An example of academic misconduct is plagiarism. Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of another, from the Internet or any source, without proper citation of the sources. See the *Student Academic Misconduct Policy* (approved December 9, 2005) located at: <https://www.unlv.edu/studentconduct/student-conduct>.

Copyright—The University requires all members of the University Community to familiarize themselves **with** and to follow copyright and fair use requirements. **You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The university will neither protect nor defend you nor assume any responsibility for employee or student violations of fair use laws.** Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and

state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies. Additional information can be found at: <http://www.unlv.edu/provost/copyright>.

Disability Resource Center (DRC)—The UNLV Disability Resource Center (SSC-A 143, <http://drc.unlv.edu/>, 702-895-0866) provides resources for students with disabilities. If you feel that you have a disability, please make an appointment with a Disabilities Specialist at the DRC to discuss what options may be available to you. If you are registered with the UNLV Disability Resource Center, bring your Academic Accommodation Plan from the DRC to the instructor during office hours so that you may work together to develop strategies for implementing the accommodations to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. Any information you provide is private and will be treated as such. To maintain the confidentiality of your request, please do not approach the instructor in front of others to discuss your accommodation needs.

Religious Holidays Policy—Any student missing class quizzes, examinations, or any other class or lab work because of observance of religious holidays shall be given an opportunity during that semester to make up missed work. The make-up will apply to the religious holiday absence only. It shall be the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor **within the first 14 calendar days of the course for fall and spring courses (excepting modular courses), or within the first 7 calendar days of the course for summer and modular courses**, of his or her intention to participate in religious holidays which do not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess. For additional information, please visit: <http://catalog.unlv.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=531>.

Transparency in Learning and Teaching—The University encourages application of the transparency method of constructing assignments for student success. Please see these two links for further information:

<https://www.unlv.edu/provost/teachingandlearning>

<https://www.unlv.edu/provost/transparency>

Incomplete Grades—The grade of I—Incomplete—can be granted when a student has satisfactorily completed three-fourths of course work for that semester/session but for reason(s) beyond the student’s control, and acceptable to the instructor, cannot complete the last part of the course, and the instructor believes that the student can finish the course without repeating it. The incomplete work must be made up before the end of the following regular semester for undergraduate courses. Graduate students receiving “I” grades in 500-, 600-, or 700-level courses have up to one calendar year to complete the work, at the discretion of the instructor. If course requirements are not completed within the time indicated, a grade of F will be recorded and the GPA will be adjusted accordingly. Students who are fulfilling an Incomplete do not register for the course but make individual arrangements with the instructor who assigned the I grade.

Tutoring and Coaching—The Academic Success Center (ASC) provides tutoring, academic success coaching and other academic assistance for all UNLV undergraduate students. For information regarding tutoring subjects, tutoring times, and other ASC programs and services, visit <http://www.unlv.edu/asc> or call [702-895-3177](tel:702-895-3177). The ASC building is located across from the Student Services Complex (SSC). Academic success coaching is located on the second floor of the SSC (ASC Coaching Spot). Drop-in tutoring is located on the second floor of the Lied Library and College of Engineering TEB second floor.

UNLV Writing Center—One-on-one or small group assistance with writing is available free of charge to UNLV students at the Writing Center, located in CDC-3-301. Although walk-in consultations are sometimes available, students with appointments will receive priority assistance. Appointments may be made in person or by calling 702-895-3908. The student's Rebel ID Card, a copy of the assignment (if possible), and two copies of any writing to be reviewed are requested for the consultation. More information can be found at: <http://writingcenter.unlv.edu/>.

Rebelmail—By policy, faculty and staff should e-mail students' Rebelmail accounts only. Rebelmail is UNLV's official e-mail system for students. It is one of the primary ways students receive official university communication such as information about deadlines, major campus events, and announcements. All UNLV students receive a Rebelmail account after they have been admitted to the university. Students' e-mail prefixes are listed on class rosters. The suffix is always @unlv.nevada.edu. **Emailing within WebCampus is acceptable.**

Final Examinations—The University requires that final exams given at the end of a course occur at the time and on the day specified in the final exam schedule. See the schedule at: <http://www.unlv.edu/registrar/calendars>.

Library statement:

Students may consult with a librarian on research needs. For this class, the Subject Librarian is (https://www.library.unlv.edu/contact/librarians_by_subject). UNLV Libraries provides resources to support students' access to information. Discovery, access, and use of information are vital skills for academic work and for successful post-college life. Access library resources and ask questions at <https://www.library.unlv.edu/>.