

LIB295: Research Strategies
Syllabus, Spring 2006

Distance education students are currently missing out on a resource that 9000 on-campus students receive annually—library research instruction. LIB295 Research Strategies corrects this deficit and will connect distance students to the wealth of academic resources available online at the Mansfield Library.

This course covers the academic research process and includes instruction on:

- access to and effective search techniques in online library catalogs to locate books and media;
- access to and effective search techniques in online databases to locate peer-reviewed journal articles;
- in-depth review of searching the free Web for quality sources;
- critical thinking about and evaluation of information resources; and
- the process of properly citing resources.

This course will be ideal for students enrolled in classes with a research paper/project assignment or for those wishing to learn more effective research strategies. The online format puts special emphasis on using library resources from a distance and highlights information resources now available for students off campus. Offering an online research strategies course helps level the playing field for distance students, improve student performance in other classes, and teach vital skills not only for the educational arena but for post-college careers and life-long learning.

Instructor:

Samantha Hines, Assistant Professor and Outreach Librarian
Office: ML 323 Office Hours: Monday, 8:00-10:00 a.m. or by appointment
(Office hours held both in person and in the Blackboard Chat area)
Phone: 406-243-4558 Email: samantha.hines@umontana.edu

You are encouraged to contact the instructor with questions and for consultation throughout the semester. There is also a thread in the discussion section for questions--feel free to post or answer a question there.

Credit

This course requires the completion of weekly assignments. There are also 4 exams according to the following schedule.

February 10: Exam 1
March 3: Exam 2
March 17: Exam 3
April 21: Exam 4
May 12: Final Project Due

Grading

Assignments: 35%
Exams: 25%
Final Project: 40%

Assignments

There is an assignment every week dealing with the week's topic. These are all available via Blackboard, integrated with the course material, and should be submitted via the Blackboard Digital Dropbox. They may also be submitted via email to the instructor if there are any technical difficulties. Each assignment is worth ten points, and the points earned make up 35% of your grade. These assignments will build toward your final project so be sure to produce thoughtful work—it will save you time at the end of the semester!

Final Project

The final project for this course will be the creation of a bibliography using a defined style (MLA, APA, Chicago, etc.). It is worth 50 points and comprises 40 percent of your grade. You will need to define the style and make sure there are at least ten references listed—at least three books, four journal articles, and three web resources.

Late Work

Last semester I had a terrible time with students submitting work late, sometimes weeks late. This semester I've decided to institute a late-work policy. I will give you a week's grace period to submit unexcused late assignments (with points deducted per day late), then after that week late assignments will NOT be accepted. The final project can NOT be turned in late. If you have an unavoidable conflict and will not be able to get an assignment on time, please contact me to make arrangements BEFORE the assignment is due in order to spare the loss of points. I'm more than willing to work with you if necessary, but if you aren't turning in assignments without telling me why I will deduct points.

Weekly Topics

Here's a summary of what's covered each week. An assignment is due on Saturday of each week unless noted.

Jan. 23 rd -Jan. 28 th :	Introduction to Libraries and Research
Jan. 29 th -Feb. 4 th :	Introduction to Library Catalogs
Feb. 5 th -Feb. 11 th :	Library Catalogs Continued
Feb. 12 th -Feb. 18 th :	Introduction to Academic Databases
Feb. 19 th -Feb. 25 th :	Academic Databases Continued
Feb. 26 th -Mar. 4 th :	Research Strategy and Information Gathering
Mar. 5 th -Mar. 11 th :	Web Searching Basics
Mar. 12 th -Mar. 18 th :	Web Searching Techniques
Mar. 19 th -Mar. 25 th :	Organizing and Outlining
Mar. 26 th -Apr. 2 nd :	Spring Break!!
Apr. 3 rd -Apr. 8 th :	Evaluating and Citing Books
Apr. 9 th -Apr. 15 th :	Evaluating and Citing Journals
Apr. 16 th -Apr. 22 nd :	Evaluating and Citing Websites
Apr. 23 rd -Apr. 29 th :	Creating More Interesting Papers and Projects
Apr. 30 th -May 6 th :	Plagiarism and Copyright in the Electronic Age