Distance education students are currently missing out on a resource that 9000 on-campus students receive annually—library research instruction. LIB200 Research Strategies corrects this deficit and connects 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. This 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 Distance Education Librarian
Office: ML 323 Office Hours: Monday, 8:00-10:00 a.m. or by appointment
(Office hours held both in person, on IM and in the Blackboard Chat area)
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Yahoo IM: Sam_MLUM AIM: MansfieldLib GTalk: SamHines

You are encouraged to contact me with questions and for consultation any time throughout the semester.

DSS Students: Please contact me early in the semester to let me know your status and advise me on what accommodations I should make. This is a text-heavy course but I can make adjustments for you if needed.

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 10: 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 160 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. Each reference will need to be annotated with a sentence or two describing where you found it and how it relates to your topic. An example of the bibliography can be found in the Course Readings section of Blackboard.

Late Work

I will give you a week’s grace period to submit unexcused late assignments and exams (with one point 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 by Saturday of each week unless noted.

Jan. 22nd-Jan. 27th: Introduction to Libraries and Research
Jan. 28th-Feb. 3rd: Introduction to Library Catalogs
Feb. 4th-Feb. 10th: Library Catalogs Continued
Feb. 11th-Feb. 17th: Introduction to Academic Databases
Feb. 18th-Feb. 24th: Academic Databases Continued
Feb. 25th-Mar. 3rd: Research Strategy and Information Gathering
Mar. 4th-Mar. 10th: Web Searching Basics
Mar. 11th-Mar. 17th: Web Searching Techniques
Mar. 18th-Mar. 24th: Organizing and Outlining
Mar. 25th-Mar. 31st: Spring Break!
Apr. 1st-Apr. 7th: Evaluating and Citing Books
Apr. 8th-Apr. 14th: Evaluating and Citing Journals
Apr. 15th-Apr. 21st: Evaluating and Citing Websites
Apr. 22nd-Apr. 28th: Creating More Interesting Papers and Projects
Apr. 29th-May 5th: Plagiarism and Copyright in the Electronic Age