



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**TENNESSEE**  
KNOXVILLE  
**BIG ORANGE. BIG IDEAS.**

## **INSC 504 Research Methods in Information Sciences** Spring 2021

School of Information Sciences  
College of Communication and Information

**Instructor:** Peiling Wang, Ph.D.  
**Classes:** Tuesday and Thursday 12:40 - 13:55 pm at Zoom  
**Specifics:** <https://utk.instructure.com/> [NetID and password required to access]  
**Office:** 443 Communications Building; voice mail: (865) 974-3700  
**Hours:** See Canvas course site; also available by appointment  
**Email:** peilingw@utk.edu

### **Catalog Description**

Research methods in a variety of information environments; primary and secondary research; research project design; research results interpretation; analysis of published research; techniques supporting research process.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

It introduces basic knowledge about conducting research in information sciences, and provides opportunities to design research projects using appropriate methods. Upon satisfactory completion of the course, the student will:

- understand the basic process of empirical research and research design
- understand the various research methods used in information science research
- understand the relationships between research questions and research methods
- understand the various techniques for data collection and data analysis
- be able to describe and compare various methods and techniques
- be able to produce research plans and research proposals (required for thesis students)
- be able to analyze quantitative and qualitative data
- be able to evaluate and critique research designs (the role as a peer or referee)

This course is required for SIS students choosing the thesis option and is an elective for non-thesis students.

## Course Design

Interactive teaching, active learning, and critical thinking are vital to the success of this course. The design of the course incorporates these components into the processes of teaching and learning. Besides lectures, you will do hands-on exercises, labs, and present your own work. As a part of the course design, you will participate in a research project to gain experience as a participant. Students will learn data analytical tools that require computing skills.

As part of the course design, I will be conducting an ethnographic research project on learning in this course. I thus play a dual role as a teacher and a researcher. You will participate in this research project as a participant. Thus, your role is triple as a learner, participant, and observer.

This course is delivered using Zoom for the Web-based virtual classroom; you may attend classes from anywhere in the world. For more information or tutorials, visit

<https://oit.utk.edu/instructional/tools/liveonline/>

The course schedule, materials, assignments, and communication are managed using Canvas courseware, which you may access on the course site using your UT NetID and Password at <https://utk.instructure.com/> or <http://online.utk.edu/>

## Required Textbook

Punch, Keith F. (2014) *Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*. 3rd Ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

## Readings

Papers or chapters will be accessible from the Canvas course site with links from the schedule.

## Online References

Lowry, Richard (1998-2019) *Concepts & Applications of Inferential Statistics*. free access provided by the author Professor of Psychology Emeritus, Vassar College at <http://vassarstats.net/textbook/> (use browser FireFox, Safari or Chrome)

Illowsky, Barbara & Dean, Susan (2013) *Introductory Statistics* (free online, pdf download, or iBooks; <https://openstax.org/details/introductory-statistics>)

Trochim, William M. The Research Methods Knowledge Base, 2nd Edition. Internet WWW page, at URL: <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/contents.php> (version current as of October 20, 2006).

Human Subjects in Research <http://cics.cci.utk.edu/irb-information>

<https://quizlet.com/subject/statistics/>

Take a quiz? <https://quizlet.com/320457683/psychology-midterm-review-unit-2-flash-cards/>

## Recommended Textbooks

If you pursue thesis research, these textbooks will be helpful:

Punch, Keith F. (2006) *Developing Effective Research Proposals*. 2nd ed. Sage Publications.

Wildemuth, Barbara M. (2016) *Applications of social research methods to questions in information and library science*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.

Creswell, John W. (2013) *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed approaches*. 4nd. ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Vaughan, Liwen (2001) *Statistical methods for the information professional: A practical, painless, approach to understanding, using, and interpreting statistics*. Medford, NJ: Information Today, Inc.; 2001.

Ronald R. Powell and Lynn Silipigni Connaway. (2010). *Basic Research Methods for Librarians*. 5th ed. Westport, NY: Libraries Unlimited.

## Class Attendance & Participation

Prepared attendance and participation in course activities are important to succeed in this course. If you have to miss a class for whatever reason, you are still responsible for the material covered. Class sessions are recorded for replay. If you miss in-class activities, contact me to arrange a make-up/catch-up session.

Missing more than one class meeting for reasons other than those listed above will have a negative impact on your course participation grade. *Acceptable reasons for class absence include:*

- Illness
- Serious family emergencies,
- Special curricular or job requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences),
- Military obligation,
- Severe weather conditions,
- Religious holidays
- Participation in official university activities such as music performances, athletic competition or debate
- Obligations for court imposed legal obligations (i.e., jury duty, or a subpoena)

## Assignments and Grading

Instructions and due dates of the assignments are posted to and accessible from the Canvas course site. A late assignment will result in a point-deduction (1/each day) unless a prior request has been approved with a new due date agreed upon. Acceptable reasons are similar to the above listed.

- Attendance (10%)
- Research Participation (5%):

- Review manuscripts: Practice (15%)
- Qualitative analysis (15%) [two students may work as a team]
- Quantitative analysis (15%) [two students may work as a team]
- Project (30%) [teamwork is encouraged upon approval of the instructor]
- CITI Certificate (5%)
- Presentation (5%)

The University of Tennessee grading system for graduate level courses

A: superior performance	A-: intermediate grade performance
B+: very good performance	B: good performance
B-: intermediate grade performance	C+: less than satisfactory
C: well below the standard expected of graduate students	D or F cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements

### Course Communications

Canvas is the course communication space. Discussions, Announcements, Assignments, Schedules, Grades, and any related matters will be facilitated by Canvas. If you send email from Canvas, be sure to include your Vols email because canvas email cannot be replied to directly

Synchronous Zoom classes will have technical support. You may call SIS support at (888) 378-9338 or (865) 974-7913; OIT HelpDesk via phone (865) 974-9900 or online at <http://help.utk.edu/>.

### Required Technology

Computer and Internet access to OIT resources.

### Course Feedback

In order to maximize learning outcomes, students are encouraged to provide criticisms, input and suggestions to my teaching. You may do so by meeting with me, emailing me, or just dropping an anonymous note.

### Being Successful in This Course

- The students will be prepared for all classes such as reading before the class; be active in participating in discussions online and in Canvas; meet due dates on assignments
- The instructor will be attentive to and supportive of individual student's needs; create and facilitate meaningful learning activities; provide feedback on assignments in a timely manner.

### Schedule

see Canvas

## **Policies and Additional Information**

### **Inclement Weather**

The chancellor (or appointed representative) may officially close or suspend selected activities of the university because of extreme weather conditions. When a decision to close is made, information is distributed to the campus community, shared with local media, and posted on the front page at <http://utk.edu>. SIS will cancel classes when UT is closed. Please check the SIS student listserv ([UTKSIS-L@LISTSERV.UTK.EDU](mailto:UTKSIS-L@LISTSERV.UTK.EDU)) for messages about closing.

### **Disabilities that may Impede Learning**

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact [Student Disability Services](#) in 2227 Dunford Hall at 865-974-6087, or by video relay at 865-622-6566 to coordinate reasonable academic accommodations.

### **Civility**

Civility is genuine respect and regard for others: politeness, consideration, tact, good manners, graciousness, cordiality, affability, amiability and courteousness. Civility enhances academic freedom and integrity, and is a prerequisite to the free exchange of ideas and knowledge in the learning community. Our community consists of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and campus visitors. Community members affect each other's well-being and have a shared interest in creating and sustaining an environment where all community members and their points of view are valued and respected. Affirming the value of each member of the university community, the campus asks that all its members adhere to the principles of civility and community adopted by the campus: <http://civility.utk.edu/>.

### **CCI Diversity Statement**

The College of Communication and Information recognizes that a college diverse in its people, curricula, scholarship, research, and creative activities expands opportunities for intellectual inquiry and engagement, helps students develop critical thinking skills, and prepares students for social and civic responsibilities. All members of the College benefit from diversity and the quality of learning, research, scholarship and creative activities is enhanced by a climate of inclusion, understanding and appreciation of differences and the full range of human experience. As a result, the College is committed to diversity and equal opportunity and it recognizes that it must represent the diversity inherent in American society. The College is acutely aware that diversity and fairness are foundations that unite the College's faculty, staff, students, and the larger communication and information community.

### **Instructor Status as a Title IX Mandatory Reporter**

University of Tennessee faculty are committed to supporting our students and upholding gender equity laws as outlined by Title IX. Please be aware that if you choose to confide in a faculty member regarding an issue of sexual misconduct, dating violence, or stalking, we are obligated to inform the University's Title IX Coordinator, who can assist you in connecting with all possible resources both on- and off-campus. If you would like to speak with someone confidentially, the

Student Counseling Center (865-974-2196) and the Student Health Center (865-974-3135) are both confidential resources.

For additional resources and information, visit [titleix.utk.edu](http://titleix.utk.edu).

## **Academic Integrity**

Students should be familiar and maintain their *Academic Integrity* described in <https://hilltopics.utk.edu/academics/>, p. 15 as: “*Study, preparation and presentation should involve at all times the student’s own work, unless it has been clearly specified that work is to be a team effort. Academic honesty requires that the student present his or her own work in all academic projects, including tests, papers, homework, and class presentation. When incorporating the work of other scholars and writers into a project, the student must accurately cite the source of that work.*”

Students should abide by the **Honor Statement** (<https://hilltopics.utk.edu/student-code-of-conduct/> Section X. Honor Statement)

“As a student of the University, I pledge that I will neither knowingly give nor receive any inappropriate assistance in academic work, thus affirming my own personal commitment to honor and integrity.”

## **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism in any of its several forms is intolerable, and attention to matters of documentation in all written work is expected and required. Inadvertence, alleged lack of understanding, or avowed ignorance of the various types of plagiarism are not acceptable excuses.

Specific examples of plagiarism include:

- Copying without proper documentation (quotation marks and a citation) written or spoken words, phrases, or sentences from any source;
- Summarizing without proper documentation (usually a citation) ideas from another source (unless such information is recognized as common knowledge);
- Borrowing facts, statistics, graphs, pictorial representations, or phrases without acknowledging the source (unless such information is recognized as common knowledge);
- Collaborating on a graded assignment without the instructor’s approval;
- Submitting work, either in whole or in part, created by a professional service and used without attribution (e.g., paper, speech, bibliography, or photograph).

Students who may be unsure of the nature of plagiarism should consult the instructor or a guide for writing research reports. (Additional resources are available at <http://www.lib.utk.edu/instruction/plagiarism.>)

Infractions of academic integrity are penalized according to the severity of the infraction but may include a course grade of "F."

## **SIS MSIS Program Outcomes**

It is our vision to provide a quality educational program, and for students to have the very best educational experience possible. By the end of their time in the MSIS program, each student should be able to:

1. Describe and discuss the processes of creation, organization, distribution, storage, access, retrieval, management, use, and preservation of information.
2. Describe and discuss the nature of leadership and management in the information professions and the importance of participation in the global information society.
3. Apply the general principles, values, and ethical standards of providing information services in a variety of settings and for diverse populations.
4. Comply with the changing responsibilities of the information professional in a culturally diverse and networked global society.
5. Identify critical professional issues in a variety of organizational, cultural, societal, disciplinary, transdisciplinary, and historical contexts.
6. Analyze and apply standards or policies related to the processes of creation, organization, distribution, storage, access, retrieval, management, use or preservation of information.
7. Explain the changing nature of information, information needs, and information behavior.
8. Assess and implement information technologies, systems, sources, and services that serve users effectively and efficiently.
9. Analyze research and apply it to information practice.