

COURSE OUTLINE

Research Techniques

Course Description

OR 103. Research Techniques. 1 hour credit. This course will enable the student to understand the process of information seeking: defining a need, creating a research strategy, selecting and evaluating sources, and using information ethically. The student will be able to apply this knowledge throughout his/her college career and life.

Course Relevance

Information is in abundant supply and easily accessible. Unfortunately, not all information is good. Concepts from this class will teach students how to access the best information and critically judge that information. The student will be able to apply these techniques to college courses as well as other areas of his/her life.

Required Materials

None

Learning Outcomes

The intention is for the student to be able to:

1. Access needed information effectively and efficiently
2. Evaluate information and its sources critically
3. Assess and use information ethically and legally

Primary Learning PACT Skills that will be DEVELOPED and/or documented in this course

Through the student's involvement in this course, he/she will develop his/her ability in the following primary PACT skill areas:

1. Critical Thinking
 - The student will develop critical thinking skills through evaluation of gathered information in activities and a final project.
2. Internet Use
 - The student will improve their usage of the internet by creating effective search strategies and critically evaluating information from the internet for a final project.

Secondary skills (developed but not documented):

Reading
Writing
Computer Literacy
Problem Solving
Ethical Conduct

Major Summative Assessment Task(s)

These learning outcomes and the primary Learning PACT skills will be demonstrated by

1. Completion of a portfolio based on an information problem selected by the student at the beginning of the class

Course Content

- I. Themes – Key recurring concepts that run throughout this course:
 - A. Searching effectively
 - B. Evaluating information
 - C. Using information ethically
- II. Issues – Key areas of conflict that must be understood in order to achieve the intended outcome:
 - A. There are many different resources available
 - B. Quality of information varies
 - C. Information can be used
- III. Concepts – Key concepts that must be understood to address the issues:
 - A. Effective searching skills are crucial to finding relative information
 - B. All information must be evaluated carefully
 - C. Citing sources is essential when using other's intellectual property
- IV. Skills/Competencies – Actions that are essential to achieve the course outcomes:
 - A. Create an effective search strategy and evaluate resources
 - B. Demonstrates knowledge of plagiarism and citing sources

Learning Units

- I. Identify information needs
 - A. Search question
 - B. Keywords
 - C. Types and formats of potential sources
 1. Books
 2. Periodicals
 3. Encyclopedias
 4. Newspapers
 5. Internet sites
- II. Search Effectively
 - A. Knowledge and selection of appropriate sources
 - B. Effective search strategies
 1. Boolean
 2. Truncation
- III. Evaluation of information
 - A. Accuracy
 - B. Bias
 - C. Currency
 - D. Author
- IV. Ethical and legal use of information

- A. Copyright
- B. Plagiarism
- C. Citing Sources

Learning Activities

Independent and collaborative learning activities such as forming research questions, comparing and contrasting different types of information, and evaluating internet information will be assigned to assist the student to achieve the intended learning outcomes. Class discussion and lecture will also contribute to the learning process.

Grade Determination

The student will be graded on satisfactory completion of assessment task, learning activities, and attendance.