

❖ **LIBS 310—Methods of Discovery**

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Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 1:00 – 4:00 (virtual and face-to-face) and by appointment.  
It is sometimes easier to contact me by email than it is by phone.

**Course Description:** Students will explore and apply a variety of research methodologies. Emphasis is on the application of advanced reading, thinking and writing skills to the study of complex problems.

**Course Objectives:**

- Define and explain common terms and concepts used in qualitative research
- Analyze ethical issues involved in research as presented in case studies
- Apply various research and data collection methods in formal assignments and online discussions
- Investigate and analyze research materials available through library databases and the internet to develop an annotated bibliography

**Required Texts:**

Esterberg, Kristin G. *Qualitative Research Methods in Social Research*. McGraw Hill, 2002.  
ISBN: 0-7674-1560-4

**Grading Policy:** Grades for all writing assignments whether formal essays or discussion board postings will be based on how well you have read and reasoned about the reading assignments. This means that you must demonstrate that you can not only summarize, but write analytically and theoretically. Grammar and spelling do count in this class, so please proofread carefully and spell check before submitting all assignments. All of us make a typo here and there, and I understand that, but please do your best to keep these kinds of mistakes as well as grammatical problems to a minimum.

15 points each—Assignments Based on Research Methods Applications
15 points each—Postings to Discussion Board
10 points—Proposal for Annotated Bibliography—Due Monday February 21, at 5:00 pm

40 points—Annotated Bibliography –Due Thursday at 5 pm Monday, May 9

**Grading Rubric for Weekly Reading Responses and Discussion Board Postings**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Possible Points</b>	<b>Your Points</b>
Student followed directions and answered the Question(s) asked (rather than gets off track Or discusses topics not germane to the course	5	
Student takes the assignment seriously and does his/her best to answer the question	3	
Student uses critical thinking & evidence from texts & lectures rather than anecdote or personal opinion	4	
Student Uses proper grammar, complete sentences, Spell Check & cites when appropriate	3	
Total Score	15	

Grading Scale:

A—90-100%

B—80-89%

C—70-79%

D—60-69%

F—59% and below

Please note that most assignments will receive grades but not all will. However, please make your best effort on all assignments. They are all important.

Grades will be accessible through your Gradebook.

**Please be aware:** Although it might appear that online classes should be easy, students often find them more difficult than face-to-face courses. To do well in an online course you must be motivated and well-disciplined. Waiting until the last minute to read assignments and get

homework turned in can be disastrous if you suddenly experience computer problems. It always pays to plan ahead in a course of this type.

**Technology Requirements:** It is critical that you have access to a computer with internet access. High speed access is recommended rather than dial-up. “Our campus is optimized to work in a Microsoft Windows environment. This means our courses work best if you are using a Windows operating system (XP or newer) and a recent version of Microsoft Internet Explorer (6.0, 7.0 or 8.0).”

“Your courses will also work with Macintosh OS X along with a recent version of Safari 2.0 or better. Along with Internet Explorer and Safari, eCollege also supports the Firefox browser (3.0) on both Windows and Mac operating systems.”

“It is strongly recommended that you perform a “Browser Test” prior to the start of your course. To launch a browser test, login to eCollege, click on the ‘myCourses’ tab, and then select the ‘Browser Test’ link under support services.”

**Behavior Policy:** All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See Student’s Guide Handbook, University Procedures, Conduct).

It is fine to disagree with each other and with me, but your comments must be well-reasoned, civil and diplomatic. Please refer to <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html> for the online etiquette we will follow in this course

**Please Note:** The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services  
Texas A&M University-Commerce  
Gee Library, Room 132  
Phone (903) 468-8148 or (903) 886-5835  
FAX (903) 468-8148  
[StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu)

### **Reading Schedule:**

The reading schedule is subject to change as circumstances warrant. Any changes in the schedule will be announced in advance.

Week One:

Esterberg: Chapter 1: What is Social Research?

Esterberg: Chapter 2: Strategies for Beginning Research

Week Two:

Esterberg: Chapter 3: Ethical Issues

Week Three:

Esterberg: Chapter 4: Observation Participant and Otherwise

Week Four:

Esterberg: Chapter 5: Interviews

Week Five:

Esterberg: Chapter 6: Unobtrusive Measures

Adler and Clark: Content Analysis and Comparing Methods:

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