

Delivering a One-Credit Scholarly Communication Course to Humanities Graduate Students:

Engaging with Students, Expanding the Library's Role, Exploring Outcomes

Lindsay Johnston
Denis Lacroix



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
LIBRARIES

Outline

- Course Origins
- MLCS Context
- MLCS 795 Course Objectives
- Literature Review Findings
- Student Perceptions
 - Survey
 - Interview Results
- Next Steps



MLCS 795 - Course Origins

- Liaison Advocacy
 - MLCS information literacy undergraduate series
 - Honours student seminars
 - Library involvement in scholarly communication workshops for faculty
- Pre-existing graduate seminar
- MLCS student demographics



The poster features a colorful, abstract banner at the top with various shapes and colors. Below the banner, the University of Alberta Faculty of Arts logo is on the left. The main text reads 'Graduate Studies with Modern Languages & Cultural Studies' in a mix of blue and green fonts. Below this, it states 'MA (course- and thesis-based) and PhD programs that foster interdisciplinary research and transcultural collaboration'. On the right side, a yellow box titled 'FOUR AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION:' lists: '> Applied Linguistics', '> Media & Cultural Studies', '> Translation Studies', and '> Transnational & Comparative Literatures'. At the bottom right, contact information is provided: 'mlcs.ualberta.ca' and 'arts.undergrad@ualberta.ca'. The bottom of the poster has a green banner with the text 'MLCS offers graduate degree programs that foster interdisciplinary research and transcultural collaboration'.

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
FACULTY OF ARTS

Graduate Studies with
**Modern Languages
& Cultural Studies**

MA (course- and thesis-based) and
PhD programs that foster interdisciplinary
research and transcultural collaboration

FOUR AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION:

- > Applied Linguistics
- > Media & Cultural Studies
- > Translation Studies
- > Transnational & Comparative Literatures

mlcs.ualberta.ca
arts.undergrad@ualberta.ca

MLCS offers graduate degree programs that foster interdisciplinary research and transcultural collaboration

www.ualberta.ca/modern-languages-and-cultural-studies/graduate-program-information

Modern Languages & Cultural Studies (MLCS) Context

- Graduate Curriculum Review
 - Portfolio Model
 - Series of One-credit modules common to all MLCS department disciplines
 - 2 mandatory modules: grant writing and information literacy!
 - 10 hours of class time (ie. 5 two hour class sessions) + homework time
- Faculty of Arts student mission which calls for
 - opening unexpected doors of opportunity
 - training for adaptability and critical thinking skills
 - encouraging lifelong learning and groundbreaking research
- UofA's Strategic Plan *For the Public Good* objectives encourage
 - Broad curricular experiential learning opportunities
 - Increase community relations
 - Interdisciplinary, cross-faculty, and cross unit engagement and collaboration



What will students learn?

Faculty of Arts

[ABOUT](#)[PROGRAMS](#)[DEPARTMENTS](#)[RESEARCH](#)[STUDENT SERVICES](#)[ALUMNI & GIVING](#)

[Home](#) / [Departments](#) / [Modern Languages and Cultural Studies](#) / [Graduate Program Information](#) / [The Portfolio](#) / [Modules](#) / [Information Literacy](#)

Modern Languages and Cultural Studies

[Department Information](#) +[Undergraduate Program Information](#) +[Course Outlines](#)

Graduate Program Information

[Prospective Students](#) +

The Portfolio

Modules

[Grant Writing](#)[Information Literacy](#)[Community Service Learning](#)

Information Literacy

Description

Provides students with practical knowledge to understand the nature of scholarly conversations in their field and how they plan to participate in the discourse of their discipline; identify and use a variety of information discovery tools and techniques as they explore the most relevant and appropriate sources for their research.

Objectives

Identify the contribution of scholarly pieces and scholars to the discipline; formulate questions for research based on gaps and use varied methods and tools; identify markers of authority when engaging with information; discovery strategies and tools when searching for and managing information; articulate the purpose and distinguishing characteristics of copyright, open access, and public domain; uses of proper attribution and citation; develop an information management, dissemination and preservation plan; articulate their place in the academic discourse of their chosen discipline

Outcomes

Variety of tasks to help develop a research inquiry (questions) and strategies that address a broader world-view, and that recognize information gaps and new investigative methods; to recognize how the economics of information impact their research; to effectively and ethically use, manage, and preserve the information they consume and create.

NB: This is a required portfolio element for all students and must be taken in the first term of study. This is a five week taught workshop; it is not self-directed.

Course Objectives Mapped to ACRL Framework Concepts



1. **Authority Is Constructed and Contextual**

- a. identify the contribution of scholarly pieces and scholars to the discipline;
- b. identify markers of authority when engaging with information
 - i. Final Assignment: Create a citation map and an annotated bibliography using metric data

2. **Research as Inquiry**

- a. formulate questions for research based on gaps and use varied methods and tools;
- b. Final assignment: Citation map lists research questions and the resources to support them

3. **Information Has Value**

- a. articulate the purpose and distinguishing characteristics of copyright, open access, and public domain;

4. **Scholarship as Conversation**

- a. uses of proper attribution and citation;
 - i. Final Assignment: Create a citation map and bibliography making explicit the relationship between sources
- b. students articulate their place in the academic discourse of their chosen discipline

5. **Searching as Strategic Exploration**

- a. discovery strategies and tools when searching for and managing information;

6. **Information Creation as a Process**

- a. develop an information management, dissemination and preservation plan;
- b. Final Assignment: Create a citation map and a data management abstract
- c. In class activity: formulate a research question and represent it graphically using an image

Course Materials

- Departmental requirements and university calendar description
- Syllabus
- OERs
- Libguide: <http://guides.library.ualberta.ca/mlcs795>

MLCS 795 Information Literacy

Class 1: Overview, Discover, Cite

Class 2: Scholarship is a Conversation

Class 3: Continue the Conversation:
Metrics

Class 4: Open Access

Class 5: Data Management &
Copyright

Writing & Citing

Citation Map

Syllabus

- [MLCS 795 Syllabus and Course Outline](#)

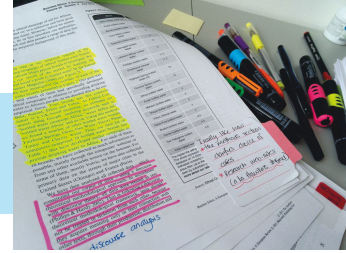
Readings, Handouts and Presentations

- [Where Do You Find Information \(Tutorial\)](#)
- [Putting a Search Together \(Tutorial\)](#)
- [Where to Start Searching \(Tutorial\)](#)
- [Presentation Slides](#)
- [Class 1 - Summary](#)

Assignments

- ["What is your research?" Activity...](#)
- [Keywording Exercise \(Due on Oct. 27\)](#)
 1. complete Keywording exercise for your own research topic
 2. go to your e-mail in which you identified dBs relevant to your topic & select 2 dBs to search
 3. use your completed Keywording sheet to search, save & export citations into RefWorks (minimum 10 citations from each dB)
 4. in RefWorks, create a folder for your research topic, then add your citations there
Bring your completed Keywording sheet to class on Oct. 27.
- [RefWorks \(Citation Manager\)](#)

Literature Review Findings

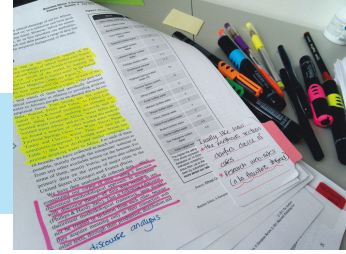


- Scarcity of scholarly articles on information literacy credit courses for graduate students
- Articles on grad level credit courses focus on understanding how students find information
- Broad-disciplinary base, eg: All disciplines, Humanities students, Ed students, etc.

Bruce, Christine S. "Postgraduate Response to an Information Retrieval Credit Course." *Australian Academic and Research Libraries*, vol. 22, no. 2, 1991a.

Madden, Ronan. "Information Behaviour of Humanities PhDs on an Information Literacy Course." *Reference Services Review* vol. 42, no. 1, 2014.

Literature Review Findings



- International (English language) results: US, UK, Australia...
- Articles outline various course structures, and various types of collaboration with faculty members. No consensus on content or format of courses.

Cohen, Nadine, et al. "A Survey of Information Literacy Credit Courses in US Academic Libraries." RSR: Reference Services Review, vol. 44, no. 4, 2016., pp. 564-582.

Bibliography: guides.library.ualberta.ca/mlcs795/bibliography

Student Course Perceptions: Survey and Interview Results



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
LIBRARIES

Student Participants

- 4 students: 1 MA, 3 PhDs
 - 4 responded to survey
 - 3 interviews
- Canadian & international educational backgrounds
- Some had previous info lit training, some none
- Interdisciplinary focus: Comparative Literature

Students' Expectations



“Expected the course would be about using the library resources, including the catalogue, but it was much broader than that, because it touched upon scholarly communication, publication, open access...”



“Open to anything the course had to offer...”



Skeptical, but ended up finding the course very helpful: MLCS is “trying to raise independent researchers, intellectual minds...”

Survey Results



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
LIBRARIES

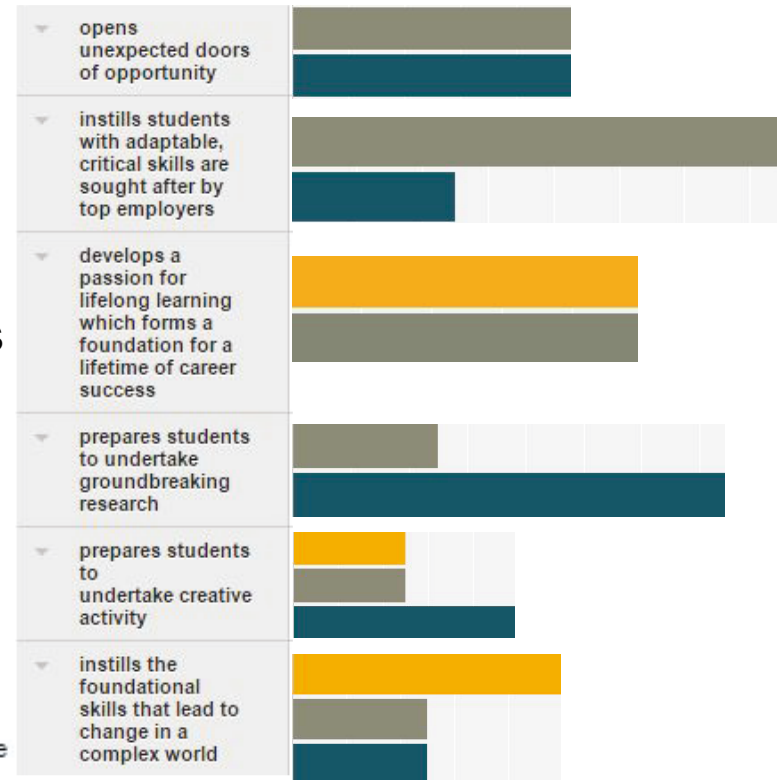
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the course met the following elements of the Faculty of Arts Vision and Mission

Students agreed or strongly agreed that MLCS

795

- 1) opens unexpected doors of opportunity
- 2) instills students with adaptable, critical skills sought after by top employers
- 3) prepares students to undertake groundbreaking research

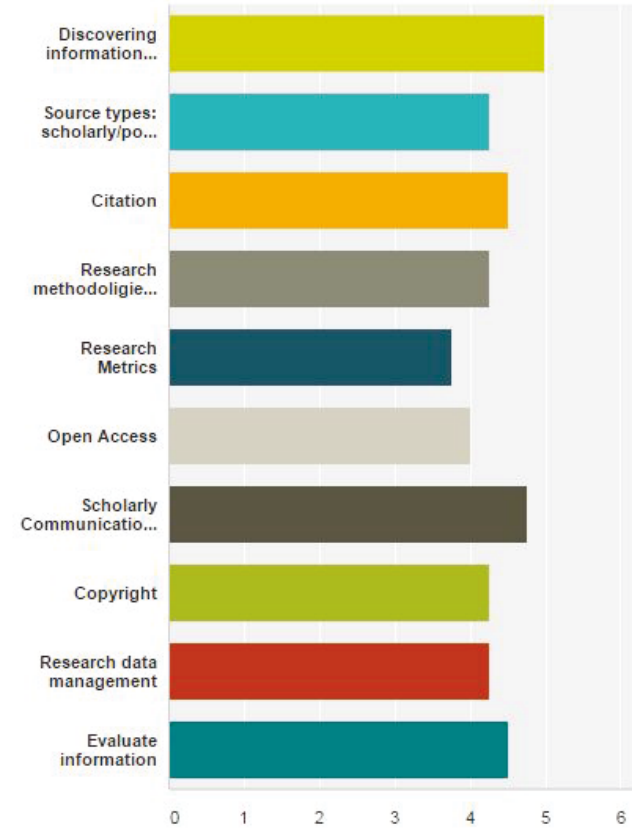
Neutral Agree Strongly Agree



In terms of your studies and research, please rate each of the concepts included in the course from least important to most important.

Most Important:

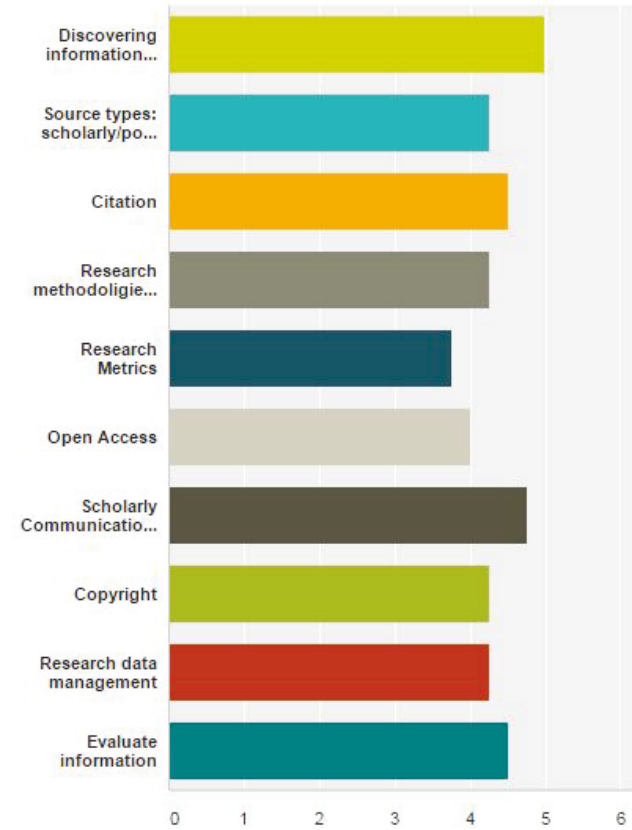
- **Discovering information using information seeking tools** (4: most important)
- **Citation** (3: most important)
- **Scholarly Communication in the Humanities** (3: most important)
- **Evaluate information** (3: most important)



In terms of your studies and research, please rate each of the concepts included in the course from least important to most important.

Important:

- **Research data management (RDM)**
(2: most important + 1: important)
- **Source types: scholarly/popular, primary/secondary** (2: most important + 1: important)
- **Research methodologies/critical approaches**
(2: most important + 1: important)
- **Copyright** (2: most important + 1: important)
- **Open Access** (1: most important + 2: important)
- **Research Metrics** (1: most important + 1: important)



Please explain why the course concept(s) ranked as most important (ie. above moderately important) in question 2 had the greatest impact in your scholarly activities.

- Gave me research skills after a long absence from Academia and a complete restructuring of research.
- The materials on information seeking tools, citation and research metrics helped me to expand my bibliography and re-formulate some of my research questions; they were also helpful for evaluation of the sources. The training session on copyright helped me plan the preparatory stages of my project.

Is there any content that was missing that you would have liked the course to cover? Please explain.

- No! There was already A LOT of information in the course. Anymore and it would be unmanageable in the time given.
- No





Interviews

Interview script: <https://goo.gl/Lqaiva>

UNESCO OER Readings

- Effective as reference sources
- Too long & technical
- Lacked explanations on metrics

Open Access Curricula for Researchers and Library Schools



UNESCO Member States have recognized that knowledge plays a key role in economic growth, social development, cultural enrichment and democratic empowerment. This decision has influenced UNESCO's Open Access programme, which focuses on bridging knowledge pools on OA across the world and building capacities to better understand Open Access.

Within the overall framework of UNESCO's strategy on Open Access.

www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/resources/publications-and-communication-materials/publications/publications-by-series/oa-curricula-for-researchers-and-library-schools/



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

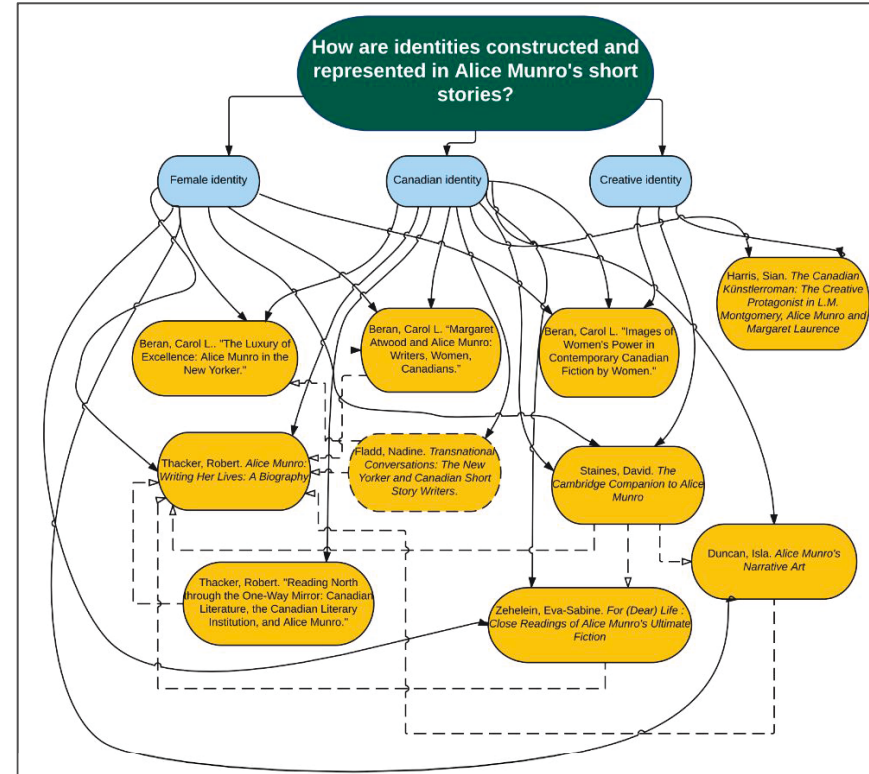
**Scholarly
Communication**

**Sharing Your
Work in Open
Access**

**Research
Evaluation Metrics**

The Assignments

- Small classroom & homework assignments:
 - Images of research
 - Citation
 - Evaluating what you read/identify research method
 - Metrics
- Final Assignment
 - Stages, instructions, and examples
 - Concept map portion may not appeal to some learning styles



Student final assignment concept map reproduced with permission

Threshold Concepts

Troublesome

- Scholarly communication
 - Citation styles
 - Concept map
 - Publication metrics
- Research data management (RDM)



Transformative

- Copyright : student changed her thesis proposal in light of copyright issues
- Authorship : student decided to change which authors to bring into the conversation
- Research Question : Students were able to refocus and redefine their research topics.
- Interdisciplinarity : Students learned about new search tools and were able to find more on their challenging topics
- Metrics : bigger picture view of the discipline and individual researchers' place in it

Next Steps



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
LIBRARIES

Improvements

Initial Stage:

Ask students to provide a research plan with research questions

- bring plan developed in Grant Writing course (first module)
- present their research, ask for ideas from fellow-students
 - [Images of research competition](#) + [3MT model](#)



The Three Minute Thesis (3MT®) is an academic research communication competition developed by The University of Queensland (UQ), Australia.

www.threeminutethesis.org

Engagement & Concept Retention:

- Students present for 2 mins on class readings & contribute one good resource
- Students work on a publication metric cheat sheet to share with class. Which type of metric best applies to their situation? If there are no metrics, what next?
- Use exit slips or minute papers at the end of each class
- More on Digital Humanities and integrate a tour of new [Digital Scholarship Centre](#)

Findings

- Course is valued by students and they appreciate broader focus on Scholarly Communication
- Force students out of their comfort zones
- Humanities grads don't want a flipped classroom
- Benefits to students:
 - Refocus research question: better understanding of research intentions
 - Improved awareness of resources & better able to face challenge of interdisciplinarity
 - Learn how to apply metrics: see bigger picture
 - Deeper understanding of scholarly communication; introduction to new concepts such as research data management



¿¿Questions ??



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
LIBRARIES

