



ILS 235: SPIRaL (Student Partners for Information Research and Literacy) Undergraduate Research Program, Part 1: Commencing Information Literacy Research

CRN: 29159

Credit hours: 2 credit hours

Meeting time and place: Mondays and Wednesdays 1:30-2:20pm in Beering B260

Course web page: <https://purdue.brightspace.com/d2l/le/content/1102070/Home>

Communicating with your research mentors

Clarence Maybee,	Rachel Fundator,
<i>Director of the Institute for Information Literacy at Purdue; Professor and W. Wayne Booker Chair for Information Literacy</i>	<i>Clinical Assistant Professor in the Libraries and School of Information Studies</i>
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Office: Hicks G941	Office: Hicks G922
Office Hours: Tues 4pm (can do in-person or online, just send us a heads-up ahead of time for an online meeting)	Office Hours: Tues 9am (can do in-person or online, just send us a heads-up ahead of time for an online meeting)

In addition to our research group meetings, you will be paired with a research mentor (Dr. Maybee or Professor Fundator) and will meet individually with them several times during the year. When you need additional support, feedback, or clarification related to your work on the SPIRaL project or just more general professional or academic guidance, you are encouraged to reach out to your research

mentor to schedule a time to meet. Our office hours are listed above, but if you cannot make it during those times, we will work with you to find alternative meeting arrangements.

- We are reachable via email Monday-Friday except for University holidays or unless otherwise communicated to the research team.
- We try to respond as soon as possible (generally within 24-48 hours).
- To help us keep track of and respond to your emails quickly, include “SPIRaL” and the topic in the subject line of the email (e.g., SPIRaL–Question about B. Fister Reading).

SPIRaL Overview

Over the course of a year-long research experience, you will engage in original research to investigate how information literacy—in its many forms—can inform real-world solutions to contemporary information challenges, such as mis/disinformation.

In the first half of the semester, you will explore the information literacy literature to build a foundation for our research this year. In this early part of the semester, you will be introduced to the different views scholars have of information literacy, the various research approaches they employ, and the range of real-world information challenges information literacy researchers attend to with their research. You will use the insights from the existing information literacy and information challenges research to inform the research study you will carry out over the year.

In the second part of the fall semester, You will commence original research (IRB 2024-84) that addresses a need or gap in the literature. You will apply data collection methods and reflect on the affordances of qualitative research approaches in pursuing knowledge about information literacy’s role in addressing information challenges.

Across this year-long research experience, the SPIRaL research team will aim to: 1. expand what is known about the role information literacy can play in addressing significant information challenges in the world, and 2. enrich the information literacy research community by welcoming new and passionate undergraduate researchers into this work.

SPIRaL Teaching & Learning Philosophy

In SPIRaL, students are not just assigned research tasks to complete but are rather partners in developing and conducting the research. The faculty-student team who developed the SPIRaL program believes learning is a social and unfolding endeavor. We believe that we are all learners with room to expand and refine our understanding over time through collaborative conversations and strategic inquiry. We also believe all of us can lend our unique experiences and insights to help one another learn this year. In SPIRaL, we will all use and expand on our strengths to make decisions, build relationships with other researchers (mentors and student researchers), and contribute to the success of future SPIRaL researchers by identifying areas of growth and improvement for the program.

Learning Outcomes

Over the course of this semester, you will be able to do the following:

- Analyze the range of scholarly perspectives, research approaches, and real-world information challenges information literacy researchers attend to with their research.
- Use insights from information literacy research to conduct a qualitative research study investigating the role information literacy may play in addressing various information challenges.
- Apply qualitative research methods to collect data for our research study that will investigate the role information literacy may play in addressing various information challenges.
- Employ a practice of reflection and act upon reflective insights to operate effectively on team-based research.

Methods of Evaluation

To track your development in the pursuit of these learning outcomes, we will use multiple evaluation methods, such as a research analysis paper, written reflections, study spotlight presentations, and a weekly learning log documenting your efforts and learning in the course.

SPIRaL logistics

Brightspace

All materials, assignments, and guidance will be posted in the SPIRaL Brightspace course. We will post information (online activities, discussion starters, etc.) for the upcoming week by Sunday evening. We strongly encourage you to regularly review upcoming weeks and the SPIRaL schedule, to recognize where we are in our research and what is to come.

Deadlines

Deadlines are an unavoidable part of being a professional and this research program is no exception. Team members must be able to rely on one another to complete their work on time. In order for the research project to stay on schedule, due dates have been established for assignments. Assignments should be uploaded to the appropriate space in Brightspace by 11:59 pm EST on the due date (almost always Mondays) listed in the course schedule unless otherwise stated or agreed upon with the research team. Communication is also key to the success of research. Your mentors and fellow researchers depend on you to let us know as *soon as possible* if something is preventing you from completing your work by a deadline so we can come up with an alternate plan.

In the case where you do not submit an assignment and do not work with your mentors to identify an alternate plan, we will have to take points off the assignment. 50% will be taken off assignments submitted 5 days late with no plan made with mentors. All assignments not submitted within a week of a deadline without an alternate plan arranged with your mentors will result in a zero.

Naming your files

A necessary part of conducting team research is to be organized. Please be sure to submit all your assignments as a Word document/Google doc (no PDFs, please). Use the following file naming convention (Assignmentname-Lastname-Firstname) for your documents. This will save all of us time and confusion as we collaboratively edit, share, and locate our documents!

Syllabus changes

Because the process of conducting research is often non-linear and requires researchers to be adaptable to inevitable changes or delays, **this syllabus is subject to change**. We will announce and share changes made to the syllabus as early as possible. If there has been a change to the syllabus, you will see a note at the top with the date of the edit made and the initials of the editor (e.g. edited 11/04/2023–RF).

Attendance policy

We strongly believe that the most effective way for all of us to learn and to succeed in SPIRaL is by regularly attending and engaging in our group and individual meetings. As a student researcher, you make this program possible, have necessary perspectives to share, and so are expected to be present for all group meetings and individual meetings with mentors. If it is not possible for you to attend a meeting, please discuss this in advance with your research mentors and another member of the research team, so they can fill you in on what has been missed.

We recognize that occasionally it may be necessary for you to be absent from a scheduled SPIRaL activity due to sickness, a pressing conflict, an emergency, etc. When conflicts or absences can be anticipated, such as for many University sponsored activities and religious observations, please inform us of the situation as far in advance as possible. For unanticipated or emergency absences when advance notification to us is not possible, contact us as soon as possible by email or phone to let us know the situation. In emergencies or cases of bereavement, if you are unable to make direct contact with us, you or your representative/advisor should contact the Office of the Dean of Students via [email](#) or phone at 765-494-1747. Our course Brightspace includes a link to the Dean of Students under 'Campus Resources'.

You are responsible for research/classwork resulting from an absence. Our philosophy is that we are all a research team, and we must work as a team to maintain progress with the research. We expect you to 1.) notify us (and someone in the research group) that you will miss a class, and 2.) that you work with the team to identify what was missed or what the next steps are. If you miss a class session that requires make-up work, we will work together to determine what those action items are. Assigning make-up work will be at the discretion of your SPIRaL mentors.

Special note regarding PUSH: Please note that PUSH **does not** provide students with “excuse” notes. Unless you are acutely ill, there is nothing for PUSH to verify. Please communicate with us as soon as possible, in the event of an illness, so that we can work together for a positive solution to an absence.

Missed or late work

The primary focus for SPIRaL this year is the original research we will conduct. Given the multi-faceted nature of conducting research, we recognize that some deadlines will need to be adjusted to accommodate where we are as a research team and as individuals with lives and commitments. In a situation where you recognize that you will not be able to meet a deadline, you should communicate with your mentors (and if relevant to a class meeting, another member of the team) via email as early as possible. Let us know specifically what you will not be able to submit on time and what you are requesting (time or additional help). If you are keeping an eye on our SPIRaL timeline and the Brightspace course, chances are you will know day(s) in advance that you will not be able to meet a deadline. If you are working on a particular task with another SPIRaL student researcher, please communicate and coordinate with them, as well.

The research team will try to accommodate these inevitable changes or shifting deadlines because we have all experienced the need to adjust and ask for help. However, it is up to the discretion of the research mentors to accommodate individual requests. If late deliverables or failure to submit deliverables becomes a recurring problem, SPIRaL research mentors will first have a conversation with you to uncover the nature of the problem and strategize ways in which we can all adjust our process, working time, etc. to meet the deadlines established by the research team. In the unlikely situation that, after this conversation, a SPIRaL researcher continues to fail to submit deliverables or frequently submits late, the research mentors may have to recommend that the student researcher discontinue SPIRaL to focus their efforts on their coursework and other commitments.

Learning materials & technology

There is no required textbook for this course. All pre-work (which includes a mix of readings, videos, and other types of materials) will be linked in the [official course in Brightspace](#). We will use the Brightspace system to assign pre-work in preparation for our group meetings, share group meeting notes, slides, and other supporting materials, and for you to submit any assignments.

Our group meetings will be interactive and discussion based. Please bring a device, such as a tablet or laptop, to our meetings. If you do not have a device to use, please let us know as soon as possible, and we will seek out a loaner device.

SPIRaL Assignments

All assignments are to be submitted to Brightspace at 11:59pm on the due date listed below unless otherwise stated.

Assignments	Due	Points
Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Certificate	09/16	5
Study Spotlights (2)	09/04; 09/25	10 each
Reflections (2)	08/26; 12/02	10 each
Learning Logs (15 and drop one)	Submitted Mondays by 11:59 pm	3 each
Analysis paper (1)	09/30	15
Fall Research Expo reflection (1)	Due by 11/25	10
		Total: 112

Reflections:

SPIRaL guides new researchers to adopt a reflective approach to the work they do. Structured and recurring reflection helps generate, deepen, and document learning (Ash, & Clayton, 2009). You will complete two 1-2 page reflections this fall. These reflections are opportunities to pause and think deeply about your learning about information and algorithmic literacy and the process of conducting research in SPIRaL. Read the entire [reflection assignment description](#). You will also conduct a reflection on your experience attending the [fall research expo](#) in November.

Learning Logs:

Your Learning Log is a space where you will document—in the manner that makes sense to you—your efforts, questions, ideas, and progress in order to reflect on what’s working (or not), why the work matters, and what you plan to do next based on those insights. You will upload your Log weekly (on Mondays no later than 11:59pm). Read the entire [Learning Log assignment description](#).

RCR Certificate:

You will complete two RCR training modules and quizzes by September 16th to be eligible as a research team member for this project. Read the overview to the [RCR assignment in Brightspace](#).

Brief Schedule:

Date	Topic	Assignments Due
08/19	SPIRaL Orientation	
08/21	What is information literacy?	
08/26	Exploring Information Challenges, part 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection #1
08/28	Exploring Information Challenges, part 2	
09/02	LABOR DAY NO CLASS Mentor meeting this week	
09/04	Information Challenge Study Spotlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study spotlight #1
09/09	Preparing for guest lecture	
09/11	Guest lecture focused on info challenges (Dr. Elena Musi)	
9/16	Information literacy research perspectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCR due
09/18	Information literacy research approaches, part 1	
09/23	Information literacy research approaches, part 2 RCR Field Specific #1	
09/25	Research Approach Study Spotlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study spotlight #2
09/30	Guest Lecture focused on research methods (Dr. Peterson-Salahuddin)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis 2-page paper due
10/02	Situating our research	
10/07	FALL BREAK NO CLASS	

10/09	Our interview approach	
10/14	Interview approach and practice interviews	
10/16	Practice interviews + participant selection	
10/21	Final interview practice and logistics	
10/23	Data Collection begins— NO CLASS	
10/28	Working session and Mentor meetings	
10/30	Data Collection check-in #1	
11/04	Working session and Mentor meetings	
11/06	Research Roundtable **2:30-3:20 in Honors College South 1066**	
11/11	Data collection check-in #2 and initial impressions	
11/13	Exploring thematic analysis	
11/18	Coding Practice Data collection ends	
11/20	Acclimating to coding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send your course schedule for next semester to rfundato@purdue.edu
11/25	Coding continued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall Expo reflection due
11/27	Thanksgiving break NO CLASS	
12/02	Wrapping up the semester and next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflection #2

12/04	End of semester celebration	
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* **Schedule and assignments subject to change. Any changes will be posted in Brightspace.**

SPIRaL evaluation & improvement

The SPIRaL development team is committed to continuous improvement of the program based on the experiences of student researchers. Throughout SPIRaL, we will provide specific opportunities for you to share what is working, what can be improved, and in what ways. We also welcome informal feedback at any point to help us adjust in real-time and plan for adjustments and improvements in subsequent years of the program. During the last two weeks of the course, you will be provided with an opportunity to evaluate this program and your experience working with the research mentors. Purdue uses an online course evaluation system. You will receive an official email from evaluation administrators with a link to the online evaluation site. You will have up to two weeks to complete this evaluation. Your participation is an integral part of SPIRaL succeeding, and your feedback is vital to improving education at Purdue University. We strongly urge you to participate and play a role in improving SPIRaL for future researchers!

Other Policies & Statements

(listed in alphabetical order)

Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity is valuing and demonstrating honesty in academic settings and in your academic work. It is a critical part of participating ethically and effectively in this course and in your professional or academic experiences beyond this course. Purdue specifically prohibits "[...] dishonesty in connection with any University activity. Cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information to the University are examples of dishonesty." [Part 5, Section III-B-2-a, Student Regulations] Furthermore, the University Senate has stipulated that "the commitment of acts of cheating, lying, and deceit in any of their diverse forms (such as the use of substitutes for taking examinations, the use of illegal cribs, plagiarism, and copying during examinations) is dishonest and must not be tolerated. Moreover, knowingly to aid and abet, directly or indirectly, other parties in committing dishonest acts is in itself dishonest." [University Senate Document 72-18, December 15, 1972].

For more information about academic integrity, as well as tips to avoid engaging in academic dishonesty, see Purdue's [student guide for academic integrity](#).

AI Usage

The assessments in this course emphasize the importance of reflection as a way to deepen your learning. Using generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT and [Copilot](#), will not be particularly helpful for the assignments we have and will bypass this opportunity to slow down and think about your research activities, evaluate what is working or not, or brainstorm new approaches/opportunities, which will ultimately hinder the kind of learning we are after in SPIRaL.

There are ethical and appropriate uses of generative AI. For example, generative AI can be helpful for brainstorming ideas by posing questions and considering responses, editing your writing, or helping you think through alternative solutions based on what has been written about elsewhere.

We do not endorse using AI tools for composing your learning logs or reflections. We especially prohibit the use of generative AI for interacting with our collected data because it is our responsibility to protect the confidentiality of our research participants, and inputting this data into AI tools violates this responsibility.

If you use AI tools to help you along with something you are working on (that is not in the list above), please include a paragraph accompanying your assignment that describes what tool you used, how you used it (including specific prompts and outputs), and how it helped (or didn't help) you with your task. You may find that using generative AI tools are (un)helpful in unexpected ways. We encourage you to write down times when you've found it to be (un)helpful, and talk with your fellow researchers to decide if it is worth bringing into the researcher guidelines document that SPIRaL researchers are developing over the offerings of this course. Clarence and Rachel can also chat with you about this and provide some guidance in our mentor meetings.

Accessibility and Accommodations

Purdue University strives to make learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability, please let us know so that we can discuss options. You are also encouraged to contact the Disability Resource Center at: drc@purdue.edu or by phone: 765-494-1247.

We try our best to make all of our materials fully accessible to all learners through the use of alternative text, captions in videos, and proper document structuring. We are still learning how to do this, and we may inadvertently make mistakes. If you experience any challenge accessing or engaging with any course materials this semester, please let us know as soon as possible. We will work with you to make sure that all of our materials are accessible and usable.

Basic Needs Security

Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support. There is no appointment needed and Student Support Services is available to serve students 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Considering the significant disruptions caused by the current global crisis as is related to COVID-19, students may submit requests for emergency assistance from the [Critical Needs Fund](#).

Emergency Preparation

In the event of a major campus emergency, requirements, deadlines, etc. are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances beyond our control. Relevant changes will be posted as an announcement in Brightspace or can be obtained by contacting us via email or phone. You are expected to read your @purdue.edu email on a frequent basis. Read about further [emergency information and details here](#).

Mental Health Statement

Your mental health and well-being are important to us. There are many resources available to you at Purdue to support your mental health and well-being. Below are a few options, but do not hesitate to reach out to us for help connecting you with one of these Purdue resources or services:

- **If you find yourself beginning to feel some stress, anxiety and/or feeling slightly overwhelmed, try [Therapy Assistance Online \(TAO\)](#)**, a web and app-based mental health resource available courtesy of Purdue Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS). TAO is available to all students at any time by creating an account on the [TAO Connect website](#), or downloading the app from the App Store or Google Play. It offers free, confidential well-being resources through a self-guided program informed by psychotherapy research and strategies that may aid in overcoming anxiety, depression and other concerns. It provides accessible and effective resources including short videos, brief exercises, and self-reflection tools.
- **If you need support and information about options and resources**, please contact or see the [Office of the Dean of Students](#). Call 765-494-1747. Hours of operation are M-F, 8 a.m.- 5 p.m.
- **If you find yourself struggling to find a healthy balance between academics, social life, stress, etc.**, sign up for free one-on-one virtual or in-person sessions in West Lafayette with a [Purdue Wellness Coach at RecWell](#). Student coaches can help you navigate through barriers and challenges toward your goals throughout the semester. Sign up is free and can be done on BoilerConnect. Students in Indianapolis will find support services curated on the [Vice Provost for Student Life website](#).
- **If you're struggling and need mental health services: Purdue University is committed to advancing the mental health and well-being of its students.** If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of mental health support, services are available. For help, such individuals should contact [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) at 765-494-6995 during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or by going to the CAPS offices in [West Lafayette](#) or [Indianapolis](#).

Nondiscrimination Statement

Purdue University is committed to maintaining a community which recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters tolerance, sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among its members; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her potential. In pursuit of its goal of academic excellence, the University seeks to develop and nurture diversity. The University believes that diversity among its many members strengthens the institution, stimulates creativity, promotes the exchange of ideas, and enriches campus life. A hyperlink to Purdue's full Nondiscrimination Policy Statement is included in our course Brightspace under University Policies. You may also read the full nondiscrimination policy on Purdue's [official website](#).

Violent Behavior Policy

Purdue University is committed to providing a safe and secure campus environment for members of the university community. Purdue strives to create an educational environment for students and a work environment for employees that promote educational and career goals. Violent Behavior impedes such goals. Therefore, Violent Behavior is prohibited in or on any University Facility or while participating in any university activity. See the [University's full violent behavior policy](#) for more detail.