Overview of ILR 260 Credit by Exam

The exam includes multiple-choice questions, technology-related tasks, and research-writing tasks.

Sections of the exam will require you to use NU Library resources. NU Library tutorials can be found at http://nu.libguides.com/training

Below you will find the course description for ILR 260, as well as a list of topics and performance indicators intended to help you assess your readiness for the exam.

ILR 260 Course Description
A cross-disciplinary course that teaches effective report and research paper writing through the use of key computer technologies. Topics include library and Internet research; information organization, evaluation, and synthesis; MLA and APA style formats; and the use of document-production, spreadsheet, image-editing, and presentation software.

Topics
- academic disciplines
- research ethics
- reference resources
- primary, secondary, and tertiary sources
- MLA/APA documentation styles
- Boolean logic for searches
- library catalogs
- navigating the NU Library site
- analytical research writing
- web search
- evaluating web sources
- Library of Congress classification system
- LexisNexis / news sources
- citing web sources and news sources
- journal databases
- peer-reviewed sources
- citing journal sources
- annotating and engaging with sources
- integrating sources into a research project
- Wikipedia and wikis
- word processing programs
- summarizing and paraphrasing
- synthesizing information
- chart design in spreadsheet programs
- calculating in spreadsheet programs
- statistical information
- image analysis and editing
- ethical and social issues relevant to information technology
Performance indicators

The list below is presented to help you think more concretely about skills and abilities associated with the preceding list of topics.

RESEARCH

▪ Identify key concepts and terms associated with a research question
▪ Identify and retrieve sources that best serve an information need
▪ Distinguish among various types of search tools and search environments, demonstrating understanding of the various purposes they best serve
▪ Demonstrate understanding of which types of search strategies will be most effective in different research environments
▪ Navigate interdisciplinary scholarly databases, both proprietary (e.g., password-protected databases available through the library) and open web.
▪ Formulate complex search queries in both proprietary and open-web search environments
▪ Demonstrate understanding of when and how to expand, narrow, or otherwise refine a search
▪ Locate “known items”
▪ Retrieve information in different formats
▪ Use one source to find others.
▪ Locate data / data sets relevant to a specific research purpose
▪ Distinguish among various types of sources (for example, scholarly vs. popular) and sub-categories of sources (for example, news story vs. opinion column, or academic article vs. dissertation, or primary source vs. secondary source)
▪ Understand and evaluate various kinds of sources found through both open-web searching and library-database searching
▪ Analyze norms and conventions across a variety of writing spaces (both print and digital)
▪ Identify and distinguish among different types of expertise and research methods
▪ Demonstrate basic web-search literacy (for example, distinguish among domains, interpret URLs, distinguish between browsers and search engines)
▪ Demonstrate understanding of the basics of how search engines work
▪ Understand and use prominent open-web information sources (e.g., Wikipedia, The Internet Archive) and tools (e.g., Google search engine).

RESEARCH WRITING

▪ Communicate research findings clearly and compellingly
▪ Distill complex information down to its core, relevant ideas (demonstrate summarizing skills)
▪ Translate specialist information into non-specialist language (demonstrate paraphrasing skills)
▪ Synthesize source information (for example, identify areas of agreement and disagreement, as well as gaps and ambiguity; organize information in meaningful ways)
▪ Use clear and context-sensitive source-integration strategies
▪ Cite sources correctly
- Demonstrate understanding of the purposes of citation and of particulars of citation format
- Demonstrate understanding of ethical information use (for example, avoiding plagiarism and representing sources accurately and fairly)

DIGITAL LITERACY

Note: Computers at NU testing sites run Windows and are installed with Microsoft Office programs, but exam tasks have been designed to focus on tools that are basically the same across platforms and programs, or so similar that they can be speedily intuited by those possessing basic familiarity with the general category of program used to perform the task. Note, too, that you will have access to the Web during the portion of the exam that requires you to perform tasks in Microsoft Office programs.

- Understand word-processing program basic tools well enough to locate and use them across different office suites
- Understand spreadsheet-program tools well enough to locate and use them across different office suites
- Demonstrate understanding of the basics of document design for college writing
- Design charts and tables
- Identify instances of unclear or misleading visual data presentation
- Use spreadsheet programs to analyze data
- Demonstrate basic familiarity with a range of prominent ethical and social issues related to information technology, such as access, privacy, and intellectual property.
- Seek answers to technical questions using well-crafted web search formulations
- Understand and identify different file formats
- Save a screenshot in a specified image-file format
- Demonstrate a basic understanding of how image editing programs work and how to use them
- Distinguish among types of visuals and the kinds of information they are generally used to communicate
- Demonstrate critical awareness of the role of framing in visual meaning-making
- Shape the meaning of an image through framing
- Demonstrate understanding of basic terminology associated with identification and manipulation of digital images