

INFS 1000 Research Portfolio: A Comprehensive Exam, in 3 phases

[overview]

This competency examination will test your information literacy and research skills. To complete the examination you will employ concepts and resources taught in INFS 1000. You will put together an individual research portfolio but will not be writing an actual research paper. You may use a topic you are writing a research paper for in another class or a topic you might write a research paper on at some time in the future. After reading through the exam instructions, please consult the grading rubric at the very end of the exam instructions for more information on specific exam requirements.

[expectations]

This is an open book exam, but you are expected to complete this entire exam on your own and should not ask anyone else for assistance. I will answer questions for clarification sake only. I will be evaluating your ability to construct a well focused thesis statement and research questions, your ability to use appropriately focused searches, and the rationale you provide to justify your choice of resources and your ability to evaluate those resources based upon specific criteria.

[document/form]

You must complete the entire exam (all 3 phases of it) using this document/form, so first thing you should do is save this document locally (to your personal computer, a flash drive, etc.) so that you don't lose any work. Double check that you have saved it properly before closing it! When you have completed the portion that is due, save & submit the entire document to the dropbox as a .doc or .docx.

[step-by-step file instructions]

Step 1: Complete Exam 1. After you submit Exam Phase 1 to the dropbox using this document, I will schedule an appointment to discuss your exam with you. Once we have "met," I will return your exam with my feedback to you in the dropbox feedback area.

Step 2: Continue working on exam using the document with my feedback on it. You may then revise according to my comments & suggestions (if any) and continue with Phase 2. When you are done with Phase 2, submit the document to the dropbox. I will review, make comments, and return your exam to you in the dropbox feedback area.

Step 3: Continue working on exam using the document with my feedback on it. You may then revise according to my comments & suggestions (if any) and continue with Phase 3. When you are done with Phase 2, submit the document to the dropbox.

NOTE: Be sure to put your revisions in the appropriate areas marked "Revised" throughout. See syllabus/schedule for exact due dates!

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Exam Phase 1

Choose a broad topic and explain how or why you chose this topic. *Note: Topic should not be the same as your group assignment topic.*

Original Topic with explanation	
Revised Topic with explanation	

Locate two reference articles using MCTC Library resources. *One of these reference articles should provide comprehensive coverage of your topic. Note: Do NOT use a general encyclopedia.*

MLA citation of 1 st reference resource	
Revised citation of 1 st reference resource	
Explain how you searched	
Revised explanation	
Tell me why you chose this article	
Revised justification	
MLA citation of 2 nd reference resource	
Revised citation of 2 nd reference resource	
Explain how you searched	
Revised explanation	
Tell me why you chose this article	
Revised justification	

Compose a draft argumentative thesis statement & 2-3 research questions. *Using the two reference resources, begin to narrow your topic focus. (Hint: You may want to use a concept map to help you do this!) Tell me the academic discipline(s) under which your topic might fall and the aspects of the topic you wish to focus on. Create 2-3 research questions that focus your research topic in a specific direction. The thesis statement should be between 2-5 sentences in length and should include a description of the main issue that you wish to focus on, a claim as to the position you are taking on your topic, and a proposed solution or a call to action. Do not use questions in your thesis statement.*

Narrowed topic focus	
Revised focus	
Academic disciplines you will focus on	
Revised disciplines	
2-3 research questions	1. 2. 3.
Revised research questions	1.

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	2. 3.
Argumentative thesis statement	
Revised thesis statement	

Keywords, keyword phrases & possible search strings. *Review your thesis, your research questions & your reference articles & identify possible keywords & keyword phrases you might use to search for additional resources. Combine the keywords and/or keyword phrases with Boolean operators, truncation, nesting or other advanced search logic to create possible search strings.*

Keywords	➤ ➤ ➤
Revised keywords	➤ ➤ ➤
Keyword phrases	➤ ➤ ➤
Revised keyword phrases	➤ ➤ ➤
Possible search strings	➤ ➤ ➤
Revised search strings	➤ ➤ ➤

STOP! Do not continue to Phase 2 of exam until you have received my feedback on Phase 1.

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Exam Phase 2

What I'm looking for:

Explain your search	<i>Explanation of how and where you located the resource. Tell me exactly how you searched for each item, i.e., keyword, subject heading, or other type of search. Write down your exact search phrases, including any advanced search techniques such as Boolean operators or truncation, or how you browsed using a web portal or directory. Tell me if you located any useful subject headings that lead you to other resources, or if the subject headings helped you refine or refocus your search strategy. Provide an explanation of your search approach to help me understand why you searched the way you did.</i>
Analyze & Justify	<i>Analyze, justify, and evaluate each item found. Do NOT just summarize the content but tell me which research questions it answered for you and how it helps you make your argument. Also tell me what information the resource provides that is unique and not provided by any of the other resources. Justify why you think each book, article, or web page is valuable for supporting your research topic and focus</i>
Evaluate	<i>Evaluate resource according to the criteria outlined in Evaluating Resources handout.</i>

Locate one (1) non-reference type book or e-book. *Locate 1 appropriate book on your topic using the Library Catalog or subscription e-book database.*

MLA citation	
Revised citation	
Explain your search	
Revised explanation	
Analyze & Justify	
Revised analysis	
Evaluate	
Revised evaluation	

Locate one (1) peer reviewed/scholarly journal article. *Locate one appropriate peer reviewed scholarly journal article on your topic using a scholarly journal database such as Academic Search Premier. You can use one of the other scholarly journal databases, but you must locate a scholarly peer reviewed journal article as this should not be a newspaper or general magazine article.*

MLA citation	
Revised citation	
Explain your search	
Revised explanation	
Analyze & Justify	
Revised analysis	
Evaluate	
Revised evaluation	

Locate one (1) general magazine or newspaper article. *Locate one appropriate popular or general magazine article or one newspaper article on your topic using an MCTC Library subscription database.*

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MLA citation	
Revised citation	
Explain your search	
Revised explanation	
Analyze & Justify	
Revised analysis	
Evaluate	
Revised evaluation	

STOP!

Do not continue to Phase 3 of exam until you have received my feedback on Phase2.

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Exam Phase 3

*Continue the exam by locating 6 additional resources that will elaborate on various aspects of your topic. These resources should be a combination of books, scholarly journal articles, magazine articles and/or newspaper articles or specialized web pages. The goal is to locate **the best and most appropriate resources** which will support specific aspects of your topic focus. You choose the distribution of your resources based upon your research needs. I do not require you use only MCTC Library resources to complete this portion of the exam, but I will be evaluating your search strategy.*

First Resource

MLA citation	
Explain your search	
Analyze & Justify	
Evaluate	

Second Resource

MLA citation	
Explain your search	
Analyze & Justify	
Evaluate	

Third Resource

MLA citation	
Explain your search	
Analyze & Justify	
Evaluate	

Fourth Resource

MLA citation	
Explain your search	
Analyze & Justify	
Evaluate	

Fifth Resource

MLA citation	
Explain your search	

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Analyze & Justify	
Evaluate	

Sixth Resource

MLA citation	
Explain your search	
Analyze & Justify	
Evaluate	

Conclusion

Write a concluding paragraph expressing your understanding of the research process.

No late exams.

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Comprehensive Exam Rubric

<i>Requirements</i>	Emerging (D or F level)	Developing (C level)	Accomplished (B level)	Exemplary (A level)	Comments & Total Points
<i>Specified dimensions of the topic appropriately</i>					
<i>Phase 1</i>	0 1 2 3	3.5	4	5	/5
<i>Phase 2</i>	0 1 2 3 4 5	5.75 6 6.25	6.5 6.75 7	7.25 7.5 7.75 8	/8
<i>Phase 3</i>	0 2 4 6 8 10 12	14, 14.5, 15, 15.5	16, 16.5, 17, 17.5	18, 18.5, 19, 19.5, 20	/20
<i>Clearly state the focused topic.</i>	Topic has an imprecise or unclear focus. The focus needs to be narrowed or clarified.	Topic has a discernable focus but lacks precision.	Clear focus on the topic which is adequately precise.	Very clear focus that is precise, appropriately narrow, and well articulated.	
<i>Developed an appropriate working thesis.</i>	Thesis statement does not clearly lay out the main ideas and issues, does not clearly state a focused topic, lacks precision. No argument.	Thesis statement addresses the topic but needs more precise focus and precision. There is an argument but it needs to be more clearly stated.	Thesis statement that is clear and adequately precise. The argument is adequately stated.	Thesis statement that is very well focused and concise. The argument is clear, focused and well stated.	
<i>Took appropriate steps to narrow and focus the topic.</i>	Research questions are too broad or vague; research questions do not adequately focus the topic.	Research questions address the topic but need more focus and precision.	Clear, focused and adequately precise research questions.	Very clear, concise and well focused research questions.	
<i>Keywords, keyword phrases & controlled vocabulary</i>					
<i>Phase 1</i>	0			1	/1
<i>Phase 2</i>	0 1 2 3	3.5 3.75	4 4.25	4.5 4.75 5	/5
<i>Phase 3</i>	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	10, 10.5, 11	11.5, 12, 12.5	13, 13.5, 14	/14
<i>Identified & employed keywords and controlled vocabulary terms that were appropriate to the topic.</i>	Keywords and/or controlled vocabulary terms were not useful for the topic focus. Misapplication of keywords and/or controlled vocabulary terms. Shows a lack of understanding of what controlled vocabulary terms are and how they are to be used.	Some useful keywords and/or controlled vocabulary terms that relate to the research focus. Keywords and/or controlled vocabulary terms may be too broad or need to be combined to be effective.	Many useful keywords and/or controlled vocabulary terms that clearly relate to the research focus. Indication that the keywords and/or controlled vocabulary terms have been combined in useful ways to help focus searching.	Very useful keywords and controlled vocabulary terms that clearly relate to the research focus. Located sub-headings and connected them appropriately with main controlled vocabulary terms. Combined keywords and main and sub-headings in very useful ways to help focus searching.	

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Requirements	Emerging (D or F level)	Developing (C level)	Accomplished (B level)	Exemplary (A level)	Comments & Total Points
<i>A clear, articulate research strategy.</i>					
Phase 1	0			1	/1
Phase 2	0 1 2 3 4 5	5.75 6 6.25	6.5 6.75 7	7.25 7.5 7.75 8	/8
Phase 3	0 2 4 6 8 10 12	14, 14.5, 15, 15.5	16, 16.5, 17, 17.5	18, 18.5, 19, 19.5, 20	/20
<i>Chose relevant and appropriate databases and search tools</i>	Choice of databases and search tools not connected to research needs and/or inappropriate for college-level research	Chose databases and search tools that are generally appropriate for college-level research	Chose databases and search tools that are appropriate and targeted for research needs	Chose databases and search tools that were highly appropriate and targeted toward type of resource sought	
<i>Clearly articulated the process used to identify and locate resources.</i>	Research process is not clearly stated or is confused in its application. Research process does not adequately take account of the topic focus and is much too broad in application.	Research process is articulated but needs more focus and clarity.	Clear research process that adequately takes account of the issues related to the topic.	A clear, concise, and well focused research process that takes into account all the relevant issues related to the topic.	
<i>Used search techniques appropriate for the topic. Used specific and effective search techniques.</i>	Consistent mistakes are made in applying basic search techniques. Confusion related to application of search terms and search techniques.	Basic search techniques are adequately applied but no or little demonstration of advanced search strategies, or errors are made in the application of search techniques.	Clear use of basic and advanced search techniques. Minor errors in application of search techniques, or lack of connection in search strategies across library resources.	Used basic and advanced search techniques very well and has applied the search techniques consistently well across all the library resources.	
<i>Appropriate Resource Selection</i>					
Phase 1	0				/1
Phase 2	0 1 2 3 4 5	5.75 6 6.25	6.5 6.75 7	7.25 7.5 7.75 8	/8
Phase 3	0 2 4 6 8 10 12	14, 14.5, 15, 15.5	16, 16.5, 17, 17.5	18, 18.5, 19, 19.5, 20	/20
<i>Selected resources appropriate for the topic</i>	Resources selected were not appropriate for supporting the topic focus. Little to no consistency in the selected resources and the research topic focus.	Most of the resources selected are appropriate for the topic.	All of the resources selected are appropriate for the topic.	All of the resources selected are very well focused on the topic or specific sub-aspects of the topic.	
<i>Demonstrated how each resource supported the thesis statement and research topic.</i>	Little or no demonstration of the appropriateness of resources for topic relevance, or confusion related to resource relevance.	Demonstration of the appropriateness of resources for topic relevance is adequate for most resources.	Demonstration of the appropriateness of resources is well documented and clearly stated. Good level of detail provided concerning relevance of resources to thesis statement, research questions, and topic focus.	Demonstration of the appropriateness of resources is very well documented with in-depth analysis of each resource. Clear and detailed explanation of how each resource supports the thesis statement, research	

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Requirements	Emerging (D or F level)	Developing (C level)	Accomplished (B level)	Exemplary (A level)	Comments & Total Points
				questions, and the various aspects of the topic focus.	
Evaluation					
Phase 2	0 1 2 3 4 5	5.75 6 6.25	6.5 6.75 7	7.25 7.5 7.75 8	/8
Phase 3	0 2 4 6 8 10 12	14, 14.5, 15, 15.5	16, 16.5, 17, 17.5	18, 18.5, 19, 19.5, 20	/20
Evaluated each resource according to specific evaluation criteria and provided clear and specific evaluations.(8 pts)	Little or no evidence of evaluation of the resources. Attempts at evaluation were not based on any criteria but were mere assertions of credibility without evidence to support claims.	Clear evidence of evaluation of most of the resources, but evaluation lacks depth.	Clear evaluation of resources based upon specific criteria of authority, reliability and bias.	Strong and in-depth evaluation of all resources based upon specific and relevant criteria. Clear understanding of the bias, authority, reliability, and credentials of the author, publisher, or web site sponsor.	
MLA Citations					
Phase 1	0 1	1.5	1.75	2	/2
Phase 2	0 1 2	2.25	2.5	3	/3
Phase 3	0 1 2 3	4	5	6	/6
Accurately cited sources in MLA citation style	Did not cite work; or citation contained significant errors	Cited work, but citation contained errors	Cited work with only minor style errors	Cited work with no errors	
Phase 1 Total					/10
Phase 2 Total					/40
Phase 3 Total					/100
Comprehensive Exam Total					/150