Class Meetings: The course will meet 14 times. There are no quizzes for the course and no final examination. Final papers are due the last day of class, but will be accepted earlier.

Class Attendance: Attendance is taken each week. In the unavoidable event of an absence, students should make arrangements with other students to pick up class notes and assignments. Time will be given during the first meeting of class for students to find study partners. Students who miss more than 2 classes will have their final average dropped by three points per each additional absence. This course depends heavily upon lectures and student participation. Students need to attend class to get full benefit from the course.

Prerequisites: None. This is the introductory course for students in the library services and archival tracks as well as for school library media students.

Readings: There is one required text, Reference and Information Services. Please see the weekly course outline and bibliography at the end of this syllabus for citations and timing.


Additional readings are available through electronic reserves—ERes on the University at Albany Library website. The course password for IST605 is ist605dla. Library staff do not know this password so please keep this information for reference throughout the course. Be prepared to discuss readings on the due date.

Bookstore: Mary Jane Books (on Western Avenue a few blocks from the downtown campus) has the required text for the course although you should be able to order it from other bookstores, walk-in or virtual. Chapter 1 of Bopp and Smith is available on ERes.

Time Required: This class meets for approximately three class contact hours each week. Homework should take two to three hours per each contact hour. You will need to devote at least 9 hours per week to this class (3 hours in class and 6 to 9 hours outside of class). If you find yourself spending substantially more than 12 hours on average per week, please see the instructor.
**Student Performance Evaluation:** Evaluation based upon the following weightings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment: Topic</th>
<th>Point Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1 Library Scan and two reference questions to start</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2 Reference Interview Checklist</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3 Dictionaries, Encyclopedias</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4 Annotated Bibliography—Diversity</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5 Directories, Almanacs, Yearbooks, Handbooks</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#6 Biography</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#7 Geographic, Bibliographic Sources</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#8 Indexes, Abstracts; Government Documents</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#9 Electronic Presence</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#10 Individual Essay</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>100 points</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Keep in mind that attendance is a factor in grading (see attendance statement above). Points up to n - 2 will be assigned for each project based upon completing all of the specified parts. Grammar, punctuation, spelling, organization, and visual presentation will make the difference in assigning full points for each assignment. Class participation is based on the expectation that students will contribute to class discussion. No points will be assigned if a student never speaks in class.

**Objectives for Students:** It is expected that students who finish this course will be able to:

- Identify, use and evaluate reference sources
- Understand the reference process including reference interviewing/negotiation and search development
- Articulate and put to use a user-centered approach to reference service especially as this approach pertains to communication skills necessary to provide effective reference services to all users
- Understand the structure and searching techniques of web and electronic resources
- Select, assess and evaluate reference services and collections
- Discuss current issues in reference services, including policy, ethics, and diversity issues in a variety of library settings
- Explain ALA standards for high quality reference service.

**Email:** Each student is expected to have an email account for this class. Students will need to check email at least once a week. This is also the best method of communication with the instructor and TA concerning assignments, questions, and readings. Each student must also subscribe to IST-L, the Information Studies listserv.

**Incompletes:** No incompletes will be given in this class without the express permission of the instructor in advance of the end of the semester. Call in advance if you are going to be absent. Students who do turn in papers late without the express permission of the instructor will have their paper grade lowered by 1 point under the assigned grade. No kidding. See the instructor about marriages, births, and other legitimate issues that might cause a paper to be late.

**Food, Phones, and Comfort:** Please feel free to bring a snack to class. Please avoid peanuts (some people have allergies) and really aromatic foods. Please turn off your cell phone. If absolutely necessary leave it on, but exit the room as quietly as possible (hard to do with the phone ringing somewhere in your backpack!) If you have any condition that would make different presentation of materials (e.g., size of type), placement in the room, special seating, or
different teaching style (where possible) beneficial to you, please see the professor. In the past
students with hearing or learning style issues have tape recorded lectures for future reference.

**Trees and Other Resources:** Feel free to turn in all assignments on the back of paper that has
already had one use. Old stationery and rough drafts are good examples of such paper. If you
find that you have made a mistake in a paper, neatly correct it with pencil or pen rather than
reprinting the whole thing. Think ecologically.

**Weekly Course Outline:** Speakers will be added during the semester with the intent of having at
least a public and academic reference librarian come to class to talk about careers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>ERes</th>
<th>Bopp/Smith</th>
<th>Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction to the course; history of reference</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Reference ethics; Reference environments</td>
<td>Fritch…</td>
<td>Chapters 1, 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Reference Interviews (Reidling; Kluegel, Dewdney…; Beck…;►)</td>
<td>Coffman…; Green; Lee…; Ross &amp; Dewdney</td>
<td>Chapters 3, 8, 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Dictionaries, Encyclopedias (and databases)</td>
<td>MacDonald…; McQuade</td>
<td>Chapters 17, 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Evaluation and Standards; more on reference interviews</td>
<td>Natowitz…; Forsman; Blessinger…</td>
<td>Chapters 9, 10, 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/27</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Diversity Issues in Reference</td>
<td>Tenopir—4</td>
<td>Chapter 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Organizing Principles: Information and Services</td>
<td>Tenopir—2 O’Neill</td>
<td>Chapters 4, 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Directories, Almanacs, Yearbooks, Handbooks</td>
<td>Chapters 14, 15</td>
<td>#5 [D/A/Y/H]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Biographical Sources</td>
<td>Chapters 16</td>
<td>#6 [Bio]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/26</td>
<td>SPRING BREAK</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Government Documents—Day 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Geographic and Bibliographic Sources</td>
<td>Sweetland</td>
<td>Chapters 19, 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Indexes, Abstracts; Government Documents—Day 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chapters 21, 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/23</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Electronic Resources for Reference Ross &amp; Nilsen ►</td>
<td>Buschman…; Huwe; Janes…; Jasco</td>
<td>Chapters 5, 6, 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/30</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Future Trends and Possibilities; Wrap Up</td>
<td>Rockman; Tenopir—6 Whitlach RUSA</td>
<td>#10 Individual Essay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Plagiarism and Cheating: Due to the exploratory nature of this course, students are encouraged to form study groups and to talk about and read each other’s assignments. Learn by interacting with one another—support and help one another. Nonetheless, students are expected to give credit where credit is due, citing the work and ideas of others in papers that they write. As a policy for this course, plagiarism, self-plagiarism or cheating will result in a failing grade for the course. In addition, the instructor will pursue further disciplinary action at the University level. If you are not sure, ask the instructor or err on the side of citing more than you think necessary.

Section 2: Assignments for the Term—Part I

Note the following specifications for all the assignments for the course:

- See the “Weekly Course Outline” for due dates for assignments.
- Students should have papers ready at the beginning of the class and be prepared to discuss their findings and conclusions with the class.
- Papers should be word-processed, double-spaced, and single-sided, with 12 point type the rule unless specified otherwise in the course assignments.
- Please make sure to paginate your papers. Do not use report covers—a staple in the upper left-hand corner is sufficient.
- Finally, finishing a paper during class time is not considered good form. The professor frowns on missing class to complete word processing in the basement of Draper. Please plan ahead so that this does not happen to you.

Assignment #1
Library Scan: Part I (do parts I, II, and III for this assignment)

By the second week of class you need to pick a target library for your work for the semester. This should not be a library you have worked in or work in now, and not the community library that you know really well. As discussed in class the first week, this target should be either an academic or public library. If you are interested in special libraries or archives, select an academic library. If you are interested in school libraries, pick a public library with good children’s/young adult sections. This library does not need to be near Albany. You will hand in for week 2, in a word-processed document:

1. The name of the library and its address.
2. The URL for the library
3. Library statistics including: size of staff, number of potential users, funding source(s), collection size, number of public access computer terminals and their use (if not all multi-purpose)
4. A pencil sketch or better floor plan of the public space of this library
5. A description of its reference section (where, approximately how big…)

Double space any dense paragraphs, but in general this will look more like a checklist copied from items 2 through 3 above plus any other information you found that helps describe your target library. Approximate length of part I: 3 to 5 pages.

Library Scan: Part II

You do not have to be stealthy. It is fine to introduce yourself to the Reference Librarian on duty, if there is one. Answer the following:

1. The reference desk itself—is it easily approached? Is it obvious to the user where to go for reference help? What if a user were in a wheelchair, would the help be easily accessible?
2. How busy is the desk? Is the librarian(s) frequently busy helping users? Does it seem that a user might have to wait long for assistance?

3. Are the print reference sources close to the service point?

4. Where are the publicly accessible computers located?

5. If you had a question, would you feel comfortable approaching the desk and asking a question?

6. If you feel comfortable identifying yourself as an IS student, please talk to the reference librarian on duty if he/she has time. Ask about: The mix of typical questions – quick answer or research. If you were not comfortable and did not talk to the librarian, why not?

7. Is there a lot of telephone business? Email? Does the library do online chat reference (that is, interactive, real time chat)

Now write up your findings. Be prepared to discuss in class and to turn in your write-up at the end of class. As an ethical consideration, students should treat the classroom as a confidential space during these discussions. We should learn from positive and negative evaluations but they should not leave the room. Approximate length of part II: 2 to 3 pages.

Library Scan: Part III
At your target library, please find the answers to the following three questions:

1. Please find a recipe for goulash. I’d actually like the recipe including ingredients, cooking directions, time to prepare, number of persons served and any background information on the dish.

2. How many books are in the Bible?

3. I need an authoritative filmography for Meryl Streep. Please tell me just the source. I don’t need a printout.

Write up the answer, the source and the way you found the information for each. These do not need to be long. Please do not ask a reference librarian for the answer. You need to do this on your own. All forms of reference are open for this—print, or online.

***

Assignment #2: Reference Interview Checklist
Read the assigned articles and book chapters. Based upon these readings and your own experiences with reference librarians and reference interviews, create a two-page (approximately) checklist (single spaces with double between items fine) of the essentials of a reference interview. For each item on your checklist include a one-sentence statement on why this item is essential, important, or nice to have in an interview. Be sure to include diversity and accessibility issues here.

Note: Assignments 3, 5, 7, and 8 are all 6 point assignments that have both questions that will require going to sources, and your evaluation of two of the three sources in the assignment’s category. For the reference questions give (1) your answer, (2) the complete citation including page for the source of the answer, (3) your judgment as to the quality of the information you found. These need not be long answers. Think about how much information you would need to give a patron in a telephone call. Report on the questions in order and number them clearly so they are not impossible to follow. You are expected to do 6 of the 8 questions in each assignment.

Pick any two sources that you found in the library. They do not have to be the ones you used to answer questions. For the two source evaluations give (1) the complete citation for the source, (2)
descriptive information on the source—including number of pages, organization, parts, appendices, indices, illustrations and whatever else you find, and (3) your evaluation of this source listing positive and negative aspects of it for an adult user. Use the criteria for each type of source as listed in Bopp and Smith. If it helps you can decide how good a source it would be for you—an adult user, or for a particular target group. Be sure to state that target group if it is not you. Each evaluation should run about one page.

***

Assignment #3: Dictionaries, Encyclopedias

Reference questions: (see note above)

1. I came across the term “lacrimation” in my reading. What does it mean? Could you tell me the derivation of the word?

2. I’m thinking about buying a Scottish Fold cat. I need some information about their personalities.

3. I need some information about the inventor of the Jacquard loom. Could you give me name, nationality, dates of birth and death, and when and where the loom was first exhibited?

4. I am doing a poem for school and need some words that rhyme with “illusive.” Where can I find a list?

5. What can you tell me about the Navajo Code Talkers?

6. What’s the Italian phrase for “sheep”? How about “Black sheep”?

7. I’m having an argument with my Norwegian friend. Which is bigger, an acre or a hectare? How big are they anyway?

8. What is a “boggart”? I need a couple of synonyms for a paper I’m writing.

Sources: (two out of three; not necessarily used above)

1. Pick a single-volume encyclopedia
2. Pick a multi-volume encyclopedia
3. Pick a dictionary

***

Assignment #4: Annotated Bibliography—longer assignment

Create an annotated bibliography (summative and evaluative) about providing reference services for a special user population. (Do not create a bibliography for that population. Instead find research about that population’s information use.) Think about special populations that make use of your target library (e.g., the elderly, recent immigrants—in general or a particular population, young adults, academics—students or professors, home schooling families, archivists). Cite the works using one style (e.g., MLA, APA, or Chicago). Under the citation write a paragraph summarizing the work and then evaluating it as an information source. What are its strengths and weaknesses? Aim to have 75 percent (12) of your 10 to 12 citations from scholarly works—peer-reviewed journals or monographs. Up to four of the other citations may be from magazines that are not peer-reviewed, or from websites and listservs. You need to include a rationale for why these are important sources.
Start your bibliography with a title and then a one to two page double spaced essay that is an overview of your topic, the population’s information use, and the method you used to organize the bibliography.

Approximate length: will vary but at least 7 pages with single spaced citations followed by single spaced annotations.

***

Assignment #5: Directories, Almanacs, Yearbooks, Handbooks

Reference questions: (see note above)

1. A doctor in Albany, Jeffrey A. Schumacker, has been recommended to me. Could you tell me where he went to medical school and when he graduated, what year he was licensed to practice, his specialization, whether he is board certified and in what, and the address of his practice?

2. I want some information about the Albany Institute of History and Art on Washington Avenue in Albany. What kinds of facilities does it have and when is it open? What are its admission prices?

3. How much money and how many grants did the Adirondack Community Trust in Lake Placid, NY give out in the year ending 6/30/05?

4. I keep having these lines of poetry run through my head: “Whose woods these are I think I know.” What poem is it? Who wrote it? When?

5. Why should I feed food with selenium to my sheep if I live on the U.S. east coast?

6. To date, who are the top three career rebounders in the National Basketball Association? How many did they each have?

7. I’m a real fan of Jane Austen films. Did the 2005 movie *Pride and Prejudice* win any Oscars? In what categories?

8. I’m not sure I believe everything in the *Farmer’s Almanac*. How much snow are we supposed to get in January 2008? What is the weather supposed to be like on New Year’s Day?

Sources: (two out of three; not necessarily used above)

1. Pick a directory
2. Pick an almanac
3. Pick a yearbook or handbook

***

Assignment #6: Biography—longer assignment

Choose a person, living or deceased, from any area: the arts, science, education, etc. Look the person up in at least five biographical sources—paper or online (but NOT Google). Please do not choose a person so obscure that there is likely to be no information in standard sources. It is also unwise to choose a person who is so famous, such as Abraham Lincoln, that biographical sources are everywhere. You must include at least one print source.

List the sources you used.
For each source:

1. Describe briefly how easy it was to use.
2. How much information was included in the source? Vital statistics, career highlights? List of publication if an author, etc.

3. Did the source provide leads to other sources of information?

Comparing your five sources, was information consistent in terms of things like birth dates (or death dates if applicable), educational background, etc.? If not, which source did you deem to be most reliable and why?

Now, search your person using Google. How much of what you find appears to be authoritative, useful information? How much is of questionable value? Approximate length: 4 to 5 pages.

***

Assignment #7: Geographic, Bibliographic Sources
Reference questions: (see note above)
1. I need to look at a color map of the geologic structure of Australia. Just give me a source please. No need to copy the map.

2. Please find a book for me that will give information about Peru’s geography. How many miles of coastline does it have?

3. Where is the Albany River located? How long is it?

4. I’d like to look at a map of the American Colonies around 1700. Could you recommend a source?

5. Where can I find information about the Albany Times Union and other regional newspapers? What was the Times Union’s weekday circulation in 2005?

6. I need contact information for the Film Literature Index. Who is the managing editor and what is the contact address and phone number?


8. I love historical novels. Is there a reference book that will tell me what to read next—like a reader’s advisory source?

Sources: (two out of three; not necessarily used above)
1. Pick an atlas
2. Pick a gazetteer
3. Pick a bibliographic source

***

Assignment #8: Indexes, Abstracts; Government Documents
Reference questions: (see note above)
1. I went to college with Wendy Wasserstein. Could you give me a list of some of the plays that she wrote? Did she win any prizes?

2. James Joyce (1882-1941) was an Irish novelist, short story writer, poet, dramatist, and critic. I need abstracts of some critical essays about Joyce and his work for my book group. Would you please give me the citation to a reference book I could look at?
3. How many articles about sheep and shepherds did the Albany *Times Union* (newspaper) print in 1998? What were they?

4. While we’re at it on sheep, what’s the first reference to sheep in the *Bible*?

5. With the New York State gubernatorial election just passed, I am wondering how old you have to be to run for governor in the state. How long do you have to be a resident?

6. How much does it cost to get a dog license in the town of New Scotland, NY? Where do you apply? Does it make a difference if the dog is neutered? Are there any exceptions for which there is no fee? Note: do NOT make a telephone call. This is a search-the-internet question.

7. We also have a U.S. Presidential race coming up. Could you find some biographical information for me on Hilary Rodham Clinton and give me her office address and phone number in Washington?

8. What was the population of the United States as of the last U.S. census?

Sources: (two out of three; not necessarily used above)
1. Pick an index
2. Pick another index
3. Pick a government document

***

Assignment #9: Electronic Presence Scan of Target Library
Go to the web site of your target library and do a thorough scan of the resources available there. Hand in a document that gives
1. The name of the library and its address.
2. The URL for the library
3. An outline of the website for the library in which you list the categories that the library site covers
4. A separate section that lists the information sources that one can access through the library website (e.g., databases, full-text novels, reference works)
5. Your one-page evaluation of the website as an information source for its intended users
6. Your one-page description of one information source that the site provides to users.

Double space parts 5 and 6. You should become an expert for this website. Approximate length: 4 to 6 pages.

***

Assignment #10: Individual Essay—longer assignment
Read the articles assigned for week 13 of the course, review the materials from the rest of the course, and write a 5 page essay that discusses the future of reference and how you see yourself professionally involved in reference. You should cite at least 6 articles that are pertinent to your discussion and reflect upon what you think will happen to reference in the future and how you presently feel about your career in reference (which could be to never do reference at all 😐) Please use examples from the interviewing you did at your target library and from our speakers.

*****
Readings (on ERes) at http://eres.ulib.albany.edu.libproxy.albany.edu/eres/default.aspx
Look under “Documents.” Not all the functions are working to my liking and the assignments ARE NOT the correct ones. Follow this syllabus, not the ERes assignments.

Also please note that not all the readings below are assigned in the syllabus. It is assumed that some students might want to delve more deeply into particular topics. The additional readings are to that end. Please note that there are many readings by Tenopir. As a result they have been numbered in the class calendar. The numbers refer to the system [in brackets] in this bibliography.


Block, Marylaine. “Getting students beyond the net.” Library Media Connection 21(7—April/May 2003): 52-55. [N.B.: YA]

Bunge & Bopp. “History and varieties of references services.” [Chapter 1 of Bopp and Smith]


Lee, Jennifer, K. Alix Hayden & Don McMillan. “I wouldn’t have asked if I knew I had to go to the library . . . .” Issues in Science and Technology Librarianship, Fall 2004. [N.B. Bibliography on reference services—undergraduate]


