

SYLLABUS--IIST 605
INFORMATION SOURCES AND SERVICES
Spring 2007
Tuesdays 7:15-10:05, Draper 147

Instructor: Steve Black

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My office is in The College of Saint Rose library, at 392 Western Ave. I am normally in Monday 8-4, Tuesday and Thursday 10-7, and Wednesday and Friday 8-4. You are welcome to visit! If you travel a long distance to Albany, check ahead to be sure I'll be available.

SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of this course is to prepare students to understand and do reference and information work in libraries and other information arenas. The objectives of this course encompass basic reference sources in both print and electronic formats, and the history, philosophy, and practice of reference services. By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

- ❑ identify and evaluate information sources
- ❑ choose appropriate sources to answer reference questions
- ❑ understand the process of reference, including reference interviewing and search strategies
- ❑ discuss current issues in reference services, including policy issues in various library settings
- ❑ explain ALA standards for high quality reference service.

REQUIRED TEXT

Cassel, Kay Ann, and Uma Hiremath. 2006. *Reference and Information Services in the 21st Century*. New York: Neal-Schuman. (Available at Mary Jane's and the campus bookstore)
Additional readings are listed below with Assignment 5.

EXPECTATIONS

Intellectual engagement

You are expected to learn about information sources and services by doing all of the following:

- Attend class, pay close attention, and actively participate,
- Read all assigned readings,
- Become familiar with all the sources listed in the assignments and presented in class,
- Complete the assignments on time.

Attendance (physical and mental)

All students are expected to be to class on time, to stay the entire class period, to pay attention, and to actively participate in class. One half point will be deducted from your final

grade for each instance of being more than 10 minutes late to class or leaving class early. Points will be subtracted from your final average for absences as follows:

First absence: no points off

Second absence -2 points

Third absence -4 points (total 6 points off)

Fourth absence -8 points (total 14 points off)

GRADING STANDARDS

Letter	Percentage score	Performance indicators
A	96-100	Complete, thorough, and accurate. Exemplary expression of both the spirit and letter of the assignment; clearly shows familiarity with sources and grasp of concepts.
A-	90-95	Complete and well written, with very few errors. Clearly expresses comprehension of the content.
B+	85-89	Mostly well done and competently written, but contains a few errors and/or does not express understanding of an important concept.
B	80-84	Mostly complete and competently done, but has some errors and/or does not express a few important concepts.
B-	75-79	Substantially completed and displays understanding, but with multiple errors
C+	70-74	Partially completed and/or contains substantial errors
C	60-69	Incomplete and/or with numerous errors
E	0-59	Very poorly done, displaying minimal effort

Grades on assignments turned in late will be reduced by 10 points.

Incompletes for the course will be given only under truly extraordinary circumstances.

POLICY ON STUDENTS WORKING TOGETHER

Librarianship is a collaborative, collegial profession. As such, I strongly encourage you to discuss the content of this course with your peers.

Naturally, the University's policy on academic honesty applies to this course. Part of that policy reads "Plagiarism includes . . . submission of another student's work as one's own."

Working together on assignments is allowed. "Together" is defined as being physically in the same time & place. Dividing the work, as in "you do the odd ones and I'll do the even ones" is NOT allowed. If you work together with someone, write a note at the beginning of your assignment indicating who you worked with and what you did together.

It is also all right to discuss reference sources in terms of their strengths, weaknesses, and the types of information that may be found in them. But giving or receiving an answer from a classmate is forbidden. I encourage you to discuss the readings as much as you would like with your peers, but of course the wording of your work must be your own.

ASSIGNMENTS

Please submit assignments on white paper, stapled in the upper left corner, with your name at the top of the first page.

ASSIGNMENT 1: BIBLIOGRAPHY (20% OF GRADE, BOTH PARTS DUE FEB. 27)

Part 1

1. Choose one bibliography in book format published before 1975 on a person or specific topic. Select one you can check out of the library. Cite it in MLA format.
2. Make a list headed "Books and Manuscripts" and cite any 10 books and/or manuscripts from the bibliography, then indicate how many libraries have the work. If the title is not in WorldCat, indicate "not in WorldCat".
3. Make a list headed "Periodicals" and cite any 5 journal, magazine, or newspaper articles from the bibliography, then indicate how many libraries have the periodical for the cited year.
4. Find indexes or databases (e.g. *Reader's Guide*, *Social Sciences Index*, *JSTOR*) that cite each of the 5 articles your listed for question 3. For each, indicate the title of the index, the volume or year, and the page number the citation is found on. If from a database like *JSTOR*, give a URL or accession number to indicate where you found the citation in the database.
5. Write a paragraph summarizing the value of your chosen bibliography as a research tool. Address whether online resources make the bibliography obsolete.

Part 2: Bibliography reference sources

Use these sources to answer questions 1-4 below:

- *WorldCat*
- *University at Albany's Minerva catalog*
- *Ulrich's International Periodicals Directory*
- *Magazines for Libraries*

For each, give the answer **and** describe how you found it.

6. Who wrote *My Eyes Have a Cold Nose*?
7. I need a list of currently published peer-reviewed journals published in Albany, NY.
8. Does U Albany have this? Can I get it online? Black, Craig C. "Presidential address: Rodents, Congress, and science policy." *Journal of Paleontology* 70.4 (1996): 541.
9. Does U Albany subscribe to all the journals *Magazines for Libraries* lists as basic academic periodicals for Energy?

ASSIGNMENT 2: WHICH DATABASE SHOULD I USE? (20% OF GRADE, DUE MARCH 18)

For each of the following e-mail queries, recommend the best database(s) among those available at <http://library.albany.edu/databases/search.asp>. For each query, describe to the patron in a few sentences why the database(s) is/are good choices. A database may be appropriate for more than one query, but this assignment is designed to have you identify 15 different databases. Do not respond with only a general database like Academic Search or InfoTrac.

1. I'm looking for articles on the history of the Erie Canal.
2. I want to browse issues of the journal *Background on World Politics*.
3. Where can I find research articles on mass spectrometric analysis of citrus fruits?
4. I need information about Nathan Bedford Forrest for a 5-page paper.
5. I need to find all the reviews ever published about the book *Team of Rivals* by Doris Kearns Goodwin.
6. Where can I find scholarly articles about how to effectively retain employees in the medical services industry?
7. Does drinking milk actually improve bone density? I mean, have clinical studies proven that?
8. Can I get full text articles from the Albany *Times Union*?
9. I need research articles on the inclusion of children with Asperger Syndrome in mainstream classrooms.
10. I'm looking for research on the effect of divorce on kids, from an attachment theory perspective.
11. Where should I look for current research on dark energy from cosmic microwave background anisotropy observations?
12. I need current information on the bill that recently passed requiring researchers with NIH grants to post their research articles for free on the web.
13. Where can I find critiques of the work of Henry Dumas?
14. I need info on additives to strengthen lightweight concrete.
15. Are there any magazines devoted to crocheting?

ASSIGNMENT 3: SPECIFIC SOURCES TO ANSWER A QUESTION (25% OF GRADE, DUE APRIL 15)

Part 1

1. Compare & contrast the entries for "metric system" in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, *World Book Encyclopedia*, and wikipedia.org. Which would you recommend for whom, and why?
2. Compare & contrast the entries for "wallpaper" in the *Grove Dictionary of Art* and wikipedia.org. Which would you recommend for whom, and why?

Part 2

For each of the following, find and cite THREE sources that would be useful to the patron asking the question: **one reference resource** (print or online, but no Wikipedia), **one book** (circulating or reference), and **one article** from a periodical. Cite in MLA or Chicago style. For each of the 3 cited sources, state which database(s) or other resources you used to find them, and briefly explain to the patron why it appears to be a useful resource.

3. I'm working on a paper about the changing role of women in World War II, especially in the work place. I'm doing analysis of the economic trend--the big picture—not personal accounts.
4. What are the physiological effects of caffeine? This is for my senior level anatomy and physiology course.
5. Where can I get primary sources from soldiers in the American Civil War? You know, letters home, photographs, that sort of thing. I'd prefer Confederate soldiers, if possible.

6. I need stuff on Alexander Calder for a report due tomorrow morning.
7. Can you help me with my paper on Pareto efficiency?
8. I'm writing a paper about illegal immigration for my English 101. I have to present opposing viewpoints.
9. I have to write a short paper about lenticular clouds.
10. Where can I get statistics on homelessness? I'd especially like to compare rates in the U.S. with rates in other countries.
11. I'd like to find out why Lyndon Johnson chose not to run for re-election in 1968.
12. What are the current job prospects for newly graduated holders of an M.S.I.S.?

ASSIGNMENT 4: ONLINE REFERENCE RESOURCE PRESENTATION (10% of grade, presentation dates TBA)

Create a one-page handout and make a 5-10 minute presentation to our class on the electronic reference resource I'll assign to you. The handout should succinctly describe the coverage of the database, and point out its noteworthy and/or unique features. Make enough copies to distribute to your classmates. Include in your handout:

1. Name of resource
2. Publisher and/or organization responsible for content
3. Types of information needs this resource is intended to fulfill (e.g. general undergraduate research, primary resources in history, medical information for professionals)
4. Types of material covered (e.g. journals, images of art works, newspapers)
5. Dates of coverage
6. Print equivalent of this resource, past or present
7. Noteworthy features and content.

I will provide sample searches for each database for you to demonstrate. The samples will be designed to highlight important features of the database.

Grade is based on how well you execute and explain the sample searches and the clarity of the handout.

ASSIGNMENT 5: REVIEW ESSAY (25% of grade, due May 6)

Topic: What is the proper role of reference librarians in the ideal Information Commons?

Write an essay of 2000-5000 words (approximately 5-12 pages, double-spaced, size 12 font) that answers the question above by analyzing, synthesizing and integrating the readings listed below with additional sources of your choice. Cite the readings in either Chicago or MLA style. Be sure to address each reading, but your original synthesis and integration of the readings will likely emphasize some readings more than others. Definitely express your own opinion and create your own definition of an ideal information commons, but also show that your opinion is informed by the readings, textbook, in-class lectures and class activities. Integrate at least 3 additional sources of your choice to help you address what constitutes an ideal information commons. Periodicals worth a look include *Reference and User Services Quarterly*, *Library Journal*, *portal: Libraries and the Academy*, *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, and *College & Research Libraries*. I encourage but do not require you to also use scholarly journals from related fields such as education, computer science or student services.

Green, Samuel S. Personal Relations Between Librarians and Readers, *American Library Journal*, no. 1, Nov. 1876, 74-81. Online at <http://polaris.gseis.ucla.edu/jrichardson/DIS220/personal.htm>.

RUSA Professional Competencies for Reference and User Services Librarians, Online at <http://www.ala.org/ala/rusa/rusaprotocols/referenceguide/professional.htm>.

RUSA Guidelines for Behavioral Performance of Reference and Information Service Providers, *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, v.44, no. 1, Fall 2004, 14-17. (This document is also available at the ALA web site).

Ross, Catherine S. and Patricia Dewdney. Negative Closure: Strategies and Counter-strategies in the Reference Transaction, *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, v. 38, no. 2, 1998, 151-163.

Association of College & Research Libraries, Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education, 2000. Online at <http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlstandards/standards.pdf>.

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