

LS 507-901: Information Sources and Services

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School of Library and Information Studies

Official Course Description:

Required course introducing printed and machine-readable reference sources and reference services.

Required Texts:

Kay Ann Cassell and Uma Hiremath. *Reference and Information Services in the 21st Century: An Introduction*. 3rd Ed. New York: Neal-Schuman, 2006.

William A. Katz. *Introduction to Reference Work, Vol. I*. 8th Ed. Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2001.

Supplementary:

Jane E. Aaron. *The Little, Brown Essential Handbook*. 6th Ed. New York: Pearson Longman, 2007.

Course Goal:

To prepare students to provide information services in a variety of environments through...

- an introduction to information systems
- the development of searching skills
- the development of standards of judgment relating to information sources and services

The emphasis is on helping students to learn the means by which they will be able to help people with their information needs.

Objectives:

Reference Services

The student will be able to:

- Describe the principal features of reference services in a variety of environments
- Relate issues of special group interests, such as faculty, social scientists, and multicultural students to the provision of reference services
- Demonstrate the ability to communicate both in speech and writing
- discuss on an introductory level techniques and methods needed in the management and evaluation of reference services
- Express an integrated philosophy of reference/information service
- Explain basic concepts, theories, and principles of reference/information service in information settings
- Analyze public service experience and reference practices from field observations, applying published reference principles and standards
- Express values that promote accurate and helpful public service

Information Seeking Behavior and the Reference Interview

The student will be able to:

- Describe the principal forms of information seeking behavior.
- Discuss factors that affect human interaction in a reference environment.
- Analyze an information query and determine the type of resource most likely to provide the needed information
- Demonstrate an understanding of the reasons why and ways in which humans interact with information

Reference Sources

The student will be able to:

- Identify types of reference resources and the information likely included therein
- Demonstrate an understanding of the organization of knowledge
- Describe the following major types of reference sources, bibliographies, indexes, encyclopedias, dictionaries, ready-reference sources, biographical sources, and geographical sources, and to their major features
- Retrieve needed information from global sources through networking and other strategies to meet the requests of users
- Describe standards of judgment to use in evaluating and selecting reference materials
- Demonstrate the ability to apply problem-solving and decision-making techniques in reference situations
- Be familiar with the tools and guidelines for evaluating reference sources

Database Searching and the Internet

The student will be able to:

- Demonstrate the ability to locate machine-readable information
- Identify major factors of searching technique that result in good searches in machine-readable databases
- Identify major factors in the production of machine-readable databases that result in good searches in them

Grading Policy

Grading

- A. Outstanding achievement: Student performance surpasses course expectations; understanding and incorporation of class material is abundantly evident in student work as well as is a grasp of the importance of using supporting material and sources appropriately.
- B. The expected level of graduate work. Meets course expectations, shows good understanding of class material effective incorporation of other sources of information.
- C. Unacceptable work, below standards for graduate study. Assignments that are incomplete or show a lack of understanding of the class, materials, and principles of LIS.

Grades for this course are based on combined assessment of papers and assignments, in-class participation and contribution, and attendance.

Production of Written Work

Students are required to select APA, MLA, or Chicago style of documentation and utilize it consistently. All sources must be cited, quotations must be in quotation marks and attributed correctly. Not doing so constitutes plagiarism. **Grades for assignment submissions that include incomplete in-text citations or reference lists will be lowered by one-half grade level (e.g., an assignment that would have received 17/20, or an 85/100: B, will be lowered to 16/20, 80/100: B-).**

All assignments must be word-processed and include your name, the date, class number (i.e., LS 531) and the title of the assignment from the syllabus. Please follow the document naming scheme provided on your assignment descriptions.

In-Class Participation

It is assumed that each student will miss no more than one session and will speak in class -- the equivalent of a "B" grade for "participation." Missing more classes or failing to participate will lower your grade; frequent participation will raise the grade.

A Word about Chat:

I do not, as a rule, disable the chat function in the eLearning classroom. However, if the nature of the chat taking place is abusive or excessively off-topic, this will have an impact on the participation grade of the individuals involved.

If you private chat with me during class time, please be aware that I will not respond. It's fine to inform me of something via private chat, but it's inappropriate to ask questions using that function while I'm teaching. This is essentially the equivalent of approaching an instructor during a lecture and whispering in her ear. It's distracting at best and rude at worst.

Attendance

Regular attendance is required and necessary. A substantial portion of your grade will be based on in-class work and participation. Unexplained absences will affect your grade. Contact me as soon as possible if you cannot attend class.

Weekly Assigned Readings and Discussion

In addition to our textbooks, you will have weekly assigned readings from other sources. Rather than utilizing UA's e-reserves we will access those materials through RefWorks.

It is important that you be prepared to discuss readings each week. To facilitate this, please come to class prepared with at least three questions or discussion topics based on the readings. Your participation in these discussions will constitute the bulk of your participation grade.