INLS 200 Midterm Exam Spring 2013

**[overview]**

This competency examination will test your information literacy and research skills. To complete the examination you will employ concepts and resources taught in INLS 200. 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. If you don’t have any specific topic in mind, you may select one of the suggested topics provided below. 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 (*with the exception of a reference librarian*). 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 using this document/form, so the 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. When you have completed the exam, save & submit the entire document to me as a .doc or .docx via email: [rclemens@unc.edu](mailto:rclemens@unc.edu) **Complete the exam and send to me by Thursday, March 7 at 5:00 pm**.

This assignment is intended to deepen your understanding of the fundamentals of locating and evaluating scholarly journal articles, books and popular articles that are relevant to a particular topic. In this assignment I will be looking to see that you are able to:

* continue to refine focus on a specific aspect, or aspects, of your topic
* search library databases to effectively locate useful material
* use keywords and keyword phrases to construct a focused search and ultimately locate relevant information
* perform a search using appropriate Boolean operators, phrases, and other advanced search techniques to construct a well focused and narrow search to locate full-text material that support your thesis statement and research questions
* select articles that directly support one or more aspects of your research topic
* use information according to ethical guidelines of information studies:
  + record citation information (author, publication year, title, journal title, publisher information, etc. – i.e. everything one would need to re-find the item)
* explain in precise terms exactly what aspects of your selected material (book, articles) will be useful in supporting your research questions and thesis statement
* evaluate your selected books/articles based upon specific criteria

**Part 1**

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

Optional topics:

* How are corporations fostering employee creativity?
* What methods, drugs or interventions are most effective in treating alcoholism?
* Does procrastination serve a purpose in the creative process?
* Mothers have traditionally received custody in divorce cases; is that trend changing? Should it change?
* How is Social Anxiety Disorder different from shyness?
* The circadian rhythm of teenagers makes it difficult for them to waken before 8:00 am, yet most high schools require students to be in class by that time. Some districts have changed their schedules and others are creating flexible schedules similar to those at colleges. Is attendance and performance improved by scheduling changes?
* How are collegiate athletic programs assessing and managing sports-related concussions?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Original topic with explanation |  |
| Revised topic with explanation  *After you read some background material and conduct some initial information searches, come back here and rethink how you will approach your topic.* More narrow or more broad? Move in a different direction? If the topic is not adequately addressed in the literature it can be difficult to collect and analyze the topic; likewise if there is an overwhelming amount of existing research on the topic, you should consider focusing on just a slice of the subject. |  |

**Locate two reference articles/pieces using UNC Library resources.** *One of these reference articles should provide comprehensive coverage of your topic.*

Suggested resources:

* CQ Researcher
* Issues & Controversies On File
* SAGE eReference
* Oxford Reference Online
* Reference Universe

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Citation information of 1st reference resource |  |
| Explain how you searched |  |
| Tell me why you chose this item? |  |
| Citation information of 2nd reference resource |  |
| Explain how you searched |  |
| Tell me why you chose this item? |  |

**Compose a draft argumentative thesis statement & 2-3 research questions.** *Using the two reference resources, begin to narrow your topic focus. Tell me the academic discipline(s) under which your topic might fall and the aspects of the topic you wish to focus on.* C*reate 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 |  |
| Academic discipline(s) you will focus on |  |
| 2-3 research questions | 1.  2.  3. |
| Thesis statement |  |

**Keywords, keyword phrases & possible search strings.** *Review your thesis, your research questions & your reference articles/pieces & 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  Example: menus, food, label\*, restaurants, calories, decision-making, nutrition, health |  |
| Keyword phrases  Example: food labels, menu labeling, healthy choices |  |
| Possible search strings  Example: menu label\* AND (choice or select\*) AND (health\* OR nutrition\*) |  |

**Part 2**

**What I’m looking for:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Explain your search | 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 should be able to do your search and locate the same full-text scholarly journal article. |
| Analyze and justify | 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 |
| Evaluate | Evaluate your scholarly journal article based upon the criteria outlined in the Evaluating Resources handout   * + Author   + Publisher   + Type of Information   + Purpose   + Sources   + Currency   + Style   Do not just tell me the author’s name or the publisher’s name—use the guiding questions provided in the handout to tell me what you know about the author and about the publisher and how that information leads you to conclude the source’s credibility. Use the handout to guide you through the various listed criteria, use your own words, and cite any outside sources consulted. |

**Locate one (1) non-reference type book or e-book.** *Locate 1 appropriate book on your topic using the UNC Library Catalog.* You can probably make good decisions based upon the information about each book provided through the catalog instead of actually tracking down the books.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Citation information for book |  |
| Explain your search |  |
| Analyze and justify your selection |  |
| Evaluate the resource |  |

**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.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Citation information for scholarly article |  |
| Explain your search |  |
| Analyze and justify your selection |  |
| Evaluate the resource |  |

**Locate one (1) general magazine or newspaper article.** *Locate one appropriate popular or general magazine article or one newspaper article on your topic using a UNC Library database such as Academic Search Premier.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Citation information for magazine/newspaper article |  |
| Explain your search |  |
| Analyze and justify your selection |  |
| Evaluate the resource |  |

**Part 3**

***Continue the exam by*** *locating* ***4 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. For section 3 of the exam, you are not required to use only UNC Library resources, but I will be evaluating your search strategy.*

**First Resource**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Citation information |  |
| Explain your search |  |
| Analyze and justify your selection |  |
| Evaluate the resource |  |

**Second Resource**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Citation information |  |
| Explain your search |  |
| Analyze and justify your selection |  |
| Evaluate the resource |  |

**Third Resource**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Citation information |  |
| Explain your search |  |
| Analyze and justify your selection |  |
| Evaluate the resource |  |

**Fourth Resource**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Citation information |  |
| Explain your search |  |
| Analyze and justify your selection |  |
| Evaluate the resource |  |

**Exam Rubric**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirements** | **Emerging**  **(D or F level)** | **Developing**  **(C level)** | **Accomplished**  **(B level)** | **Exemplary**  **(A level)** |
| ***Clearly state the focused topic.*** | 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. |
| ***Developed an appropriate working thesis.*** | 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. |
| ***Took appropriate steps to narrow and focus the topic.*** | 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. |
| ***Identified & employed keywords and controlled vocabulary terms that were appropriate to the topic.*** | 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 |
| ***Chose relevant and appropriate databases and search tools*** | 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 |
| ***Clearly articulated the process used to identify and locate resources.*** | 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. |
| ***Used search techniques appropriate for the topic. Used specific and effective search techniques.*** | 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. |
| ***Demonstrated how each resource supported the thesis statement and research topic.*** | 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 questions, and the various aspects of the topic focus. |
| ***Evaluated each resource according to specific evaluation criteria and provided clear and specific evaluations.*** | 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 |