INLS 501: Information Resources and Services*

Spring 2013
Wednesdays, 6:00 – 8:45pm
208 Manning Hall
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Office hours by appointment

Brief Course Description

This course will provide students with an overview of analysis, use and evaluation of information sources and services. Students will gain an appreciation for the history and evolution of reference services, experience searching and utilizing a variety of resources, and providing assistance to information seekers.

Teaching Methods

This course is a combination of lecture, discussion and activity, but discussion is emphasized. I believe that discussion is a good method to explore many issues related to reference work. Further, communication is key in providing reference service, and one benefit of discussion is that it will help you hone your communication skills.

Goals and Objectives

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

- Explain the characteristics of reference services and reference work.
- Explain the role of information seeking in reference services.
- Utilize, compare and evaluate a variety of reference sources.
- Utilize the reference interview to address reference questions.
- Determine the role of library instruction in reference services.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Throughout the term, you will receive assignments designed to familiarize you with sources, search methodologies, and the foundations of reference service. All graded assignments are due by 5 p.m. on the due date indicated. Unless **PRIOR** arrangements are made, **5 points will be deducted** each day an assignment is late. All students are to follow the **Honor Code.**

BASIS FOR GRADING:

Semester grades will be determined by the level of participation in class discussions and the quality of written assignments.

Grades will be assigned on an H/P/L/F basis. Under this scheme few students will obtain an "H" grade, which signifies a higher level of achievement than an "A" might in other schools' A-F grading systems. This is not to say that earning an "H" is an impossible task, but rather, that the attainment of an "H" in any SILS course denotes a significant academic achievement. Incompletes will not be assigned on an automatic basis. Rather, they will only be issued in cases of extenuating circumstances such as severe health problems late in the semester. In general the following grading framework will apply:

    H   Superior work: complete command of subject, unusual depth, great creativity or originality.
    P+   Above average performance: solid work that extends somewhat beyond what was required to complete the assignment, good command of the material, etc.
    P   Completely satisfactory performance: good solid coverage and work. A "P" will be given when a student completes an assignment satisfactorily and according to the instructions.
    P-   Marginal performance: not wholly satisfactory (on the whole good, but flawed in some respect)
    L   Unacceptable performance: substandard in many respects (seriously deficient)
    F   Performance substandard in many/all respects; completely lacking in merit (unworthy of credit)

NOTE: Most students earn a "P" of some variety.

For assignment grades:

H+ =	99-100 (a true rarity except in very objective test situations for any class)	
H=	97-98	
H-=	96	
P+/H=	95	**These are all A's in most schools.**
P+=	93	
P/P+=	90	
P=	87	
P/P-=	85	**These are all B's in most schools.**
P-=	83	
P-/L=	80	
L=	70-79	**This is a C in most schools.**
F=	69 and below	**This is an F in most schools.**

For semester grades:

H=	94.5 and above (due to rounding up to 95)
P+=	89.5-94.49 **(+/- will not show on your grade transcript)**
P=	84.5-89.49
P-=	79.5-84.49
L=	69.5-79.49
F=	anything below 69.5

Attendance at each class session is expected. **If you must miss a class**, please make arrangements with one of your classmates concerning note taking. It is probably a good idea for everyone to have a **"note buddy"** in case of illness and/or emergencies occurs and you have to miss a class. The instructor is not a good source of notes as her outlines may not reflect actually goes on in class discussion. The following regulations on a student's class attendance were adopted by the Faculty Council:
Regular class attendance is a student obligation, and a student is responsible for all the work, including texts and written work, of all class meetings. No right or privilege exists which permits a student to be absent from any given number of class meetings.... **If a student misses three consecutive class meetings** or misses more classes than the instructor deems advisable, the instructor will report the facts to the student's academic dean for appropriate action...

Honor Code:

All students are expected to follow the Honor Code: http://honor.unc.edu/

Schedule (subject to change)

Please refer to the course calendar on Sakai for the most up-to-date listing of course activities, readings, and assignments.

Assignments

There will be several mandatory assignments given throughout the semester. Full assignment descriptions and specific due dates may be found on the Assignments section of the course Sakai site.

⚔ Print reference source selection and evaluation assignment
  ◦ Sometime following the tour, return to Reference section of Davis Library and select a book in print. Look at the front matter and back matter (i.e., preface, introduction, table of contents, indexes, etc.). Please write a brief, 1-2 page description of the book's topic, arrangement, potential audience, and at least one specific area covered by the source. Please include a complete citation for the book selected. Due 1/23/13 - please submit via Dropbox tool in Sakai.

**Proper Citation of all your work is very important. If you would like assistance with creating citations, please view this link, provided by the UNC Library:
http://www.lib.unc.edu/house/how_do_i/researching/cite_sources.html\

  ⚔ Search Strategy/Source Comparison
  ◦ Formulate a semi-complex search strategy for a question/topic of your choice
      ⚔ The strategy should contain at least three concepts
      ⚔ Please use at least two Boolean operators, including at least one set of synonyms/alternate terms connected with OR
      ⚔ Consider using wildcards, truncation, or stemming to assist you in compiling alternate terms and/or synonyms
  ⚔ Use your search strategy to look for results in three different databases, one of which should use natural language searching (this can include Google or any other free, web-based search that does not accept Boolean operators or advanced search logic), and two of which should be available on the University Library's list of e-research tools. If you have questions about which tools would be most appropriate for your topic (hint: this is an important part of the evaluation), feel free to ask me.
  ⚔ For each database, write your specific search strategy (note: depending on your database's features, you may want to modify your original strategy to get more relevant results or more reasonable numbers of results to answer your question), the number of results that you retrieved with your optimized strategy, the type of content (articles, news items, web pages, etc.) retrieved by each, its level of relevance to your original question, and the instances in which one might be able to use these results to answer the question - for instance, some web results might be acceptable for developing biographical information, but less so for a graded research paper.
  ⚔ Compare and contrast your results, both from the different databases, and from different versions of your search strategy. Hand in your 1-2 page source/strategy evaluation and

comparison via the Sakai DropBox by class time next Wednesday, 2/13.
- ⚲ Assigments will be evaluated for: appropriate use of advanced search techniques within the strategy, selection of appropriate resources to answer the specific question, modification of the original strategy to best utilize the features of the specific databases chosen, search refinements to retrieve appropriate sets of results, and effective comparison of sources.

- ⚲ Internet Public Library ongoing reference assignment
  - ⚲ The Internet Public Library (IPL) is both a public service organization and a learning/teaching environment. Volunteer answerers respond to questions submitted by users via a webform. Volunteers include librarians from around the world, as well as library students.
  As an historical note, the IPL was originally created in a graduate seminar on Reference, much like this course, in the School of Information and Library Studies at the University of Michigan in the Winter 1995 semester. The goal of the original IPL project was to explore the integration of distributed networked environment into libraries.

  - ⚲ For this assignment you will gain experience with providing asynchronous digital reference service. You will go through the IPL Student and Volunteer Training Manual, answer a practice question, and then 3 real questions from real users. The practice question is for, well, practice; the 3 real questions are are for a grade. Each component is explained in detail on the course Sakai site.

Advanced Searching assignment

- ⚲ We will participate in an advanced searching training program developed by a software developer designed to help LIS students develop command-line searching skills. This project will include one or two short assignments in the form of search worksheets and practice search questions. Full details will be available on the Sakai site.

Final Project – Annotated Bibliography

- ⚲ Your final project will involve creating an annotated bibliography of reference sources on a topic of your choice. Select 15-20 sources, being sure to include both print and electronic resources. Choose from reference sources, not regular collection materials (keep in mind that some reference materials may be stored in the regular stacks). Include a description of each resource and a brief discussion (1-2 paragraphs) of why you chose it for your topic. Group your selections in sections of the best sources and mid-range choices. Be sure to define your specific audience prior to beginning the project, as different resources are better suited to different academic levels, areas of expertise, etc.
- ⚲ Use any citation style you like, but be consistent. It's best to choose your topic early in the semester and note potential sources as we go along. A topic should be somewhat specific. For example, 'biology' is too broad. A subfield of biology like stem cell research is a better choice.
- ⚲ You'll turn in your bibliography either as a typed document or as a web page accessible to me for grading purposes (you can host this on your UNC web space or any other domain that you prefer, as long as I can get to it to view for grading). You will also prepare a 10-15 minute presentation of your project for the class – this should include an overview of your topic, specific sources chosen, and may also include demonstrations of resources, highlights from selected sources, and any other relevant information that you feel the class might benefit from.
- ⚲ Full details and due dates for the project and presentations can be found on the course Sakai

site.