

Information Sources and Services

No Prerequisites

3 credit hours

Location: Weekly: Marist 208 4:10 – 6:40 p.m.

Instructor contact information:

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Office Hours: Wednesday 2-4

and by appointment

Course Description:

This course provides an introduction to the terminology, concepts, and practices for the provision of information services to meet effectively user needs in a variety of settings. Special emphasis will be placed on the reference process as well as the content, use, and evaluation of resources in print and electronic formats. In addition the course will cover the sources, policies, technologies, and systems that support access to and the retrieval of information central to reference services.

READING MATERIAL

Required Text:

Reference and Information Services: An Introduction. By Bopp, R.E., Smith, L.C. ed. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 2001.

Additional readings will be assigned throughout the semester to supplement our textbook (please see bibliography at end of syllabus for *some* of our additional readings)

COURSE GOALS.

This course will provide the student with:

- A solid introduction to the fundamental concepts of library public services and the skills required to deliver them effectively.

At the conclusion of this course, students should be able to:

- Articulate a philosophy of reference service which includes a discussion of ethical and other issues relevant to the provision of information;
- Apply appropriate communications skills in instructional settings and one-on-one reference interviews;
- Apply standard evaluative criteria to basic reference sources in order to determine the fitness of sources to meet particular information needs;
- Demonstrate proficiency in retrieving information from general reference sources (print and electronic), including designing basic search strategies; and
- Discuss policies and procedures for the provision of service, and the role and evaluation of reference and information service departments

Professional Standards Addressed in this course:

American Library Association (ALA)

<http://www.ala.org/ala/accreditation/accredstandards/DraftCoreCompetencie.pdf>

- Knows the ethics, values and foundational principles of the library and information professions.
- Knows the basic concepts, terminology, literature and issues related to the creation, evaluation, and selection of specific items or collections of information
- Knows and demonstrated service concepts, principles and techniques that facilitate information access, relevance, and accuracy for individuals or groups of users
- Can retrieve, evaluate and synthesize information from diverse sources for use by individuals or groups
- Can interact with individuals or groups of users to provide consultation, medication or guidance in their use of information resources
- Can recognize and respond to diversity in user needs and preferences for resources and services
- Demonstrates oral and written communication skills necessary for group work, collaborations, and professional level presentations

Special Library Association (SLA) <http://www.sla.org/content/learn/comp2003/index.cfm>

- Applies expertise in databases, indexing, metadata, and information analysis and synthesis to improve information retrieval and use in the organization
- Builds a dynamic collection of information resources based on a deep understanding of clients' information needs and their learning, work and/or business processes.
- Demonstrates expert knowledge of the content and format of information resources, including the ability to critically evaluate, select and filter them. Develops information policies for the organization regarding externally published and internally created information resources and advises on the implementation of these policies.
- Conducts market research of the information behaviors and problems of current and potential client groups to identify concepts for new or enhanced information solutions for these groups. Transforms these concepts into customized information products and services.
- Researches, analyzes and synthesizes information into accurate answers or actionable information for clients, and ensures that clients have the tools or capabilities to immediately apply these.
- Develops and applies appropriate metrics to continually measure the quality and value of information offerings, and to take appropriate action to ensure each offering's relevancy within the portfolio."

Medical Library Association (MLA) <http://www.mlanet.org/education/platform/skills.html#6>

"Health sciences librarians require knowledge of the content of information resources and skills in using them. They must understand the principles and practices related to providing information to meet specific user needs and to ensure convenient access to information in all forms, including

- information needs of ... [the various types and perspectives of your users];
- information-seeking and transfer characteristics of user groups and individuals;
- assessment of identified information needs;
- [...] information resources and their relevance to specific information needs;
- retrieval strategies and techniques;
- analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information for identified needs;
- methods of information delivery and access;
- development of services tailored to meet needs of individual and group users; and
- resource sharing.

ALA's Reference and User Services Association (RUSA)

<http://www.ala.org/ala/rusa/rusaprotocols/referenceguide/professional.htm>

It emphasizes the development of a core knowledge base, which is defined as:

"The areas of knowledge essential for reference and user services librarians are: (1) the structure of information resources in areas of knowledge central to primary users; (2) knowledge of basic information tools, including online catalogs, search systems, databases, Web sites, journals and monographs in both printed and electronic formats, videos, and sound recordings; (3) information seeking patterns and behaviors of primary users; (4) communication principles involving interaction with users both in person and through other channels; (5) the influence of technology on the structure of information; (6) copyright and intellectual property law; and (7) information competency standards.."

Course Requirements

Assignments and their weighting in the overall course grade are:

1. **Field Study (15%)** exploration of a library information service of the student's choosing
2. **Reference Source Analysis (20%)** evaluation of reference resources and alternatives.
3. **Role Play Analysis (20%)** role play a reference librarian
4. **Term Project (25%)** written report on a project related to the subject matter of the course
5. **Final Exam (10%)** an in-class final exam.
6. **Class Contributions (10%)** The class is designed to be highly interactive. Students who contribute the most to our class's shared pool of knowledge will receive the highest grades in this area.

EXPECTATIONS AND POLICIES

Academic honesty:

Academic honesty is expected of all CUA students. Faculty are required to initiate the imposition of sanctions when they find violations of academic honesty, such as plagiarism, improper use of a student's own work, cheating, and fabrication.

The following sanctions are presented in the University procedures related to Student Academic Dishonesty (from <http://policies.cua.edu/academicundergrad/integrityprocedures.cfm>): "The presumed sanction for undergraduate students for academic dishonesty will be failure for the course. There may be circumstances, however, where, perhaps because of an undergraduate student's past record, a more serious sanction, such as suspension or expulsion, would be appropriate. In the context of graduate studies, the expectations for academic honesty are greater, and therefore the presumed sanction for dishonesty is likely to be more severe, e.g., expulsion. ...In the more unusual case, mitigating circumstances may exist that would warrant a lesser sanction than the presumed sanction." Please review the complete texts of the University policy and procedures regarding Student Academic Dishonesty, including requirements for appeals, at <http://policies.cua.edu/academicundergrad/integrity.cfm> and <http://policies.cua.edu/academicundergrad/integrity.cfm>.

Other Policies or Expectations.

University resources.

- Know your NT (CUA network) account information and be able to log on to the CUA network. Contact the Center for Planning and Information Technology at 202/ 319-4357 for assistance.
- Know how to use the CUA library resources, including the ALADIN online system. Visit the CUAT library homepage at <http://libraries.cua.edu> for assistance.

Email.

- Provide a meaningful subject tag in all your emails about this class.
- Begin each subject line with *lsc553*, or risk a delayed response or potentially no response.
- I will make every effort to get back to you within 48 hours of receiving your email.

Assignments.

- Place your name on the first page of each assignment.
- Submitted work must have a professional appearance and not be handwritten.
- Use staples to securely fasten together any multi-page assignments.
- Save your work frequently and in multiple places.
- If you encounter a problem with your home computer you are expected to use one of the many other computers in our environment to submit your work on time. For example, the numerous computers on campus and in the surround area's public libraries.

Participation & Conduct:

- *Attendance is mandatory.* Attendance is required, in keeping with university policy. Students may miss up to 3 classes without a penalty. Your participation grade will drop by 10 points for every absence after 3 missed classes.
- *Late work.* The instructor will not accept late work except by prior arrangement. If accepted, it will be graded at the end of the term.
- *Makeup work.* If a student has a legitimate reason, such as a family emergency, the instructor might allow a student to do makeup work. The amount and nature of the work is up to the instructor's discretion. It will be graded at term's end.
- *Behave respectfully.* Students are expected to behave respectfully in our class's online site. Participation grades will reflect a student's maturity level and professionalism, and whether the student actively participates in class discussions.
- *Arrive on time.* Chronic lateness can negatively affect class participation grades.
- *No phone calls during class.* Turn off or silence cell phones and pagers. Students leaving the room for calls are not allowed to return to that class session.
- *No grade discussions in class.* Instructor will not discuss grades in class. First consider why the instructor deducted points. If you still disagree, explain your disagreement in an e-mail to the instructor.

Syllabus:

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus if circumstances warrant such change. All changes will be provided to students via BlackBoard

Campus Resources for student support:

Academic Tutoring and Learning Assistance Service (ATLAS)

<http://counseling.cua.edu/atlas/>

101 O'Boyle Hall

Phone: (202) 319-5018

CUA Counseling Center

<http://counseling.cua.edu/services/>

127 O'Boyle Hall

Phone: (202) 319-5765

Mullen Library

<http://libraries.cua.edu/welcome.html>

Phone: (202) 319-5070

Office of Career Services

<http://careers.cua.edu/>

They even offer help with interview preparation and mock interviews.

<http://careers.cua.edu/studalum/Servicesandassistance.cfm#mockinter>

Accommodations for students with disabilities:

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss specific needs. Please contact me as soon as possible, preferably within the first week of class. Also, please contact Disability Support Services (at 202 319-5211, room 207 Pryzbyla Center) to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. To read about the services and policies, please visit the website: <http://disabilitysupport.cua.edu>.

Course Overview:

- Introduction to course
- Service philosophy, ethical issues, reference interview
- Reference sources and evaluating reference sources
- Digital vs. print resources
- Navigating and searching resources
- Instructing users
- Managing a reference service
- Summary and future

Course Outline - This calendar is subject to change depending on class needs.

Week	Occurrence	Topic	Readings	Assignment Due
1	Jan 16	Introduction to topic & the workings of this course		
2	Jan 23	Service philosophy, ethical issues, and the reference interview	Bopp & Smith, Ch. 1, 2 One of the papers at the end of this syllabus	Brief comments on your selected paper
3	Jan 30	Reference in specific settings and for specific populations	Bopp & Smith, Ch. 12	
4	Feb 6	Reference interview Face-to-face vs. digital	Bopp & Smith, Ch. 3, 7; Kuhlthau paper	Term Project topic due 2/13
5	Feb 13	Intro to reference sources & Evaluating sources	Bopp & Smith, Ch. 4, 13	Assignment 1, Field study Due 2/13
6	Feb 20	Comparing resources in different formats	Bopp & Smith, Ch. 5-6 Plus outside readings	
7	Feb 27	Reference sources continued	Bopp & Smith, Ch. 14-22	
8	No Class Mar 5	NO CLASS CUA Spring Break		
9	Mar 12	Term Projects		Assignment 2, reference sources Due 3/12
10	Mar 19	Reference sources continued	Bopp & Smith, Ch. 14-22	
11	Mar 26	Navigating and searching sources	Outside readings	Partial Term Project due 3/26

12	April 2	Navigating and searching sources	Outside readings	Assignment 3, Role play Due 4/2
13	April 9	Instructing users: intro to instructional design	Bopp & Smith, Ch. 8	
14	April 16	Modes of instruction	Outside readings	
15	April 23	Operation and management of reference and research services	Bopp & Smith, Ch. 9-11	
16	April 30	NO CLASS CUA Reading Day		Term Project Due 4/30
17	May 7	Final Exam		Final Exam

Grading:

Grades for this course will be based upon the following:

Assignment 1, field study	15%
Assignment 2, reference resources	20%
Assignment 3, role play	20%
Term project:	
Partial Term project	10%
Final version of Term project	15%
Final exam	10%
Participation in class	10%
TOTAL	100%

NOTE: Late work will not be accepted with the exception of those cases noted above in the "Participation & conduct" section.

Related Bibliography:

Read through one of these papers and be prepared to share a brief (3-5 sentences) opinion on the paper's main point and its validity.

American Library Association. (1995, June 28) *Code of Ethics*. Available: <http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/statementspols/codeofethics/codeethics.htm> . Accessed: June 28, 2007.

Factiva, Inc. (2007) Factiva.com Overview. <http://customer.factiva.com/en/learning/learningmain.aspx?GOTO=programs> (login at www.factiva.com)

Infospace, Inc. (2007, April) *Different Engines, Different Results: Web Searchers Not Always Finding What They're Looking for Online*. Available: <http://www.infospaceinc.com/onlineprod/Overlap-DifferentEnginesDifferentResults.pdf> . Accessed: June 28, 2007.

Ladner, B. et al. (2004, Summer) "Rethinking Online Instruction." *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, v. 43, no. 4, p. 337-345.

Lancaster, L.C. (2003, Oct. 15) "The Click of Generations." *Library Journal*, 36-39.

Lipow, A. (2002) "Point-of-Need Reference Service: No Longer an Afterthought." *The Future of Reference Services Papers*. Available: <http://www.ala.org/ala/rusa/rusaprotools/futureofref/pointofneed.htm> Accessed June 29, 2007.

Ohio Library Council (2006) *Ohio Reference Excellence on the Web*. [ORE Exercises.] Available: <http://www.olc.org/ore/> . Accessed May 11, 2007.

Reference and User Services Association. (2000) *Guidelines for Information Services*. Available: <http://www.ala.org/ala/rusa/rusaprotools/referenceguide/guidelinesinformation.htm> . Accessed June 28, 2007.

Reference and User Services Association. (2004, June) *Guidelines for Behavioral Performance of Reference and Information Service Providers*. Available: <http://www.ala.org/ala/rusa/rusaprotools/referenceguide/guidelinesbehavioral.htm> . Accessed May 11, 2007.

Rettig, J. (2002) "Technology, Cluelessness, Anthropology, and the Memex: The Future of Academic Reference Service." *The Future of Reference Services Papers*. Available: <http://www.ala.org/ala/rusa/rusaprotools/futureofref/technologycluelessness.htm> Accessed June 29, 2007

Tannen, D. (1995, Sept.—Oct.) “The Power of Talk: Who Gets Heard and Why.”
Harvard Business Review, p. 138-147.

Tyckoson, D. (2002) “On the Desirableness of Personal Relations Between Librarians and Readers: The Past and Future of Reference Services.” *The Future of Reference Services Papers*. Available:
<http://www.ala.org/ala/rusa/rusaprotools/futureofref/desirableness.htm> Accessed June 29, 2007.

Zemke, R. et al. (1999, Nov.) “Generation Gaps in the Classroom.” *Training*, 48-54.