

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA
SCHOOL OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE
Government Information LSC 782
Course Syllabus
Summer 2009

I. Calendar

May 23 Introduction to **Government Information and Electronic Distribution; the Role of Government Printing Office, and the Federal Depository Library Program.**

Reading:

- in Hernon: chapters 1,2,6,15,16
- in Morehead: chapters 1,2,3,4

Work Assigned: -Research Questions #1 (due 5/30)
-Source Evaluation (due 6/13)

May 30 **Legislative Branch Information, the influence of Commercial Vendors, Congressional Support Agencies**

Reading:

- in Hernon: chapters 3,4
- in Morehead: chapter 5

Work Assigned: -Research Questions #2 (due 6/6)
-Course paper/project (due 6/27)

Assignments due: Research Questions #1(assigned 5/23)

June 6 NOTE: Special class hours 10:30 A.M. - 4:30 P.M.
Special location Information Commons, Marist Hall

Part 1: 10:30 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.

- **Managing Services at a Regional Depository**
- Guest speaker Annie Young
- **Government Maps**
- Guest speaker Michael Fry

Part 2: 1:15 P.M. - 4:30 P.M.

Presidential "Legislation" and Administrative Law

Reading:

- in Hernon: chapter 5
- in Morehead: chapters 6,7,8

Work Assigned: Research Question #3 (due 6/13)

Assignments due: Research Questions #2(assigned 5/30)

June 13 Statistical Sources & Government Datasets

Reading:

- in Hernon: chapter 13
- in Morehead: chapter 9

Work Assigned: Research Questions #4 (due 6/20)

Assignments due: Research Questions #3 and Source
Evaluation

(#3 assigned 6/6, Source Evaluation
assigned, 5/23)

June 20 Data Manipulation Tools and Geographic Information Systems

Reading:

- in Hernon: chapter 14
- in Morehead: chapter 12
- readings provided by instructor

Work Assigned: none, complete course paper/project

Assignments due: Research Questions #4 (assigned 6/13)

June 27 Declassified Documents, Technical Reports, Patents & Final Paper Presentations

Reading:

- in Hernon: chapter 7, 12
- in Morehead: chapter 10

Assignments due: Course Paper/Project
(assigned 5/23)

Textbook: Read, from either of the sources, the chapters listed above.

Peter Hernon, Harold Relyea, Robert Dugan, Joan Cheverie. *United States Government Information: Policies and Sources*. Westport, CT Libraries Unlimited, 2002. (Recommended)

Joe Morehead. *Introduction to United States Government Information Sources, 6th edition*. Westport, CT Libraries Unlimited, 1999. (Recommended)

Chaney, Deborah. *The Complete Guide to Citing Government Information Resources: A Manual for Social Science & Business Research*. 3rd edition. Bethesda, MD: LexisNexis Academic & Library Solutions, 2002. (Recommended)

Grades will be computed as follows:

50% research questions

20% source evaluation

20% project/paper

10% class participation and in class exercises

Instructor: Jim Gillispie

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(Govt. Pubs./Maps/Law Library, Johns Hopkins Univ.)

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II. Policies

ATTENDANCE and ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES:

Students are expected to attend class, and complete assignments and readings on time. Emergency situations that may prevent you from meeting these requirements should be discussed with the instructor.

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

You'll find Academic Affairs policies on "Academic Dishonesty" and on "Unethical Practices" in the University Policies and Procedures web page at <http://policies.cua.edu/>.

You are held responsible for adhering to these policies. Incidences of academic dishonesty, defined by the University as "failure to observe rules of fairness in taking exams or writing papers, plagiarism, fabrication, and cheating" will result in a grade of F (0 points) on the project or exam in question, and will be reported to the Dean for possible further action (including failure in the course).

ADA ACCOMODATION:

Students with disabilities requiring accommodation under federal regulations must present a written accommodation request to the instructor by the second class meeting. It is strongly recommended that the student contact the Office of Disability Support Services, Suite 207, Pryzbyla Center (202-319-5211; email cua-disabilityservices@cua.edu, web <http://disabilitysupport.cua.edu/>). This is the University office responsible for disability accommodation and services, and its staff can answer questions about services and requirements regarding documentation. Special accommodations or other arrangements cannot be made without documentation approved by this office.

CUA NETWORK:

All students should know their 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.

CUA LIBRARIES:

All students should be able to use the CUA library resources, including ALADIN and subscription databases. Visit the CUA Library homepage at <http://libraries.cua.edu> for assistance.

III. Course Objectives

As a result of this course, the student will:

1. Develop competency in answering government information reference questions using primary sources, commercial publications and electronic databases.
2. Gain experience evaluating and comparing competing government information products and services.
3. Learn to use government statistical datasets and a geographic information system to manipulate, query, and map government collected data.
4. Understand the relations between government functions and publishing.
5. Know the bibliographic control used for government information.
6. Understand the printing practices and information distribution of the Government Printing Office and the Federal Depository Library Program.
7. Understand the documentation and publications of the major international/intergovernmental organizations.
8. Correctly cite government publications.

IV. Course Requirements

Students are responsible for completing four sets of **Research Questions**, a **Source Evaluation**, and a **Course Project/Paper** by the due dates on the course syllabus and according to the following guidelines:

1. **Research Questions:** Assigned every week and due one week later at the beginning of class. Students are encouraged to confer with each other while completing each exercise. Each student, however, must turn in his or her own assignment. In completing the research questions, students should include a full citation, in proper form, for the source that answers each question*. Also include with each question a "research log" as described below**.
 - * Include SuDoc Numbers and/or URLs. Consult class handouts.
 - ** Keep a record of the steps (research log) taken in the resolution of each research question. Usually this process works best in a chart or brief narrative form. In general, note sources examined, headings/entries used, cross-references given etc. List sources consulted in which no relevant information was found along with those sources that proved more fruitful.
2. **The Source Evaluation:** This assignment will require students to compare and critically evaluate one of the sources introduced in the first half of the course. The finished evaluation should be approximately five to eight pages in length, double-spaced. Students are expected to work independently on the Source Evaluation.
3. For the **Course Paper/Project**, each student will visit and evaluate a library that collects a substantial amount of government publications, **OR** compare and evaluate two depository library sites on the web. The paper will describe and discuss how the library organizes, manages and provides reader access to government information. In each case, students must consider the implications of the practices and decisions made by the particular library and the potential impact on readers. The paper should be seven to ten pages in length, double-spaced. Additionally, students will summarize their findings and briefly present them to the class during a final class session. 5/09