

Syllabus: On-Line Information Retrieval

LSC 727 – Spring 2010
Catholic University of America
Instructor: Karen Marsh King

Course Description

This course will offer an overview of the theory as well as practice of information storage and retrieval in the online environment. Major themes in the course include; the history of the online information industry; awareness of issues and trends in the provision of online services; types and structures of online databases; basic search skills; the selection of an appropriate electronic source; construction of an effective search strategy; best practices in teaching online resources; and the evaluation of online resources for collection management decisions. Students will learn search techniques using internet resources and commercial databases, including Dialog, Lexis, and Factiva. The course will explore electronic reference services as well as the development, provision, and management of online search services.

Course Objectives

For students to:

1. Become capable, professional information searchers with a general proficiency in pre-search interviewing, search strategy organization and planning, search result evaluation for the solution of information problems of clients as evidenced in self paced units, projects, and exercises.
2. Understand and apply database characteristics and search syntax of Dialog, Lexis/Nexis, Factiva and other databases through hands-on search and retrieval exercises.
3. Develop the ability to successfully select appropriate electronic resources to fulfill information requests in several subject fields as evidenced in self-paced units, exercises and final exam.
4. Achieve the ability to transfer the knowledge and skills learned for one system to an unfamiliar database as evidences by comparative elements of assignments, projects, and exercises.
5. Develop proficiency in using documentation and search aids to learn about the scope, coverage, unique features, and search language of the unfamiliar database and perform quality searches in such a system.

6. Become familiar with professional associations and sources of current information that discuss online resources and search services.
7. Cultivate informed opinions and develop an understanding of the issues facing librarians in the provision of online search services and related collection development decisions.

Text and Assigned Materials

Librarian's Guide to Online Searching. Suzanne S. Bell. **Second Edition.** Libraries Unlimited. 2009. ISBN: 9781591587637.

Other readings will be assigned with most being available on the course website.

Basis for Grading

There are six graded components for the class that total 1000 semester points.

- Graded paper (First component) – short paper (10%) (100 points)
- Self Paced Units (Second) – (30%) (300 points) (100 points for each unit)
- Semester project (Third) – (20%) (200 points)
- Graded evaluation project (Fourth) – (10%) (100 points)
- Final Exam (Fifth) – (16%) (160 points) Take home exam – deliver electronically.
- Graded participation (Sixth) - Determined from class participation, attendance, graded homework, out of class exercises, participation in out of class discussions and class evaluation questions over seven of the eight class meetings. (14%) (140 points) (20 points per class period)

Grading

Grading Scale Points

A	(1000-940)
A –	(939 – 900)
B+	(899 – 860)
B	(859 – 820)
B-	(819 – 780)
C+	(779 – 740)
C	(739 – 700)
C-	(699 – 660)

Overview of Graded Components

Graded Paper

The topic for the short graded paper will be discussed during the first class. All work on the paper will be done on an individual basis. The paper should be three typed pages double-spaced. Research for the paper should include at least three articles or other information resources/reports. A variety of resources is preferable. Citations may be done in any form as long as the format is consistent and complete. Details discussed on Jan 15 – Due on Jan 29.

Self Paced Units

Student will be responsible for accomplishing self-paced units and completing assigned work. Self-paced unit details will be posted on the class web site. The units will be discussed during class and then due three weeks later.

Unit One: discussed on Jan 15 - Due on Feb 5

Unit Two: discussed on Jan 29 - Due on Feb 19

Unit Three: discussed on Feb 26 - Due on Mar 19

Semester Project

The project and presentation will consist of four components :

- A paper (five pages)
- Teaching unit (15 minutes)
- An in-class exercise (15 minutes)
- A short conclusion paper - Critique and propose changes to your teaching and exercise. Base your paper on your observations while you were teaching, class performance with exercise, and feedback from classmates. (two pages – due one week after project presentation)

The semester projects will be discussed early in the semester. Four weeks in advance of due date students will discuss project ideas with the instructor and then follow up to finalize project details at least two weeks before the project is due. Students will be teaching a particular resource as well as developing and facilitating exercises. The projects will be presented during three class sessions from the mid to late semester (Feb 26, Mar 26, Apr 16).

Particular resources will be assigned to be presented on specific dates. The list of dates and resources will be available for students to consider on Jan 15.

Evaluation Project

The project will require students to evaluate/compare online resources using concepts and criterion learned during the semester. The project will be discussed two weeks before the due date. Discussed on April 16 – Due on April 30.

Final Exam

The final exam will be a take home exam that will consist of short essay questions and an exercise to demonstrate the knowledge gained and skills learned during the semester. The exam will be given to the students the last day of class and will be due the following week on Friday May 7th by 11:59pm. The take home exam will be submitted electronically.

Class Participation, Attendance, and Class Evaluation Questions

The instructor understands that adult students have very busy schedules, however, attending each class and being prepared for class discussion is very important to assure success in the class.

The grading of your class participation will be based on the following:

- Is the student prepared for class?
- Is the student willing to engage in class discussions and participate in exercises?
- Is the student a good listener?
- Does the student make points that are relevant to the class discussion?
- Are the comments linked to the comments of other class members?

From time to time class preparation evaluation questions may be given in the form of a short quiz or a short essay question. The questions will be given at the beginning of a class in order to evaluate the students' knowledge of the assigned readings for that class.

General Guidelines for papers and written assignments

Assignments, papers, and projects should be typed, double-spaced, with a size font size of 10. Citations may be done in any form as long as the format is consistent and complete.

Timeframe for completion of graded components

Graded assignments that are due the day of a class meetings should be handed in at the beginning of class. Bring one copy to hand in and your own copy to use during class discussion.

Graded assignments that are due on non-class days should be submitted by 11:59pm on the due date to the appropriate section in the course website.

Late assignments will be assessed a half letter grade penalty per day. Assignments that are later than a week will not be accepted and grade of zero points will be marked.

Please note that in order to receive credit for the final exam; it must be turned in on time due to the CUA final grade posting policies.

If you have any questions about the assigned work, please contact the instructor.

Academic Honesty Policy:

Please read the policy on relevant information on academic honesty found in the University's Online Student Resources at:

<http://policies.cua.edu/academicundergrad//integrityfull.cfm>

As well as the Academic Graduate and Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Procedures at:

<http://policies.cua.edu/academicundergrad//integrityfull.cfm>

Additional information can be found on the University Policies website at:

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

It is expected that all students will adhere to accepted codes of ethical, personal, and civil conduct while in this class and conversing online, using e-mail, or engaging in any online chat sessions. Failure to abide by such codes of conduct and etiquette may result in withdrawal from the course and a failing grade.

Academic dishonesty is defined in the guidelines as "failure to observe rules of fairness in taking exams or writing papers, plagiarism, fabrication, and cheating". Any incidence of plagiarism will result in a grade of F (0 points) on the project or exam in question, and will be reported to the Dean of the School of Library and Information Science for possible further action (including failure in the course).

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Catholic University of America defines plagiarism to include such concepts as:

1. "Intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise"
2. "Failure to attribute any of the following: quotations, paraphrases, or borrowed information from print sources or web sites"
3. "Buying completed papers from other to use as one's own work",

For more on what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it, see the guide on the Purdue Online Writing Lab web site at:

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_plagiar.html.

Disabilities:

Students with documented disabilities who need course accommodations, have emergency medical information or require special arrangements for building evacuation should contact the instructor within the first week of class.

A guide for services and accommodations for students with disabilities can be found at:

- <http://counsel.cua.edu/ADA/publications/disbro/contents.cfm>

Some basic guidelines and links to other information may be found at:

- <http://counsel.cua.edu/ADA/clicks/>

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns about the class schedule or assignments, please feel free to call, e-mail, or talk with me in person. If you prefer to talk in person, I am available to meet with you before class. Contact me two of days in advance to organize and confirm the details for a meeting.

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