

VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY
MASTER OF LIBRARY & INFORMATION SCIENCE
MLIS 7995 Special Topics – Genealogy for Librarians
Syllabus—Maymester 2015
Three Credit Hours

Instructor:

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Course Title: Genealogy for Librarians

Description:

An overview of resources on genealogy and techniques for providing library service to genealogists. The course allows students to acquire practical knowledge of genealogical materials and to explore related topics for providing library service to genealogists.

Learning Outcomes:

Students will:

- Describe the goals of genealogical research
- Describe the characteristics, needs and values of genealogists
- Describe standard techniques and tools used in genealogical research
- Conduct an effective genealogy reference interview
- Access key genealogical resources in a variety of formats
- Discuss issues related to service levels and external resources

Required Textbook:

Gates, Henry L. *African American Lives*. Alexandria, VA: PBS Video, 2006.

Simpson, Jack. *Basics of Genealogy Reference: A Librarian's Guide*. Westport, Conn: Libraries Unlimited, 2008.

Recommended Supplemental Textbooks:

Croom, Emily Anne. *Unpuzzling Your Past: The Best-Selling Basic Guide to Genealogy*, 4th ed. Betterway Books, 2001.

Gates Jr., Henry Louis. *In Search of Our Roots: How 19 Extraordinary African Americans Reclaimed Their Past*. Crown, 2009.

Moore, Dahrl Elizabeth. *Librarian's Genealogy Notebook A Guide to Resources*. Chicago: American Library Association, 1998.

Swan, James. *Librarian's Guide to Genealogical Services and Research*. Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2004.

Please comply with the MLIS policy that prohibits the use of VSU's Interlibrary Loan service for obtaining textbooks at: http://www.valdosta.edu/mlis/student_resources/documents/ILL_Textbooks.pdf

ALA-RUSA Information:

- Guidelines for a Unit or Course of Instruction in Genealogical Research at Schools of Library and Information Science
<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/rusa/resources/guidelines/guidelinesunit.cfm>
- Guidelines for Developing Beginning Genealogical Collections and Services
<http://www.lita.org/ala/mgrps/divs/rusa/resources/guidelines/guidelinesdeveloping.cfm>
- Guidelines for Establishing Local History Collections
<http://www.lita.org/ala/mgrps/divs/rusa/resources/guidelines/guidelinesestablishing.cfm>

Ethics, Conduct, Standards, Guidelines:

- Association of Professional Genealogists
<http://www.apgen.org/articles/ready.html>
- Board of Certification for Genealogist Code of Ethics and Conduct
<http://www.bcgcertification.org/aboutbcg/code.html>
- National Genealogical Society's Genealogical Standards and Guidelines
http://www.ngsgenealogy.org/cs/ngs_standards_and_guidelines

Attendance:

This is a web-based course with no face-to-face meetings required.

Requirements:

E-Knowledge Checks/Reflections on Weekly Readings posted to Discussion Board	20 points
Discussion Board Dialogue	20 points
Media Observation	15 points
Personal Research Part 1	15 points
Personal Research Part 2	15 points
Site Visitation	15 points

Grading Scale:

There are 100 points possible in the course. Grades will be assigned as follows:

100-91 points = A; 90-81 points = B; 80-71 points = C; 70-61 points = D; 60 and below = F

Late assignments will be given an automatic 10 point reduction.

Students are responsible for utilizing the database access through Odem Library to locate all assigned readings which have not been placed on electronic reserve. Readings from Croom, Moore, and Swan will be placed on electronic reserve.

Topics for E-knowledge checks and discussion board postings will be provided at a later date.

Weekly Topics and Related Readings:

Week 1: First Steps

May 14 to May 17

Croom, Chapter 1 In the Beginning – p. 3-9 (**E-reserve**)

Croom, Chapter 2 Charting Your Course – 10-22 (**E-reserve**)

Moore, Section 1. Brief Introduction to Genealogy & Family History- p.1-6 (**E-reserve**)

Moore, Section 3. Checklist of Genealogical Sources & Abbreviations Used in Genealogy -p.15-18 (**E-reserve**)

Simpson, Chapter 1: First Steps in Genealogy Research – p.1-6
Getting Organized; Talking to Family Members

Simpson, Chapter 9: Using the Internet – p.101-114
Free Sources on the Internet; Web 2.0 and Genealogy; Subscription Sites

Swan, Chapter 1 Starting Research – p. 3-12 (**E-reserve**)

Swan, Chapter 8 Start an Organized Search – p.147-172 (**E-reserve**)

Online Articles

Dunford, Fraser "Caught in the Net." *Beaver* 89.1 (2009): 50-51.

Duff Wendy M. and Catherine A. Johnson. "Where is the List with All the Names? Information-Seeking Behavior of Genealogists." *The American Archivist* 66, 1(Spring/Summer 2003): 79-95.

Howells, Cyndi "Tracking Your Family Through Time and Technology." *American Heritage* 50.1 (1999): 88.

Kovacs, Diane K. "Family Trees on the Web." *American Libraries* 34.7 (2003): 44.

Pinker, Steven "Strangled by Roots. (Cover story)." *New Republic* 237.3 (2007): 32-35.

Snell, Mary Kay. "Genealogy for Librarians." *Texas Libraries* 52,1 (Spring 1991): 17-22. (**E-reserve**)

101 Best Genealogy Websites of 2014

<http://familytreemagazine.com/article/101-best-websites-2014>

Top 100 Genealogy Websites for 2015

<http://www.genealogyintime.com/articles/top-100-genealogy-websites-of-2015-page01.html>

2015 Best Genealogy Search Service Comparisons and Reviews

<http://genealogy-search-review.toptenreviews.com/>

Averaged rankings of 4 major website ranking companies that are genealogy exclusive

<http://clarkandlewisgenealogy.com/50-most-popular-genealogy-websites.html>

Assignment I: Media Observation (15 points)

Due Date: 18 May 2015 at 6:00 am

Watch the documentary, *African American Lives*, a four-hour long, multi-episodic program tracing the genealogy of several notable African American entertainers, physicians or scientists. The program is co-produced and narrated by Dr. Henry Louis Gates, the Alphonse Fletcher University Professor at Harvard University.

The VSU-MLIS program has licensed the rights from PBS granting permission for students enrolled in MLIS 7999 to stream each of the one hour episodes. The videos will be available for the duration of the course.

View each of the four episodes: (1) Listening to our Past; (2) Searching for our Names (3) the Promise of Freedom; (4) Beyond the Middle Passage. Compose a paper which addresses the following areas:

- I. Describe the role of history in connection with genealogical research.
- II. Identify the emerging themes or concepts throughout the guests' narratives?
- III. Identify the specialties of the research experts.
- IV. Identify the kinds of documents used.
- V. Describe discoveries that either reinforced or introduced new information to the guests about their personal family narratives.
- VI. Personal reflections or responses to the program.

Paper Structure and Formatting guidelines:

- The paper should consist of four to six pages in length. There is an automatic five point reduction if you submit fewer than four pages or exceed six pages.
- Use 12-point font, one-inch margins, and double spacing. There is a five point deduction for any variation.
- Use the header function in your word processor to insert in the upper right hand corner of each page, insert your full name and page number
- If you quote or paraphrase from sources outside yourself, use MLA citation style. The hint of plagerism will result in zero points.
- Complete sentences, correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation are required for full credit.
- Submit as .doc document.

Week 2: Census Reports and Vital Records

May 18 to May 24

Moore, Section 4. Census Records & Forms, 1800-1920 – p.19-21 **(E-reserve)**

Moore, Section 5. Other Genealogical Records – p.23-29 **(E-reserve)**

Simpson, Chapter 2: Census Basics – p.7-20

Simpson, Chapter 3: Advanced Census Research – p.21-28

Simpson, Chapter 4: Researching Vital Records – p.29-42

Death Records; Marriage Records; Birth Records; Locating vital Records Using Indexes;
Obtaining vital Records from Repositories; Social Security Death Index (SSDI)

Online Articles

Adam, Michelle, and Helen Kelly "For Every Soul There is a Trace." *World of Hibernia* 5.1 (1999): 46.

Bidlack, Russell E. "Genealogy Today." *Library Trends* 32.1 (1983): 7-23.

Conniff, Richard "The Family Tree, Pruned." *Smithsonian* 38.4 (2007): 90-97.

Francis, Laurie. "The Genealogy Search Process." *PNLA quarterly* 68.3 (2004): 12, 22.

Lustenberger, Anita Anderson. "Using Indexes," *OnBoard* 3 (September 1997): 24. *

Mills, Elizabeth Shown. "Analyzing Deeds for Useful Clues," *OnBoard* 1 (January 1995): 8. *

Mills, Elizabeth Shown. "Analyzing Wills for Useful Clues," *OnBoard* 1 (May 1995): 16. *

Mills, Elizabeth Shown. "Censuses - Often-Overlooked Basics," *OnBoard* 4 (January 1998): 8 *

Mills, Elizabeth Shown. "Ethnicity and the Southern Genealogist: Myths and Misconceptions, Resources and Opportunities." *Generations and Change: Genealogical Perspectives in Social History* Eds. Robert M. Taylor and Ralph J. Crandall. Macon: Mercer 1986. p. 89-108 **(E-reserve)**.

Peters, Chrissie Anderson. *Genealogy for Beginners: From Both Sides of the Reference Desk*.
"Conference Issue: Programs from the TLA/SELA Joint Conference, Memphis, TN, April 5-7,
2006". *Tennessee Libraries* 52:8 (2006): <http://www.tnla.org/associations/5700/files/peters562.pdf>.

*The readings from *Onboard* are brief and intended as skill-building exercises.

Assignment II: Personal Research Pt. 1 (15 points)

Due Date: 25 May 2015 at 6:00 am

Students reflect upon their own histories by examining their own genealogies as a method to gain perspectives of future clientele seeking their assistance. Students will begin to use census reports and other vital records to map their own genealogy.

Based on the current knowledge of your family:

1. Complete an ahnentafel chart with you as number one (up to five generations). Contact one other relative to help fill in any basic information gaps.
2. Complete a pedigree chart with you as number one (up to five generations). Contact one other relative to help fill in any basic information gaps.
3. Reflection on the process:
 - a. What did you know about your ancestors before creating these charts?
 - b. What surprises did you encounter or what information was confirmed?
 - c. What challenges or roadblocks did you encounter?
 - d. Describe two questions that you want to pursue in the future.

Paper Structure and Formatting guidelines:

- The paper should consist of four to six pages in length. There is an automatic five point reduction if you submit fewer than four pages or exceed six pages.
- Use 12-point font, one-inch margins, and double spacing. There is a five point deduction for any variation.
- Use the header function in your word processor to insert in the upper right hand corner of each page, insert your full name and page number
- If you quote or paraphrase from sources outside yourself, use MLA citation style. The hint of plagiarism will result in zero points.
- Complete sentences, correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation are required for full credit.
- Submit as .doc document.

Week 3: Published Resources and Information Services

May 25 to May 31

Simpson, Chapter 5: Basic Published Resources – p.43-56
Newspapers and Obituaries; City Directories; Local Histories; Published Family Histories;
Genealogical Periodicals and Periodical Source Index (PERSI)

Simpson, Chapter 6: Basic Archival Sources – p.57-68
Church Records; Cemetery Records; Military Records

Simpson, Chapter 7: Immigration Records – p.69-78
Preliminary Research; Passenger List; Naturalization Records; Immigration Research

Simpson, Chapter 8: Ethnic Records & International Research – p.79-100
Ethnic Research in the U.S.; International Research; Ethnic Challenges and Strategies; African-American and Native American Research

Online Articles

Ashton, Rick J. "A Commitment to Excellence in Genealogy: How the Public Library Became the Only Tourist Attraction in Fort Wayne, Indiana ." *Library Trends* 32.1 (1983): 89-96.

Amason Benedict, Shelia "Using Newspapers Effectively," *OnBoard* 9 (September 2003): 20-22.

Bidlack, Russell E. "Genealogy as It Relates to Library Service." *ALA yearbook: a review of library events 1977*, Volume 3 (1978): xxiv-xxx. . **(E-reserve)**

Davidsson, Robert I. "Providing Genealogy Research Services in Public Libraries: Guidelines and Ethics." *Public Libraries*. Chicago: May/Jun 2004. Vol. 43, Iss. 3; pg. 142, 3 pgs

Hinckley, Kathleen W. "Analyzing City Directories," *OnBoard* 2 (May 1996): 16. *

Mills, Elizabeth Shown "Analyzing and Reviewing Published Sources," *OnBoard* 3 (May 1997): 16. *

Null, David G. "Genealogy and Family History in the Academic Library." *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 11.1 (March 1985): 29-33.

Rubincam, Milton. "What the Genealogist Expects of an Archival Agency or Historical Society." *The American Archivist* 12, 4(October 1949): 333-338.

Shawker, Patricia O'Brien "Passport Applications: A Rich Genealogical Resource," *OnBoard* 13 (May 2007): 14-15. *

*The readings from *Onboard* are brief and intended as resources for skill-development.

Assignment III: Personal Research Pt.2 (15 points)

Due Date: 01 June 2015 at 6:00 am

Family histories emerge as we engage in genealogical research & conversation with relatives. Select 2 stories that were revealed as you conducted research. For each story, address the following:

- Who/what is the source of the story? i.e., who did you speak with, what story did you find
- What types of records could document/support the story?
- Where would you look for these particular records?
- How did these stories facilitate your fact finding mission? How did it help you fill in gaps?
- How are these family stories linked with larger histories in the local/regional/national communities?
- What books/resources will be helpful in learning more about these larger histories?
- What are some unique/particular components related to your family research project?
(e.g. African American/slavery, European immigration, Asian forced encampment, military service, religious affiliation) .

Week 4: Advanced Resources and Professional Tools

02 June to 07 June

Moore, Section 2: Library Reference Service p. 7-14 (**E-reserve**)

Simpson, Chapter 10: Resources of the Family History Library – p.115-124

Simpson, Chapter 11: The National Archives & Other Repositories – p.125-134

Simpson, Chapter 12: The Genealogy Reference Interview – p.135-140

Approaches of Patrons to Research; Using Four Basic Steps; Common Researcher Mistakes;
Difficult cases

Simpson, Chapter 13: Professional Toolkit – p.141-148

Swan, Chapter 10: Identifying Databases and Indexes – p.205-224 (**E-reserve**)

Swan, Chapter 11 Facilitating Research with Computers – p.225-252 (**E-reserve**)

Online Articles

Francis, Laurie. "The Genealogy Reference Interview." *PNLA quarterly* 70.1 (2004): 13-15.

Linder, Bill R. "An Overview of Genealogical Research in the National Archives." *Library Trends*.
Summer 1983 25-38.

Mills, Elizabeth Shown. "Genealogy in the 'Information Age': History's New Frontier?" *National
Genealogical Society Quarterly* 91 (December 2003): 260-278.

Redmann, Gail R. "Archivists and Genealogists: The Trend Toward Peaceful Coexistence." *Archival
Issues* 18, no.2 (1993): 121-132.

Remus, William. "How to Use DNA in Your Genealogical Research" *FEEFHS Journal* 13: 54-59.

Skloot, Rebecca "Putting the GENE Back in Genealogy." *Popular Science* 264.1 (2004): 78.

Taylor, Robert M. and Ralph J. Crandall. "Historians and Genealogists: An Emerging Community of
Interest." *Generations and Change: Genealogical Perspectives in Social History*. Robert M. Taylor
and Ralph J. Crandall. Macon: Mercer 1986. pgs. 3-28. (**E-reserve**)

Assignment IV: Site Visitation (15 points)

Due Date: 6 June 2015, at 11:59pm

Visit a genealogical or history based institution of your choice which provides access to primary documents. The facility could be a library, a local history center, a LDS History Center, a national or regional archives or one of several other kinds of institutions who provides research access for genealogists. Interview one of the staff persons working in the facility. Create a Microsoft power point presentation about the institution containing exactly 15 slides (no less, no more) plus one additional slide for either a title or acknowledgement page. The presentation must contain at least one slide for each of the following elements:

- the mission of the library or information center
- the patrons who regularly utilize the facility
- description of the collection
- description of the kind of services provided
- the education, experience and background of the staff member or staff members
- the relationship of the institution with other institutions or organizations
- common obstacles assisting researchers
- ethical considerations that are important in this library or information center
- advice for you and your classmates as you prepare for your careers

A group of students can attend the same presentation, but each person's work should stand alone. The presentations are not group projects, so should not be duplicates of one another.

Technical Requirements

All assignments must be submitted using computer programs that are compatible with VSU-supported formats. For word processing documents, MS Word is preferred (2003 or 2007). If you are using a lower version of WordPerfect or some other word processing software, save your documents as Rich Text Format (rtf).

Distance Learning Support

A VSU reference librarian is responsible for coordinating library services for off-campus VSU students. That librarian's email and phone contact will be provided to you at the start of this semester. An online guide for distance education students is on the Odum Library Web site at http://www.valdosta.edu/library/services/revised_students.pdf.

Academic Dishonesty

"Valdosta State University expects that graduate students will pursue their academic endeavors and conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner. All work that a student presents to satisfy course requirements should represent his or her own efforts, including appropriate use and acknowledgement of external sources."

Specific regulations related to student conduct and behavior are contained in the Student Handbook, Student Code of Ethics. Please acquaint yourself with the full policy at [http://coefaculty.valdosta.edu/troot/eced4300/Academic points20Dishonesty.doc](http://coefaculty.valdosta.edu/troot/eced4300/Academic_points20Dishonesty.doc).

It is your responsibility to make sure you understand how to avoid breaches of academic integrity. It is not the responsibility of the instructor to post rules for citing, quoting, or ethical exchange of information for every assignment. If you are unsure about the parameters of an assignment, ask for clarification.

Special Needs Statement

Valdosta State University is an equal opportunity educational institution. It is not the intent of our institution to discriminate against any applicant for admission or any student or employee of the institution based on the sex, race, religion, color, national origin, or the handicap of the individual. It is the intent of the institution to comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and subsequent executive orders as well as the Title IX section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Students requiring classroom accommodations or modifications because of a documented disability should discuss this need with the professor at the beginning of the semester. Students requesting classroom accommodations or modifications due to a documented disability must contact the Access Office for Students with Disabilities located in room 1115 Nevins Hall. The phone numbers are 245-2498 (V/VP) and 219-1348 (TTY).

Student Agreement

Enrollment in this class signifies that the student has agreed to abide by and adhere to the policies and regulations specified above. It is understood that the instructor may adapt or change this syllabus and the assignments contained within it according to circumstances that may arise during the course of the semester.