

VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY
MASTER OF LIBRARY & INFORMATION SCIENCE
MLIS 7100 Information Sources and Services
Syllabus—Fall Semester 2008
Three Credit Hours

Instructor:

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Catalog Description

An introduction to concepts and processes in reference and information science and to fundamental information sources and services provided by libraries and information organizations. An overview of the reference function includes the history and future of reference service, question negotiation, information needs analysis, effective research strategies, evaluation of information sources in various formats, and ethics of information services.

Course Outcomes

Each student will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of theoretical concepts and techniques that support the provision of reference and information services.
- Demonstrate familiarity with current issues and trends in reference services.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the reference process including techniques for question negotiation.
- Develop successful search strategies.
- Evaluate fundamental information sources.
- Demonstrate an understanding of ethics of information services.

Textbook

Cassell, Kay Ann, and Uma Hiremath. *Reference and Information Services in the 21st Century: An Introduction*. New York: Neal-Schuman, 2006. ISBN: 1-55570-563-4

Please familiarize yourself 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

Note: The VSU Bookstore placed an order for 20 copies of the book. If you want quick, dependable service, or are buying your books with Financial Aid, place your order through the VSU Bookstore.

Instructor Availability & Support

Dr. Ondrusek checks her e-mail and telephone messages at least once daily throughout normal business hours (M-F, 9-5). By institutional policy, instructors are asked to communicate with students online through VSU accounts (WebCT/Vista and BlazeNet e-mail). If you are registered for the course as a non-

degree student, a BlazeNet account will be assigned to you for this semester. Your BlazeNet login and password serve as your WebCT/Vista login and password. The BlazeNet login page is at <http://luminis.valdosta.edu/cp/home/loginf>.

All discussion posts and assignment submissions for this online course must be sent via WebCT/Vista. In the case that we encounter technical problems with the WebCT software, group e-mail assignments will be routed through BlazeNet. For instructions on using a student BlazeNet account, go to: <http://www.valdosta.edu/helpdesk/guides/blazenet/>.

Attendance

This is a Web-delivered course, with no required face-to-face meetings. Attendance at the Live Classroom student presentations will be arranged based on the size of the class and the number of presentations. Attendance at the Live Classroom presentation assigned to you is mandatory.

Course Activities Overview

Bibliographic Tools Self Assessment

15 points

This is an online assessment available through your WebCT course site. The questions are designed to guide you through the features of bibliographic tools essential to reference service. This is also an exercise to acquaint you with the WebCT assessment tool. Look for it on the WebCT site. It will be available from noon Wed., 9/3, through Mon. 9/8, at noon. Completing the self assessment is mandatory. You will receive 15 points for submitting it with all questions answered. The test itself is self-grading, so you will be able to see how well you did on the questions. However, the grade will not be entered into your final average.

Searching Strategies Assessment

75 points

This is a graded test that counts toward your final grade. The test will be available from noon Wed., 9/24, through Mon. 9/29, at noon. Treat it as an exam. Collaboration is not allowed. No make-up test is available.

Reference Transaction Report

75 points

Part 1. (30 points)

Visit a library and ask a question at the reference desk. Make this a question on a topic that you actually know about or that is meaningful to you. Select a topic that you are comfortable sharing in your report. Let the librarian lead you through the reference interview and answer as you think a patron needing this information would respond. If you don't collect enough information from this first attempt to write your report, try another librarian (later), OR remain near the reference desk and document at least one transaction with another patron that included an interview. Report on the librarian's interview techniques and quality of the transaction. Substantiate your remarks with citations from the assigned readings.

Part 2. (30 points)

In addition, submit a question to a virtual reference service. You may use the same question if you think it is appropriate. This can be an e-mail, chat, or IM service. Again, report on your experience in terms of the quality of the reference service and your satisfaction with the outcome of the transaction. Substantiate your remarks with citations from the assigned readings

Part 3. (15 points)

Describe how you would improve either of the transactions. Be explicit. Cite the readings from which you got your ideas for these improvements.

Submit your observations and findings as a **Reference Transaction Report**.

Reports that are incomplete, formatted incorrectly, or contain extensive spelling or grammar errors will be returned for revision and can receive no higher than 65 points upon re-submission.

Reference Transaction Report Due date: Mon. Oct. 20, noon.

One-day grace period (Tues. submissions accepted without penalty).

Wed. – paper can earn no higher than a B.

Thurs. – paper can earn no higher than a C.

Fri. – paper can earn no higher than a D.

Sat. – grade of zero entered into your grade book.

Reference Summaries sent to your Blog

75 points

You will be assigned to work in small groups to review reference materials. If possible, you will be placed in a group with others who share your interests in a particular library type (e.g., public, academic, or a special area of reference). Small-group discussion boards in WebCT will be created to serve as each group's "Reference Blog." During Weeks 10, 11, 12, and 13, **each person selects 15 titles** of resources appropriate to your library type. To be considered for inclusion, a reference "work" should have the characteristics of those resources discussed in your textbook in Chapters 5, 6, 7, 9, and 11. Reliable sources typically used by librarians for the selection of reference works will be recommended. You may not duplicate titles, so weekly "blog meetings" are necessary to select different titles for review.

Create a summary for each of the 15 resources. The guidelines for the content and format required in each summary will be posted on WebCT. Grading criteria will be posted on WebCT as well. Share your selections by posting them to your group blog on a weekly basis. See the Assignment Calendar for how many summaries are due each week and weekly due dates. Your reviews are graded separately, but collaboration is a must.

Pathfinder Project

60 points

Using the reference works compiled in you group blog, create a pathfinder to your "collection." This should be carried out as a group project. Examples of pathfinders will be provided on the WebCT site. Criteria on which your pathfinder will be evaluated will also be posted on the WebCT site. Projects that are incomplete, formatted incorrectly, or contain extensive spelling or grammar errors will be returned for revision and can receive no higher than 50 points upon re-submission. All group members receive the same grade.

Reference Simulation Project

75 points

This is the culminating activity for this class in which you will simulate a hypothetical reference activity. To do this, you will role-play **ONE** of these situations:

Conduct an interview and follow through on a transaction from a single user.

To answer the query, use a reference work or works that we covered in class.

(You will have to partner with a classmate to do this. One person plays the librarian, the other person acts as the patron asking the question.)

OR

Teach a patron how to use an online reference tool to meet a particular information need.

To create your instruction, use a reference tool or tools that we covered in class.

You will receive notes on how to use the "instructor" features of Live Classroom. Use the final weeks of classes to create your "dramatization" and to refine and practice presenting it "live." In the last week of the course, you will present your simulation to your classmates, and you will be able to see what your classmates created. Dates will be announced.

A Word about Group Projects

Play to the strengths of each other in group work. Some of you will emerge as good "detectives," as able writers, or as creative designers. If you are uncomfortable in your group or the group finds that a member is not participating equally, communicate this to Dr. Ondrusek privately. The situation will be resolved based on the individual circumstances.

Assignment Calendar

<i>Week of:</i>	<i>Activities:</i>
Week 1 Mon. Aug. 18	<u>Reference Work as a Profession</u> Read Cassell and Hiremath text: Chapter 1. FYI, print out or bookmark RUSA's: <ul style="list-style-type: none">o <i>Professional Competencies for Reference and User Services</i> at http://www.ala.org/ala/rusa/rusaprotools/referenceguide/professional.cfm Take the “ Reference Preference ” survey. Results will be used to place you in groups. Use the “ Introduce Yourself ” discussion board to say “hello” to all. Questions? Use the Ask Me discussion board from here on out for answers. Background materials will be posted on the WebCT site for this and all subsequent weeks.
Week 2 Mon. Aug. 25	<u>Reference as a Key to Bibliographic Information</u> Read Cassell and Hiremath text: Chapter 4. View material on the WebCT course site.
Mon. Sep. 1	Labor Day
Week 3 Tues. Sep. 2	<u>Bibliographic Tools Self Assessment</u> This is an online self-test. Your grade is your feedback. You earn 15 points for completing all parts. The test will be available from noon Wed., 9/3, through Mon. 9/8, at noon. <u>Treat it as an exam.</u> Collaboration is not authorized.
Week 4 Mon. Sep. 8	<u>Searching Strategies, Part 1</u> Read Cassell and Hiremath text: Chapter 3 (Basic search techniques) View tutorials on the WebCT course site (when/how to search library catalogs).
Week 5 Mon. Sep. 15	<u>Searching Strategies, Part 2</u> Read Cassell and Hiremath text: Chapter 8 (Indexes) View tutorials on the WebCT course site (when/how to search indexes).
Week 6 Mon. Sep. 22	<u>Searching Strategies: Part 3</u> Read Cassell and Hiremath text: Chapter 13 (Web). View tutorials on the WebCT course site (when/how to search the Web). <u>Searching Strategies Assessment</u> This is a graded test that counts toward your final grade. The test will be available from noon Wed., 9/24, through Mon. 9/29, at noon. <u>Treat it as an exam.</u> Collaboration is not authorized. No make-up test is available.

- Week 7
Mon. Sep. 29 Giving the Best Reference Service Possible: Face-to-Face Reference Transactions
Reference and information services competencies
Read Cassell and Hiremath text: Chapter 2
Read the assigned journal articles listed in the Week 7 WebCT folder.
Print out and study the ALA *Guidelines for Behavioral Performance for Reference and Information Service Providers* found at this site:
<http://www.ala.org/ala/rusa/rusaprotools/referenceguide/guidelinesbehavioral.cfm>
- FYI, print out or bookmark:
- *ALA Code of Ethics* at
<http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/statementspols/codeofethics/codeethics.htm>
 - *Library Services to Older Adult Guidelines* (RUSA) at
<http://www.ala.org/ala/rusa/rusaprotools/referenceguide/libraryservices.cfm>
 - *Guidelines for Library Services to Spanish-Speaking Library Users* (RUSA) at
<http://www.ala.org/ala/rusa/rusaprotools/referenceguide/guidespanish.cfm>
 - *Competencies for Serving Young Adults* (YALSA) at
<http://www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/profdev/yacompetencies/competencies.cfm>
 - *Competencies for Librarians Serving Children in Public Libraries* (ALSC) at
<http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/alscresources/forlibrarians/professionaldev/competencies.htm>
 - *Guidelines for Medical, Legal, and Business Responses* at
<http://www.ala.org/ala/rusa/rusaprotools/referenceguide/guidelinesmedical.cfm>
- Week 8
Mon. Oct. 6 Giving the Best Reference Service Possible: Virtual Reference Transactions
Reference and information services delivered virtually
Read the assigned journal articles listed in the Week 8 WebCT folder.
Print out and study the ALA *Guidelines for Implementing and Maintaining Virtual Reference* (RUSA) found at this site:
<http://www.ala.org/ala/rusa/rusaprotools/referenceguide/virtrefguidelines.cfm>
- If using an e-mail virtual reference question, submit it ASAP!
- Oct. 13-14 Fall Break
Oct. 15-17 GA COMO
- Week 9
Wed. Oct. 15 Reference Transaction Observation Week
Complete your **Reference Transaction Report** and submit as specified on WebCT.
Due date: Mon. Oct. 20, noon.
One-day grace period (Tues. submissions accepted without penalty).
Wed. – paper can earn no higher than a B.
Thurs. – paper can earn no higher than a C.
Fri. – paper can earn no higher than a D.
Sat. – grade of zero entered into your grade book.
- Week 10
Mon. Oct. 20 Evaluating Reference Works: Getting Started on your Blogs
Evaluation criteria for reference works, printed and online
Read Cassell and Hiremath text: Chapter 17.
- Go to the **Reference Blog** assigned to your group. Plan with your group.
Read the instructions on how to select ref resources for review.
View examples of how to prepare and submit ref summaries.
- Each person must submit 2 summaries to the Blog: 1 print resource; 1 Web ref resource.
Due date: Mon. Oct. 27, noon. Late submissions lose credit.

- Week 11
Mon. Oct. 27 Evaluating Reference Works: Encyclopedic Resources
Encyclopedias, Biographical collections, Literary criticism
Read Cassell and Hiremath text: Chapter 5 and Chapter 11.
View material on the WebCT course site.
- Each person must contribute 4 summaries to your group's **Reference Blog**.
Recommended: 2 encyclopedias, 2 biographical works
- Dr. Ondrusek starts transferring summaries from private group Blogs to the lists called Ref Central Reviews – all classmates can read these.
Due date: Mon. Nov. 3, noon. Late submissions lose credit.
- Week 12
Mon. Nov. 3 Evaluating Reference Works: Ready Reference
Short-entry “look-up” tools: Dictionaries, Directories, Almanacs, Handbooks, Manuals, Gazetteers, Reviews (for books, theater, films, music), Chronologies.
Read Cassell and Hiremath text: Chapter 6, Chapter 7, and Chapter 9.
- Each person must contribute 5 more summaries to your group's **Reference Blog**.
Recommended: No more than 1 student dictionary each.
- Dr. Ondrusek starts transferring summaries from private group Blogs to the lists called Ref Central Reviews – all classmates can read these.
Due date: Mon. Nov. 10, noon. Late submissions lose credit.
- Week 13
Mon. Nov. 10 Evaluating Reference Works: Your Final Four
Submit last four ref summaries.
- Each person must contribute 4 more summaries to your group's **Reference Blog**.
Your picks. They must be ref resources from the approved lists.
- Dr. Ondrusek starts transferring summaries from private group Blogs to the lists called Ref Central Reviews – all classmates can read these.
Due date: Mon. Nov. 17, noon. Late submissions lose credit.
- Week 14
Mon. Nov. 17 Pathfinder Project
Working with your group, create a Pathfinder using selections from your **Reference Blog**.
Submit as specified on the WebCT site.
Due date: Mon., Nov. 24, noon.
- Week 15
Mon. Nov. 24 Live Classroom and Reference Simulation Demonstration
Read Cassell and Hiremath text: Chapter 15 and Chapter 16.
View material on the WebCT course site.
Dr. Ondrusek will present a lesson using Live Classroom, Monday evening.
- Nov. 26-28 Thanksgiving
- Week 15
(cont'd)
Mon. Dec. 1 Reference Simulation: Prep & Practice Week
Decide on the reference activity that you want to simulate, either a reference transaction OR teaching transaction. Use this week to refine your simulation and practice presenting it “live.”
- Finals
Week Reference Simulation: Presentation & Performance Week
Present your **Reference Simulation** to your classmates on Live Classroom.
Dates and times to be announced.

Graded Course Requirements

As a student in this class, you are expected to: (1) read or view all assigned background materials; (2) participate in class follow-up activities; (3) visit a library as needed (to examine print reference works and to pose a question to a reference librarian); (4) present your reference simulation to your classmates using Live Classroom; (5) submit all projects on time and according to the format designated by the instructor; and (6) conduct your research and composition according to the rules of academic integrity (see Academic Dishonesty section on page 8).

Bibliographic Tools Self Assessment	15 points
Searching Strategies Assessment (Graded Test)	75 points
Reference Summaries submitted to Blogs	75 points
Pathfinder Project	60 points
Reference Transaction Report	75 points
Reference Simulation Project	<u>75 points</u>
	375 possible points

Grading

Your final grade will be one of these letter grades: Cut points for your final grade are still under review.

Exceptionally exceeds minimum standards	A
Exceeds minimum standards	B
Meets minimum standards	C
Barely meets minimum standards	D
Fails to meet minimum standards	F

Technical Requirements

All class materials will be placed on a password-protected Web site using the WebCT/Vista course management program. If you are a new WebCT user, go to the WebCT/Vista help pages at <http://www.valdosta.edu/vista/>. On the right margin are “Self Help” links. View the “Getting Started” tutorial first. Then return to the WebCT/Vista page and login using your BlazeNet email ID and password. To meet all class requirements, you should be prepared to: (1) open and save/print all documents that are required background reading - this requires the Adobe Acrobat Reader on your computer; (2) view all Powerpoints placed on the course WebCT site – these are saved to **Powerpoint 97-2003**; (3) participate in Live Classroom sessions – login links and instructions will be available through your WebCT course homepage; (4) check discussion groups as needed; and (5) keep electronic backup copies of each assignment and project you submit.

Unless otherwise stated, assignments must be submitted using a word processing program compatible with Microsoft (MS) Word. WebCT requires the format for **MS Word 97-2003**. If you are using MS Word 2007, save it down to the 97-2003 format. If you are using WordPerfect or sharing documents with classmates who have a different version of Word, save your documents in Rich Text Format (rtf). Documents that can not be opened on VSU equipment will be returned to you for re-formatting.

The university’s Information Technology department provides step-by-step guides on how to use VSU’s email and other sources. The IT Help Desk is at <http://www.valdosta.edu/helpdesk/guides/> and their phone hot line is 229-245-4357.

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/trout/eced4300/Academic%20Dishonesty.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.