

VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY
 MASTER OF LIBRARY & INFORMATION SCIENCE
 MLIS 7100 Information Sources and Services
 Syllabus—Spring Semester 2009
 Three Credit Hours

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* The instructors set aside this time to be available, mostly by phone.

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 multiple 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

Check with your instructor for her/his policy on how frequently e-mail and telephone messages will be returned. 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.

All discussion posts and assignment submissions for this online course must be sent via WebCT/Vista. 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>. 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. Real-time instruction using tools in WebCT such as Chat or Live Classroom may be scheduled at the discretion of the instructor.

Presentations using Live Classroom will be required at the end of the semester. These presentations are mandatory and attendance at the entire session in which you present is required.

Course Activities Outline

The following list is a brief overview of the activities included in this course. Complete instructions for each assignment along with grading criteria will be posted on the WebCT course site in advance of that assignment's due date.

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. Take the test as many times as needed until you have a perfect score. Earn your first 15 points.

Searching Strategies Assessment

75 points

This is a graded test that counts toward your final grade. 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. 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)

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)

From either of the transactions, describe in detail at least one interview technique that the librarian used effectively. Name the techniques that were missing from either (or both) transactions. Tell how you would insert these techniques into a reference encounter if you were the librarian being asked the question that you posed. Cite the readings from which you got your ideas for these techniques.

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 Resource Write-ups

Amount of points under review

You will be asked to examine and analyze a combination of print and online reference resources on a weekly basis.

Pathfinder Project

60 points

Create a pathfinder on a topic to be discussed with your instructor. 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.

Reference Simulation Project

Amount of points under review

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.

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 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 4).

Bibliographic Tools Self Assessment	15 points
Searching Strategies Assessment (Graded Test)	75 points
Reference Resource Write-ups	under review
Pathfinder Project	60 points
Reference Transaction Report	75 points
Reference Simulation Project	under review

Grading

Your final grade will be one of these letter grades:

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

Amount of points for each grade are under review

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.

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 breeches 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.

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.

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.