



Master of Library and Information Science Program

Valdosta State University

MLIS 7100: INFORMATION SOURCES & SERVICES

COURSE SYLLABUS

FALL 2012

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3 credit hours

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. **Prerequisite or co-requisite: MLIS 7000.**

Grade Requirements

All students admitted fall 2012 and thereafter must earn a grade of "B" or better in these core courses: MLIS 7000, 7100, 7200, 7300, 7700, and 7800.

Course Dates & Delivery: August 13, 2012 through December 3, 2012. This class will be conducted on the Web via BlazeView, Valdosta State University's electronic course management system. All discussion posts and assignment submissions must be sent via BlazeView. Your VSU email username serves as your BlazeVIEW login. For information and assistance with Blazeview, call the IT Help desk at 229-245-4357 or submit a help request at: <http://www.valdosta.edu/vista/forms/help.php>

MLIS Program Objectives (PO)

Graduates of the MLIS Program will:

- PO 1. Perform administrative, service, and technical functions of professional practice in libraries and information centers by demonstrating skills in information resources, reference and user services, administration and management, and organization of recorded knowledge and information.
- PO 2. Use existing and emerging technologies to meet needs in libraries and information centers.
- PO 3. Integrate relevant research to enhance their work in libraries and information centers.
- PO 4. Demonstrate professionalism as librarians or information specialists.

Student Learning Outcomes (LO)

Students will:

- LO 1. Apply the principles identified with competent question negotiation as outlined in the most current *Guidelines for Behavioral Performance of Reference and Information Service Providers* (PO 1, PO 4).
- LO 2. Describe the physical environments for both in-person and virtual reference transactions conducive to delivering effective information services (PO 1, PO 2).
- LO 3. Classify information resources by their distinguishing characteristics (PO 1).
- LO 4. Consult the sources most relevant for keeping reference collections up to date (PO 3).
- LO 5. Retrieve information based on the needs of the user and on availability of resources (PO 1).
- LO 6. Devise search strategies consistent with how a resource organizes knowledge and information (PO 1).
- LO 7. Evaluate both print and online resources based on criteria used in professional reviews (PO 3).
- LO 8. Apply the central research findings and research literature related to reference services (PO 3).
- LO 9. Produce a user aid for a targeted audience (PO 1).

Instructor Availability & Support

By institutional policy, instructors are asked to communicate with students online through BlazeView and VSU e-mail. E-mail messages will be answered in forty-eight hours. If the questions you ask can be answered using the syllabus or other course document, you will be referred to the pertinent document. The best place to ask questions is in a discussion forum unless the question pertains to your specific work.

Required Text

Cassell, K. A., and Hiremath, U. (2011). *Reference and Information Services in the 21st Century: An Introduction*. 2nd Ed. New York: Neal-Schuman.

Slone, D. J. (2009-2012). *Course handbook 2012, MLIS 7100*. The handbook is available in the Document Center on BlazeView. You can access it by clicking the "Course Content" link and "Document Center".

Recommended Text: All written assignments must adhere to the following style manual: American Psychological Association (APA). (2009). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. (6th ed. 2nd printing). Washington, DC: Author.

Assignments & Due Dates (There is a 24-hour grace period for submission of assignments. Assignments will not be accepted after the grace period.)

Assignment	Due	Value	LO
Topical Discussions	Aug. 13 th – Oct. 1 st	15%	3, 4, 6, 8
Search List 1	September 10 th	10%	5, 6, 7
Search List 2	September 24 th	10%	5, 6, 7
Search List 3 & Source Evaluation	October 8 th	15%	5, 6, 7, 8
Reference Presentation	October 29 th	25%	1, 2, 5
Pathfinder	November 26 th	25%	4, 7, 9

GRADING

ALA and Departmental Requirements: NO grade below a C will be credited toward a VSU graduate degree. To receive an A in the course a student must complete every assignment.

Reminder: This is a core course, and those of you admitted fall 2012 or thereafter must earn a grade of “B” or better in this course in order to receive credit for it. Those same students must successfully complete each assignment marked as “necessary to fulfill requirements for this course.”

An overall grade of zero can be assigned to an entire paper or project if the instructor determines that its contents, or parts of its contents, were completed by a second party **or copied into a paper or project from a source without proper citing**. Noncompliance with rules on appropriate use of resources will result in zero credit for those parts of the assignment affected. If you are unsure about the parameters of an assignment, ask for clarification. See also the section “University Policies” below.

Grading Scale: In determining the quality of completed work, the level of your submission in comparison to other students on the same assignment is a consideration. If the best works receive high marks, lower quality papers are graded commensurately. In short, simply completing an assignment within the guidelines is most often not enough to garner an “A”.

Final grades will be based on the following grading scale:

Letter Grade	Number Grade	Criteria for Assignment of Grades
A	92-100	Superior. Work is creative, thorough, well-reasoned, insightful and well-written; it shows a strong grasp of course topics and demonstrates a superior ability to organize, analyze, and integrate course concepts into a cohesive whole
B	80-91	Good. Work is, to some degree, thorough, well-reasoned and well-written; it demonstrates a good grasp of course topics and an ability to organize, analyze, and integrate course concepts into a cohesive whole
C	70-79	Below Standards. Work falls short of meeting expectations for graduate level students in one or more areas; understanding of course topics is less than complete; writing needs improvement
D	60-69	Poor. Work falls far short of meeting expectations for graduate level students in one or more areas; understanding of course topics is less than complete; writing needs improvement; work shows little progress from the beginning to the end of the semester
F	Below 60	Failing

Evaluation of Performance: Grades for written assignments will be based on the average of three criteria, content, quality of writing, and scholarship.

Content

Creativity– the degree to which work is creative within the context of the assignment

Efficiency – the lack of bulk (i.e. superfluous text, unnecessary pictures, junk)

Appropriateness – the degree to which the paper addresses the assignment given

Quality of writing

Grammar – the degree to which grammar, sentence structure, punctuation, etc. meet graduate level standards

Writing – the lack of typos and misspellings

Scholarship

Structure – the degree to which you adhere to APA style 6th edition guidelines (1/3 of the grade for any assignment will be deducted for non-adherence to APA style guidelines)

Support – your ability to weave in supporting works without over-paraphrasing or plagiarizing

Sophistication – the degree to which work integrates course concepts into a cohesive whole

EXPECTATIONS & REQUIREMENTS

Basic Tenet: As graduate students, you are expected to do graduate-level work and to conduct research beyond the textbook.

Written Format: Unless otherwise instructed, all written assignments must be submitted electronically using MS Word. Please use one-inch margins, an 11- or 12-point font, and double spacing. Number each page, and include your last name in the header or footer of the document. Do not include an abstract. The list of references should start on a new page. Italics, rather than underlining, should be used for publication titles.

There is a 24-hour grace period for submission of assignments. Assignments will not be accepted after the grace period.

Submission Requirements: All students must

- Use the following scheme to name your files: Last Name, Assignment
- Submit assignments by 11:59 p.m. of the due date
- Submit assignments via the Assignment Manager
- Submit no more than one document for each assignment. If you send an assignment in two or more parts, only one document will be reviewed and graded.

Research & Writing: You are to assume that readers of your written work are of average or above-average intelligence and do not know the assignment you've been given. You should also assume that all assignments require research. In addition, you are expected to weave in supporting work from professional and scholarly literature wherever possible. Though research should extend beyond course readings, the bulk of written work must be your own. As graduate students, it is your responsibility to know or learn the difference between plagiarism and over-paraphrasing. When in doubt, please review the section entitled "University Policies".

SCHEDULE & READINGS

Week of	Topics	Readings (See the list at the end of the syllabus)
August 13 th	Introduction to Reference Work	Cassell & Hiremath, Chapter 1 & 2; Course handbook pgs. 2-7; RUSA
August 20 th	Searching and Answering Questions	Cassell & Hiremath, Chapter 3; Course handbook pgs. 7-27
August 27 th	Indexes, Databases and other Bibliographic Sources;	Cassell & Hiremath, Chapters 4 & 8
September 3 rd	Ready Reference, Encyclopedias and Dictionaries	Cassell & Hiremath, Chapters 5-7
September 10 th	Using the Internet for Reference Due: Search List 1	Cassell & Hiremath, Chapter 13; Ormondroyd
September 17 th	Answering Health, Law and Business Questions	Cassell & Hiremath, Chapters 9 & 13
September 24 th	Geographic Sources Due: Search List 2	Cassell & Hiremath, Chapter 10
October 1 st	Biographical Sources; Government Sources	Cassell & Hiremath, Chapters 11 and 12
October 8 th	The Reference Interview Due: Search List 3	Cassell & Hiremath, Chapters 13-16 Coatney; Dewdney; Gross; Ross; Straw
October 15 th	Bibliographic Instruction	Jones-Kavalier; Loertscher
October 22 nd	Reference in the 21 st Century	Beck; RUSA 2003; RUSA 2004a; RUSA 2005; Cassell & Hiremath, Chapters 20 -21
October 29 th	Trends in Reference Services Due: Reference Presentation	Miller-Gatenby & Chittenden; Shaw and Spink; RUSA 2004b
November 5 th	Developing and Managing Reference Collections	Cassell & Hiremath, Chapters 17-18
November 12 th	Information Literacy in Reference	Cassell & Hiremath, Chapter 16
November 19 th	Assessing and Improving Reference Services	Dahl; Gandhi; Cassell & Hiremath, Chapter 19; Straw; Oberlander
November 26 th	Due: Pathfinder	

ASSIGNMENTS

Reread “Expectations & Requirements” above before attempting assignments. The course handbook in the Document Center on BlazeView is useful for most assignments.

Topical Discussions: This assignment will use the “Topical Discussions” forum on BlazeView to discuss course topics. To successfully complete this assignment, use course notes and readings to discuss course topics, including, search strategies, ethics and source evaluation.

Reference Searches: These are the most challenging and time-consuming assignments in the course. They require attention to detail and thoroughness. The purpose of this assignment is to become familiar with reference sources in order to (1) transform user queries into effective search strategies; (2) effectively utilize reference tools in various formats; and (3) practice presenting reliable information in a credible way. Grades will be based on completeness of answers, credibility, appropriateness of sources, and use of APA style. Points

will be deducted for misspellings, grammatical errors and failure to put your name on your paper, among other things. During each of 3 weeks, you will be given lists of reference questions via BlazeView. To successfully complete the lists you should

- Read the instructions
- Answer the questions using reference sources as instructed. (Sample questions and answers can be found in the course handbook on p. 30-31)
- Answer the questions using complete sentences
- Include the question with your answer
- Provide a complete citation for each source
- Use the same source no more than twice on each list
- Avoid proxy addresses and other URLs that lead to login pages. Instead, use the APA style guide to learn how to list Web sources. You will not get credit for reference entries that use proxy addresses or dead links.

It is important for this series of assignments that you do the actual work yourself. Working with other students by splitting up the assignment and presenting identical answers or consistently similar resources may result in a grade of "0" for each student suspected of collusion.

For search list 3, you will evaluate sources from your search using professional and scholarly literature.

Reference Presentation: (6 to 8 pages)

To successfully complete this assignment, you should...

- Visit the reference department of a library or information center. Do not tour a place where you work or have worked
- Observe the workings of the department, including reference transactions, and examine print and electronic resources
- Find a librarian, introduce yourself and explain the assignment. Do not select someone you know
- Ask the librarian if s/he is willing to talk to you for 20 to 30 minutes about reference work. You may need to make an appointment
- Interview the librarian reference resources and reference work in general
Sample questions (Your are not limited to these):
 - What does a typical day look like?
 - What resources (databases, print, the web, smartphones, etc.) are most useful to you?
 - Given your experiences, what would you like new librarians to know about reference?
- Write a paper that describes both the reference transaction and an exemplary day in a reference library. The presentation should focus on an imaginary library of your choice and should incorporate what you learned on your tour, from your readings and from *Guidelines for Behavioral Performance of Reference and Information Service Providers*
- Incorporate scholarly and or professional literature beyond course readings

Pathfinder Project (8 to 9 pages)

You should begin early with this assignment. The purpose is to develop skills in organizing information on the Web, providing information about a specific topic to a target user group, and guiding patrons to research sources. A pathfinder is a bibliographic guide to researching a particular topic. In developing such a document, you are the information organizer and teacher. Your pathfinder should reflect the most common questions in a

literature search. It is not an exhaustive bibliography. Rather, it is a carefully selected list of various types of important resources. To successfully complete this assignment you should:

- Choose a college-level research topic that interests you (please avoid currently popular authors, entertainers, etc.). Do not duplicate topics from pathfinders on the web.
- Select **one** library for which you are providing the guide.
- Develop an annotated list of print or electronic reference sources (almanacs, bibliographies, indexes and abstracts, dictionaries, journal databases, manuals or handbooks and encyclopedias) on the topic that are available to people with access to the chosen library.
- Begin your pathfinder using an html editor or Word. The pathfinder should include the following:
 - Creative use of pictures;
 - Careful selection of colors and text so that the pathfinder is easily readable;
 - An introduction that provides background about the topic and why it is important (this should be no more than a ½ page paragraph);
 - A statement about the scope of the pathfinder audience (Keep it short);
 - A statement about the target audience (Keep it short);
 - Schema(s) of how to look for information on the topic in the chosen library. The schema should include call numbers that are useful for research in the topic area;
 - Subject headings;
 - Any additional instructive information that might be useful for finding needed information;
- Do not include a section entitled “Reference Sources”. They all should be reference sources.
- Do not include a section entitled “Books” or “Print sources” unless you also describe the type of reference source the book is (i.e. handbook, dictionary, encyclopedia, etc.)
- When done, upload the .doc or .html and all graphics in .jpeg or .gif to BlazeView. Sample pathfinders can be found in the Document Center on BlazeView. Keep in mind that previous pathfinders are based on instructions that are different from yours. Be sure that your pathfinder adheres to the instructions in this syllabus.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic Honesty: Academic honesty requires that you submit only your own work, cite sources properly, give credit to the authors of original ideas, and complete assignments with honesty, respect and fairness. If you are caught plagiarizing, cheating, fabricating or otherwise representing an assignment untruthfully, you will be given a grade of “0” for the assignment. Additional actions may also be taken, up to and including academic dismissal. Specific regulations related to student conduct and behaviors are contained in the Student Handbook http://www.valdosta.edu/studentaffairs/documents/Student_Handbook_2009-10v1.pdf
See also: <http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/AcademicHonestyPoliciesandProcedures.shtml>

If you need help with citations and research resources and techniques, the university provides extensive resources for students. For help please start at the Odum Library’s “how to” page:
<http://www.valdosta.edu/library/learn/howto.shtml>

SafeAssign: By taking this course, you agree that all required course work may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to SafeAssign, a tool within BlazeVIEW. For more information on the use of SafeAssign at VSU see [SafeAssign for Students](http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/SafeAssignforStudents.shtml)
(<http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/SafeAssignforStudents.shtml>).

Accommodations: From VSU's Access Office: 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 229-245-2498 (V/VP) and 229-219-1348 (TTY). If you have a documented disability please contact the Access Office. Once your request for accommodation is submitted please contact the instructor to discuss accommodations or modifications of course content and delivery.

Student Success Center: <http://www.valdosta.edu/ssc/> provides free tutoring and support for distance learning students at <http://valdosta.askonline.net/>

Student Agreement: Enrollment in this class signifies that you have 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.

READINGS

Beck, S. J. (2010). We must think strategically. *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, 49(1), 208-214.

Coatney, S. (2008). Why? *Teacher Librarian* 35(5), 66.

Dahl, C. (2001). Electronic pathfinders in academic libraries: An analysis of their content and form. *College & Research Libraries* 62(3), 227-237.

Dewdney, P. & Michell, G. (summer, 1996). Oranges and peaches: understanding communication accidents in the reference interview. *Reference Quarterly*, 35(4), 520-536.

Gandhi, S. (2004). Knowledge management and reference services. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 30(5), 368-381

Gross, M. (Fall,1999). Imposed versus self-generated questions: Implications for reference practice. *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, 39(1), 53-62.

Jones-Kavalier, B. R., et. al. (2008). Connecting the digital dots: Literacy of the 21st century. *Teacher Librarian* 35(3).

Loertscher, D. (2008). Information literacy: 20 years later. *Teacher Librarian* 35 (5), 42-43

Miller-Gatenby, K.J.; & Chittenden, M. (2000). Reference services for all: How to support reference service to clients with disabilities. *The Reference Librarian*, 69/70, 313-326.

Oberlander, C. (2007). Transforming the document delivery and resource sharing engine. *IFLA Journal* 33 (1), 32-40.

Ormondroyd, J., Engle, M. and Cosgrave, T. (2004). Critically analyzing information sources. Cornell University Libraries. <http://www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/research/skill26.htm>

Ross, C. S. (2003). The reference interview: Why it needs to be used in every (well, almost every) reference transaction. *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, 43(1) 38-42

RUSA: The Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) is the division of ALA that oversees professional guidelines, career development, publications, conference programs, and more for reference librarians.

Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) (2004a). Guidelines for behavioral performance for reference and information service providers. Chicago: American Library Association. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/rusa/resources/guidelines/guidelinesbehavioral.cfm>

Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) (2004b). Guidelines for implementing and maintaining virtual reference. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/rusa/resources/guidelines/virtrefguidelines.cfm>

Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) (2005) Guidelines for information services. <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/rusa/resources/guidelines/guidelinesinformation.cfm>

Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) (2003). Professional competencies for reference and user services librarians. Written by the RUSA Task Force on Professional Competencies. Chicago: American Library Association. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/rusa/resources/guidelines/professional.cfm>

Shaw, K. and Spink, A. (2009). University library virtual reference services: Best practices and continuous improvement. *Australian Academic & Research Libraries*, 40(3), 192-205.

Straw, J.E. (2000). A virtual understanding: The reference interview and question negotiation in the digital age. *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, 39(4), 376-379.