

Valdosta State University

Master of Library and Information Science Program

Fall 2013

**Syllabus: MLIS 7100 Information Sources and Services (3 Credit Hours)**

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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. This 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: MLIS 7000 or consent of the instructor.**

### **Grade Requirements**

All students admitted **Fall 2011** and thereafter must earn a grade of **B** or better in this class. Students admitted prior to **Fall 2011** must meet the rules in place at the time of admission to the MLIS Program.

### **MLIS Program Objectives (PO)**

Graduates of the VSU 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, the 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 in their work in libraries and information centers.

### **Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)**

Students will:

**SLO 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).

**SLO 2.** Describe the physical environments for both in-person and virtual reference transactions conducive to delivering effective information services (PO 1, PO 2).

**SLO 3.** Classify information resources by their distinguishing characteristics (PO 1).

**SLO 4.** Consult the sources most relevant for keeping reference collections up to date (PO 3).

**SLO 5.** Retrieve information based on the needs of the user and on availability of resources (PO 1).

**SLO 6.** Devise search strategies consistent with how a resource organizes information (PO 3).

**SLO 7.** Evaluate both print and online resources based on criteria used in professional reviews (PO 3).

**SLO 8.** Apply the central research findings and research literature related to reference services (PO 3).

**SLO 9.** Produce a user aid for a targeted audience (PO 1).

**Course Format:** This is a Web-delivered course. All course activities will be conducted through BlazeVIEW, Valdosta State University's electronic course management system. There are no required face to face meetings. Your **VSU BlazeVIEW username and Single Sign-On (SSO) password** serve as your BlazeVIEW login. For information and assistance with BlazeVIEW, call the IT Helpdesk at 229-245-4357, or go to the BlazeVIEW help pages at <http://www.valdosta.edu/vista/students.shtml>.

**Faculty Recommendations:** MLIS 7100 is a reading and writing intensive core course. Taking MLIS 7100 with no more than one other course is strongly recommended.

### **Required Course Texts and Resources**

Cassell, K. A., and Hiremath, U. (2012). *Reference and Information Services: An Introduction*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Chicago: ALA Neal-Schuman.

*ISBN-10: 1-55570-859-5 (Paper), ISBN-13: 978-1-55570-859-7 (Paper), ISBN: 978-1-55570-864-1 (available in PDF version for a fee).*

**Note:** 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](http://www.valdosta.edu/mlis/student_resources/documents/ILL_Textbooks.pdf)

Reading materials from the LIS professional and academic literature as indicated in the detailed reading list in weekly folders. Articles will be available via GALILEO Scholar, the Odum Library's e-journals collection or on Odum Library course reserve, or links will be provided in the course website.

All students are **REQUIRED to purchase** access to the MLIS Program assessment system called *LiveText* ([www.LiveText.com](http://www.LiveText.com)). Instructions for purchasing and using LiveText are posted on the course website.

**Why LiveText?** *LiveText* is the software that the MLIS Program selected for keeping track of the assessments developed to meet ALA accreditation requirements that MLIS programs document their goals and objectives in terms of student learning outcomes. These assessments are now part of all the core courses as well as certain electives. Therefore, all current students must purchase a subscription in order to submit those assignments that also serve as core assessments.

The *LiveText* subscription requirement is not tied to when you entered the program or to when you plan to graduate. It is a change in the way the program keeps records for

the ALA accreditors – the MLIS Program now gives reviewer access to *LiveText* to verify completion of core assessments.

Once you purchase your subscription to *LiveText*, it is good for up to 5 years. You will also have personal access to other *LiveText* features you may find useful once you have your subscription. Please consider the purchase of your *LiveText* subscription as you would the purchase of any other textbook or piece of software required for a course. You might also be interested to know that *LiveText* is used extensively in hundreds of North American universities for program assessment and portfolio purposes. At VSU it is also required in the College of Education for purposes similar to those the MLIS Program has implemented.

### **Student Learning Outcome Measures**

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

#### **Topical Discussions – 10 Points**

You will participate in **five** threaded discussions related to course readings on BlazeVIEW throughout the semester.

#### **Reference Environment Scan Report (SLO2, SLO8) – 10 Points**

You will visit the reference department of a library or information center other than the one where you work to observe its reference services, examine the print and electronic reference collections, talk with a reference staff member who holds an MLIS degree and who is NOT a personal friend or work colleague of yours, observe reference transactions, check the library's website for inclusion of virtual reference service(s). In your paper you will describe what you observed (reference section size, floor plan, staffing, approachability...), what you learned from the reference librarian and from the library website.

#### **Search Strategies Assessment (SLO3, SLO5, SLO6) – 15 Points**

Using the tools and techniques presented in class you will plan a series of searches and document your strategies according to the assignment guidelines provided.

#### **Reference Consultation Report – 20 Points**

##### **Part I. – Reference Interview Checklist – 4 Points**

For items from the *RUSA Guidelines for Behavioral Performance for Reference and Information Service Providers* and the *steps of a reference transaction those were in evidence* from your textbook, use a one-sentence statement to explain why the item is essential, important, or nice to have in an interview. Create a checklist that includes both those items and your statements.

### Part II. - Reference Interview Evaluation Report – 6 Points

Use the checklist as a guide to evaluate the reference transaction and the librarian's techniques in the videos in this week's assignment folder, see how certain items have been or not been enacted. Discuss how certain parts of the transactions can be improved.

### Part III. – Reference Interview Reflection Paper -10 Points

Using the checklist as a guide, you will conduct one face to face reference interview with someone who is not in this class in which you are the interviewer. You have to assist the client in locating a resource that contains the answer to his/her questions. You will also conduct one reference transaction via an online reference service in which you are the client and you ask a question.

You will write an essay describing both your interviewing experiences based upon assigned readings. Substantiate your argument with citations.

### Question Answering (SLO5, SLO6, SLO7) – 30 Points

You will answer two sets of assigned questions using relevant resources and techniques and confirm the reliability of your sources. You will present the answers following the specified format.

1) Ready Reference Question Set – 10 points

2) Complex Queries Set – 20 points

### Pathfinder (SLO4, SLO7, SLO9) – 15 Points

You will create a pathfinder on a specific topic aimed at a specific user group. You must select your topic from the list provided by the instructor in the course website.

### **Course Grade**

Students in this course are expected to

- 1) Read or view all assigned materials;
- 2) Participate in class activities;
- 3) Visit a library to observe its reference services and examine reference sources;
- 4) Submit all projects on time and according to the format designated by the instructor;
- 5) Conduct all research and composition according to the VSU Academic Honesty Policy (see page 5 of this document).

Topical Discussions	10 Points
Reference Environment Scan	10 Points
Search Strategies Assessment	15 Points
Reference Consultation Report	20 Points
Question Answering Exercise 1	10 Points
Question Answering Exercise 2	20 Points
Pathfinder	15 Points

Students can earn a maximum of 100 points in this course. Course grades will be awarded as follows:

- A: 90 – 100 points
- B: 80 – 89 points
- C: 70 – 79 points
- D: 60 – 69 points
- F: fewer than 60 points.

To be eligible for an A in this course, a student must complete *every* assignment.

## **COURSE POLICIES**

**Attendance:** Course content is delivered asynchronously according to the course calendar. It is the student's responsibility to follow the course calendar and participate via BlazeVIEW as indicated at the appropriate times. The instructor reserves the right to schedule real-time delivery of instruction using tools available inside BlazeVIEW.

It is in the student's best interest to log into the BlazeVIEW course delivery system daily to check for announcements and e-mail messages related to the course.

**Communication:** By institutional policy, instructors are asked to communicate with students online through VSU accounts (BlazeVIEW and VSU e-mail). The course **Faculty Office discussion board** will be available for the duration of the semester. Please post course-related questions that may be relevant to your classmates on the discussion board. Please read the Faculty Office discussion board regularly. If you have a personal question please send it to the instructor via **BlazeVIEW course e-mail**. If you would like to speak with the instructor by telephone please ask for an appointment via e-mail so a mutually appropriate time can be determined. If you are in Valdosta and would like to meet face to face please send a message via e-mail to arrange a time. If the instructor's office door is open please feel free to come in.

**Submitting Assignments:** All discussion post and assignment submissions must be sent via BlazeVIEW. If you use any word processing program other than Microsoft Word, please save your document in Rich Text Format (rtf). The instructor returns documents that cannot be opened on VSU equipment. Naming conventions for each assignment submission will be provided.

**Late work:** All course work is due inside BlazeVIEW on the date and time indicated on the course calendar. Any exceptions without penalties must be negotiated in advance. Technological crises are not an acceptable excuse for submitting work late unless BlazeVIEW is down.

A grace period of 24 hours is offered without penalty for written work and projects. After 24 hours 1 point of the maximum possible grade will be deducted from the student's score per day. **The instructor WILL NOT accept work that is more than five (5) days late without prior consent.** If you inform me of extenuating circumstances **before** the deadline, we can work out a solution for submitting a late assignment without penalty. Completely skipping an assignment is not acceptable in graduate school. To receive an A in this course requires completing **every** assignment.

## **University Resources & Policy**

**Academic Honesty:** 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 behaviors are contained in the Student Handbook, Student Code of Conduct. See also:

<http://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/vp-office/academic-honesty-policies-and-procedures.php>

It is **your responsibility** to make sure you understand how to avoid breeches of academic integrity. If a student is unsure about the parameters of an assignment, ask for clarification. If a student needs help with citations and research resources and techniques, the University provides extensive resources for students. For help please start at the Odum Library's "Tutorials"

page: <http://www.valdosta.edu/academics/library/tutorials/citing-your-sources/welcome.php>.

Noncompliance with rules on appropriate use of resources will result in **zero** credit for those parts of the assignment affected. Asking librarians or staff in a library to provide answers or to conduct research to fulfill any part of a graded course requirement is an infraction of academic integrity. The same policy applies to contacting any free or commercial reference service for assistance with a graded assignment.

An overall grade of **zero** can be assigned to an INDIVIDUAL paper or project if the instructor determines that its contents, or parts of its contents, were completed by a second party.

**TurnItIn:** By taking this course, you agree that all required course work may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to TurnItIn, a tool within BlazeVIEW. For more information on the use of TurnItIn at VSU, go to <http://www.valdosta.edu/academics/elearning/main/faculty-and-staff/faculty-resources/turnitin.php>.

**Student Conduct:** All interactions related to this class are to be conducted respectfully and

professionally whether during face to face meetings, online interactions, small group work, email or telephone communication according to the Student Code of Conduct as presented in the

Valdosta State University Student Handbook, beginning on page 64:

<http://www.valdosta.edu/administration/student-affairs/student-conduct-office/documents/student-handbook.pdf>

**Distant Learning Support:** 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.

To help address concerns of off-campus and online students, the VSU Library maintains the

Library Services and Resources for Distance Education Student webpage at: <http://www.valdosta.edu/academics/library/services/distance-education.php>.

To ask questions about availability or location of VSU online resources, use the VSU Library's Live

Chat or E-mail at: <http://www.valdosta.edu/library/ask.php>. You may also phone the VSU Library's reference service at (229) 333-7149.

**Accommodations Statement:** From VSU's Access Office: Students with disabilities who are experiencing barriers in this course may contact the Access Office for assistance in determining and implementing reasonable accommodations. The Access Office is located in Farber Hall. The phone numbers are 229-245-2498 (V), 229-375-5871 (VP) and 229-219-1348 (TTY). For more information, please visit <http://www.valdosta.edu/access/> or email: [access@valdosta.edu](mailto:access@valdosta.edu).

**Student Agreements:** Enrollment in this class signifies that you agree 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 if extraordinary circumstances arise during the course of the semester.

### **Important Dates**

Monday, August 12: First day of classes.

Friday, August 16: Fall registration ends.

Monday, September 2: Labor Day Holiday, University closed.

Thursday, October 3: Midterm. Last day to withdraw from a class without academic penalty.

**Incompletes:** If you have not submitted assignments due up to this point in the semester, you are not eligible for an Incomplete at the end of the semester. Informing your instructor that you plan to withdraw does not remove you from the course. You must request withdrawal through the office of the VSU Registrar.

November 25-29: Thanksgiving Holiday Break – No Classes

December 2: Last class day for Fall 2013.

December 7: Official Graduation Date.

### **Course Calendar:**

You will find the course calendar that highlights detailed information about weekly course readings, activities and lists due dates for all assignments inside the BlazeVIEW course website.

### **Assignment Due Dates at a Glance\***

Sunday, September 1: Reference Environment Scan Report.

Sunday, September 15: Search Strategies Assessment.

Sunday, September 22: Part I of the Reference Consultation Report.

Sunday, October 6: Part II and Part III of the Reference Consultation Report.

Sunday, October 27: Question Answering 1.

Sunday, November 10: Question Answering 2.

Sunday: November 17: Pathfinder

\*Discussion board will be open from Monday till Sunday when there is a topic for that week. There will be five graded discussion topics in total throughout the semester.