

Valdosta State University
Master of Library & Information Science
MLIS 7100 Information Sources and Services
Syllabus—Summer 2011
Three Credit Hours

Instructor

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MLIS Program

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Office Hours: By appointment face-to-face, phone, or Skype

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.

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

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

Required Materials

Textbook

Cassell, K. A, and Hiremath, U. (2009). *Reference and information services in the 21st Century: An introduction*. 2nd ed. ISBN: 978-1-55570-672-2

E-reference shelf at Odum Library.

<http://www.valdosta.edu/library/learn/ereferenceshelf.shtml>

Hardware



- A headset with attached microphone for use with Live Classrooms.

Readings

Required readings are listed in the syllabus. Unless otherwise indicated, pdf files are provided on the course homepage in the Readings folder.

MLIS Program Advisement

MLIS 7100 is a reading/writing intensive core course.

Attendance

This is a Web-based course, with no required face-to-face meetings. If scheduled, Live Classrooms are optional but listening to the archive(s) is suggested.

Assignments

The following graded and ungraded components of the course.

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------|-----------------|
| • Reference Transaction Report | 20% | Due: May 29 |
| • Search Exercise 1 | 10% | Due: June 16-19 |
| • Search Exercise 2 | 10% | Due: June 26 |
| • Search Exercise 3 | 10% | Due: July 3 |
| • Search Exercise 4 | 10% | Due: July 10 |
| • Pathfinder | 35% | Due: July 28 |
| • Pathfinder Topic | ungraded | Due: May 19 |
| • Participation | 5% | |

Assignment Synopses

- **Reference Transaction Report:** An essay describing face-to-face and virtual transactions and requiring a recommendation for one improvement
- **Search Exercises:** Print/electronic reference sources search exercises covering a range of major sources and including some questions requiring written answers
- **Pathfinder:** A bibliographic user guide that introduces the literature of a specific subject area or topic
- **Pathfinder Topic:** The academic subject that will serve as the topic of the bibliographic guide and as the source for initiating the reference transactions
- **Participation:** Following course guidelines/instructions/policy

Late Assignments

This section of MLIS 7100 does not include a grace period. Late assignments, however, will be accepted according to the following points deduction schedule: -10 points for any part of a 24-hour period; e.g., an assignment submitted 5 minutes late loses 10 points, one submitted 24 hours and 2 minutes late loses 20 points, and so on.

Any request for a due date extension is to be handled over the phone with the instructor.

Grading

Assignments will receive a numerical score that is recorded as a letter grade. Only the letter grade is calculated into the final grade. See the final grade grid on the course homepage in BlazeView for calculation guide.

General Grade Scale

- A = excellent work, among the best work seen at the graduate level
- B = satisfactory work, better than average work at the graduate level
- C = honest attempt, needs moderate to major revisions to be satisfactory
- D = perfunctory or missing work

Points Grade Scale

- A=93-100
- B=85-92
- C=77-84
- D=69-76
- F=Below 69

Final Grade Scale

- A = always satisfactory, often excellent
- B = mostly satisfactory, occasionally excellent
- C = sometimes satisfactory, often needs revisions
- D = rarely satisfactory, often perfunctory, late or missing
- F = lacking even an attempt to learn or do, dishonesty, plagiarism.

Communicating with the Professor

See the file "Communicating with the Professor" on the course homepage. Following these guidelines is considered in the participation grade.

Technical Requirements

All class materials will be placed on a password-protected Web site using the BlazeVIEW course management program. New users of BlazeVIEW should go to the BlazeVIEW help pages at <http://www.valdosta.edu/vista/students.shtml> then return to the BlazeVIEW page and login using their BlazeNet email ID and password.

To meet all course requirements, students should be prepared to:

- 1) print out and read all course material
- 2) be aware of all links on the course homepage in BlazeView
- 3) read all emails and discussion postings by the instructor
- 4) complete assigned readings, which usually requires Adobe Acrobat Reader
- 5) view all PowerPoint files posted in weekly folders

- 6) at least listen to optional Live Classroom sessions, which are available at the BlazeVIEW course homepage
- 7) check discussions as needed
- 8) keep backup copies/files of assignments submitted
- 9) follow instructions and guidelines

Unless otherwise stated, assignments are to be submitted as Word documents.

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 behavior are contained in the *Student Handbook*, *Student Code of Ethics*. Please acquaint yourself with the full policy at <http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/AcademicHonestyPoliciesandProcedures.shtml>.

Students are responsible for making sure they understand how to avoid breeches of academic integrity. Guidelines for citing, quoting, and appropriately using resources for assignments that require written compositions, reviews, or commentary are provided where applicable.

Noncompliance with the guidelines on appropriate use of resources will result in zero credit for those parts of the assignment affected. If unsure about the parameters of an assignment, ask for clarification.

Asking librarians or staff in a library to provide answers or to conduct research to fulfill any part of a graded course requirement is a violation 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 entire assignment if the instructor determines that its contents, or parts of its contents, were completed by a second party. This, of course, does not apply to group projects that require collaboration.

Distance Learning Support/IT Help

All computer hardware/software questions should be sent to VSU's IT Help Desk at <http://www.valdosta.edu/helpdesk/guides/> or by phone at 229-245-4357. To ask questions about availability or location of VSU online resources, use the VSU Odum Library's Live Chat or E-mail at: <http://www.valdosta.edu/library/ask.php> or call the reference desk at (229) 333-7149.

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 Conduct

Student behavior, which includes conversations and emails to class members and the instructor as well as postings to the discussion board in BlazeVIEW, is to be respectful and professional. Guidelines are specified in the VSU Student Code of Ethics.

http://www.valdosta.edu/studentaffairs/documents/SAF_Student_Handbook2009-050809.pdf

Student Agreement

Per the VSU Vice President for Academic Affairs: 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>).

Note: *The instructor may adapt or change this syllabus and/or the assignments according to circumstances that arise during the semester.*

Syllabus

Week 1 **Introduction; Reference Librarianship: Now and Then**
May 12-15 May 13, 4:00 p.m.-4:50 p.m.: Live Classroom

Readings

Cassell, K. A., & Hiremath, U. (2009). *Reference and information services in the 21st Century: An introduction*. 2nd ed. Chapter 1: Introduction to reference and information services, pp. 3-14. New York: Neal-Schuman.

Auster, E. & Chan, D. C. (2004). Reference librarians and keeping up-to-date: A question of priorities. *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, 44(1), 57-66.

Bopp, R. E., & Smith, L. C. (2001). *Reference and information services: An introduction*. Chapter 1: History and variety of reference services, pp. 3-25. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited. Course reserves.

Bopp, R. E., & Smith, L. C. (2001). *Reference and information services: An introduction*. Attitudes and characteristics of the reference librarian, pp. 49-51. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited. Course reserves.

Huber, J. T., Boorkman, J. A. & Blackwell, J. (2008). *Introduction to Reference Sources in the Health Sciences*. 5th ed. Chapter 1: Organization and management of the reference collection, pp. 3-27. New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers. Course reserves.

Week 2 **Reference Interview**
May 16-22 Pathfinder Topic Due: May 19

Readings

Cassell, K. A., & Hiremath, U. (2009). *Reference and information services in the 21st Century: An introduction*. 2nd ed. Chapter 2: Determining the question: In-person, telephone, and virtual reference reviews, pp. 15-31. New York: Neal-Schuman.

Cassell, K. A., & Hiremath, U. (2009). *Reference and information services in the 21st Century: An introduction*. 2nd ed. Chapter 3: Finding the answer: Basic search techniques, pp. 35-54. New York: Neal-Schuman.

Anderson, C. (2009, November). How to be a person: Tips and tricks for virtual reference. *C&RL News*, 577-579.
<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/acrl/publications/crlnews/2009/nov/person.cfm>

Dervin, B. and Dewdney, P. (1986). Neutral questioning: A new approach to the reference interview. *RQ* 25(4), 506-513.
<http://communication.sbs.ohio-state.edu/sense-making/zennez/zennezdervindewd86nq.pdf>

Desai, C. M. (2003). Instant messaging reference: How does it compare? *The Electronic Library*, 21(1), 21-30.

Radford, M. L. (1998). Approach or avoidance? The role of nonverbal communication in the academic library user's decision to initiate a reference encounter. *Library Trends* 46(4), 699-717.

Ronan, J., Reakes, P. and Ochoa, M. (2006). Application of reference guidelines in chat reference interactions: A study of online reference skills. *College and Undergraduate Libraries* 13(4), 3-23.

Ross, C. S. and Dewdney, P. (1999). Negative closure: strategies and counter-strategies in the reference transaction. *Reference and User Services Quarterly* 38(2), 151-163.

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

Week 3 **Chat, E-mail, and IM Reference**
May 23-29 Reference Transaction Report Due: May 29

Readings

Arnold, J., & Kaske, N. (2005). Evaluating the quality of a chat service. *portal: Libraries and the Academy*, 5(2), 177-193.

Coffman, S., & Arret, L. (2004). To chat not to chat: Taking yet another look at virtual reference. *The Searcher*, 12(8), 49-56.

Desai, C. M. (2003). Instant messaging reference: How does it compare? *The Electronic Library*, 21(1), 21-30.

Naylor, S., Stoffel, B., & Van der Laan, S. (2008). Why isn't our chat reference used more? Finding of focus group discussions with undergraduate students. *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, 47(4), 342-354.

RUSA. (2004). Guidelines for Implementing and Maintaining Virtual Reference.
<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/rusa/resources/guidelines/guidelinesbehavioral.cfm>

Weeks 4-5 Search Strategies I, II: Bibliographic Sources: Search Engines; Full-text databases

May 30-
June 12

VSU closed for Memorial Day, May 30

Readings

Cassell, K. A., & Hiremath, U. (2009). *Reference and information services in the 21st Century: An introduction*. 2nd ed. Chapter 4: Asking questions about books, magazines, newspapers, libraries and publishing, and bibliographic networks—bibliographic sources: pp. 57-73. New York: Neal-Schuman.

Cassell, K. A., & Hiremath, U. (2009). *Reference and information services in the 21st Century: An introduction*. 2nd ed. Chapter 13: How and when to use the Internet as a reference tool, pp. 271-291. New York: Neal-Schuman.

[[Jacso, P. (2008). Amazon, Google Book Search, and Google Scholar. *Online*, 31(1), 51-54.

Jacso, P. (2008). Google Scholar revisited. *Online Information Review*, 32(1), 102-114.]]

Week 6 Search Strategies III: Primary Sources; Evaluating Sources

June 13-19 Search Exercise 1 Due: June 17-19

Readings

Cassell, K. A., & Hiremath, U. (2009). *Reference and information services in the 21st Century: An introduction*. 2nd ed. Chapter 8: Answering questions about event and issues, past and present—Indexes and full-text databases, pp. 153-178. New York: Neal-Schuman.

Cassell, K. A., & Hiremath, U. (2009). *Reference and information services in the 21st Century: An introduction*. 2nd ed. Chapter 17: Selecting and evaluating reference materials, pp. 337-350. New York: Neal-Schuman.

Duke University Libraries. Evaluating Web Pages
<http://library.duke.edu/services/instruction/libraryguide/evalwebpages.html>

Fister, B., Gilbert, J., & Fry, A. R. (2008). Aggregated interdisciplinary databases and the needs of undergraduate researchers. *portal: Libraries and the Academy*, 8(3), 273-292.

Odum Library. Evaluating Websites and Search Engines
<http://www.valdosta.edu/library/learn/searchengines.shtml#eval>

Week 7 Encyclopedias and Biographical & Genealogical Sources

June 20-26

Search Exercise 2 Due: June 26

Readings

Cassell, K. A., & Hiremath, U. (2009). *Reference and information services in the 21st Century: An introduction*. 2nd ed. Chapter 5: Answering questions about anything and everything—Encyclopedias, pp. 75-100. New York: Neal-Schuman.

Cassell, K. A., & Hiremath, U. (2009). *Reference and information services in the 21st Century: An introduction*. 2nd ed. Chapter 11: Answering questions about the lives of people—Biographical information sources, pp. 233-248. New York: Neal-Schuman.

Badke, W. (2008). What to do with Wikipedia. *Online*, 32(2), 48-50.

Bibel, B., & Yusko, S. (2010, September 15). Encyclopedia update, 2010. *Booklist*, 107(2), 82-86. *Booklist Online*
<http://www.booklistonline.com/ProductInfo.aspx?pid=4324933>

Cohen, N. (2008). [Start writing the eulogies for print encyclopedias](#). *The New York Times*.

Davidsson, R. I. (2004). Providing genealogy research services in public libraries: Guidelines and ethics. *Public Libraries*, 43(3), 142-144.

Quinn, M. (2002). Encyclopedia update: Do encyclopedias still matter? *Booklist*, 99(2), 253.

Rector, L. H. (2008). Comparison of Wikipedia and other encyclopedias for accuracy, breadth, and depth in historical articles. *Reference Services Review*, 36(1), 7-22.

Waters, N. L. (2007). Why you can't cite Wikipedia in my class. *Communications of the ACM*, 50(9), 15-18.

Week 8 Word Sources; Dictionaries, Thesauri

June 27-

July 3 Search Exercise 3 Due: July 3

Readings

Cassell, K. A., & Hiremath, U. (2009). *Reference and information services in the 21st Century: An introduction*. 2nd ed. Chapter 7: Answering questions about words—Dictionaries, pp. 125-151. New York: Neal-Schuman.

Bulson, C. (2010). Reference on the Web: Online dictionaries. *Booklist*, 106(18), 68.

Quinn, M. E. & Bulson, C. (2010, April 9). Dictionary roundup, 2010. *Booklist Online*.

<http://www.booklistonline.com/ProductInfo.aspx?pid=4137671>

Week 9 Ready Reference

July 4-10 VSU closed for Independence Day, July 4
Search Exercise 4 Due: July 10

Readings

Cassell, K. A., and Hiremath, U. (2009). *Reference and information services in the 21st Century: An introduction*. 2nd ed. Chapter 6: Answering questions that require handy facts—Ready reference sources, pp. 103-122. New York: Neal-Schuman.

Week 10 Information Ethics, Reference Services for Specific Populations, and Bibliographic Instruction

July 11-17

Readings

Bopp, R. E., & Smith, L. C. (2001). *Reference and information services: An introduction*. Chapter 2: Ethical aspects of reference service, pp. 28-46. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited. Course reserves.

Bopp, R. E., & Smith, L. C. (2001). *Reference and information services: An introduction*. Chapter 12: Reference services for specific populations, pp. 279-306. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited. Course reserves.

Chapman, J. M., Pettway, C. K., & Scheuler, S. A. (2003). Teaching journal and serials information to undergraduates: Challenges, problems and recommended instructional approaches. *The Reference Librarian*, 79-80, 363-382.

Isaacson, D. (2004). Is the correct answer the right one? *Journal of Information Ethics*, 13(1), 14-18.

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.

Shachaf, P. (2008). Virtual reference services: Implementation of professional and ethical standards. *Library & Information Science Research*, 27(4), 513-533.

Tinerella, V. P., & Dick, M. A. (2005). Academic reference service for the visually impaired: A guide for the non-specialist. *College & Research Libraries News*, 66(1), 29-32.

Week 11 Issues and Trends in Reference

July 18-24

Readings

Cassell, K. A., & Hiremath, U. (2009). *Reference and information services in the 21st Century: An introduction*. 2nd ed. Chapter 20: Reference 2.0, pp. 389-415; Chapter 21: The future of information services, pp. 419-428. New York: Neal-Schuman.

Blessinger, K. D. (2002). Problem patrons: All shapes and sizes. *The Reference Librarian*, 75/76, 3-10.

Nicholas, D. The behavior of the researcher of the future (the 'Google generation'). *Art Libraries Journal*, 35 (1), 18-21.

Liu, Z. (2006). Print vs. electronic resources: A study of user perceptions, preferences, and use. *Information Processing & Management*, 42(2), 583-592.

Week 12 Pathfinder

July 25-28

Pathfinder Due: July 28

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