

VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY
MASTER OF LIBRARY & INFORMATION SCIENCE
MLIS 7100 Information Sources and Services
Syllabus—Fall Semester 2011
Three Credit Hours

Instructor:

Anita Ondrusek, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
MLIS Program
Valdosta State University
Office Phone: 229-245-3742
E-mail: alondrus@valdosta.edu

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.

Draft MLIS Program Objectives (PO)

(submitted to the Graduate Executive Committee Fall 2011)

Graduates of the VSU MLIS Program will:

- PO 1. Perform administrative, service, and technical functions of professional practice in libraries and information centers.
- PO 2. Use existing and emerging technologies to meet system, user, and other needs in libraries and information centers.
- PO 3. Integrate relevant research to enhance work in libraries and information centers.
- PO 4. Demonstrate professionalism in their work in libraries and information centers.

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).

(measures that assess these outcomes appear on page 3 of this syllabus)

Textbook

You must purchase the 2nd Edition of the Cassell & Hiremath textbook. The newest release is the 2nd Edition, Revised Edition. Either of the books below are acceptable textbooks for this semester:

Cassell, Kay Ann, and Uma Hiremath. (2009). *Reference and Information Services in the 21st Century: An Introduction*. 2nd Edition. **ISBN 13:** 978-1-55570-672-2.

Cassell, Kay Ann, and Uma Hiremath. (2011). *Reference and Information Services in the 21st Century: An Introduction*. 2nd Edition, Revised Edition. **ISBN-10:** 1555707408; **ISBN-13:** 978-1555707408.

Note: The code for students to get 10% off the price of the Cassell & Hiremath textbook when ordering directly through Neal-Schuman is ONDRU. To get the discount online: Insert the ONDRU code in the appropriate field when purchasing via the online order form (www.neal-schuman.com). To get the discount via phone (212-925-8650 or 866-NS-BOOKS) or fax (212-219-8916 or 866-209-7932), or email (orders@neal-schuman.com), make sure you reference the ONDRU code. If you wish to use Financial Aid funds to purchase the textbook, contact the VSU Bookstore for availability of the 2nd Edition, ISBN: 978-1-55570-672-2, of this textbook – the 10% discount does not apply.

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

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 (BlazeView and VSU e-mail). If you are registered for the course as a non-degree student, a VSU email account will be assigned to you for this semester.

All discussion posts and assignment submissions for this online course must be sent via BlazeView. Your VSU email username serves as your BlazeView login. The BlazeVIEW password requires at least one capital letter in it. See the section on "Technical Requirements" on page 9 of this syllabus for contact information in the case you need technical help.

Faculty Recommendations

MLIS 7100 is a reading and writing intensive core course. Students report that they spend an average of 10 to 15 hours each week on assignments.

Taking MLIS 7100 with no more than one other course is strongly recommended. Students who have never worked in a library should schedule this course after completing MLIS 7000 and one other core course, either MLIS 7200 or MLIS 7300.

Attendance

This is a Web-delivered course, with no required face-to-face meetings. The instructor will schedule real-time instruction using tools in BlazeView such as Chat or Live Classroom.

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

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.

Bibliographic Tools Self Assessment (LO 3) **5 points**
This is an online assessment available through your BlazeView course site. Take the test as many times as you like – aim for a perfect score. Submit your test using the BlazeView Assessment tool.

Searching Strategies Assessment (LO 3, LO 5, LO 6) **15 points**
This is a graded test that counts towards your final grade. **Treat it as an exam.** Collaboration is not allowed. No make-up test is available. Submit your test using the BlazeView Assessment tool.

Question Answering Exercise 1 (LO 5, LO 6, LO 7) **10 points**
Find answers to questions using ready reference resources and techniques and confirm the reliability of your sources. Submit your report using the BlazeView Assignment tool.

Question Answering Exercise 2 (LO 5, LO 6, LO 7) **20 points**
Using a set of questions asked by a diverse set of hypothetical patrons, identify sources that satisfy their requests and confirm the reliability of your sources. These questions represent complex requests that involve describing your search strategies. Submit your report using the BlazeView Assignment tool.

Reference Transaction Report (LO 1, LO 2, LO8) **20 points**

Part 1. (7 points)

View examples of face-to-face reference transactions provided by the instructor. Report on the interview techniques and quality of the transactions. Substantiate your remarks with citations from the assigned readings.

Part 2. (7 points)

Select one example from the reference transactions you viewed for Part 1. Explain how you would interact with the patron and provide directions to materials that satisfy the request in a virtual reference (IM) setting. Substantiate your remarks with citations from the assigned readings.

Part 3. (6 points)

Select a library and observe its reference services. Explain what model(s) of reference this library service follows. Check the library's website for inclusion of virtual reference service(s). Propose at least one improvement that you would make to this library's reference environment and describe how you would design and implement it based on the research on reference models from your assigned readings.

Construct your report per the instructions on the BlazeVIEW web site. Submit your report using the BlazeView Assignment tool.

Pathfinder Project (LO 4, LO 7, LO 9) **15 points**
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 (see BlazeView folder). Submit your pathfinder using the BlazeView Assignment tool.

Final Project (LO 1, LO 5, LO 6) **15 points**
This is the culminating activity for this class in which you will simulate a reference transaction and present it to your classmates using Live Classroom. You will find the instructions and requirements for this project outlined on the BlazeVIEW course site. Dates for presentations will be announced.

Assignment Calendar

Week of:

Activities:

Week 1
Mon. Aug. 15

Reference Work as a Profession

Read Cassell and Hiremath text: Chapter 1.

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

RUSA created **Guidelines** to outline standards for the practice of reference librarianship.

FYI, bookmark or print the web page containing links to the RUSA Guidelines at:
<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/rusa/resources/guidelines/index.cfm>

Equally as important, bookmark or print these guidelines for future consultation:
Professional Competencies for Reference and User Services
<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/rusa/resources/guidelines/professional.cfm>

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 site for all subsequent weeks.

Week 2
Mon. Aug. 22

Bibliographic Resources

Read Cassell and Hiremath text: Chapter 4.

Study the **Guide Sheets** and the **Bibliographic Resources PowerPoint** in this week’s folder – these materials supplement your text.

SELF TEST

Take the **Bibliographic Resources Self Assessment**

This is an online self-test.

You earn 5 points for completing all questions correctly.

Take the test as often as you like.

The test will be available from noon Fri., 8/26, through Mon. 8/29, at noon.

Treat it as an exam. Collaboration is not authorized.

SEARCHING STRATEGIES (Aug. 29-Sep. 25)

Week 3
Mon. Aug. 29

Searching Strategies, Part 1

Read Cassell and Hiremath text: Chapter 3 (Finding information)

Study the **Guide Sheets** on strategies for searching library catalogs and all other **Handouts** in this week’s folder

Mon. Sep. 5

Labor Day

Week 4
Tues. Sep. 6

Searching Strategies, Part 2

Read Cassell and Hiremath text: Chapter 8 (Indexes)

Download and study the **Handouts** on indexes and databases and the **Guide Sheet(s)** on strategies for searching databases in this week's folder.

Attend the **Live Classroom on searching strategies** or view the archive.

Date: Wednesday, Sept. 7. Time: 8 PM.

Week 5
Mon. Sep. 12

Searching Strategies, Part 3

Full-text online collections

View material on the course site.

Attend the **Live Classroom on searching practice** or view the archive.

Sample searches will be presented for your review.

This exercise will prepare you for the types of questions you will see on the **Searching Strategies Assessment**.

Date: Wednesday, Sept. 14. Time: 8 PM.

Week 6
Mon. Sep. 19

Searching Strategies, Part 4

Read Cassell and Hiremath text: Chapter 13 (Web)

Download and study the **Guide Sheet** on strategies for searching with Web engines in this week's folder.

Take the **Searching Strategies Assessment**

EXAM

This is a graded test that counts towards your final grade.

The test will be available from **noon Wed., 9/21, through Mon. 9/26, at noon**.

Treat it as an exam. Collaboration is not authorized. No make-up test is available.

REFERENCE TRANSACTIONS (Sep. 26 – Oct. 16)

Readings and the Guidelines & Grading Criteria for the project called the Reference Transaction Report are found in the folder called Weeks 7, 8, 9.

Weeks 7-8
Mon. Sep. 26
through Oct.9

Giving the Best Reference Service Possible: Reference Transactions

Today, the models used to deliver reference services go beyond the librarian-at-the-reference-desk. Research on virtual reference shows both its importance and its drawbacks. Whether at a desk or connected by IM, studies show that the best reference encounter is one in which the librarian assumes a respectful, helpful tone.

There are many readings for the next two weeks. Get started early. Week 9 is set aside for you to: 1) observe contrasting styles of reference by viewing simulated reference vignettes, and 2) visit a library and observe the models of reference in use.

Read Cassell and Hiremath text: Chapter 2

Download and read *Seeking Synchronicity*, a 2011 report sponsored by a grant.
<http://www.oclc.org/reports/synchronicity/full.pdf>

Locate and read the assigned journal articles listed in this week's folder.

Print out and study the RUSA *Guidelines for Behavioral Performance for Reference and Information Service Providers* found at this site:

<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/rusa/resources/guidelines/guidelinesbehavioral.cfm>

Print out and study the ALA *Guidelines for Implementing and Maintaining Virtual Reference (RUSA)* found at this site:

<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/rusa/resources/guidelines/virtrefguidelines.cfm>

These other ALA documents contribute to the formation of the principles that govern effective and fair reference services:

- *ALA Code of Ethics*
- *Library Services to Older Adult Guidelines (RUSA)*
- *Guidelines for Library Services to Spanish-Speaking Library Users (RUSA)*
- *Competencies for Serving Young Adults (YALSA)*
- *Competencies for Librarians Serving Children in Public Libraries (ALSC)*
- *Guidelines for Medical, Legal, and Business Responses*
<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/rusa/resources/guidelines/guidelinesmedical.cfm>

Oct. 5-7

MLIS faculty will be attending GA COMO.

Thur. Oct. 6

Last day to withdraw from a class without academic penalty.

If you have questions about your progress in this course, schedule a consultation with your instructor before she leaves for the GA COMO conference.

Week 9

Mon. Oct. 10

Reference Transaction Observation and Writing Week

A full explanation of the project is in the **Guidelines and Grading document** in this week's folder. If you completed your observations earlier, use this as your writing week.

**REFERENCE
TRANSACTION
REPORT**

Submit it as specified in the **Guidelines** in this week's folder.

It must be divided into 3 parts.

It must cite from the readings as specified.

Due date: Wed. Oct.19, noon.

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

Fri. – paper can earn no higher than 17 points (equal to a B).

Sat. – paper can earn no higher than 15 points (equal to a C).

Sun. – paper can earn no higher than 13 points (equal to a D).

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

EVALUATING REFERENCE RESOURCES (Oct. 19 – Nov. 20)

Weeks 10 & 11
Wed. Oct. 19 Evaluating Reference Resources: 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.

Evaluation criteria for reference works, printed and online.
Read Cassell and Hiremath text: Chapter 17

QA EXERCISE 1 Prepare Question Answering Exercise 1
Submit it using the Assignment Tool as specified in the **Guidelines and Grading document** in this week’s folder.

Due date: Mon. Oct. 31, noon.

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

Oct. 24 & 25 Fall Break – Most University services closed. The Odum Library is open.

Weeks 12 & 13
Mon. Oct. 31 Evaluating Reference Resources: Encyclopedic Resources
Encyclopedias, Biographical collections

Read Cassell and Hiremath text: Chapter 5 and Chapter 11.

View material on the course site.

QA EXERCISE 2 Prepare Question Answering Exercise 2
Submit it using the Assignment Tool as specified in the **Guidelines and Grading document** in this week’s folder.

Due date: Mon. Nov. 14, noon.

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

Week 14
Mon. Nov. 14

Pathfinder Project

Create a Pathfinder on a topic for a particular user population
(e.g., public library, academic library, special library, youth services).

Choose your topic from the list in this week’s folder.

View background material on Pathfinders in the BlazeView folder.

Examine examples from the ipl2 website at <http://www.ipl.org/div/pf/>.

Submit as specified in the **Guidelines and Grading document** in this week’s folder.

Due date: Mon., Nov. 21, noon.

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

ADVISING and TEACHING LIBRARY USERS (Nov. 21 – Dec. 8)

Partial Week
Mon. Nov. 21

Getting Ready for Real-World Reference Encounters

Attend the **Live Classroom discussing the requirements of your final project.**

Date: To be announced.

Use these chapters in the Cassell and Hiremath text for background
(Select the chapter(s) that fit your interests or career goals):

Chapter 14 Reader's Advisory Work

Chapter 15 Reference Work with Children and Young Adults

Chapter 16 Information Literacy in the Reference Department

A document containing **Guidelines and Grading** for this project will be posted in this week's folder.

Make sure that your presentation fits the **Guidelines** – consult with your instructor, if needed.

Nov. 24-26

Thanksgiving Break

Week 15
Mon. Nov. 28

Reference Simulation Project: Prep & Practice Week

Use this week to refine your project and practice presenting it "live."

Presentations
Week

Reference Simulation Presentation Week

Sat. Dec. 3 -
Thur. Dec. 8

Present your **Reference Presentation** to your classmates on Live Classroom.

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 activities; (3) visit a library to examine reference works and observe its model(s) of reference service; (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 Honesty section on pages 9-10).

Bibliographic Tools Self Assessment	5 points
Searching Strategies Assessment	20 points
Question Answering Exercise 1	10 points
Question Answering Exercise 2	20 points
Reference Transaction Report	20 points
Pathfinder Project	15 points
Reference Simulation Project	15 points

100 – 90 points = A 89 – 80 points = B 79 – 70 points = C

No grade below a C will be credited toward a VSU graduate degree.

Because this is a core course, a student scoring 69 points or fewer will have to repeat the course.

Letter 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

Technical Requirements

All class materials will be placed on a password-protected Web site using the BlazeVIEW course management program. If you are a new BlazeVIEW user, go to the BlazeVIEW help pages at <http://www.valdosta.edu/vista/students.shtml>. Then return to the BlazeVIEW page and login using your BlazeView passwords.

To meet all class requirements, you should be prepared to: (1) open and save or 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 BlazeVIEW site – these are saved to **Powerpoint 97-2003**; (3) participate in Live Classroom sessions – login links and instructions will be available through your BlazeVIEW 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. BlazeVIEW accepts documents in **MS Word 97-2003**, **MS Word 2007**, and **MS Word 2010**. 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 cannot 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 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."

The **Guide to Ethical Conduct** is a booklet created for VSU MLIS students (http://www.valdosta.edu/mlis/student_resources/documents/GuidetoEthicalConductWebversion.pdf). It contains guidelines on appropriate conduct and outlines the ethical principles that instruct the profession of library and information science.

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>.

It is **your responsibility** to make sure you understand how to avoid breeches of academic integrity. The instructor posts rules for citing, quoting, and appropriate use of resources for assignments that require written compositions, reviews, or commentary.

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.

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 entire paper or project 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 on a final product.

Distance 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 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.

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 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.

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).