

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

Instructor:

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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. 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.

Textbook

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

Note: The code for students to get 10% off of the new 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 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 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 BlazeView. Your BlazeNet login and password serve as your BlazeView/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/>.

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.

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 BlazeView course site in advance of that assignment's due date.

Bibliographic Tools Self Assessment

15 points

This is an online assessment available through your BlazeView 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 BlazeView assessment tool. Take the test as many times as needed until you have a perfect score. Submit your test using the BlazeView Assessment tool.

Searching Strategies Practice Exercise

15 points

Complete a database search on an assigned topic. Post your results to a discussion board.

Midterm Examination: Searching Strategies Assessment**85 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. Submit your test using the BlazeView Assessment tool.

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 a chat, IM, texting, or telephone 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 improvement that you would make to the reference environment. This could have to do with signage, furniture, the arrangement of the print collection, making electronic access easier, or anything you noticed about the physical or virtual environment during your transaction. Tell what improvement(s) you would make and in what way(s) such improvement(s) would make a positive change in the current reference service. This is an informed opinion piece that does not have to be substantiated with citations from the assigned readings.

Submit your report per the instructions on the BlazeVIEW web site.

Reference Resource Reviews**60 points**

You will be asked to examine and analyze a combination of print and online reference resources. Submit your report using the BlazeView Assignment tool.

Pathfinder Project**50 points**

Create a pathfinder on a topic to be discussed with your instructor. Submit your pathfinder as an e-mail to the instructor using the BlazeView e-mail tool.

Reference Simulation Project**50 points**

This is the culminating activity for this class in which you will simulate a hypothetical reference transaction.

You will partner with a classmate to do this. One person plays the librarian, the other person acts as the patron asking the question. Conduct an interview and follow through by locating the information needed by the patron using a reference work or works that we covered in class.

A list of reference questions that make a good starting point for your simulation will be provided.

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.

Assignment Calendar

Week of:

Activities:

Week 1
Mon. Aug. 17

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. 24

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 and update your text.

SELF TEST

Take the **Bibliographic Resources Self Assessment**

This is an online self-test.

You earn 15 points for completing all questions correctly.

Take the test as often as you like.

The test will be available from noon Fri., 8/28, through Mon. 8/31, at noon.

Treat it as an exam. Collaboration is not authorized.

SEARCHING STRATEGIES (Aug. 31-Sep. 27)

Week 3
Mon. Aug. 31

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. 7

Labor Day

Week 4
Tues. Sep. 8

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 search strategies** or view the archive.
Date: Wednesday, Sept. 9. Time: 8 PM.

Week 5
Mon. Sep. 14

Searching Strategies, Part 3
Full-text online collections

View material on the course site.

**SEARCHING
EXERCISE**

Complete the **Searching Strategies Practice Exercise** in this week's folder.

Submit your answers using the Assignment tool.

Due date: Mon. Sep. 21, noon.

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

Late submissions lose points.

Week 6
Mon. Sep. 21

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.

Read the feedback from your Searching Strategies Practice Exercise.

**MIDTERM
EXAM**

Take the **Searching Strategies Assessment**

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

The test will be available from **noon Wed., 9/23, through Mon. 9/28, at noon.**

Treat it as an exam. Collaboration is not authorized.

No make-up test is available.

REFERENCE TRANSACTIONS (Sep. 28 – Oct. 18)

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. 28
through Oct. 11

Giving the Best Reference Service Possible: Reference Transactions

To familiarize yourself with types and characteristics of reference delivery:

Read Cassell and Hiremath text: Chapter 2

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>

(Note that the RUSA *Guidelines* cite many authors from your readings.)

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>

Attend the **Live Classroom on the Internet Public Library** or view the archive.

Date: To be announced.

Oct. 7-9

MLIS faculty will be attending GA COMO.

If you have questions about your progress in this course, schedule a consultation with your instructor on Oct. 5th or 6th.

Thur. Oct. 8

Last day to withdraw from a class without academic penalty.

Week 9

Reference Transaction Observation Week

Mon. Oct. 12

Acting as a patron, ask a question face-to-face at a library; ask a question via an electronic reference service (phone, IM, chat, or texting preferred)

A full explanation of the project is in the **Guidelines and Grading document** in this week's folder.

REFERENCE TRANSACTION REPORT

Report your experiences in your **Reference Transaction Report**

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

It must be divided into 3 parts.

It must cite from the readings as specified.

Due date: Wed. Oct.21, noon.

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

Fri. – paper can earn no higher than 68 points (equal to a B).

Sat. – paper can earn no higher than 61 points (equal to a C).

Sun. – paper can earn no higher than 54 points (equal to a D).

Mon. – grade of zero entered into your grade book

Oct. 19 & 20 Fall Break

EVALUATING REFERENCE RESOURCES (Oct. 21 – Nov. 22)

Weeks 10 & 11
Wed. Oct. 21

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

**REFERENCE
RESOURCE
REVIEW 1**

Prepare Reference Resource Review 1

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

Due date: Mon. Nov. 2, noon.

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

Late submissions lose points.

Weeks 12 & 13
Mon. Nov. 2

Evaluating Reference Resources: Encyclopedic Resources

Encyclopedias, Biographical collections

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

View material on the course site.

**REFERENCE
RESOURCE
REVIEW 2**

Prepare Reference Resource Review 2

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

Due date: Mon. Nov. 16, noon.

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

Late submissions lose points.

Week 14
Mon. Nov. 16

Pathfinder Project

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

View background material on Pathfinders and examples on the course site.

You may work on your own or with a partner.

If you design your Pathfinder with a partner:

Work should be equally distributed.

You both get the same grade.

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

Due date: Mon., Nov. 23, noon.

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

Late submissions lose points.

ADVISING and TEACHING LIBRARY USERS (Nov. 23 – Dec. 10)

Partial Week
Mon. Nov. 23

Getting Ready for Real-World Reference Encounters

Attend the **Live Classroom showing reference simulations** or view the archive.

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

Nov. 25-27

Thanksgiving Break

Week 15
Mon. Nov. 30

Reference Simulation: Prep & Practice Week

Decide on a reference transaction that you want to simulate with a partner.

One person plays the role of the librarian; the other person plays the role of the patron.

You both get the same grade.

The transaction must demonstrate EITHER:

- A request for leisure reading material posed by the "patron" that requires the "librarian" to demonstrate how to use a reader's advisory resource described in the textbook or covered in this course.

OR

- A reference question posed by the "patron" that requires the "librarian" to teach the patron how to use a resource described in the textbook or covered in this course.

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

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

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

Presentations
Week
Sat. Dec. 5 -
Thur. Dec. 10

Reference Simulation: Presentation & Performance Week

Present your **Reference Simulation** 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 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 Honesty section on page 10).

Bibliographic Tools Self Assessment	15 points
Searching Strategies Practice Exercise	15 points
Midterm Examination	85 points
Reference Transaction Report	75 points
Reference Resource Write-ups (2 sets@30 points each)	60 points
Pathfinder Project	50 points
Reference Simulation Project	50 points

350 – 321 points = A 320 – 281 points = B 280 – 246 points = C

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

Because this is a core course, a student scoring 245 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 BlazeNet email ID and password.

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 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 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>.

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 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.