

INTRODUCTION TO REFERENCE SERVICES LIB K104

Course Syllabus
Spring 2010

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Or

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Office hours: One hour before each class or by appointment

Class resources are posted on Blackboard Learning

Course Objectives:

This class is designed to familiarize the student with the use of general and specialized reference tools, procedures, and services in all types of library reference settings. Through a variety of learning experiences students will know how to use the fundamental concepts of reference service to enhance patrons' information needs. Students will learn the text and subtext of a question and identify the best resources, both digital and print. Students will also learn how to use resources to find the optimal answers.

Areas of Study

The focus of study will be around these four categories of learning reference and information services:

Part I: Fundamental Concepts

- Introduction to Reference Services
- Determining the Questions: In-Person, Telephone, and Virtual Reference Interviews
- Finding the Answer: Basic Search Techniques

Part II: Introduction to Major Reference Sources

- Traditional Reference Sources (Encyclopedias, Facts—Ready Reference, Dictionaries, etc.)
- Historical Events
- Health, Law and Business
- Travel and Geography
- Biographical Information Sources
- Government Sources

Part III: Special Topics in Reference and Information Services

- When and How to Use the Internet as a Reference Tool
- Reader's Advisory Works
- Reference for Children and Young Adults

Part IV: Developing and Managing Reference Collections

- Selecting and Evaluating Reference Materials
- Assessing and Improving Reference Services
- Reference 2.0 (Social Networking)
- Future of Information Service

Text: Cassell, Kay Ann and Uma Hiremath, Reference and Information Services in the 21st Century: an Introduction. Second edition. New York: Neal-Schuman, 2009.

Text is available at TRCC Bookstore, Neal-Schuman Publishers, and Amazon.

Secondary Sources: Handouts and other readings will be provided by the instructor.

Electronic Portfolio

Students will be required to maintain an electronic portfolio of their work throughout this course. Students will regularly analyze and evaluate a wide variety of digital and print reference sources. **Note: A jump drive is strongly recommended!** The portfolio should be organized by class meetings and contain reflective notes or rubrics on the products, sites, and resources examined and developed over the course of the semester. The portfolio will become a working file of resources for you.

Current Readings

Reference services are ever changing, it is important to keep current with how reference service is delivered in many types of libraries and to different populations of patrons. Students will be required to read a short article each week that helps them understand the changes that are occurring in reference and information services. Students are to bring the article and a short personal reaction/reflection summary of the article to class each week. Students will be expected to join informal discussions about their readings. These readings will be assessed as class participation/discussion.

Other Course Requirements:

There will be homework in this class that enhances students' understanding of the areas of study. For example, students may be asked to visit Reference departments of libraries to make observations, interview librarians, and use resources. Students will be expected to use numerous reference sources to answer questions, evaluate sources, and to reflect on the reference processes in roles as both a patron and as library staff. A calendar to accompany the syllabus will be distributed at the first class.

Assessment:

Class participation/discussion	20%
Current readings/reflections	10%
Midterm exam	20%
Homework/assignments	20%
Final Project	20%
Electronic Portfolio	10%

<u>Grades</u>	<u>Equivalent</u>	<u>Quality Points</u>
A	94-100	4.0
A-	90-93	3.7
B+	87-89	3.3
B	83-86	3.0
B-	80-82	2.7
C+	77-79	2.3
C	73-76	2.0
C-	70-72	1.7
D+	67-69	1.3
D	63-66	1.0
D-	60-62	0.7
F		0

Attendance:

This course is designed in such a way that a student will get more from the in-class activities and discussion than the textbook alone. Therefore, students are expected to attend class regularly.

College Withdrawal Policy:

Students may withdraw, in writing at the Registrar's Office, for any reason until the end of the 10th week of classes. From the 11th week through the end of the 13th week, a student may withdraw with the signature of the instructor or advisor.

Disabilities Statement:

If you have a hidden or visible disability, which may require classroom or test-taking modifications, please see me as soon as possible. If you have not already done so, please be sure to notify the Disabled Student Counselor.