LIS 503 Reference and Information Services

Course Outline

Fall 2018

Room ED 106 Tuesdays, 9:00-11:50am

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Office Hours: 5-166 Education Centre North, Tuesdays 12-1pm (or by appointment)

Calendar Description:

An introduction to reference and information services and resources. Includes history and varieties of reference services, user populations, instruction, ethics, access issues, the reference interview, search strategies, evaluation of services, and the organization, selection, evaluation, and use of major information resources.

Class Description:

Quests for knowledge have driven individuals and society—in all cultures and in all time periods—to preserve, seek, use and share information across a spectrum of work, leisure, and everyday life contexts. LIS 503 introduces students to the contemporary theory and practice of providing information services to a diverse group of stakeholders in a diversity of situations. We explore the terrain of basic print, digital and human information sources at our disposal today, including an introduction to the principles and technologies that support searching and retrieval. Positioned within theory, we test best practices and techniques to communicate and satisfy requests for information. Finally, we explore how information services might be offered to users in innovative, inclusive, and diverse ways.

Course Objectives:

1. To develop a basic understanding of the rationale for various types of reference and information services and resources in libraries.
2. To introduce students to the basic theories of information behaviour.
3. To develop the ability to interview users in order to analyze the information needs of various users.
4. To introduce the variety of information sources available that can be used to meet users’ information needs.
5. To introduce the basic techniques of searching across a variety of contexts and platforms.
6. To introduce students to the basic concepts of information service provision

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs):
1. Drawing on information behaviour theory, students will be able to provide consultation, mediation and guidance to a range of individuals and communities in locating and using information. (PLO 1; PLO 3; PLO 7)

2. Through in-class discussion and exercises as well as assignments, students will be able to evaluate and synthesize both online and print resources to provide relevant information in response to diverse user needs, communities and preferences. (PLO 3; PLO 7; PLO 9)

3. Following an examination of search strategies, students will be able to conduct comprehensive information searches using a wide variety of systems and techniques. (PLO 3; PLO 7; PLO 9)

4. Through in-class discussion and exercises, students will be able to identify, describe, and evaluate a range of diverse information services and service delivery models. (PLO 1; PLO 3)

Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs):

- PLO 1: Be familiar with the history, the philosophy, and the service orientation of libraries, librarianship, and related information environments; and understand the value of teaching, service, and research to the advancement of the field of library and information studies.
- PLO 3: Demonstrate critical thinking, analytical capacities, and problem-solving skills.
- PLO 6: Show understanding of the knowledge and information organization life cycle including, but not limited to, production, organization, distribution, access, preservation, disposition, and retrieval practices of recorded knowledge and information resources of all kinds.
- PLO 7: Conduct effective searches to locate, evaluate, analyze, and synthesize information sources, with respect for the culturally diverse composition of society and its information needs.
- PLO 9: Examine the impact, importance, and limitations of technologies in personal, professional, and social contexts as well as in library and information studies settings.

Content:

History of reference services, information seeking behaviour, conducting the reference interview, information search strategies and techniques, subject/discipline databases, specialty databases, virtual/digital reference services, services to diverse populations, information literacy instruction, managing and evaluating information services.

Methods:

Lectures, readings, in class discussions, small group discussions, in class activities, guest speakers and assignments

Course Relationships:

Co-requisite – LIS 501
Tools and Technology:

Learning how to track and cite references is an important skill to learn early at Library School. There is tremendous value in tracking the readings you’ve done as you progress through the rest of your degree, and it will become imperative as you move into professional practice. For that reason, I recommend that you look into free online citation tools – for example, Refworks (available free through University of Alberta Libraries), Zotero or Mendeley – in order to help you manage your reference lists.

If you have access to personal technology (laptops, tablets, phones etc.), please bring it to class with you. You will find it useful during activities and discussions.

Required Texts:

Readings are drawn from recent monographs and periodicals in the field and are available electronically through University of Alberta Libraries, for download through e-class, or are on reserve at the Rutherford library.

Although there is no required textbook, students may find the following two general sources on reference and information services helpful. Both are available through the library.


Assignments and Weighting:

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<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resource Evaluation &amp; Review Due Oct 2nd</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resource presentation. Due Oct 16 &amp; 30</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>In class search. Search Nov 6. Due Nov 20</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literature search. Due Nov 30</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation, attendance, &amp; professionalism. Ongoing</td>
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Late Assignment Policy:

Late assignments will be subject to a penalty of 5% per day (including weekends).

School of Library and Information Studies Grading Statement:

Grades reflect professional judgements of student achievement made by instructors. These judgements are based on a combination of absolute achievement and relative performance in class. The instructor should mark in terms of raw scores, rank the assignments in order of merit, and with due attention to the verbal descriptions of the various grades, assign an appropriate final letter grade. Grades are calculated in accordance with the SLIS Grading Procedure.

Academic Integrity: The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these stands regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behavior (online at http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts an/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offense and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.

Students should also be mindful of the SLIS Copyright Policy: https://cloudfront.ualberta.ca/-/media/.../slis/.../slis-copyright-policy.pdf

Inclusive Language and Equity:

The Faculty of Education is committed to providing an environment of respect for all people within the university community and to educating faculty, staff and students in developing teaching and learning contexts that are welcoming to all. The Faculty recommends that students and staff use inclusive language to create a classroom atmosphere in which students’ experiences and views are treated with equal respect and value in relation to their gender, racial background, sexual orientation and ethnic background. Students who require accommodations in this course due to a disability or chronic health condition affecting mobility, vision, hearing, learning, or mental or physical health are advised to discuss their needs with Student Accessibility Services.

Recording of Lectures:

Audio or video recording, digital or otherwise, of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Student or instructor content, digital or otherwise, created and/or used within the context of the course is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

Policy about academic regulations can be found in Section 23.4(2) of the University Calendar.