INF 382D. Introduction to Information Resources and Services

Course Description: Evaluation and use of printed and online information resources and services found and used in the popular library (e.g., schools and public libraries, with emphasis on new information technologies. Information-seeking behavior of users, document delivery, new roles of the information specialist in users support, communication and helping skills, and information needs of a variety of clients using libraries. May be repeated for credit when the topics vary. (Graduate standing)

Purpose and Objectives of the Course

The Objectives of this course are:

1. to acquaint you with and increase your knowledge of a sample of reference tools which are considered basic for the answering of typical reference questions in libraries and information centers;
2. to introduce techniques and procedures for the critical evaluation of reference materials;
3. to introduce you to standard techniques for the solving of typical information questions;
4. to acquaint you with the basic helping relation concepts and communication skills suitable of use in reference and information retrieval work;
5. to introduce you to fundamental concepts in information and reference services, including electronic information delivery.
6. to introduce you to basic procedures for planning, managing, and evaluation of reference services

Texts (Some required):


Other support materials:


University of Texas. *INF 382D Manual*. (purchase at copy shop).

Helpful General Guides to Reference Sources and Services:


*Gale Directory of Databases*. Gale Research, 1993 to date. QA 76.9 D32 D575. PCL Ref.


Periodicals Worth Knowing

The Booklist.


Information Technology and Libraries.
Internet Electronic access available. Continues Public Library Association. PLA Newsletter. Current issues in Periodicals Room PCL 2.500. Older issues at Z 731 P932, PCL.

Public Libraries.
Internet Electronic access available. Continues Public Library Association. PLA Newsletter. Current issues in Periodicals Room PCL 2.500. Older issues at Z 731 P932, PCL.

Online.

Reference and Use Service Quarterly.
Continuation of RQ. Internet: Electronic access available. Current issues in Periodical Room, PCL. Older issues at Z 671 R23, PCL.

Reference Librarian.
Internet: Electronic access available. Current issues in Reference Room, PCL. Older issues at Z 11 R52, PCL.

School Library Journal : SLJ.

School Library Media Research: SLMR.
Internet: Electronic access available. Continuation of School Library Media Quarterly.
Topics

What is Reference?
   History of Reference and Information Provisions in Libraries
   Current and Future Developments and Issues

What We Use to Provide Services
   Management Skills
   Technical Skills
   People Skills
   Social Responsibilities and Expectations
   Connecting with Our Communities

Introduction to Essential Techniques
   Helping People Find Information:
      Communication Theories
      Helping Relationships and Helping Skills
   Information Retrieval Skills
   Information Retrieval
      Boolean logic
      Truncation
      Controlled vocabulary

How People Learn and the Relationship to Information Needs

Tools and Skills for Evaluation of Information
   Evaluation of Resources
   Print and Electronic Resources
   Internet

Information Needs of Users
   Situational and Contextual Influences
   Cognitive Needs
   Affective Needs
   Social and Cultural Needs

Analyzing the Reference Question/Inquiry
   Contextual Considerations
   Institutional Context
   Person as Context
   Place as Context
   Inquiry in Context
   Source in Context

Finding Information—Sources and Contexts:
   Biographical Resources
      Problems and Issues
      Examples of tools and Inquiries
   Words and Dictionaries
      Problems and Issues
      Examples of tools and Inquiries
   Facts and Ready References
      Problems and Issues
      Examples of tools and Inquires
   Bibliography and Bibliographic Control
      Problems and Issues
      Examples of tools and Inquires
Grade Values and Assignments:

Exercise portfolio and readings 20%
Exam 1 (includes field visit) 20%
Exam 2 (include field visit) 20%
Product Reviews 30%
  Review 1
  Review 2
  Review 3
Participation 10%

Schedule and Assignments

Please note assignments that require some prior-class preparation for in-class and/or group discussion. Make sure you check the textbook readings assignments listing preparation for the class discussion.

For January 22 read:
Cassell and Hiremath, Ch. 1, Ch. 17, Ch. 20

January 22  Module 1A
Module 1- What is Reference?
Module 2- Evaluation of Information Resources

For January 29 read:
Cassell and Hiremath, Ch. 2, Ch. 3

January 29  Module 3- The Information Question and Inquiry Process
Module 4.  Information Retrieval Skills

For February 5 read:
Review Cassell and Hiremath, Ch. 3

February 5  Model 5  Introduction to Essential Communication and Helping Techniques
Module 6.  How People Learn and are Socialized in Society:  Theories and Applications

For February 12 read
Cassell and Hiremath, Ch. 11
Prepare for class discussion on biographical sources.  See exercise Module 7A
**February 12**  Module 7A.  Biographical Resources  
Problems and Issues  
Examples of tools and Inquiries  
**Product Review 1 is due**  
For February 19  
Read Cassell and Hiremath, Ch. 7  
Prepare for class discussion on words and dictionary sources. See exercise in Module 7B in manual  

**February 19**  Module 7B.  Words and Dictionaries  
Problems and Issues  
Examples of tools and Inquiries  
For February 26:  
Read Cassell and Hiremath, Ch 6, Ch 8  
Prepare for class discussion on ready reference sources. See exercise in Module 7C in manual  

**February 26**  Module 7C.  Facts and Ready Reference  
Problems and Issues  
Examples of tools and Inquires  
**Review 2 due**  
For March 5-12:  
Read Cassell and Hiremath, Ch 4, 8, 12  
Prepare for class discussion on indexes and bibliography, and bibliographic control. See exercise in Modules 7D in manual  

**March 5-12**  Module 7D.  Bibliography, Indexes and Bibliographic Control, Government publications  
Problems and Issues  
Examples of tools and Inquires  
**March 12  Exam I, with field visit 1 (second part of class: 1 hour and 45 minutes)**  
For March 26  
Read Cassell and Hiremath, Ch. 5  
Prepare for class discussion on encyclopedias. See exercise in Module 7E in manual  

**March 19**  Spring Break  

**March 26**  Module 7E.  Encyclopedias  
Problems and Issues  
Examples of tools and Inquires  
**Review 3 due**  
For April 2  
Read Cassell and Hiremath, Ch. 13  
Read also in the professional literature Electronic Resources and be able to engage in discussion on your reading. Complete the analysis exercise for Electronic Resources, found in your manual, Module 7F  

**April 2**  Module 7F.  Electronic Resources  
Problems and Issues  
Examples of tools and Inquires  
For April 9  
Read Cassell and Hiermath, Ch. 10  
Prepare for class discussion on Places and Travel. See exercise in Module 7G in manual
April 9  Module 7G. Places and Travel
Problems and Issues
Examples of tools and Inquires
Review 3 is due
For April 16
Prepare for discussion on Community Information.
Read in the professional literature about Community Information.
See Module 7H

April 16  Module 7H. Community Information
Problems and Issues
Examples of tools and Inquires
For April 23
Read Cassell and Hiermath, Ch. 14, 16
Prepare for discussion on information literacy, instruction, and reader advisement
Module 9 in manual

April 23 Information Literacy and Instruction
Problems and Issues
Examples of programs
For April 30
Read Cassell and Hiermath, Ch. 14, 16
Prepare for discussion on management and evaluation
See Module 9 in manual

April 30 Management and Evaluation of references services
Problems and Issues
Examples of programs
Exam II, with field visit 2 (last part of class 1 hour and 45 minutes)
Portfolio and readings and exercises due

Assignment Due Dates:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<td>Review 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review 3</td>
<td>Mar. 26</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam I</td>
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<td>Exam II</td>
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<tr>
<td>Portfolio/exercises</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
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Grade Determinants

100-95 = A
94-93 = A-
92-90 = B+
89-84 = B
83-80 = B-
79-70 = C
69-60 = D
59-00 = F
ANNOTATED ASSIGNMENTS

Three Product Reviews.
You are also required to select and prepare three professional-level items reviews of recently published reference books or information products. Follow the general guidelines of professional reviewing as you find in professional journals and/or guidance from Cassell and Hiremath. See “Periodicals Worth Knowing” in this syllabus for examples of published reviews. Make sure that you have read Cassell and Hiremath, Ch. 17 and several reviews from the professional literature to get an idea about evaluation and writing reviews. Probably the best beginning source will be the reviews found in Booklist in its “Reference Books Bulletin” section, http://www.ala.org/booklist. The reviews are due separately from the reading journal, but, for access purposes, include these in your Portfolio when turned in.

Group Participation (discussions), Exercises and Reference Services Analysis, and Reading Assignments Portfolio.

Readings from the class text and other sources.
You are required to keep a reading journal of items that you read from your textbook. Record at least 4 textbook readings, plus 2 external reading sources. This exercise should help you keep abreast of class discussions and assignments. See the form below for guidance in how to record your readings.

Assignment: Reading from the Literature

READING EVALUATION FORM

Title with Bibliographic Citation:  (Use Standard bibliographic citation manual, e.g., American Psychological Association, Style Manual, Modern Language Association)

Date Read:

Subject or topic (related to class outline):

Central Premise or theme:

Key Concepts:

1. 
2. 
3. 

Other discussion points or issues

Group discussions.
Please keep a record of at least 3 group exercises that you will be required to do during this course. As assignments may differ, please follow the instructions for each exercise as presented to you. Discussion reports should be well formatted and included in the portfolio with a date as to when the exercise was completed. See guide below. You may include information from the group, but be sure and add your own insights and observations. You will be expected to participate in all groups discussions.
Group discussions guide.

Date:
Title of the exercise (e.g., type resource/and or process under discussion) (make sure that you title it so that it relates to the module under discussion:
Description of the Exercise: (e.g., answer typical references questions, analysis a process)
Analysis:
Statement of what you learned from this exercise:

Include these in your portfolio

Exercise and Process Portfolio.

1. As part of this portfolio find answers to at least 3 sets of sample questions in the resources modules. Following the general way that you find and cite reference questions. (This will be explained in class.)

2. Include 3 analysis exercises based on the reference services. (Select according to your interests.) Often these will be a part of the group discussions, and you may expand on those and provide your own insights. See above.

Portfolio Order
Arrange your portfolio in this order. Use tabs to divide sections.

1. Readings
2. Reference resources exercises
3. Reference service analyses
4. Group reports (include at least 3)
5. Other items you wish to include (optional)

Two Exams
Two exams are required. These exams will be based on study questions provided to you. Many of these questions will be based on text readings and discussions in class. Both exams will require a field report. It is always helpful to move out of the classroom and into the world of action, so to speak, to see what is going on in professional life. You will select two field exercises to be submitted as part of each exam.

For Exam 1: Interview someone about how and where they seek information. Consult Cassell and Hiremath, Ch. 2. Analyze and provide examples. Use the following guide:

Field Assignment: Information Interview
People describe, define, and seek information in various ways and in many different formats. Most people, if not all, have information needs. However, they often do that state those in ways that traditional institutions such as libraries are organized to accommodate their needs. For this exercise you are to select a person to interview about a recent information need and inquire as to how they went about getting that information. You may select someone you know or randomly select someone who might have reason to have needed information recently. Read on the theory of how people do or do not seek information (Lukenbill and Immoth, Health Information for Youth..., p. 6; Lukenbill, Biography in the Lives of Youth, Ch. 4, pp.79-84). Do a little background reading about interviewing (we will discuss helping and information interviewing in the course of this class), prepare an interview protocol (questions to ask), practice with someone that you will not be interviewing; then when you feel...
comfortable with your protocol, conduct the interview. After you have conducted your interview, write up a field report for submission. In your report include the following:

- Describe the person you interviewed.
- Describe how and why you selected this person for the interview.
- Describe the environment in which the interview took place (e.g., office, home, business, etc.)
- Provide an objective overview of the points made in the interview by the subject.
- Provide a critical analysis of the interview (e.g., what you discovered about how people define information, how they go about it, etc.).
- Somewhere in your interview make sure that you ask them about using a library to find the information that they needed. Observe how they respond to this important question.
- Provide any other useful information that might have emerged from the interview.
- Provide supplemental materials.
- Attach your interview questions.
- Attach a brief bibliography of sources you used to prepare for the interview.
- Attach any important notes you took during the interview.

Be prepared to include this in Exam 1.

**For Exam 2:** Visit a place where information is delivered and see how facilities either enhance or detract from this process. Use the following guide:

**Field Assignment: Facilities Operations**

Environment and facilities play important roles in how information is delivered. For this field exercise, you are to select a public place where information is given out in some form or style. Read in the literature something about facility design. It may be a public or school library or other public facility. Make sure that you select a site that is ample enough for you to observe a variety of activities and the interplay of facilities over the time that you visit. Depending on the circumstances, you may either inform them that you or observing their facilities or ask permission of the staff to observe their facilities. Remember that you are not observing people, but the environment in which they work and in which client interact with them. Make sure that you take into account these points:

- Provide an overview of the physical quarters.
- Describe the underlying philosophy behind the facility arrangement. (You can talk to the librarian or staff about this.)
- Describe the client group served by the program.
- Describe the types of programs and services provided based on your observations or public information provided. (E.g., handouts, news releases, conservation with staff, clients, etc.)
- Describe the staff and its characteristics as you observed them.
- Describe any unique characteristics of the site as you observed it.
- Make sure that you summarize, giving your critical analysis of facilities.
- Other observations as needed.

Be prepared to include this in Exam 2.