

Syllabus

LIS 623 INFORMATION IN THE HUMANITIES

Online
Fall 2008

Instructor: Susan Knoer

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Prerequisite: LIS 601, or permission of instructor

Credit hours: 3

Course description:

The content and structure of bibliographic and other information resources in the humanities. A consideration of formal and informal communication within the humanities with emphasis on information sources and services in religion, philosophy, literature, linguistics, visual arts, music, dance, theatre, film and other closely related subjects. Students will examine both print and online resources, and examine researcher behavior.

Course format:

Online readings and assignments, and readings from textbook.

Postings to the discussion list or chat room.

Research producing an annotated bibliography.

Research in online databases, the Web, and real paper books. You will need access to a fairly large library for your bibliography, since many reference sources do not circulate or travel by interlibrary loan. I suggest that you locate one convenient to you and plan your research in advance, but creative solutions are encouraged. There are a number of humanities reference books at the University of Louisville which can be borrowed by ILL, but not enough for the entire class; you can check other libraries, too.

Technical requirements:

Instructions for accessing Blackboard, the instructional platform, are at:

<http://www.uky.edu/IT/CustomerService/docs/blackboard/>

You must have an Active Directory (AD) account through UK. A tutorial is at:

<http://www.uky.edu/Blackboard/ADtutorials.html#10>

You may want to search the Kentucky Virtual Library (KVL) databases, or use the online textbook in NetLibrary. You can get a KVL password at your local public library, or through UK's Distance Learning.

To access UK databases, instructions are at:

http://www.uky.edu/Libraries/page.php?lweb_id=16

If you are in Louisville, you can access all the U of L databases, but only at the U of L libraries. No password is required, and you can email many articles to yourself, or save them to your portable media (floppy, thumbdrive, etc).

If you are near another college, contact them about guest privileges.

Course content:

The study of reference sources and users in the humanities fields, including literature, music, fine arts, performing arts, religion and mythology, philosophy, and interdisciplinary fields. Print, subscription databases, and web sources will be covered. Students will discuss, evaluate, and compile a list of resources in print, databases, journals, and web sources.

Course objectives:

1. To explore the natures of sources and their use by scholars, students, and the lay public in humanities fields, and their relationship to other fields.
2. To demonstrate familiarity with the contents of primary and secondary reference resources in the humanities, including print, online databases, and websites.
3. To demonstrate the ability to compare, contrast, and evaluate various reference sources.
4. To develop a bibliography of reference works suited to use in a particular library setting.
5. To demonstrate a base knowledge of humanities fields and the vocabulary to analyze reference questions.

Attendance:

You will be expected to check the class Blackboard site at least once a week, and to actively participate in discussions. You are required to turn in assignments by the due date. If you cannot access the drop box, you must send them to me by email in RTF format. If you have a major system crash, or cannot access a computer, you may send me a floppy or a printout, if it is postmarked within 24 hours of the due date.

Acceptable reasons for non participation include illness or bereavement; it is the policy NOT to grant incompletes (I) for reasons other than these.

Textbook:

Ron **Blazek** and Elizabeth Aversa, *The **Humanities**: A Selective Guide to Information Sources*, 5th edition, 2000, Libraries Unlimited
ISBN 1563086026

This may be available through local libraries and NetLibrary through KYVL; older editions are useful for print sources, but not for web-based ones. Then again, web-based sources come, go, and move frequently. You will need access to some recent edition.

Readings:

Other required readings will be posted online after they are cleared for copyright. Readings should be discussed in the chat room, in the period it is assigned for.

Suggested readings will be listed for each topic, but I will not require anything that cannot be accessed by distance learners. You are encouraged to read outside the listed readings. If you find a good reading, in any source, please share it in the chat room.

Plagiarism:

You are encouraged to quote or refer to your sources, with proper documentation. Quotation of others' work without full attribution (plagiarism) is a violation of ethics and UK policy.

You are also cheating future scholars, since they will not be able to trace your citations to their sources, in the way you will trace others. It will also defeat the purpose of creating a useful resource for your own use.

Citations should include:

For books: title, author(s) or editor, publisher, year.

For articles: article title, author(s), journal title, issue and/or number, year.

For online databases: also include the database name and date accessed.

For web resources: also include the page title, URL, date created, and date accessed.

You are not required to use a specific style, but all citations should enable a librarian to find the resource without problems.

Grading and Assignments:

Attendance in the form of checking the course site, and class participation in the form of posting thoughtful and responsive responses and discussions are required. This is the equivalent of class discussion, and while not every student is required to respond to every topic, all should respond to at least half, and are encouraged to participate more. It is the quality, and not the quantity, that will be graded. This will form 30% of the final grade, 15% based on checking the Blackboard site weekly (yes, I can check your attendance) and commenting or asking questions in the chat room, and 15% based on the thoughtfulness and creativity of your postings. We are a large group, don't strain yourself being original, but be involved. Since we're online and asynchronous, you may treat the discussions as blog postings (short essays, of two or three paragraphs) rather than responding to a specific posting.

An annotated bibliography of books, journals, subscription databases, and websites will constitute 50% of the grade. This must cover at least one print source, one database, and one Web source for each field in the syllabus (but not each topic we discuss). It should include the bibliographic information; cost, if it's available; audience; contents; usability; authority; scope; and currency.

Since students will be coming from a wide geographic area and have differing career goals, I will allow you to choose a specialty from school media, academic, public, or special libraries for your bibliography, or you may mix them; but you all will be held to

the same standards. This must cover all the areas of the humanities we have studied, and will be a useful resource for you in whatever your first job will be.

Websites may be chosen from or contributed to the class wiki at <http://humanitiesforlibrarians.pbwiki.com/>

You are also welcome to contact me about other specializations – resources that are Hispanic-centered, for the hearing or visually impaired, or for distant learners, among other possibilities, are all possible but will be more difficult (and rewarding).

You may choose two of the following for the remainder of your grade:

10% of the grade may be based on reference question assignments. These research questions will require you to document your search strategy and sources, and are designed to familiarize you with not only the sources, but with the frustrations users and librarians encounter with them. You must check one print source and one database before you are allowed to Google it or discuss it in the chat room, but both are allowed and encouraged. Not finding “The Answer” is to be expected, but you should give your user good leads to explore.

10% of your grade may be based on an information literacy tutorial and handout in the humanities. This should be aimed at a specific library audience (school media, academic, public, or special libraries) and subject in the humanities. It should consist of a script (what you would actually say to them, 10-30 minutes, and what you would demonstrate, and how – keywords for your example, hands-on activities, pass around a thesaurus, etc), a how-to handout (they will only remember a portion of what you say), and a list of other resources they can consult later (print, web, and databases). Don’t get carried away with the script, it can be notes and not word-for-word, but make the other sections as broad as you wish. Remember, quality, not quantity, is what counts.

10% may be based on a comparative review of two or more resources, which will be in more depth than your annotations, but the same criteria. You are encouraged to collaborate on this, but there must be two print or database resources for each person in the group. You will be asked to recommend one or two, and justify your answers. You may frame it as an article for publication, or as a report to your boss (the budget is tight, and you can only afford a few – or just one). You should also recommend at least one web-based source and justify it.

10% may be based on a project of your own design. The proposed Project **must be submitted by Week Three for approval**, by email. I encourage you to use real-life situations and needs, or a special interest of your own, but it must be of equal depth as the ones above. Alternative media and topics are welcome, but you must turn in something in an RTF file also, for the Blackboard record. I am open to doing two self-designed projects, contact me.

All assignments **MUST** be submitted in RTF (Wordpad for Windows users), text (Notepad for Windows users) format, or Open Office. You may use whatever software you like, but the final version must be in RTF or Text. Check your “save as” when you save it, before sending it to the dropbox. There is limited space on the server, and I have limited software and hardware at hand.

All assignments will be **due by midnight Saturday** of the week it is due, i.e., week of Nov 2 will be due Nov 8 at midnight.

This needn't limit your creativity. If you would like to video or podcast your info lit session or presentation to your boss, or create an interactive tutorial, or do a web page or a poster session, go for it! You must, however, **contact me by Week Six**, to make sure I have access to the software and hardware needed, and allot the time for other media (I'm a speed reader, but not a speed listener!). You also must allow the time for it to reach me, if it's a physical media (tape, cd, poster, etc).

Grading:

GRADE SCALE:

74-82 points = C

Completes assignments, citations and research are incomplete, responds to list comments briefly or incompletely, but shows basic understanding of principles and subject matter.

83-91 points = B

Completes assignments, citations are complete, analyzes new material and shows critical thinking skills, applies personal experience or cites sources in comments, responds to postings with constructive comments.

92-100 points = A

Completes assignments, citations are complete, analyzes and synthesizes new information, thoroughly researches sources, compares to other sources, supports statements with citations, contributes new resources to the discussion list, completes assignments creatively or logically, applies new information to real life situations, responds to comments with new information, insight, or analysis.

Schedule:

Week 1— week starting Aug 24

Class Responsibilities for students and instructor.

Syllabus and schedule.

Introductions, discussion of class expectations.

Week 2— Aug 31

General Sources in the Humanities

The Humanist vocabulary – go for baroque!

What are the Humanities?

Information seeking and sources – why humanists are different.

Interdisciplinarity, or, why the humanist crossed the road

Reading: Chapter 1

Week 3— Sept 7

General Sources in the Humanities

Information Literacy and the Humanities – how do you teach people to be fuzzy thinkers?

Reading: Chapter 2

Week 4— Sept 14

Philosophy Sources and Search Strategies, or, You Kant Put Descartes Before the Horse

Reading: Chapter 3

Week 5— Sept 21

Religion Sources and Search Strategies

Reading: Chapter 5

Week 6— Sept 28

Music Resources and Search Strategies; or, Can You Hum a Few Bars of That?

Week 7— Oct 5

Take a break and catch up. Work on your bibliography and do any traveling you have to. Read all the chat room postings and lectures. Work on your projects. Study for comps. Have a life.

Week 8— Oct 12

Performing Arts Resources and Search Strategies: Opera

And Dance; or, Can I Get the Ring Cycle From itunes?

Reading: Chapter 9 – Music and Dance

Due: Project 1

Week 9— Oct 19

Performing Arts Resources and Search Strategies: Theater, TV, and Film; or, Do You Want The Lion King: The Musical, The Book, The Movie, or the TV Special?

Reading: Chapter 9 – Theater, film, and TV

Week 10— Oct 26

Art Resources and Search Strategies, or, It's That Really Famous Picture of The Depression, You Know?

Reading: Chapter 7

Due : Project 2

Week 11— Nov 2

Literature Resources and Search Strategies, or, Hurrah! Something I Know How To Do!

Reading: Chapter 11

Week 12— Nov 9

Primary sources and Web weaving – how to mine Distant Archives and the Dark Web, or, the World is in OIAster.

Google Print, the Internet Archive, and the Million Book Project, or, the End of the World as We Know It.

Due: Bibliography

Week 13— Nov 16

Pop Culture and Folklore– From graffiti to graphic novels

Assignment: Read the archives of popculture-1
<http://www.lists.ufl.edu/archives/popculture-1.html> Yes, all of them, or most, it's only seven years old and not very busy. Take one of the topics and do a websearch. Then do a database search on the same topic.

Discuss in the chat room: Is there more than meets the listserve? Is there more pop than culture here? Why are people talking about this? Can you really believe someone's researching this? Would someone want to research this a hundred years from now? What could they tease from it? What has been? What was your parents' pop culture, or your grandparents, or distant ancestors?

Week 14— Nov 30

Humanities and the Media/Message – Text and context, or, they made that into a book?

Assignment: Get some munchies and watch a movie (or TV or miniseries) made from a humanities text or visual work, and compare it to the original work. Discuss in the chat room how it relates to the original work, what artistic liberties are taken, how the visual style and spoken word (and sound effects, music, costume, sets, cinematography, editing) of the film adds or detracts from the original, what updates or dates either, and why a humanities researcher would want to study the film and the original both. Be a humanist – think broadly and interdisciplinary. How would you deal with those differences when they come up in reference questions?

Research and cite at least two other opinions – yes, movie reviews and websites count, but check an online database for scholarly articles, too.

Discuss it in the chat room – which did you like better? Did the movie ruin your mental image of the original? Which came first for you – did the new version make you want to see the original, or did the original make you reluctant to see the film? How would you recommend researching the film, or one facet, like costumes or sound effects?

Suggestions (but just suggestions)– Lord of the Rings (think of shield-surfing and dwarf-tossing, and the pop-culture contexts of the both the text and the film), Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge (the film is available online, about 15 minutes, and it's a short story), the new and

original versions of King Kong, The Orchid Thief, Romeo + Juliet, Frida (Kahlo) or Pollock (who are the other artists in the film? Try citation chasing them), Charlotte's Web, Wizard of Oz, DaVinci Code, The Ten Commandments.

Week 15— Dec 7

Wrapping it all up.

Chat Discussion: What was your favorite reference source? Why? Would it be useful to you later, or did you just like it? What was the worst assignment? Why? What have you learned about the humanities, and the researchers in them? What did you find most challenging? In what way? What changes would you suggest in the class next time, in content or method? Catch up on your posts.