Dominican University
Graduate School of Library and Information Science
**LIS704: Reference & Online Services**
**Spring 2005: Mondays 7:00 to 10:00**

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**Course Description:**
An introduction to effective reference service in an electronic age. The course deals with the selection, evaluation and use of general reference sources in both hard copy (print) and digital formats; nature development, functions and management of reference and online services; The reference interview; concepts principles and problems of online bibliographic organization and control.

**Required Text(s):**
Katz, William A. *Introduction to Reference Work: Basic Information Services*. 8th ed. New York, McGraw-Hill, 2002.

Text website http://www.mhhe.com/socscience/katz/

Additional readings may be assigned throughout the course.

| **Helpful Resources:** | *Dominican Call#* |
|---|---|
| Balay, R., ed. *Guide to Reference Books*. | Z1035.1.G891996 |
| Walford, A.J. ed. *Walford's Guide to Reference Materials*. | Z1035.1.W33.2000 |

**Learning Objectives:**
- ✓ The student will be able to conduct each element of a reference transaction in an effective, efficient and professional manner.
- ✓ The student will be able to describe the functions of reference services in various types of libraries.
- ✓ The student will be able to identify, locate and utilize selected reference sources to answer patron or professional queries.
- ✓ The student will be able to provide instruction to patrons in the use of reference services.
- ✓ The student will be able to evaluate reference sources using appropriate criteria.

**Assignments:**
**Treasure Hunts:** For each type of reference materials discussed in class, there will be an accompanying treasure hunt assignment to assist the student in becoming familiar with those materials. 30 pts. ea. 180 pts. total.

**Pathfinder:** The student will complete a pathfinder or finding aid for a topic chosen by the student and approved by the instructor. The pathfinder needs to be completed in both a printed version and an HTML version. 75 pts.

**Midterm:** The student will have a midterm exam covering the topics examined in the first half of the semester. 75 pts.

**Final Exam:** The final will provide the student the opportunity to evidence his/her understanding of all aspects of reference service. 100 pts.

| **Grade Scale:** | A: | 400-430 | C+: | 327-343 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Total Points*** | A-: | 382-399 | C: | 314-326 |
| | B+: | 370-381 | C-: | 301-313 |
| | B: | 356-369 | F: | $\leq 300$ |
| | B-: | 344-355 | | |

Students are expected to attend each class, arrive promptly and participate fully in class discussion and complete assignments on time. It is also understood that graduate students have commitments outside of course work. Students who plan on missing a class should make the instructor aware of that ahead of time. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain any material covered or assignments missed. Missing a significant amount of class time – more than a single class – may result in a grade reduction.

Assignments are due at the beginning of the class session on the date outlined on the syllabus unless there is a mutual agreement with the instructor to the contrary. Late assignments, without prior consent of the instructor, will simply not be accepted.

Students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Appropriate credit must be given to original creators of all works used. Please see the *Dominican University Student Handbook* for the full statement of Academic Integrity.

# Course Outline

| Date | Topic(s) | Readings | Assignments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1/17 | Introduction & overview of course | | E-mail instructor |
| 1/24 | Reference interview & reference services | Katz, Ch. 1 | |
| 1/31 | Union catalogs, bibliographies, selection aids, etc. | Katz, Ch. 3&4 | |
| 2/7 | Electronic reference | Katz, Ch. 2 | |
| 2/14 | Encyclopedias | Katz, Ch. 7 | T.H. #1 |
| 2/21 | Ready reference sources | Katz, Ch. 8 & Kister | T.H. #2 |
| 2/28 | Midterm Exam | Review all previous | |
| 3/7 | Spring Break | | |
| 3/14 | Biography & genealogy | Katz, Ch. 9 | T.H. #3 |
| 3/21 | Bibliographic instruction | | T.H. #4 |
| 3/28 | Education, historic & newspaper sources | Katz, Ch. 6 | T.H. #5 |
| 4/4 | Geographical & map sources | Katz, Ch. 11 | Pathfinder |
| 4/11 | Government documents | Katz, Ch. 12 & Nina Platt, *GPO Access* | |
| 4/18 | Archival finding aids; Future directions of reference services Review for final | | T.H. #6 |
| 4/25 | Final Exam | | |

**Additional Readings:**

Kister, Kenneth F. "Buying and Selling Words: What Every Good Librarian Should Know about the Dictionary Business." *Wilson Library Bulletin* 67 (January 1993): 35-37, 115.

Platt, Nina. "GPO Access: Government at Its Best." *Database* 21 (April/May 1998): 41-43.

**Reflection Questions**
**Questions to be answered for Session 1/17:**
1. What do you hope to get out of this course?

2. What are you going to do to maximize your learning in this course? How much time do you plan to devote to this course each week?
3. What do you expect from your instructor? What do you see as the instructors' role?
4. What do you expect from your classmates? From class participation?

**Questions to be answered for Session 1/24**
1. What is reference service? What are the various types of reference services?
2. When did you last use a reference librarian? Was the interaction helpful?
3. What is the primary function of a reference librarian?
4. How has reference service evolved over the past century?
5. What qualities do you need to be an excellent reference librarian?
6. What are some types of reference questions?
7. What are the issues surrounding conducting a reference interview?

**Questions to be answered for Session 1/31**

1. How can one know that a reference book is a quality item?

2. What are the primary reference reviewing tools?

3. How can tools such as the *Guide to Reference Books* (Balay), *American Reference Books Annual, Library Journal,* and *Choice* help librarians?

4. How does the information professional become competent to review reference sources? What sources? What skills? What attitudes? What values?

5. In selecting reference sources, how should controversial subjects be handled?

6. How do you conduct virtual reference collection development?

7. What are the primary evaluation points for web sites?

**Questions to be answered for Session 3/21**
1. How can pathfinders be used in libraries? What ten subjects would be most useful to have ready for general patrons in an academic library? In a public library?
2. How can libraries justify the staff time necessary to compile pathfinders?
3. What implications does the World Wide Web hold for pathfinders?
4. Why is preparation for reference service important in the Information Age? What is the responsibility of the information professional to information literacy beyond the workplace?
5. Will users need more or less user instruction in the future? Should libraries become public information centers? Should librarians offer information enrichment classes on subjects such as online searching at home, legal reference, aging and retirement, health and fitness, privacy protection?
6. What do patrons need to know about searching the web?
7. How can we teach patrons about the web?

8. Who should teach "information literacy"?What training should they have?
9. How do you know if you're information literate? What skills do you have? What knowledge?

**Questions to be answered for Session 4/11**
1. What role does the U.S. government play as a publisher?  How is this changing?
2. How do government documents fit into a general reference department? What are the benefits? Drawbacks?
3. How are various electronic formats complicating the picture in government documents department?
4. How long should depository libraries be expected to keep documents?
5. How good is *GPO Access*?