LIS 621

Introduction to Information Services

Instructor: C. Sean Burns, PhD
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Official Course Description

This course provides an introduction to the theory and practice of information services, which are defined broadly as the activities in which information professionals engage to connect people to the information they need, including information needs assessment, direct information provision, information literacy instruction, and intermediation for all stages of the information search process. Emphasis is placed on the roles played by information professionals to help diverse users define and negotiate their information needs, navigate user-system interfaces, formulate effective search strategies for information retrieval, and evaluate and select information. Attention is also given to the skills necessary to plan for, implement, and evaluate the delivery of information services in a wide variety of organizational contexts. The ethical foundations of information services are also considered.

Prerequisite: LIS 601

Learning Outcomes

After completing this course students will be able to

- Employ a broad range of information systems, sources, and services that libraries and other types of information-related organizations provide their clients.
- Describe and apply information retrieval theories to the search process.
- Apply knowledge of how people interact with information professionals and information systems to the provision of information services. Particular emphasis will be placed on diverse and under-served populations.
- Plan for and deliver basic instruction to users in both point-of-need and classroom environments.
- Manage the delivery of information services. Emphasis is placed on leadership and the strategic management of human, technological, and physical resources.
- Evaluate the quality of information services using a variety of methods.
- Evaluate and apply existing research to the practice of information service provision.

Required Text


For technological requirements for this course, see:
## Student Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Due Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Reference Source Review</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9/26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Pathfinder</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Practical Exercise</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10/30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Reference Services Evaluation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Faculty Research Evaluation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11/21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Instructional Unit</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>12/8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Final Examination</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>12/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Class Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Reference Source Review

Students will review two online, reference sources (as negotiated with the instructor) following the style of *Choice Online Reviews* (find under the title heading of *Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries* in the *Library* in the *Information Science & Technology Abstracts* [LISTA] database through the UK Libraries website). Each review will be approximately 300 words in length, will cover a source that fits one of the subject guidelines listed by *Choice* ([http://www.ala.org/acrl/choice/selectionguidelines2](http://www.ala.org/acrl/choice/selectionguidelines2)), and will follow *Choice*’s guidelines on the *Essential Elements of Reviews* and *Language, Style, Grammar, Content & Documentation* ([http://www.ala.org/acrl/choice/reviewers](http://www.ala.org/acrl/choice/reviewers)) as well as the appropriate evaluation criteria related to the type of reference source. (See Bopp & Smith, 2012 for descriptions of evaluation criteria of directories, almanacs, dictionaries, and so forth.) Formatting must follow *Choice* reviews for reference works and include recommendation level (see list of levels at [http://www.ala.org/acrl/choice/about](http://www.ala.org/acrl/choice/about)) and readership levels (see *Choice* search page for list of readership levels at [http://www.cro3.org/search](http://www.cro3.org/search)). See the Reference & User Services Association’s (RUSA) draft on the *Elements for Basic Reviews* for additional criteria in evaluating reference works ([http://www.ala.org/rusa/sites/ala.org.rusa/files/content/resources/guidelines/ElementsforReviews.pdf](http://www.ala.org/rusa/sites/ala.org.rusa/files/content/resources/guidelines/ElementsforReviews.pdf)).

### Pathfinder

Students will complete a comprehensive information guide on a topic of interest to them (as negotiated with the instructor). This guide will provide an annotated list of reference sources, indexes, catalogs, and other tools and instructional content on conducting research in the selected area.

The pathfinder will adhere to the following outline.

1. Title. This should include the name of the intended audience and the name of the topic.
2. Introduction paragraph: This explains the purpose and scope of the pathfinder (approx. 75
Pathfinders must be well organized, concise, and presentable to the public. Although for this assignment you must adhere to the outline above, numerous examples of pathfinders, of various designs and for various audiences, exist on the Internet. Examples include: ipl2 (http://www.ipl.org/div/pf/), Monroe County Library System (see Research Guides at the bottom of the page) http://www3.libraryweb.org/lh.aspx?id=947, Craighead County Public Library http://www.libraryinjonesboro.org/pathfinders, UK Libraries’ Research Guides http://libguides.uky.edu/, and even government organizations such as the National Archives http://www.archives.gov/research/alic/reference/pathfinders.html.

Practical Exercise

Students will solve one set of information problems using a variety of sources. The exercise will consist of hypothetical information problems that the student will answer through the use of proprietary information sources (not free web sites, that is) from the UK Libraries databases. In completing the practical exercise, students should answer the questions posed and indicate the information source or sources that provided the answer. In noting the source used, simply indicate the title, date, volume, page(s), or URL on which the information is found. Students should not ask library staff to answer questions from your assignment, but students may discuss the practical exercise with their colleagues. However, the submitted work must represent independent effort – the completion of the practical exercise is not a group project. The practical exercise will be administered online over the course of a week.

Reference Services Evaluation

Students will develop a short plan to evaluate a reference or information service. The plan will begin with a description of a reference service (or several services if it is necessary) to evaluate. Then it will outline the planned participants of the study, the methods of data collection, the location or environment of the study, and the personnel involved and the equipment necessary to conduct the study. See Bopp & Smith, Figure 10.2, page 315 for the specific questions to address. At least one similar case study or evaluation must be referenced from the literature. The plan must be submitted in outline format and be no more than 3 pages.

Faculty Research Evaluation

Students will compile a report that describes the five year research output of an assistant,
associate, or a full professor at the University of Kentucky. The chosen professor must have a research output of at least 10 peer reviewed journal articles within the last five years (up to the year before the current year). You will use the University of Kentucky's subscription to Web of Science to gather initial data. Data points to evaluate include co-authorship, order of authorship, journal publications, and citations for the 10 most recent publications. Additionally, subject area data will be identified and described by searching the journal titles of the professor's 10 most recent publications from the ULRICHSWEB serials directory (available from UK Libraries databases).

Students will identify, describe, and suggest two potential journal titles the professor might be interested in submitting future manuscripts. To identify the journals, you will use the Cited Journal data table and the Citing Journal data table from ISI Web of Knowledge's Journal Citation Reports. Specifically, you will select two of the professor's past publications with the highest impact factors, and then use the data tables to find relevant publications (one from each data table). Additional criteria include: the professor must not have published in the journal at any point in her publication history, the journal titles must have an impact factor, and the journal titles must be related to subject areas or topics based on the professor's past publications. To write a brief description of the identified journal titles, you will use the SHERPA / RoMEO (http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo/) website to describe the open access status and archival policy of the journals, the ULRICHSWEB database to describe publication information, Cabell's Directory of Publishing Opportunities to find the journal's acceptance rate, and the journals' home pages to gather other relevant details, such as information about the editorial board, etc.

Students will identify one potential coauthor at UK for the chosen faculty member. The potential coauthor must work in a different field and not work in the same department or school of the chosen faculty member. You will use UK ICT Collab (collaboration.uky.edu) to identify the potential coauthor. Based on the data available from UK ICT Collab and from information about the potential collaborator from the candidate's faculty page, you will write a brief explanation that justifies the selection of this person as a good potential candidate for collaboration.

**Instructional Unit**

Students will plan for and record a short instructional unit on an appropriate topic (to be negotiated with the instructor) using one of the lecture capture technologies available to them. The topic must be related to a reference or informational service. If the topic is academic oriented, the intended audience will be first year undergraduates at a university. If the topic is relevant to the public, the intended audience may focus on reference services at a public library. Students must speak with the instructor if other informational agencies or services will be the focus. Units are expected to last appropriately 8 minutes in length and uploaded to YouTube for public viewing.

**Final Examination**

The final examination will combine practical information problems, short-answer questions on aspects of information services, and 2 longer essay questions on issues in information services, including evaluation and ethical considerations. The final exam will be administered online over the course of finals week.
Grading and Attendance Policy

All grading is comparative, that is projects are assigned grades in comparison with each other, based on quality of thought, content and of writing style, thoroughness of research and of originality. Only exceptional work will receive an "A" grade. Projects that are received after the due date will be assigned a lower grade than would otherwise be earned.

A = 90-100; B = 80-89; C = 70-79; E = 69 or lower

It is assumed that each student will come virtually to class prepared (having thoughtfully read course material) and participate actively in discussions -- the equivalent of a "B" grade for "participation." Failing to participate will lower the grade; exceptionally informed and engaged participation will raise the grade. For an online class, attendance is composed of attendance in online discussions. You are expected to participate several times throughout the week (see the participation grade rubric at the end of the syllabus). Our weeks will begin on Wednesdays and end on Tuesdays. Acceptable reasons for non-participation include illness or bereavement; it is the school's policy NOT to grant an incomplete (I) for reasons other than these. Unexcused Absences in excess of one week of no participation in class discussions will automatically result in a maximum C grade.

The Challenges of the Online Environment

While learning in an online environment may be convenient, it presents a number of unique challenges. You will need to prepare yourself for them.

Technological challenges

You know the old adage: what can go wrong will go wrong. Expect it and plan for it. Never put off things until the last minute because technology may fail you. Give yourself plenty of time to work around technological bumps in the road. Technological failure is not an acceptable excuse for late work. You’ll also need patience and a sense of humor to work through the inevitable glitches.

Self-discipline

Because we will not be meeting in person each week, it can be surprisingly easy to forget about your online course. I highly recommend scheduling yourself for several regular times a week to “meet” with the class. Treat these meetings just as you would face-to-face meetings – only missing them in an emergency – and you will find it much easier to keep up with the course.

Reading

Because you are not attending regular lectures, you will often be learning through reading. Thus, the reading load is much heavier than it might be in a traditional setting. Many of your class “discussions,” “course content,” instructions for assignments, and supplemental readings are text-based. For some of you, this will be challenging and will require patience and tenacity. I am always here to help you and happy to answer any questions you have. I only ask that you carefully read instructions, notes, texts, and assignments thoroughly before asking for clarification. I also recommend that you make some real-time connections with a few of your classmates who live near you. Try scheduling, for example, some live discussions and exam study sessions. You will find building a small community of co-learners will ease the isolation.
and strain of learning exclusively online.

**Academic Honesty**

The highest standards of academic honesty and integrity are expected; cheating and plagiarism are simply unacceptable. Any student found guilty of cheating or plagiarism on any class assignment or test will be given a grade of E for the course. Definitions and details of the university policy on academic honesty can be found in the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook (http://www.uky.edu/StudentAffairs/Code/) in part II, sections 6.3.0, 6.3.1 and 6.3.2 or in section 6.3 of the University Senate Rules (http://www.uky.edu/USC/Section_VI.pdf). All work completed for this course must be completed specifically and only for this for this course; i.e., you may not use work completed for previous courses even if it fulfills the assignment requirements.

**Students with Disabilities**

Students with any documented disabilities should contact me to discuss any special accommodations in the course assignments and/or delivery that must be made to enable you to participate fully in the course. For help with documentation or other assistance, please contact the Disability Resource Center, Room 2, Alumni Gym, (859) 257-2754.

**Integration of Syllabus with UK Educator Preparation Unit Themes**

This course will address the four themes of the conceptual framework for the UK professional education unit: research, reflection, learning, and leading. Students will be given the opportunity to review, analyze, discuss, and apply research from diverse perspectives in education and information seeking environments. Reflection will also be integrated into students’ learning opportunities through the production of written work. This course emphasizes the commitment of the professional education unit to assure that its graduates move into their professional lives equipped for life-long learning as educators who will be active in leading colleagues in their schools and/or professional organizations. The ultimate goal in addressing these four themes is to produce leaders who work together to improve service and learning among diverse populations and improve education in Kentucky and beyond.

**Integration of the Syllabus with the Themes of Diversity, Assessment, and Technology**

All UK professional education programs address and affirm the value of diversity in education, the use of technology to support all aspects of instructional programming, and the importance of attaining high levels of skill in assessing the outcomes of instruction. This course provides students an opportunity to demonstrate attention to these themes and reflect on the mechanisms that this course has provided to demonstrate improved skills in these areas.
### Course Schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Part 1: Services</th>
<th>Part II: Sources</th>
<th>Bopp &amp; Smith</th>
<th>Additional Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8/27-9/2</td>
<td>Course Overview / History</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>9/3-9/9</td>
<td>Information Needs Interview</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fagan &amp; Desal; RUSA Guidelines for Behavioral Performance</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>9/10-9/16</td>
<td>Information Retrieval Strategies</td>
<td>Directories, Almanacs, Yearbooks, &amp; Handbooks</td>
<td>4, 5, 14, 15</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>9/17-9/23</td>
<td>Information Retrieval Strategies</td>
<td>Indexes</td>
<td>6, 21</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>9/24-9/30</td>
<td>Internet-based Retrieval</td>
<td>Biographical Sources</td>
<td>5, 16</td>
<td>Bossaller</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>10/1-10/7</td>
<td>Access-Related Information Services</td>
<td>Dictionaries</td>
<td>7, 17</td>
<td></td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>10/8-10/14</td>
<td>Reference Collections: Selection and Evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Harris; Liblicense; RUSA Elements for Basic Reviews</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>10/15-10/21</td>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>Encyclopedias</td>
<td>2, 18</td>
<td>Ferguson &amp; Weckert; Blanke; Code of Ethics; Confidentiality; AIIP</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>10/22-10/28</td>
<td>Evaluation of Reference Services</td>
<td>Bibliographic Sources</td>
<td>10, 20</td>
<td>Bunge; Huling; Ronan, et al.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>10/29-11/4</td>
<td>Organizing, Delivering, and Managing</td>
<td>Geographical Sources</td>
<td>11, 19</td>
<td>Tyckoson; McKinzie; RUSA Professional Competencies</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Information Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>11/5-11/11</td>
<td>E-Reference and Social Media</td>
<td>Government Documents</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Breznay &amp; Haas; RUSA Guidelines for Virtual Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>11/12-11/18</td>
<td>Planning for Instruction and Staff</td>
<td></td>
<td>8, 9</td>
<td>Elmborg; ACRL Info. Lit. Standards; AASL</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Development</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>11/19-11/25</td>
<td>Delivering Instruction and Staff Development</td>
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<td>9, 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>12/1-12/6</td>
<td>Information Services for Diverse Populations</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Standerfer; Redferrn; Hiylard; Slavick</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>12/7-12/12</td>
<td>Keeping Up / The Future of Reference</td>
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<td>Burns &amp; Bossaller; VanScoy</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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</table>
Additional Readings


5. Liblicense (particularly the vocabulary and the terms and descriptions sections). http://www.library.yale.edu/~llicense/index.html

6. RUSA's Elements for Basic Reviews: A Guide for Writers and Readers of Reviews of Works in All Mediums and Genres. (Only sections 1, 2, 3.4, 6, and Appendix II.) There is also an excellent bibliography of articles at the end if you need more help with writing your reviews or are interested in reading further. http://www.al.org/ala/mgrps/divs/rusa/resources/guidelines/ElementsforReviews.pdf


Rubric for Discussion Participation

Discussion enhances learning as you share your ideas, perspectives, and experiences with the class. You develop and refine your thoughts through the writing process, plus broaden your classmates’ understanding of the course content.

The following rubric will be used to assess the overall quality of and assign a grade to your discussion contributions during the semester.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Unacceptable E Level</th>
<th>Acceptable C Level</th>
<th>Good B Level</th>
<th>Excellent A Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Consistently participates less than 2 times per week.</td>
<td>Participates 2 times and/or postings are on the same day.</td>
<td>Participates 3 – 4 times and/or postings are not distributed throughout week.</td>
<td>Participates 3 – 4 times throughout the week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial Topic Posting</td>
<td>Posts lack thought and preparation.</td>
<td>Posts adequate topic discussion with basic thought and preparation; and/or doesn't address the topic fully.</td>
<td>Posts well developed discussion that addresses the topic fully and demonstrates high levels of thought and preparation.</td>
<td>Posts unusually insightful and well developed discussion that demonstrates an engagement with the material beyond typical levels of thought and preparation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Follow-Up Postings</td>
<td>Posts few or superficial follow-up responses to others (e.g., simply agrees or disagrees); does not enrich discussion.</td>
<td>Posts basic follow-up responses and makes a moderate contribution to discussion.</td>
<td>Elaborates on existing postings with further comment or observation, enriching the discussion.</td>
<td>Demonstrates analysis of others' posts; extends meaningful discussion by building on previous posts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Contribution</td>
<td>Posts information that is off-topic, incorrect, or irrelevant to discussion.</td>
<td>Repeats but does not add substantive information to the discussion.</td>
<td>Posts information that is factually correct; lacks full development of concept or thought.</td>
<td>Posts factually correct, reflective and substantive contribution; advances discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References &amp; Support</td>
<td>Includes no references or supporting experience.</td>
<td>Uses personal experience, but no references to readings or research.</td>
<td>Incorporates some references from literature and personal experience.</td>
<td>Uses references to literature, readings, or personal experience to support comments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etiquette, Clarity, &amp; Mechanics</td>
<td>Posts long, unorganized, or rude content that may contain multiple errors or may be appropriate.</td>
<td>Communicates courteously but with occasional lack of clarity and/or some errors mechanics.</td>
<td>Communicates clearly and collegially with only minor mechanics errors.</td>
<td>Postings are collegial, clear, concise, and free of mechanics errors.</td>
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