

REFERENCE AND INFORMATION SERVICES

Course Description

Covers reference services, searching, and sources. Introduces reference concepts and services, such as the reference interview, customer service, evaluating the reference collection, management, ethics, reference philosophy, service in different institutional settings and for diverse populations, and the assessment of reference services. Students learn how to search in digital and print sources, including full text information retrieval in subscription services and the freely available web. Students become familiar with over two hundred core, fundamental print and digital sources. Note: This is a core course for students who enter the program in Fall 2013 and thereafter.

Course Outcomes

Building on the SLIS [program learning outcomes](#), students in this course will further:

- Be familiar with and know how to use a wide variety of information sources.
- Evaluate information sources on the basis of authority scope, audience, etc. and thus assess their suitability for answering individual reference questions, demonstrated through an annotated bibliography and sample reference questions.
- Develop an understanding of the basic principles of database and online searching.
- Understand and be able to discuss the major issues of importance to the reference service in a variety of library settings.

Required Text

Bopp & Smith. (2011). *Reference & Information Services: An Introduction*. Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited.

This text can be accessed in ebook format for free through the Beatley Library:

<<http://ezproxy.simmons.edu:2048/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=401189&site=ehost-live&scope=site>>

Recommended Text

Bell, S. S. (2012). *Librarian's Guide to Online Searching*. Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited.

TOPICAL OUTLINE AND READINGS

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS
Module One: Introduction & Overview			
9/14	History & Definitions Reference Models	Review Syllabus Chapters 1 & 11 in <i>Reference & Information Services</i> RUSA, Behavioral Guidelines RUSA, Professional Competencies	

9/21	Reference Interview Reader's Advisory	<p>Chapter 3 in <i>Reference & Information Services</i></p> <p>Dewdney, P. & Michell, G.B. (1996). Oranges and peaches: Understanding communication accidents in the reference interview. <i>RQ</i> 35(4), 520-</p> <p>Ross, C. S. & Chelton, M. K. (2001). Reader's advisory: Matching mood and material. <i>Library Journal</i>, 126(2), 52-56.</p> <p>Taylor, R.S. (1967). Question-negotiation and information seeking in libraries. <i>College & Research Libraries</i> 76(3), 251.</p> <p>Jimerson, R. C. (2003). Reference, access, and use. <i>OCLC Systems & Services</i>, 19(1), 13-16.</p> <p>Duff, W., Yakel, E., & Tibbo, H. (2013). Archival reference knowledge. <i>American Archivist</i> 76(1), 68-94.</p> <p>Suggested:</p> <p>Bolick, J. (2015). Librarian, literature, and locality: Addressing language barriers through readers' advisory. <i>North Carolina Libraries (Online)</i>, 73(1), 2-11.</p> <p>Forsythe, E. (2010). From Assassin's Creed 2 to the Five Greatest Warriors: Games and reading. <i>APLIS</i> 23(3), 117-128.</p> <p>Williamson, T.B. (2011). Materials match-making: Articulating whole library advisory. <i>Reference & User Services Quarterly</i> 50(3), 230-234.</p> <p>Partlo, K. (2009/2010). The pedagogical data reference interview. <i>IASSIST Quarterly</i> 33/34(4/1): 6-10</p> <p>Woroniak, M., & Tarulli, L. (2014). "The danger of a single story." <i>Reference & User Services Quarterly</i> 54(1), 20-23.</p> <p>Gross, M. & Saxton, M.L. (2011).</p>	<p>Reading Reflection: Online Discussion</p>
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		Who wants to know? Imposed queries in the public library. <i>Public Libraries</i> , 40, 170.	
Working with Information			
9/28	Evaluating Information Information Literacy Introduction Guest Speaker: Jes Caron	Chapter 13 in <i>Reference & Information Services</i> Bell, Chapter 11 in <i>Librarian's Guide to Online Searching</i> <i>ACRL Information Literacy Frameworks</i>	Reading Reflection: Online Discussion
10/5	Information Seeking & Search Basics	Chapter 4, 6 in <i>Reference & Information Services</i> Bates, M. (2005). Berry picking. In Fisher, K., Erdelez, S. & McKechnie, L. E. F. (eds) <i>Theories of Information Behavior</i> Kuhlthau C. C. (2005). Kuhlthau's Information Search Process. In Fisher, K., Erdelez, S. & McKechnie, L. E. F. (eds) <i>Theories of Information Behavior</i> Chapters 1, 3 & 10 in <i>Librarian's Guide to Online Searching</i>	Sample Annotations
10/12	Columbus Day Holiday		
10/19	Ready Reference Sources Guides to People & Places	Chapters 15, 17 & 18 in <i>Reference & Information Services</i> Chapters 14, 16, & 19 in <i>Reference & Information Services</i>	
10/26	Guides to Collections & Resources	Chapters 5, 20 & 21 in <i>Reference & Information Services</i> Review Chapter 13 in <i>Reference & Information Services</i>	Sample Questions One
11/2	Specialized Sources: Business, Legal, & Health, Data Sets Social Media and Reference	Chapter 22 in <i>Reference & Information Services</i> Chapter 9 in Cassell & Hiremath's <i>Reference & Information Services in the 21st Century</i> (available online full-text :) Bridges, L.M. (2012). Librarian as	

		<p>professor of social media literacy. <i>Journal of Library Innovation</i> 3(1), 48-65.</p> <p>Jacobson, T.E., & Mackey, T.P. (2013). Proposing a metaliteracy model to redefine information literacy. <i>Communications in Information Literacy</i> 7(2), 84-91.</p> <p>Scardilli, B. (2014). Avoiding the unauthorized practice of law. <i>Information Today</i> 31(8), 1-25</p>	
Working with People			
11/9	<p>Instruction</p> <p>Information Literacy Review</p>	<p>Chapter 8 in <i>Reference & Information Services</i></p> <p>Chapter 12 in <i>Librarian's Guide to Online Searching</i></p> <p>Yakel, E. & Torres, D. (2003). AI: Archival intelligence and user expertise. <i>American Archivist</i>, 66(1), 51-78.</p> <p>Yakel, E. (2002). Listening to users. <i>Archival Issues</i>, 26(2), 111-27.</p>	Reference Interview
11/16	<p>Patrons & Services</p> <p>Working with Diverse Populations</p> <p>“Problem” Patrons & “Difficult Customers”</p>	<p>Chapter 12 in <i>Reference & Information Services</i></p> <p>Ferrell, S. (2010). Who says there's a problem? A new way to approach the issue of “problem patrons.” <i>Reference & User Services Quarterly</i> 50(2), 141-151.</p> <p>Thompson, S. H. (2009). Pixilated problem patrons: Or, the trials of working virtual reference and what we've learned from it. <i>Reference Librarian</i> 50(3), 291-296.</p> <p>O'Donnell, F. (2000). Reference service in academic archives. <i>The Journal of Academic Librarianship</i>, 26(2), 110-119.</p>	Sample Questions Two
11/23	Ethics	<p>Chapter 2 in <i>Reference & Information Services</i></p> <p>Dewdney, P., & Michell, G.B. (1997). Asking why questions in the reference interview: A theoretical justification.</p>	Reading Reflection: Online Discussion

		<p><i>Library Quarterly</i> 67, 50-72.</p> <p>Luyt, B. (2001). Regulating readers: The social origins of the reader's advisory in the United States. <i>The Library Quarterly</i> 71(4), 443-466.</p> <p>Schachaf, P., Oltmann, S.M., & Horowitz, S.M. (2008). Service equality in virtual reference. <i>Journal of the American Society for Information Science & Technology</i>, 59(4), 535-550.</p> <p>Jimerson, R. C. (2006). Ethical concerns for archivists. <i>Public Historian</i> 28(1), 87-92.</p> <p>ALA's Code of Ethics SAA's Code of Ethics</p>	
11/30	<p>Managing Reference Services</p> <p>Collection Development Assessment & Evaluation Managing People and Services</p>	<p>Chapter 7, 9, 10 in <i>Reference & Information Services</i></p> <p>Francis, M. (2012). Weeding the reference collection: A case study of collection management. <i>The Reference Librarian</i> 53(2), 219-234.</p> <p>Ress, S. (2015). Special Collections: Improving Access and Usability. <i>Reference Librarian</i>, 56(1), 52-58.</p> <p>Tyckoson, D. d. (2012). Issues and Trends in the Management of Reference Services: A Historical Perspective. <i>Journal Of Library Administration</i>, 52(6/7), 581-600.</p>	Ethics Reflection
12/7	Instruction Sessions		
Wrap-Up			
12/14	<p>Future of Reference</p> <p>Wrap-up</p>	<p>Kern, K. M. (2014). Continuity and change, or, will I ever be ready for what comes next? <i>Reference & User Services Quarterly</i> 53(4), 282-285.</p> <p>O'Gorman, J. & Trott, B. (2009). What will become of reference in academic and public libraries? <i>Journal of Library Administration</i> 49(3), 327-339.</p> <p>Murray, K. (2010). The future of archival reference: Services, technology and trends. <i>Journal of the Society for North Carolina Archivists</i></p>	<p>Research Guides</p> <p>Final Quiz</p>

Grading Chart

Score	Grade
96-100	A
91-95	A-
86-90	B+
81-85	B
76-80	B-
71-75	C+
66-70	C
61-65	C-
Below 60	F

Meaning of Grades

B grade means that the work handed in is satisfactory and meets the requirements of the assignment. **B+** means that you have done more than meet the minimum requirements. An **A** grade means that the assignment is excellent. Anything below a **B** means that there were problems with the assignment meeting the minimum requirements.

Assignments

Please note that written presentation will have an impact of the grade for the written papers. It is imperative that all papers be well written.

Late Policy

All assignments are to be turned in on time. Late submissions are strongly discouraged. If late submission is unavoidable, arrangements should be made with me **in advance**. Without prior arrangement, late assignments will lose one point per day.

SOURCE EVALUATIONS

Part of class participation grade & basis for Final Quiz

Purpose & Goals:

Through this exercise, students will become familiar with a wide range of reference source types and titles. Part of the purpose of this course is to learn not just individual sources such as the Oxford English Dictionary, but also to gain a better understanding of how types of resources (indexes, databases, dictionaries, etc.) function, and when, where, and how best to use them. This exercise will also give students experience at evaluating a wide range of sources and developing thorough, succinct, evaluative annotations. Such annotations are an important way for librarians to communicate the value and use of a source to each other and to patrons. Learning outcomes for this assignment are to:

1. Explore and critically evaluate a wide range of information sources
2. Develop critical annotations for resources

Guidelines:

I have created a list of representative reference sources, available on the Source Evaluation section of the class wiki http://gslis.simmons.edu/wikis/saunders/Main_Page (click on Reference Sources by type). Throughout the

semester, we will work together to review and annotate each source on this list using criteria discussed in class. These resources will form the basis for the final quiz (described below). Each student is responsible for contributing at least two reviews to the wiki. There are two ways that you can do this:

1. Provide an annotation for the two sources already on the list, and sign them so I'll know they are yours.
2. Submit a new source for the list—add a “favorite” reference source that is not already on the list. Add it to the appropriate sub-section of the wiki, along with an annotation, and sign it so I'll know it's yours.

Although each student only needs to contribute two annotations, we are all responsible for becoming familiar with the whole list. The final quiz will be a multiple choice test, in which I will describe 20-25 resources from the list, and you will need to identify the title of the source.

Learning to evaluate information sources for quality and usefulness is an important skill for reference librarians. In addition, librarians need to be able to write concise yet thorough reviews of information resources that patrons and other librarians can use to determine whether a source is likely to have the information they need, or is something they would want to buy for their collection. This assignment will give you practice in each of these skills, as well as helping you to become familiar with a selected set of reference sources.

CLASS PARTICIPATION

10%

Regular attendance and class participation through thoughtful contributions to class discussions is an important part of the learning process and of your total grade.

Reading Reflections

As part of your class participation grade, each week you will post a brief reaction/reflection on any of that week's readings to the online discussion board. Each student must make at least one post each week—it can be an original post OR a substantive response to a peer's post (a substantive response is more than just a simple agreement, but moves the conversation forward by adding new content/reflections/questions). The posts must be made BEFORE class begins each week.

SAMPLE ANNOTATIONS

5%

Purpose and Goals:

Evaluating information sources is a critical part of reference, as is writing effective reviews and annotations of resources. Librarians rely on annotations and reviews to inform collection development decisions, and many librarians write reviews for trade publications like *Library Journal* and *Choice*. Librarians also write annotations and reviews for patrons, often including them in research guides. The purpose of this assignment is to practice writing succinct yet thorough evaluative reviews of information sources. This assignment will also prepare students for the annotations that are part of the Research Guide assignment. Learning outcomes for this assignment are to:

- Apply professional standards to evaluate information sources
- Write clear, concise, original annotations

Guidelines:

Students will choose one reference resource to review. Students must provide 2 annotations of the same source. The first annotation must be NO MORE than 300 words (excluding full citation in APA format). The second annotation must be NO MORE than 100 words (excluding full citation in APA format).

ETHICS REFLECTION ASSIGNMENT

10%

Purpose and Goals:

Ethics are an important part of every service in every information setting, and the SLIS faculty are committed to preparing students for ethical practice. Reference librarians interact directly with patrons on a regular basis, and those interactions can shape the patron's experience with information and affect their understanding, access, and use, making ethics in reference especially important. The purpose of this

assignment is to explore and apply ethical standards to reference-specific situations. Learning outcomes for this assignment are to:

1. Critically assess reference scenarios from an ethical perspective
2. Apply ethical codes and professional standards to respond to scenarios

Guidelines:

Students will be provided with a brief scenario describing a reference question/transaction (i.e. a child asks for a book with sexually explicit content, an adult demands a particular resource be removed from the collection, etc.) Each student should respond to the scenario within the context of the type of library they plan to work in – all SLTP students should frame the scenario as though it is taking place in a school library/media setting. In response to the provided scenario, the student must explain how they would handle the situation, with attention to the following areas:

- Considering class readings, discussions, and review of ethical standards, how would you respond to the described scenario? Provide a thorough explanation your how you would respond, and why you would respond in this way.
- What might be the potential ramifications of your response (what kind of reactions/complaints might you anticipate from the patron, the patron’s family, the community, board of trustees, your colleagues, etc.)?
- What kind of guidance is provided by our professional associations related to the scenario? Which specific ethical codes or values relate to this scenario? Do you agree with the stance taken by the professional associations on this issue? Why or why not?
- Are there any relevant legal policies that might inform your decision? What are they and how would they apply in this case?

REFERENCE INTERVIEWS REFLECTION

15%

Purpose and Goals:

The reference interview is a core aspect of reference services. The purpose of this assignment is to give students practical experience in conducting a reference interview and answering a patron’s questions in at least two different formats. Learning outcomes for this assignment are:

1. Apply professional standards and best practices in carrying out a reference interview, including clarifying and answering a patron’s question.
2. Practice the reference interview in at least two different formats
3. Reflect on and analyze the experience

Guidelines:

- 1) Find a friend, colleague, classmate, or family member willing to participate in an in-person or telephone reference interview. Have them think about a topic they are interested in- professionally, personally, etc.- and would like to know more about. Try to be sure that they have a topic with some breadth, and not a simple fact-finding question. Using techniques discussed in class, conduct a reference interview with them.
- 2) Pair up with a classmate to conduct a virtual reference transaction. This transaction will take place using an instant-messaging service of your choice. If you and your partner already have services, you may conduct your interview using the existing service. Alternately, the SLIS Tech Lab offers several IM platforms. Plan a time to “meet” and take turns as patron and reference librarian. Each person should have a turn as the patron asking the question, and as the reference librarian conducting the interview and answering the question to the best of their ability.
- 3) Prepare a brief (4-5 page) overview and analysis of your interviews.
 - a. Begin with an overview of each transaction- what question was asked, how did you clarify the question, etc. (if possible, attach a transcript of the virtual/IM transaction)-- offer enough detail to give a clear picture of how the interview proceeded.
 - b. Analyze the interaction and offer observations—what did you do well? What might you

have done differently next time? Was there anything particularly difficult, challenging, surprising, etc.?

- c. Compare and contrast your experience with each method and your observations on advantages and difficulties with each.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS ONE & TWO

10% each

Purpose and Goals:

The purpose of this assignment is to give students practical experience in searching different information sources, compiling resources, and answering various types of reference questions. Learning outcomes for this assignment are:

1. Select and search authoritative and relevant information sources using efficient and effective search strategies
2. Analyze and answer sample questions accurately and completely

Guidelines:

Assignments are posted on the class web site. Each assignment consists of 10 questions to be answered using authoritative and reliable sources. For each answer, cite the source in APA format, give a complete answer, and **briefly** describe your search process.

INSTRUCTION SESSION

10%

Purpose and Goals:

Instruction is an increasingly important aspect of reference services, in many cases involving more than half of a reference librarian's time. The purpose of this assignments is to introduce students to user instruction and information literacy. Learning outcomes for this assignment are:

1. Design and deliver an audience-appropriate instruction module
2. Teach to specific learning goal(s)

Guidelines:

Select a topic (e.g., using Boolean operators, searching a particular database, evaluating Web sites, etc.) and design brief (2-5 minute) instruction session on the topic. You can do this in any format that is comfortable to you: a "live" session; a podcast, a screencast using software like Jing; Camtasia, VoiceThread, etc; or even create a static guide document (for an example, see some of the SLIS Technology guides). All sessions must include: Learning goals and a brief description of the intended audience.

RESEARCH GUIDE

25%

Purpose and Goals:

This assignment brings together several aspects of the course and the reference service in general, including designing and creating tools/services/learning objects; selecting, evaluating, and analyzing information sources; understanding audiences; and annotating/reviewing information sources. Learning outcomes for this assignment are:

1. Create an audience-appropriate research guide by identifying, selecting, evaluating, relevant resources
2. Apply professional standards and best practices in designing and organizing a research guide
3. Write professional-level evaluative annotations
4. Explore the LibGuide software

Guidelines:

Students will create a research guide on a topic of their choice, geared toward a specific audience. In some cases, people find it easier to begin with a topic that they are interested in, and then find a library/archives/audience that would benefit from a pathfinder on that topic. In other cases, students have chosen a library/archives that they like or have a connection to, and then developed a topic that would benefit a particular community within that setting. *If possible*, interview a reference librarian(s) to learn more about their collection, patron groups, user needs. Based

on real or perceived needs, choose an audience and a topic for your guide using LibGuide software.

Research Guide

Begin with an intro covering:

- The institution this research guide is for: public/academic/school/archives/other. Give a brief description of the institution you chose: How large is it in terms of collections, staff, patron community? Describe the *general* community that makes up its user base.
- Define the *specific* audience for your pathfinder- who is this pathfinder for? What are the characteristics of this group, how large a population is it, what are their specific needs with regard to this topic?
- Explain your topic and define the specific scope of your work.

The body of the research guide should consist of:

- 20-25 reference resources on your topic, appropriate to your intended audience, and composed of **thorough yet concise evaluative annotations** for each. All annotations should be original and in the students' own words.
- Organization is important—what is the best way to arrange your materials for this topic and for this audience? Is it a chronological look at the development/history of the topic? Subject/topical arrangement? Format of the resources? Choose an organizational scheme that makes sense.
- Cite all sources in APA format

Conclude with:

- **Wikipedia Edit:** Find a wikipedia entry related to the topic of your annotated bibliography and edit it to include some new information and a reference to one of the sources from your bibliography. Provide a printout/scenshot of the entry pre and post edit, with changes highlighted.
- A **Further Research/Next Steps** section: this should include some brief notes to the patron suggesting some methods to continue research on their own. This could include any additional resources they might want to follow up on (these do not need to be annotated), suggested keywords and subject headings, special collections, etc.

FINAL QUIZ

5%

Purpose & Goals:

The final quiz will review students familiarity with the information source types and titles reviewed throughout the semester.

Guidelines:

An open- notebook test based on the annotations of the sources listed under the Source Evaluation section of the wiki. The test will consist of 20 multiple choice questions—each question will describe one of the resources from the Source Evaluation site. Students must select the best match from the answers provided. The test will be available in Moodle for 3 days. Students can take the test as many times as they want during those 3 days, and the highest score will be recorded.

Late Policy

All assignments are to be turned in on time. Late submissions are strongly discouraged. If late submission is unavoidable, arrangements should be made with me **in advance**. Without prior arrangement, late assignments will lose one point per day.

Honor Code

Simmons GSLIS expects each of its students to uphold the Honor System (<http://internal.simmons.edu/students/slis/current/honor-code>) and does not tolerate academic or scholastic

dishonesty, such as plagiarism, cheating, or academic fraud. Penalties range from failure on the assignment, failure in the course, or dismissal from the program.

Definition of plagiarism: Intentionally or unintentionally using someone else's words, works, thoughts, or expression of ideas without giving proper credit. When a source is not cited, it is assumed that the words, works, thoughts, or ideas are the sole product of the author, i.e., the student. Plagiarism includes handing in as one's own work a paper on which a student has received extensive aid in substance and/or structure without acknowledging that help, as well as using one paper for more than one course without authorization to do so. Material used from outside readings, references, or the like, must be noted using footnotes, endnotes, or whatever notation devices are appropriate for the field of study. Direct quotations must be differentiated from text using quotation marks or by indenting or single spacing.

Academic Support

If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, it is your responsibility to register with the Disability Services office as soon as possible to ensure that requested accommodations may be implemented in a timely fashion. For more information or to request academic accommodations, contact the Disability Services Office located in Room E-108 of the Main College Building. They are available by phone at [617-521-2474](tel:617-521-2474) or you may email Tim Rogers at timothy.Rogers@simmons.edu.

Title IX and the Simmons College Gender-Based Misconduct Policy

Title IX Federal law states that all students have the right to gain an education free of gender-based discrimination. Some examples of gender-based discrimination, as defined by this law include sexual harassment or exploitation, sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, and stalking. In compliance with Title IX, Simmons College has a 'Gender-Based Misconduct Policy' which defines these forms of misconduct, outlines College protocol and procedures for investigating and addressing incidences of gender-based discrimination, highlights interim safety measures, and identifies both on and off-campus resources.

Simmons College encourages all community members to report incidences of gender-based misconduct. If you or someone you know in our campus community would like to receive support or report an incident of gender-based discrimination, please contact any of the following:

Simmons College Title IX Coordinator, Regina Sherwood (for faculty/staff concerns):

Office Location: THCS Office, Room C-210 / Phone Number: (617) 521-2082

Simmons College Deputy Title IX Coordinator, Sarah Neill (for student concerns):

Office Location: Provost's Suite, in room C-219 / Phone Number: (617) 521-212

Associate Dean of Student Life and Title IX Representative, Raymond Ou:

Office Location: Student Life in room C-211 / Phone Number: (617) 521-2125

Coordinator of Simmons Violence Prevention and Educational Outreach Program, Gina Capra:

Office Location: Room W-003 / Phone Number: (617) 521-2118

Simmons College Public Safety

Office Location: Lobby of the Palace Road Building

Phone Number: (617) 521-1111 (emergency) or (617) 521-2112 (non-emergency)

Additionally, the Gender-Based Misconduct Policy has a **Consensual Relationships clause** that prohibits intimate, romantic or sexual relationships between students, faculty, staff, contract employees of the College, teacher's assistants, and supervisors at internship/field placement sites.

To view the full Simmons College Gender-Based Misconduct Policy, please go to:

<https://internal.simmons.edu/students/general-information/title-ix/gender-based-misconduct-policy-for-students-faculty-staff-and-visitors>