

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			
1/21- 1/27	History & Definitions Reference Models	Review Syllabus Chapters 1 & 11 in <i>Reference & Information Services</i>	Post Introductions & Expectations Group Discussion
1/28- 2/3	Reference Interview Reader's Advisory	Chapter 3 in <i>Reference & Information Services</i>	Reader's Advisory Discussion

		<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>Yakel, E. (2002). Listening to users. <i>Archival Issues</i>, 26(2), 111-27.</p> <p>Jimerson, R. C. (2003). Archives & manuscripts: Reference, access, and use. <i>OCLC Systems & Services</i>, 19(1), 13-16.</p> <p>RUSA, Behavioral Guidelines</p> <p>RUSA, Professional Competencies</p>	
Working with Information			
2/4-2/10	Evaluating Information	<p>Bell, Chapter 11 in <i>Librarian's Guide to Online Searching</i></p> <p>Chapter 13 in <i>Reference & Information Services</i></p>	Evaluating Resources Discussion
2/11-2/17	Ready Reference Sources	Chapters 15, 17 & 18 in <i>Reference & Information Services</i>	Reference Question Warm-up Discussion
2/18-2/24	<p>Guides to Collections & Resources</p> <p>Collection Development</p>	<p>Chapters 20 & 21 in <i>Reference & Information Services</i></p> <p>Review Chapter 13 in <i>Reference & Information Services</i></p>	Reference Question Warm-up Discussion 2
2/25-3/3	Guides to People & Places	Chapters 14, 16, & 19 in <i>Reference & Information Services</i>	Sample Questions One
3/4-3/17 (this includes Spring Break)	Information Seeking & Search Basics	<p>Bates, M. (2005). Berrypicking. In Fisher, K., Erdelez, S. & McKechnie, L. E. F. (eds) <i>Theories of Information Behavior</i></p> <p>Kuhlthua C. C. (2005). Kuhlthau's Information Search Process. In Fisher, K., Erdelez, S. & McKechnie, L. E. F. (eds) <i>Theories of Information Behavior</i></p>	Seeking & Searching Discussion
3/18-3/24	Advanced & Expert	Chapters 1, 3 & 10 in <i>Librarian's Guide to Online Searching</i>	Search Activity & Discussion
3/25-3/31	<p>Specialized Sources: Business, Legal, & Health, Data Sets</p> <p>Information Literacy III</p> <p>Other Literacies (Financial, Health, etc)</p>	<p>Chapter 22 in <i>Reference & Information Services</i></p> <p>Chapter 9 in Cassell & Hiremath's <i>Reference & Information Services in the 21st Century</i> (available online full-text:)</p>	Sample Questions Two
Working with People			

4/1-4/7	Reference Interview Cont'd Target Populations	Chapter 12 in <i>Reference & Information Services</i> Gross, M. (1995). The imposed query. <i>RQ</i> , 35, 236-243. O'Donnell, F. (2000). Reference service in academic archives. <i>The Journal of Academic Librarianship</i> , 26(2), 110-119. Partlo, K. (2009/2010). The pedagogical data reference interview. <i>IASSIST Quarterly</i> 33/34(4/1): 6-10.	Reference Interview Discussion & Survey
4/8-4/14	Ethics	Chapter 2 in <i>Reference & Information Services</i> Jimerson, R. C. (2006). Ethical concerns for archivists. <i>Public Historian</i> 28(1), 87-92. ALA's Code of Ethics SAA's Code of Ethics	Ethics Reflection Discussion
4/15-4/21	Information Literacy & Instruction	ACRL <i>Information Literacy Competency Standards</i> Chapter 8 in <i>Reference & Information Services</i> Chapter 12 in <i>Librarian's Guide to Online Searching</i> Yakel, E. & Torres, D. (2003). AI: Archival intelligence and user expertise. <i>American Archivist</i> , 66(1), 51-78.	No discussion this week—work on instruction modules
4/22-4/28	Instruction Cont'd Future of Reference		Instruction Modules & Feedback
Wrap-Up			
5/4			Pathfinders Final Exam

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. To view the grading system at GSLIS, go to: <http://my.simmons.edu/gslis/resources/forms/policies/shtml#grades>

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

Ungraded, basis for Final Quiz

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.

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 and Weekly Discussions

30 points total

Class participation through regular, thoughtful contributions to class discussions is an important part of the learning process and of your total grade. For each discussion, you are expected to offer one substantive post, as well as responses to **at least two of your peer's posts**. Remember that response posts should include meaningful content, not just agreement. For more information on what constitutes a good discussion post, see the "Crafting a Meaningful Discussion Post" section in the course materials folder on Moodle.

Ethics Reflection Assignment (part of weekly discussion)

5 points

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:

- How would you respond to the patron's demand/request? Why?
- What might be the potential ramifications of your response?
- Imagine the patron goes "up the chain of command." How would you justify your decision to a library director/school board/board of trustees?
- Are there any relevant legal policies that might inform your decision? What are they and how would they apply in this case?
- How might the ALA Code of Ethics and/or the code of ethics from another relevant library/archives association enter into your decision?

Respond to **at least two** of your peer's posts.

Reference Interviews Reflection & Survey (part of weekly discussion)

10 points

- 1) You will be paired up with a Simmons student who is completing a research project. Your job is to conduct a reference interview in any format that works for both of you (in person, by phone, by email, through a chat platform, Skype, Google Hangouts, etc.) and assist them to the best of your ability with their information needs using the reference interview techniques and the information sources discussed in class. Contact the student early in the semester to arrange a time for your reference consultation. You must interact with the student at least once before the assignment is due, but you may meet more than once if you would like.
- 2) Complete the reference interview survey that is linked from the Moodle assignment page. Afterwards, post a brief reflection of your experiences to your Moodle discussion group. If you do a chat interview, include a transcript if possible. You might offer your observations on advantages and difficulties with each, and/or note what you learned from this assignment (it is okay if your post duplicates your answers from the survey). Respond **to at least two** of your peer's posts. Grade will be based on: quality of interview, quality of answer, adherence to behavioral/customer service guidelines.

Sample Questions One & Two (assignments handed in separately)

10 points each

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 Module (part of weekly discussion)

10 points

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: you could videotape yourself conducting a "live" session; do 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 GSLIS Technology guides). Post your session to your group discussions, and with it include a very brief introduction which includes:

- Learning outcomes
- Intended audience
- Brief rationale (why this topic is important to this audience)

Once you've posted your own session, review your group members' sessions and offer feedback on **at least two** of them.

Pathfinder

20 points

Choose a **real** library for which you will create an online pathfinder for one of their patron groups. 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. You may create the guide using any format you want—wiki, web page, LibGuide, etc. Keep in mind that for your grade the overall design of the pathfinder will be considered as well as the content. The GSLIS Tech Lab can assist you in setting up any of these formats and students have access to software/server space necessary for any of these.

Pathfinder

Create an online pathfinder

Begin with an intro covering:

- The institution this pathfinder 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 pathfinder 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.
- 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/screenshots 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 points

An open- notebook test based on the annotations of the sources listed under the Source Evaluation section of the wiki.

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 and Academic Support

Simmons GSLIS expects each of its students to uphold the Honor System (<http://my.simmons.edu/gslis/resources/student-info/honor-code.shtml>) 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 knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise; failure to attribute any of the following: quotations, paraphrases, or borrowed information from print sources or websites; buying completed papers from others to use as one's own work.

Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with documented physical, sensory, systemic, cognitive, learning, and psychiatric disabilities. If you have a disability and anticipate that you will need a reasonable accommodation in this class, it is important that you contact the Disability Services Office located in the Main College Building Room E108, or via phone at (617)521-2474, early in the semester. See also the web page at <http://my.simmons.edu/academics/caa/> for a list of contacts. Students with disabilities are also encouraged to contact their instructors.

Readings

FOR SLTP STUDENTS ONLY

FOR SLTP Students ONLY

Copying of Student Products

Unless the student indicates otherwise by E-mail to the instructor, the instructor will be collecting copies of student work for use in the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education accreditation process. Student names will be removed from the student work prior to use.

Field-based Course Work for LIS 407 Reference/Information Services

As a part of LIS 407 Reference/Information Services, the student will complete a public school based observation and project in reference/information services in conjunction with a public school library teacher. The field-based course work for LIS 407 Reference/Information Services consists of twenty-five (25) clock hours of directed observational work and the completion of a report in a school library. Observation time in a school library is to be verified by the signature of the library teacher with whom you will work on the appropriate form which the student will supply at the time of his/her final visit. The form is to be word processed. The completed report for the LIS 407 requirement is to be submitted to the instructor of LIS 407 on the appropriate form which is entitled LIS 407 Field-based Work Monitoring Form for School Library Teacher Licensure Report with the report (the requirements of which are outlined below) stapled to it. All appropriate signatures must be obtained. This form can be found at the SLTP eLearning site. The completed report and form which are to be stapled together are first to be

submitted to the student's professor for course credit and then they are to be given to the Director of the School Library Teacher Program. Failure to complete the twenty-five hours of pre-practicum field-based course work by the conclusion of the course will result in a grade of incomplete for LIS 407.

Directions for LIS 407 Observational Report

Call ahead and make an appointment with the school library teacher to visit the reference section of a large high school library. Make sure you visit when the school library teacher is present. During your visit look over the environment, both physical and virtual, and make observations. Watch some reference interactions, look over the collection, and scan any materials that are available such as brochures, pathfinders, subject guides, etc. Ask to take one of each of these documents to use as a part of your field-based report (You can put them in the Appendix and refer to them in the body of the report). Talk to the school library teacher and ask any questions that you might have. Then, analyze one aspect of the reference collection. For example, how much material is available for science reference for grades 9 to 12? What is, in your opinion, the quality of the collection? What is the approximate age of the science reference collection? Do they have sufficient reference material both in print and non-print? To what electronic databases do they subscribe? Do these electronic databases provide a wide range of scientific resources? What print and non-print materials would you recommend they purchase? (Provide a list of recommended purchases. You will submit this list to the instructor with your field based report. You will refer to the list as a part of the report but the list will be in the Appendix.)

Please write a minimum of a five page report that answers the following questions:

1. How is the reference area organized?
2. How easy or difficult is it to find information on your own?
3. What type of signage and handouts are available?
4. Where is the reference area located with regard to the rest of the library materials and services?
5. What is the physical layout of the library?
6. What are the scope of the services and collection available in this reference section? What online services are available such as digital reference, online tutorials, virtual tours, etc.? Has the library teacher created any online tutorials for the students and teachers himself/herself possibly using Screencast or a similar software tool? Are these tutorials useful? How could they be improved?
7. What web sites do they direct the students to? How do they direct the students to them? Please recommend at least five excellent web sites in the subject area that you have chosen that the school library is not already directing students to?
8. Speak to the library teacher at a time that is convenient for him/her and find out a little about the school community including demographics, the types of services he/she is asked to provide, the types of projects he/she collaborates on with the teachers, how he/she teaches the students to use online databases and print resources. What are the major challenges he/she faces in providing adequate

reference services to the school community which he/she serves? Please document in this section what you have learned from this conversation with the library teacher.

9. Conclude your paper with your own impressions about your visit. What recommendations would you make to improve the reference services offered in this school library? What did you learn about reference services in a high school library? How has this visit affected your ideas about reference services in the library in which you will be the library teacher?

Provide the name and address of the school library that you visited.

Complete the paper and the LIS 407 Field-based Work Monitoring Form, staple the paper along with the Appendix to the LIS 407 monitoring form, and submit the completed package first to your LIS 407 instructor in fulfillment of the course requirement and then it is to be given to the Director of the School Library Teacher Program to satisfy licensure requirements. Failure to complete the 25 hours of pre-practicum field-based course work by the conclusion of the course will result in a grade of incomplete for LIS 407.

The latest field work monitoring forms are available on the eLearning site.

Ethics Reflection Assignment

Supports DESE standard 7.06 (h): *Ethical issues affecting library media services*

Assignment

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