

**University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
School of Information and Library Science**

**INLS 501-002: Information Resources and Services¹
Fall 2013 Syllabus**

Course website: <https://sakai.unc.edu/>

I) Course and Instructor Information

Meeting time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30-10:45

Meeting location: Manning Hall 304

Course credits: 3

Course prerequisites: none

Instructor: Alex Poole

Instructor position: PhD student

Instructor office: PhDungeon

Office hours: Tuesdays 10:45-11:45 and by appointment

Instructor email: poole.alex@gmail.com (please allow at least a 24-hour turnaround)

II) Course description

A combination of lecture, discussion, and activity, this course provides students with an overview of the analysis, use, and evaluation of information resources, services, and systems. It covers the following topics in varying levels of depth: the reference function and the role of libraries; the history and future of reference service; instructional services, basic database searching, major categories of information and referral tools, including dictionaries, encyclopedias, directories, geographical materials, and other ready-reference tools; and reference interviews and consultations.

III) Course objectives

- Understand the position of reference in the larger LIS landscape
- Comprehend public service functions in information agencies
- Understand the characteristics and functions of reference services, reference sources, and reference work across a variety of media
- Use, compare, and evaluate a variety of reference sources and services
- Understand the steps of the reference transaction and the role of the reference interview
- Grapple with issues surrounding specific user populations, ethics, and censorship
- Discern the role of instruction and other forms of information provision in reference services
- Develop standards of judgment for evaluating and selecting materials to support a user-oriented service
- Learn basic electronic database searching skills
- Create a reference resource

¹ This syllabus owes a great deal to Dr. Claudia Gollop, Dr. Jeffrey Pomerantz, Emily Vardell, Amber Cushing, and Sarah Stokes.

The objectives of the course will be achieved through lectures, class discussion, presentations, assigned and suggested readings; examination of key information tools and sources; team project activities; class visits; and guest speakers.

IV) Course readings:

This course does not use a textbook; rather, it relies heavily upon journal articles. These are available through Sakai "Resources." URLs will be given should a resource be available online.

Useful supplementary resources include:

- Bopp, Richard E. and Linda C. Smith. (2011). *Reference and Information Services: An Introduction*, 4th ed. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited.
- Katz, William A. (2002). *Introduction to Reference Work, Volume I: Basic Information Sources*. 8th Ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Katz, William A. (2002). *Introduction to Reference Work, Volume II: Reference Services and Reference Processes*. 8th Ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Journals dedicated to reference:

- *Reference & User Services Quarterly* (RUSA's journal, formerly titled *RQ (Reference Quarterly)*)
- *Reference Services Review*
- *The Reference Librarian*

V) Course assignments and rubrics

Throughout the term, you will receive assignments designed to familiarize you with sources, search methodologies, and the foundations of reference service.

Please submit each written assignment through the course Sakai site AND to me in paper by the BEGINNING of the class on which it is due. Unless discussed with me beforehand, late assignments will be penalized 25% of the assignment's total number of points for each day they are late. If you have a question about your grade, please do not hesitate to contact me. That said, I reserve the right to raise or to lower your grade.

Please use the American Psychological Association (APA) citation style for citations in this course ([this online APA guide](#) is particularly helpful). For group work, please indicate the names of each contributor, but only submit one copy of the assignment per team. Team effort should be evident in all group work.

Special Needs and Students with Disabilities: If you need an accommodation for a disability or have any other special need, please make an appointment to discuss this with me early in the semester. My office hours and contact information are listed at the beginning of this syllabus.

*****I reserve the right to give brief pop quizzes based on the session's reading.**

1) Reference Desk Observation Report (due 29 August; 10% of final grade):

During our tour of Davis Library Reference, take notes about the reference environment. Think of questions such as the following: where is the reference desk is? Why do you think it is situated where it is? How is it configured? What objects are around it? What signage is available? Who is working there? How do you know who they are? What are those staffing the desk doing (or not doing)? Would a patron where and who to ask their reference question? How would you feel about approaching the desk to ask a question? Overall, what do you think the advantages and disadvantages are of Davis Reference's current model/setup? What would you keep the same? What would you change? Why?

Using evidence from your tour and from the two readings (RUSA's Guidelines for Behavioral Performance of Reference and Information Service Providers and RUSA's Definitions of Reference) to underpin your assertions, please write a two-page analysis of your observations about the reference desk at the Davis Library. In all likelihood you will need to return at least once to the library to complete your observations and to collect an appropriate amount of information. Please avoid mere description—connect that description to analysis and explanation.

2) Consultation Packet (due 15 October; 20% of final grade):

You will complete this project in pairs. Each pair will receive an authentic consultation query. The pairs will locate a variety of sources (books, databases, journals, etc.) that address/answer the questions or issues implicated in the query. More specifically, each pair will select and evaluate three to five sources relying on criteria described in the readings and discussed in class.

Each consultation packet will include an email response to the request. This email should be written using professional email standards (helpful guidelines can be found here https://www.training.nih.gov/writing_professional_e-mail). It should set forth the recommended steps for the patron, including database selection, search strategy suggestions, and opportunities for relevant database instruction at the library. Each packet should also include screenshots of the searches in the selected databases to depict their recommendations to the patron. Finally, please write an analysis of how the work was divided and how you came to your recommendations.

3) Database Group Presentations (groups assigned 12 September; groups submit selected database 26 September; groups submit presentation slides 4 November; group presentations will be held on 5 and 7 November; 25% of final grade)

Groups of four to five students with similar professional goals will present a subject database to the class (e.g., those interested in law librarianship will present a core law database). In fifteen minutes, each group will provide an overview of the database, describe why the database would be useful for education/research, explain the layout of the database, and perform a sample search for the class. Each group should be prepared to answer questions from other members of the class.

Each PowerPoint or Prezi presentation must be posted in Sakai no later than 4 November and must include a slide with an explanation of the contributions of each group member.

4) Final term project & presentation (ongoing; 30% of final grade)

You will build this assignment over the course of the term. For the term project, you will complete a subject resource that supports an academic course or unit (at UNC or at another educational institution). You may select any course subject you wish. I will meet with each student early in the term to discuss his or her chosen topic. As a Framework or model for this project, please review the Course Pages at UNC at:

<http://www.lib.unc.edu/coursepages/> These Course Pages provide the focus of the course and some of the resources useful to students enrolled in the respective class.

Subject-related resources are available on the UNC Library's Subject Guides page at:

<http://www.lib.unc.edu/guides/>

Course Page Final Project Assignment Pieces	Due Date	Points
Select a Subject – please include your reasoning for selecting it.	9/24	15
Introduction, Overview, and one Resource Assessment	10/3	25
Course Page Final Project Presentations (5 minutes for each student) – brief presentation on your topic, audience, and one to two highlights from your selected resources. Consider http://igniteshow.com/ as a model.	11/19 and 11/21	20
Course Page Final Project – must include one additional assessment of a related resource.	12/3	30
Course Page Reflection	12/12 (by noon)	10
		100

5) Class participation (15% of final grade)

Attendance is mandatory. Please arrive punctually to class and please be prepared to be an active and respectful participant during each class meeting. This depends not only on completing each reading before each class, but also on reflecting upon its most important themes and raising pertinent questions and engaging in respectful and informed dialogue with other members of the class. This is a three credit hour course, so please expect to spend six to nine hours each week on the course—notwithstanding class time.

Do not hesitate to speak out positively if in disagreement with instructor or peers or guest speakers; this course pivots around discussion, not lecture.

You are welcome to bring a computer to class to assist in the learning process. It should be used for taking notes, for supplementing lectures, for conducting research required for class activities, and for other specific classroom tasks. In short, please use your laptop solely for professional behavior. Please avoid any off-task activities such as social networking sites; such off-task behavior will be penalized. In this vein, some parts of class will be conducted specifically with a “laptop screens down” request.

The rubric below sets out the criteria for the evaluation of participation in this course. It applies both to individual and to group work. Active, engaged participation is critical for success in the classroom.

Class participation rubric (adapted from the University of Pittsburgh's LIS course, Archives & Records Management):

	Strong	Needs development	Unsatisfactory
Preparation	Arrives with notes, observations, and questions.	Sometimes arrives unprepared.	Shows little if any indication of having prepared for class or having read the assigned materials.
Listening	Actively supports, listens, and engages.	Shows effort to interact but at times shows disinterest in peer contributions.	Limited or no interaction with peers and may exhibit disrespect.
Quality of contributions	Comments and questions are relevant and show close reading and keen insight.	Participates constructively but unevenly. Comments and questions are at times irrelevant or lack depth.	Never participates or participates only when prodded and does so perfunctorily. Shows little interest in materials or peer contributions.
Frequency of participation	Participates actively at appropriate times.	Participates sometimes but fails always to be attentive.	Rarely participates and is not generally engaged.
Impact on seminar	Moves discussion forward; class members benefit from student's contributions and group dynamic is enhanced.	Sometimes advances discussion but at other times seems merely filler. Group dynamics are sometimes better (but never worse) as a result of student participation.	Comments and questions fail to advance conversation. Group dynamics are impaired as a result of student's participation.

Please notify me if an unexpected problem arises for you during the course of the semester (serious illness, etc.) and we will formulate an appropriate plan. If you need to miss class because of a religious holiday, we can make alternative arrangements for this as well.

Overall Grading Policy

Based on UNC Registrar Policy for graduate-level courses

(<http://registrar.unc.edu/AcademicServices/Grades/ExplanationofGradingSystem/index.htm#grad>), both assignment and semester grades will be H, P, L or F. Few students will obtain an "H," which indicates an exceptionally high level of performance (higher than an "A" in an A-F systems). The following is a more detailed breakdown used for class assignments:

H: Superior work: complete command of subject, unusual depth, great creativity or originality

P+: Above average performance: solid work somewhat beyond what was required and good command of the material

P: Satisfactory performance that meets course requirements (expected to be the median grade of all students in the course)

P-: Acceptable work in need of improvement

L: Unacceptable graduate performance: substandard in significant ways

F: Performance that is seriously deficient and unworthy of graduate credit

I (incomplete): Incomplete grades will not be given for this course unless the instructors are notified at least two weeks in advance of the end of the term of serious circumstances affecting a student's ability to complete the course requirements by the assigned dates. If an incomplete is granted, all outstanding assignments must be turned into the instructors by a date to be determined by the instructors. Please be aware that the UNC Registrar converts any Incomplete automatically to a Fail after one year.

Academic honesty and integrity:

The grading and academic standards for this course follow the conventions established at SILS. The School's basic academic policies are at <http://sils.unc.edu/programs/msls/policies.html>

Students are expected to follow the Honor Code: <http://honor.unc.edu/>

Diversity Statement:

In support of the University's diversity goals and the mission of the School of Information and Library Science, SILS embraces diversity as an ethical and societal value. We broadly define diversity to include race, gender, national origin, ethnicity, religion, social class, age, sexual orientation, and physical and learning ability. As an academic community committed to preparing our graduates to be leaders in an increasingly multicultural and global society we strive to:

- Ensure inclusive leadership, policies, and practices;
- Integrate diversity into the curriculum and research;
- Foster a mutually respectful intellectual environment in which diverse opinions are valued;
- Recruit traditionally underrepresented groups of students, faculty, and staff; and
- Participate in outreach to underserved groups in the State.

The statement represents a commitment of resources to the development and maintenance of an academic environment that is open, representative, reflective, and committed to the concepts of equity and fairness.