Week 1  Getting Started

1.1  WebCT User's Guide

1.2  Course Outline, Requirements and Learning Outcomes

Welcome to LIBR 2416, Reference and Readers' Services Online. This 13-week, 3-credit course in Langara's diploma program in library technology is designed to introduce the learner to all aspects of reference work, including readers' advisory. The focus of activity in this practical, hands-on course will be on a detailed exploration and mapping of resources for a variety of subject areas. Resources in a variety of formats will be explored, along with the best approaches to support the reference process in any library environment.

Although there are no formal prerequisites for LIBR 2416, it is assumed that participants have already taken LIBR 1111 and are concurrently enrolled in LIBR 2411. These two courses provide important background in terms of the technical knowledge, skills and techniques required for selecting, evaluating, using, searching and creating reference resources. Students without these courses or equivalent course work should contact the course instructor. At the very least, activities in this course demand basic computer literacy skills related to using email and the Internet, as well as insights related to the evaluation and development of www resources. A basic understanding of overall library processes and practices is also important. Participants should be able to:

- use a browser for finding websites and follow hypertext links
- select and use search engines and subject directories
- develop effective strategies for searching typical online databases and Internet resources, as well as search engines

In order to manage communication within the course, participants should:

- be familiar with the basics of email
• know how to attach a file

1.2.1 Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcomes for LIBR 2416 Online
After completing this course, the learner will have acquired the knowledge, values and skills to be able to:

1. Understand and discuss current issues in reference service.
2. Develop strategies for personal and professional growth within the field.
3. Understand and describe how informational resources are created, organized and published.
4. Identify and evaluate common types of reference questions and readers' advisory requests.
5. Demonstrate effective reference interview techniques.
6. Develop successful strategies for responding to informational requests.
7. Identify and evaluate appropriate resources for any informational request.
8. Demonstrate the use of standard reference tools in all formats.
9. Conduct successful searches, using effective search strategies, in appropriately selected databases, and other online resources, including the Internet.

1.2.2 Flexible Assessment Option

If you already have knowledge and skills in providing reference and readers' advisory services, you should consider the "Flexible Assessment Option" for LIBR 2416, Reference and Readers' Services. Through this option, it is possible to earn credit for knowledge and skills you may already have. You should consider this option if:

• you have worked in libraries for several years, in a public services capacity, responding to informational requests
• you are working as a reference assistant
• you have extensive experience using a wide range of standard reference sources, in a variety of formats
• you can conduct an effective reference interview and can respond to informational requests using appropriate sources in print, online and www.

For more information on the Flexible Assessment Option, contact course instructor, Ann Calla at: acalla@langara.bc.ca

1.2.3 Assessment and Evaluation for LIBR 2416 Online

Course participants are responsible for a variety of learning activities including: weekly readings, course lectures, discussions, “in-class” exercises, a reference practicum, as well as assignments and term projects. As active student participation is important for the success of any course, and essential for learning in the online course environment, there is a
participation mark for the course. Specifically, there will be short exercises/activities, assigned weekly, 6 assignments, 2 term projects, with weighting distributed as follows:

- Short exercises/activities: 10%
- Assignments 1 – 6: 60%
- Term Project 1: 10%
- Term Project 2: 10%
- Course Participation, including reference practicum: 10%

100%

All exercises, assignments, term projects and practicum must be completed in order to pass the course.

1.3 Exercises/Activities, Assignments, Readings and Projects

There are no exams in this course, other than self-check quizzes. Students must complete all exercises/activities, assignments and projects, as specifically instructed under headings such as ACTIVITY or ASSIGNMENT or PROJECT, introduced throughout the course.

The course is updated weekly, with the assignments due Tuesdays, by 9 am.

1.3.1 Exercises/Activities

Although not specifically graded, students must complete all activities, as assigned. In many cases, feedback will come from the other students, as well as from the Instructor. Activities allow the learner to explore tools, enjoy the literature, make observations and join in the discussions and debates, without worrying about a letter grade.

Participants may be asked to post course work (or a summary) to a Discussion forum (called Discussion “Topics” in WebCT), as part of a general discussion of the topic. For example, each week, participants will be assigned a “Short Snapper” reference question that must be responded to in a very short timeline, reflecting the realities of the workplace. With each question being an example of a type or category of question, the analysis and critique of the solutions presented by the group, make this a vital learning activity. In other cases, the course work would go directly to the instructor using WebCT Mail or for self-check under the WebCT “Quizzes” icon on the course homepage, with analysis and highlights discussed in an appropriate forum.

1.3.2 Assignments

There are 6 major assignments, covering important course topics. Assignments, reflecting individual student work, should be sent directly to the course instructor using WebCT Mail. Individual feedback will be given and a grade assigned. The instructor will also post an answer key, including a general analysis of the sources and solutions given by the class for the particular assignment.
1.3.3 Projects

There are 2 major projects, due at the end of the Semester. Students will provide regular reports and updates on these group projects through a “project” Discussion forum. This is a valuable opportunity for support and information sharing within the class. Special guests, with expertise in particular course areas, will also be invited into the discussions. Final projects should be sent directly to the course instructor using WebCT Mail.

1.3.4 Readings

Weekly readings will be assigned from the course textbooks. As well, articles on relevant topics are tied to the weekly units. Each week, each student is also responsible for identifying additional readings in the periodical literature and on the Internet, and posting to an appropriate Discussion topic, complete citations and a critique.

1.4 Course Resources and Tools

1.4.1 Textbooks

There are no required textbooks for the course. There are a number of references in the course to the following textbooks:


These textbooks are available through the Langara College Bookstore. Participants outside of the Lower Mainland should contact Bookstore Manager, Robert Leaf by email: rleaf@langara.bc.ca.

An introductory package of readings will be made available to all participants, prior to the beginning of the course. A selection of readings and tools will be also be available online through the course under Course Resources.

1.4.2 Reference Tools and Resources

Online participants will need access a wide range of standard reference material (print, online and www), typically found or accessed through most academic and public libraries. Take some time to survey the reference services and resources in your community. The tools you will need to access may be in print, online and/or www. Please note that not all of the tools you will need to access are online. Better than any textbook, library web pages serve as excellent guides to the current array of reference tools, covering all subject areas.

1.5 Course Schedule and Background Readings
Week 1  **Reference process & practice: background & principles**  
Explore WebCT course environment  
Course overview, learning outcomes, requirements and assignments  
Readings:  
*Chapter 1*: Reference Service and the Community  
*Chapter 2*: Information and the Community  
Bopp & Smith, *Reference and Information Services*  
*Chapter 1*: History and Variety of Reference Services

Week 2  **Reference process & practice: evaluating reference tools**  
Evaluating reference resources/core collections/ready reference  
The information industry  
Readings:  
*Chapter 1*: Reference Librarians on the Information Highway  
*Chapter 2*: The Electronic Library  
Bopp & Smith, *Reference and Information Services*  
*Chapter 2*: Toward a Philosophy for Reference Service  
*Chapter 11*: Selection and Evaluation of Reference Sources  

 ASSIGNMENT 1 introduced  
TERM PROJECT 1 introduced

Week 3  **The tools: controlling periodical literature**  
Indexes/abstracts/databases/search engines  
Readings:  
*Chapter 5*: Networks and Information Costs  
*Chapter 6*: The Time of Full Text  
Bopp & Smith, *Reference and Information Services*  
*Chapter 19*: Indexes and Abstracts

TERM PROJECT 2 Introduced

Week 4  **Reference process & practice: reference interview**  
Reference interview/issues in reference service  
Evaluating reference & readers's advisory requests  
Reference practicum  
Readings:  
*Chapter 7*: The Reference Interview
Chapter 8: Rules of the Search
Chapter 9: Instruction in Information Literacy
Chapter 10: Reference Service Policies and Evaluation

Bopp & Smith, Reference and Information Services
Chapter 3: The Reference Interview
Chapter 4: Bibliographic Control, Organization of Information, and Search Strategies
Chapter 5: Electronic Reference Services
Chapter 6: Instruction as a Reference Service
Chapter 8: Evaluation of Reference Services

ASSIGNMENT 1 due
ASSIGNMENT 2 introduced

Week 5  The tools: biographical sources
Biographical dictionaries, directories and web sites
Readings:
Katz, Introduction to Reference Work, Vol. 1
Chapter 9: Biographical Sources

Bopp & Smith, Reference and Information Services
Chapter 14: Sources of Biographical Information

ASSIGNMENT 3 introduced

Week 6  Reference process & practice: online/email/virtual reference
E-mail/online reference
Role of www resources & services
Library skills/information literacy
Readings:
Katz, Introduction to Reference Work, Vol. 2
Chapter 3: The Internet
Chapter 4: Internet Reference Libraries
Chapter 5: Networks and Information Costs
Chapter 6: The Time of Full Text

ASSIGNMENT 2 due

Week 7  The tools: dictionaries/encyclopedias
Dictionaries/encyclopedias
Atlases/gazetteers
Readings:
Katz, Introduction to Reference Work, Vol. 1
Chapter 7: Encyclopedias: General And Subject Sets
Chapter 10: Dictionaries
Chapter 11: Geographical Sources

Bopp & Smith, *Reference and Information Services*

Chapter 15: Dictionaries

Chapter 16: Encyclopedias

Chapter 17: Geographical Sources

**ASSIGNMENT 3 due**
**ASSIGNMENT 4 introduced**

**Week 8**
The tools: almanacs/directories

Almanacs/yearbooks/quick facts
Directories/handbooks/manuals

Readings:
Chapter 8: Ready Reference Sources

Bopp & Smith, *Reference and Information Services*
Chapter 12: Directories
Chapter 13: Almanacs, Yearbooks, and Handbooks

**ASSIGNMENT 5 introduced**

**Week 9**
Core resources: business

Business/consumer information

**ASSIGNMENT 4 due**

**Week 10**
Core resources: literature

Literature/humanities

**ASSIGNMENT 6 introduced**
**TERM PROJECT 1 due**

**Week 11**
Core resources: medical

Medical/consumer health

**ASSIGNMENT 5 due**

**Week 12**
Core resources: legal/governmental

Legal/government publications & resources

Readings:
Chapter 12: Government Documents
Week 13  Core resources: social sciences
Social sciences/education

ASSIGNMENT 6 due

TERM PROJECT 2 due during final exam period

1.6 Course Topics

Reference process & practice

Reference process & practice: background & principles
Explore WebCT course environment
Course overview, learning outcomes, requirements and assignments
WEEK 1

Reference process & practice: evaluating reference tools
Evaluating reference resources/core collections/ready reference
The information industry
WEEK 2

Reference process & practice: reference interview
Reference interview/issues in reference service
Evaluating reference & readers's advisory requests
Reference practicum
WEEK 4

Reference process & practice: email reference
Email/online reference
Role of www resources & services
Library skills/information literacy
WEEK 6

The tools

The tools: controlling periodical literature
Indexes/abstracts/databases/search engines
WEEK 3

The tools: biographical sources
WEEK 5
ACTIVITY 1.1 Introduction

Please introduce yourself and tell us about the library you work in, or the libraries you use. Do you do reference work? Do you do research? Any special areas of interest? Please post your introduction to the Discussion topic: Week 1. The subject line should indicate: Introduction. Post by Tuesday of Week 2.

1.7 Citing and Evaluating Resources

1.7.1 Citing Sources
Most of the activities and assignments in this course will involve identifying specific sources that may be in print, online or www. You will need to determine how you will cite books, periodical articles and web sites. Communicating this information with precision, in order to identify each source, clearly, is an essential course requirement. Using a standard format for citations is an important part of managing this. There are a number of standard citation styles, with the APA style being one of the most common. Langara College also publishes a style sheet that is available on the Langara College web site. No one particular style is being prescribed in this course. Please choose a style and follow it consistently! Take some time to explore some online guides for the following styles:

- MLA style
- Chicago style
- APA style
- CBE style

Some examples of online style guides are listed below:

The Columbia Guide to Online Style  
http://www.columbia.edu/cu/cup/cgos/idx_basic.html

http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/index.html

Purdue University Writing Lab. Using American Psychological Association (APA) Format. Search site for MLA, as well.  
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_apa.html

University of Queensland. Library. References, APA Style  

**ACTIVITY 1.2 Citing sources**

Using any one of the style manuals cited, create proper citations for the 3 online style manuals and for Evaluating WWW Resources in 1.7.2. Please post your results to the Discussion topic: Week 1. The subject line should indicate: Style Guides. Please post by Tuesday of Week 2.

**1.7.2 Evaluating WWW Resources**

Wolfgram Memorial Library  
http://www.widener.edu/Tools_Resources/Libraries/wolfgram_memorial.htm
ACTIVITY 1.3  Compare reference resources

A. In preparation for the course, explore the reference works available on your public library homepage. Please describe. Which library? Types of tools? Dictionaries? Articles databases? Give some specific examples. Which ones do you use?

B. Explore the resources on the Langara Library homepage. Briefly describe the types of reference resources available here. Give a few examples.

C. Briefly describe the major differences in the kinds of resources available in college libraries, as opposed to public libraries.

Please post your brief summaries to the Discussion topic: Week 1. The subject line should indicate: Compare reference resources. Please post by Tuesday of Week 2.

For next week, in addition to the readings in Katz and Bopp, and the ACTIVITIES, begin to consider a good working definition for the terms:

- Reference
- Reference work
- Reference tool

More about this next week!