



Information Literacy
UNL 205
Syllabus



Instructor:

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Office Hour: Wednesdays 3-4 or by appointment or by drop-in

Course:

UNL 205: Information Literacy
Location: University Library, B48
Course Blog: <http://liblogs.albany.edu/infolitgreg/>
AIM/Yahoo/Google chat username: infolithelp

Ever-increasing access to information requires researchers to be able to critically assess and evaluate a variety of resources. Commensurate with these skills is the ability to utilize information responsibly and ethically. UNL 205, in recognition of the fact that each discipline has its own method of inquiry, prepares students to traverse the information terrain by introducing them to library infrastructure, information architecture, basic research methodologies, and the practical use of reference materials, print and online, for the enhancement of their potential to develop mature research skills.

General Education: Information Literacy

This course satisfies the Information Literacy General Education requirement, and provides students with the unique opportunity to learn and practice research skills under the guidance of library faculty. The course will fulfill the learning objectives for Information Literacy courses in the following ways.

1. You will learn how to effectively access and evaluate a wide variety of information sources. Evaluation skills are a critical component of this course because they enable you to choose the highest quality and most appropriate information for your needs. You will synthesize and use the information that you find throughout the course for your final projects.
2. Research tools and techniques vary from discipline to discipline. You will have an opportunity in this course to explore a variety of research techniques, while focusing on a particular field of interest.
3. Scholarly information production is organized and structured. Understanding this organization will increase your research abilities and options. Even information on the Web is found through tools which have their own structure. It is equally important to understand what is available through the Web and what is not, and how best to use these tools to find what is there.

4. There are a wide range of ethical and social issues connected with accessing and using information, from plagiarism to internet security to the digital divide. We will examine these concepts from different perspectives. Student participation in the discussion of these topics is highly encouraged, not only to increase your exposure to different viewpoints, but also to empower you in your own decision making processes.

Student Responsibilities:

Each student is expected to contribute to an environment conducive to the learning of all students. This contribution includes, but is not limited to:

- Respecting the opinion of others
- Being prepared to participate actively
- Taking responsibility for your learning and progress in the course
- Seeking help from the instructor as needed

Students are responsible for knowing and following the policies listed below. Students are also responsible for knowing and following the University policies outlined in the Undergraduate Bulletin.

Policies:

1. It is **always** the responsibility of the student to know when assignments are due. If you have any questions/problems related to the homework: ask questions in class; see me before or after class; call me; email me; IM me; post a comment to the blog; stop in during office hours; arrange a meeting at a convenient time, etc. Get the point?

2. **Assignments are due on time.** A printer or computer access problem is not an acceptable reason for a late submission, so don't wait until an hour before class to start! Late assignments will not be accepted for credit.

3. Do not plagiarize. Cutting and pasting without acknowledging the source is plagiarism. You will fail the assignment that contains the plagiarism and in serious cases be reported to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies.

4. **Failure to complete the Research Guide constitutes a failure for the entire course because it is equivalent to a final exam.**

5. Cell phones must be turned off before class starts; the use of computers during class is restricted to instructional activities; food is not allowed. Water may be brought to class in a re-closeable container.

6. **Class attendance is required.** As already outlined, students are responsible for all class work, and work done in class (including quizzes) cannot be made up.

7. Students must attend the section for which they are registered.

Final Project

Your final project will be the creation of a research guide for a topic of your choosing.

You will find 9 sources of information as you create this guide. All 9 sources must support and address a topic that you will choose at the beginning of the course.

Your goal: Create a research guide that provides beginning researchers with critical information on your topic.

You must make this information accessible through accurate and informative citations for your 9 sources, background information on experts in the field, an introduction to the basic lexicon of this field, and a brief literature review on your topic based on what you found in your 9 sources.

The 9 required items for this research guide are:

- one reference book
- one general collection book
- one scholarly journal article that you must read in its entirety
- one popular magazine article that you must read in its entirety
- one newspaper article from a database, e.g., *LexisNexis* or *Custom Newspapers*
- one primary source
- two authoritative Websites
- one government document OR one multimedia source

Final Project Outline for Creating Research Guide

The research guide will have five sections. Except for the annotated bibliography, no section needs to be more than one or two pages in length.

I. Title page or top of first page: “Research Guide: Name of Topic”

II. “Glossary of Basic Terminology” Provide at least ten terms that adequately introduce your readers to the basic lexicon of your chosen topic. **This information must be in your own words. Copying or cutting and pasting information constitutes the offense of plagiarism. If you do decide to use others’ words, you must cite your sources!**

III. “Biographical (not bibliographic!) Material” section: Write brief biographies (no more than half a page in length) for two of your authors, e.g., degrees held, other works published, special affiliations (work or university, etc.). This shows their established authority. **This information can be taken from anywhere, as long as you identify the source.**

IV. "Annotated Bibliography": Consists of 9 required information sources, cited according to MLA style, evaluated, and annotated.

V. Literature Review/summary - one-page introduction to your topic using the 9 sources you found during your research. **Information taken from your 9 sources must be cited in-text and refer to the proper source in your Annotated Bibliography.**

TILT Web-Based Modules (<http://tilt1.ulib.albany.edu/>):

If you complete all **three** modules of TILT by midnight on the last day of class and e-mail your quiz results to me, I will give you extra-credit: two points toward your final grade. (Note: the two-point addition may raise your grade one letter, if it is borderline) . In order for me to know you have completed all three modules, you must **register** as a TILT user, and go back in under this registration each time. You will have to e-mail your quiz results to me, or print them out and give them to me. Technical glitches occur with TILT, so do not leave this to the last minute if you plan to do it. I will not accept excuses for late submissions: all TILT quiz results must be in by midnight on the last day of class. **No other extra-credit assignments are available, don't ask.**

Grading:

Homework/Drafts of citations and annotations	35%
Participation/In-class assignments/Quizzes	30%
Class Presentation	10%
Final Project	25%

Class Presentation:

Each student will make a 2-3 minute presentation on the last day of class. The presentation is to address the following:

1. The reason you selected your topic
2. A brief summary of what you found
3. What was the best source you found and why?

Effective creativity in your presentation will be rewarded by up to 2 points on your final grade. This might include, but is not limited to, showing key web sites or other visuals or using PowerPoint.

Blog assignments:

There is a weblog for this class, which can be found at:
<http://liblogs.albany.edu/infolitgreg/>

Participation in the blog is part of your homework as follows:

- Each week there will be readings/videos, etc. related to an aspect of our discussion posted to the blog where possible, otherwise handed out in class.
- You are expected to comment on these materials on the class blog. Comments must actually pertain to the relevant post and contribute something substantial to the discussion. "I agree" or "I disagree" are not sufficient.
- Keep it polite, please. If I boot you for trying to start [flamewars](#), etc. you will lose credit for any future blog assignments.

In addition to the blog assignments, the blog contains general information about the class including a copy of the syllabus and a list of links that you will need to use to complete the assignments. There is also an IM widget at the right side of the screen that you can use to contact me with questions. I will be signed on most days from 9-5, and sometimes in the evenings and on weekends.

Course Outline:

|Class 1

Introduction/Syllabus/Policies
Pre-test

1. Topics/Questions
2. Intro to ULIB/Minerva/Books
3. Information Literacy and Information Technology/1st Blog Assignment

Assignment: Due at the beginning of Class 2.

1. Choose a topic for your annotated bibliography and list three questions you would like to answer about the topic. **Post this as a comment to the blog under the post “Topics and questions”.**
2. Using Minerva (online catalog), find one book on your topic and bring it to class next week.
3. Read assigned article and respond on blog.

|Class 2

Thesis Statements – posted to blog during class

1. Reference Sources/Citing and annotating a book/reference book
2. Generating a list of relevant keywords
3. Information Privacy/Security Issues

Assignment: Due at the beginning of Class 3.

1. Find one **Reference Book** and one **Book** on your topic and write a citation and annotation for each.
2. Complete 10 terms worksheet.
3. Read Privacy/Security material and respond on blog.

|Class 3

1. Types of periodical articles/Choosing and Using Databases
/Citing and Annotating magazine and journal articles
2. Reading/Discussion – Periodicals and databases

Assignment: Due at the beginning of Class 4.

1. Find **one Scholarly, one Popular and one newspaper article** and write a citation and annotation for each. All of these articles must be accessed by using the libraries' databases .
2. Read assigned article and respond on blog.

|Class 4

1. Web Searching/Evaluation/Authoritative Websites & how to cite them
2. Primary/Secondary Sources/Information formats and structure/Data-Info-Knowledge-Wisdom
3. Copyright/Fair Use/Creative Commons

Assignment: Due at the beginning of Class 5.

1. Find **one quality website and one blog** on your topic and write a citation and annotation for each.
2. Complete the **Primary/Secondary worksheet**.
3. Read Copyright/Fair use/Creative Commons material and respond on blog.

|Class 5

1. Biographical assignment
2. "Information architecture" reading

Assignment: Due at the beginning of Class 6.

1. Choose 2 authors from the sources you've found so far, find out who they are, and create a 1/2 page biographical summary of each author. **YOU MUST IDENTIFY THE SOURCE OF THIS INFORMATION.**
2. Read Information Architecture material and respond on blog.

|Class 6

Course Evaluation

1. Multimedia Sources/Government Documents
2. How to do class presentation
3. How to complete the final project
4. Final Blog Assignment

Assignment: Due at the beginning of Class 7.

1. Find **one multimedia source or government document**. Cite and annotate the source and include it as part of your final annotated bibliography.
2. Prepare for presentation.
3. Complete final Research Guide project. This must be formatted according to the guidelines distributed in class.
4. Respond to the Final Blog Assignment Post

|Class 7

Pre-post test
Class presentations
Review/Questions