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Course:
UNL 205: Information Literacy
Location: University Library, B48
Course Blog: http://liblogs.albany.edu/infolitgreg/
AIM 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. The only excused absences are those accompanied by a letter from the Dean of Undergraduate Studies.

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

Your final project will be the creation of a topical (subject-oriented) research guide.

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 a topic of your choosing.

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 (print or electronic)
- two authoritative Websites
- one government document OR one multimedia source

Final Project Outline for Creating Research Guide

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

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

II. Table of contents

III. “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!

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

VI. 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://tilt.lib.utsystem.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.

You will also need to hand a brief, TYPED outline of your presentation on the last day of class.

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 student must comment on at least 3 different posts by the end of the course: once during weeks 1-2, once during weeks 3-4, and once during weeks 5-6 of the course.
- 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. Also, I read the comments before they go up, so your intended target will never see them anyway.

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:

**3/20|Class 1:**
- *Introduction/Syllabus/Policies*
- *Information Literacy and Information Technology*
- *Pre-test*
- *Intro to ULIB/Minerva*
- *Where are the books?*

**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 (library catalog), find one book on your topic and bring the book to class.

**3/27|Class 2:**
- *Thesis Statements*
- *The Research Process*
- *Reference Sources*
- *Citing and annotating a book/reference book*
- *Information Ethics (privacy)*

**Assignment: Due at the beginning of Class 3.**

1. Find one **Reference Book** and one **Book** on your topic and complete the **Reference Book/Book Worksheet**, including **APA style citations and annotations**

2. Complete 10 terms worksheet

3. Write a paragraph or two describing a personal experience with one of the privacy issues we discussed in class, OR offering your point of view on one of the issues. **Post this to the blog as a comment under the topic “Privacy experiences” before the next class.**

*****4/3 - No Classes, Spring Break! ***

**4/10|Class 3:**
- *Types of Libraries*
- *Types of periodical articles*
- *Choosing and Using Databases*
- *Tour -Where are the periodicals?*
- *Citing and Annotating magazine and journal articles*

**Assignment: Due at the beginning of Class 4.**

1. Find **one Scholarly, one Popular and one newspaper article** on your topic and complete the **3 Articles Worksheet**.

2. All of these articles must be accessed by using the libraries’ **databases**
Assignment: Due at the beginning of Class 5.

1. Find two authoritative websites on your topic and complete the Websites Worksheet.

2. Your second comment must be posted to the blog before Class 5.

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 CITE THE SOURCE OF THIS INFORMATION.

2. Complete the Primary/Secondary worksheet.

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 visual aid for presentation - PowerPoint, website, etc.

3. Hand in final Research Guide project. This must be typed up and printed out according to the guidelines distributed in class.

4. Your final comment must be posted to the blog before Class 7.
Where to find sources, a quick guide:

Books and Reference Books - Minerva (the libraries' catalog)

3 Articles - Database finder (lists over 200 subscription databases which index specific articles)

Websites - Search engines and subject directories

Multimedia sources - Minerva, Search engines

Government documents - Minerva, Search engines (specifically Google advanced search or http://www.google.com/ig/usgov)

Primary/Secondary Sources - Since these can be any type of material, it will depend on your topic