

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT ALBANY
School of Library and Information Science

Spring 1982

LIB 605
Dr. Whalen

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LIB 605 The Reference Process

Objectives of the course:

The Reference Process course is a combination of the study of the theoretical framework for doing reference work and a study of examples of materials generally used in the process. Students completing the course should:

1. Be familiar with reference and information services in various settings;
2. Be able to conduct an effective reference search, including a reference interview, and have the necessary skills and knowledge to retrieve information in book and non-book form;
3. Be knowledgeable about the types of reference sources, examples of major works in each type, and their usefulness in answering reference questions;
4. Be aware of sources of evaluation of reference materials and be able to evaluate reference works based on standard criteria; and
5. Be familiar with bibliographic and non-bibliographic on-line searching and their appropriateness for solving different types of reference problems.

Texts:

Katz, William A. Introduction to Reference Work. 2 vols. 4th ed.
New York: McGraw-Hill, 1982

REF Sheehy, E. P. Guide to Reference Books. Chicago: American Library
Z Association, 1976 and supplement, 1980.
1035.1
S43
1976

REF Walford, A. J. Guide to Reference Material. 3 vols. London:
Z Library Association, 1973-78.
1035.1
W33

REF Wynar, Bohdan S. American Reference Books Annual (ARBA).
Z Littleton, CO: Libraries Unlimited, Inc. Annual, 1970-
1035.1
A55

Regular assignments will be made from both volumes of Katz's Introduction to Reference Work. The other three, located in the reference section of the Hawley Library, will be referred to occasionally and can be used for further explanation of works discussed.

Outline of the Course

- I. Introduction to Reference Work
 - A. Reference services in the library
 - B. The reference/research question
 - C. The reference interview
 - D. Strategies for searching
 - E. Criteria for evaluation of research materials and services
 - F. Sources of information about reference materials
 - G. New technologies in reference work

- II. Bibliographies as Basic Information Sources
 - A. General (universal)
 - B. Current: national and trade
 - C. Retrospective
 - D. Specialized bibliographic materials

- III. Encyclopedias
 - A. General (adult) encyclopedias
 - B. Popular and school encyclopedias
 - C. Children and young people's encyclopedias
 - D. Foreign encyclopedias
 - E. One-volume encyclopedias
 - F. Subject encyclopedias

- IV. Indexing and Abstracting Services
 - A. Bibliographical control
 - B. Periodical indexes
 - C. Abstracting services
 - D. Materials in collections
 - E. Newspapers
 - F. On-line data base services: bibliographic

- V. Dictionaries
 - A. Unabridged
 - B. Desk (collegiate)
 - C. Children's
 - D. Bilingual/foreign
 - E. Special

- VI. Ready Reference Sources
 - A. Almanacs
 - B. Yearbooks
 - C. Handbooks
 - D. Directories
 - E. Subject handbooks and manuals
 - F. On-line data base services: non-bibliographic

- VII. Biographical Sources
 - A. Biographical dictionaries
 - B. Indexes to biographies
 - C. Retrospective biographical sources
 - D. Specialized, e.g., scientists, educators

Outline of the Course (continued)

VIII. Geographical Sources

- A. Bibliographies
- B. Guides
- C. Atlases and maps
- D. Gazetteers
- E. Travel guides

IX. Government Documents

- A. Bibliographies and guides
- B. Catalogs and indexes
- C. State and local documents
- D. On-line services

Assignments

For each unit a sheet will be given out indicating specific readings, examples of materials to examine, and questions for class discussion. The readings will be on reserve in Hawley Library; copies of the articles can also usually be found in the journals cited in the periodical section of the library.

Term Project

Each student will be required to compile a bibliography of 20 annotated items with a 1-2 page introduction to the topic on one of the following:

1. Nuclear Power Pros and Cons
2. U.S. Policy on Undocumented Aliens
3. Government vs. Private Support for the Arts
4. The Rights of Adoptees
5. The Selling of U.S.-Banned Pesticides to Third World Countries
6. The Death Penalty
7. The Protection of Authors vs. the Freedom to Information
8. Half-way Houses for the Mentally Retarded in Suburban Communities
9. U.S. Policy on Human Rights: Poland and El Salvador
10. Sexual Harassment in the Workplace -- Real or Imagined
11. Television Programming and Consumer Groups
12. Gun Control - Pros and Cons
13. The Freedom to Die in Dignity
14. Regulation vs. Deregulation in the FDA (Food and Drug Administration)
15. Mainstreaming at the Taxpayer's Expense
16. Rights and Privileges of Veterans: World War II and the Vietnam War

The following points should be kept in mind regarding the project:

1. The introduction should give some background about the topic, presenting briefly various viewpoints and referring to materials included in the bibliography whenever appropriate.
2. The introduction should be double-spaced. The bibliography should be double-spaced between entries and between the citation and the annotation. (See examples on attached sheet.)
3. The bibliographical form on the sample page must be followed.
4. The annotations should give the main idea of the work clearly and concisely (no more than 4-6 typewritten lines). Complete sentences need not be used.
5. The bibliography should be arranged in some logical order, e.g., by author, chronologically by date of publication or grouped by pro and con articles on the topic.
6. Use a minimum of:
 - 1 book
 - 2 abstracting journals
 - 4 periodical indexes
 - 2 bibliographical tools
 - 1 government publication
 - 1 thesis or dissertation

7. For each entry give the source you used in parentheses at the end of the annotation and a letter indicating the type of work in the left-hand margin (see example).
8. Grades will be based on:
 - a) the appropriateness of the selections
 - b) the quality of the annotations
 - c) the clarity and objectivity of the introduction and its relationship to the entries in the bibliography
 - d) the use of proper form

Other Requirements

1. Weekly readings and search assignments
2. Participation in class discussions
3. Mid-term and final examinations

Evaluation

Final grades will be based on the project, participation in class discussions, and grades in examinations.

Samples of Bibliographical Citations

- B (Book) Stoller, Robert L., ed. Violence and Responsibility: The Individual, the Family and Society. New York: Beacon Press, 1980.
- A collection of papers presented in 1978 at two separate, multidisciplinary conferences on "Violence in Families" and "Violence and Responsibility." Includes neurological and medical aspects of violence, psychodynamic factors, and sociological aspects of family violence. (Pub. Lib. Cat.)
- A (Article) Hanks, Susan E. "Abused Wives: Why Do They Stay?" Journal of Marriage and the Family 38 (November 1976): 659-66. (Soc. Abstr.)
- Th (Thesis)
or
D (Dissertation) Price, John. "A Comparative Study of Postwar Homicide Rates." Ph.D. thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1974. (Diss. Abstr. Inter.)
- Ch (Chapter) Jensen, Joanne. "The Library and the Deaf Child," in Special Library Services ed. by Carl Drucher. New York: Vintage Press, 1979.
- G (Gov. Pubn.) U.S. Dept. of Education. Office of Libraries and Learning Technologies. A Reader's Guide for Parents of Children with Learning Disabilities. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Education, 1980. (Mon. Cat.)
- M (Microform) Gilmore, Daniel. A Study of Sex in Comics. 1981. ERIC Document #516-023 (RIE)