INFO 5610: Advanced Information and Access Services

Syllabus
Summer (5W1) 2019

Introduction to the Course

Welcome to the course!

The catalog description of the course is: 5610. Advanced Information and Access Services. 3 hours. Advanced problems and techniques in information service, online and CD-ROM systems, and literature searching and synthesis. Prerequisite(s): SLIS 5600 or consent of school.

This semester, we will explore virtual reference services as an advanced information and access service, and we are excited that you will be joining us as we explore the exciting and cutting-edge world of virtual reference services. Virtual reference services can be divided into two different modes of communication: asynchronous and synchronous. Asynchronous communication modes include e-mail, Web forms, and text messaging, and synchronous communication modes include chat, instant messaging, Voice over IP, and videoconferencing. As information professionals, we can also utilize social media to interact with our users. As technology advances, more and more information professionals will engage in the delivery of virtual reference services to their users, and it is vital that future information professionals (YOU!) have a solid understanding of the planning, implementation, delivery, and management of virtual reference services.

Information about the Instructors

Contact Information:

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Sarah Law Kennerly Endowed Professor, Regents Professor, and Director, Health Informatics Program
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Dr. Jodi Philbrick is the primary instructor for the course, and Dr. Ana D. Cleveland will be assisting.

**Office Hours:** You may contact us anytime via Canvas e-mail. We are also available for chat or telephone meetings by appointment.

**Course Goal and Learning Outcomes**

**Goal:** To develop an in-depth knowledge of virtual reference services as an advanced information service and gain expertise in planning, developing, providing, and managing virtual reference services.

**Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of basic principles and concepts in virtual reference services.
- Outline the implementation process for virtual reference services.
- Identify technologies that facilitate virtual reference services.
- Demonstrate the ability to deliver virtual reference services.
- Formulate policies and procedures for virtual reference services.
- Evaluate virtual reference services.
- Recognize future trends of virtual reference services.

**Course Requirements**

**Reading Discussions & Responses**

**Purpose:** To introduce the students to basic principles and concepts in virtual reference services.

**Instructions:** For each set of readings, the instructor will provide a discussion question that will be answered by the students based on their readings and personal/professional experiences. Students will answer the discussion question (min. 200 words) and respond to one other student’s answer (min. 100 words).

**Submission:** Submit your Reading Discussions & Responses to the appropriate discussion forums in the Canvas modules.
Policy Development

Purpose: To give students experience developing a virtual reference policy for an information setting of their choice.

Instructions:

For this assignment, you will be developing a virtual reference policy following the steps below:

- Choose a type of information setting of your choice, i.e. academic, public, medical, or legal; you will develop a virtual reference policy for the selected setting.
- Choose the type(s) of virtual reference services that your policy will cover, i.e. email, chat, text messaging.
- Develop a policy for your selected type of library that addresses the areas below:
  - Clientele:
    - Who will be able to use this service?
  - Staffing:
    - How many people will staff the virtual reference desk at one time?  
    - Where will the virtual reference desk staff be located when they provide the service?
  - Time:
    - How soon will questions be answered?  
    - What about weekends and holidays?  
    - How should you notify your user if the question will take some time to answer?  
    - Will there be a time limit on the transactions?
  - Types of Questions:
    - What types of questions will/will not be answered?
  - Procedures:
    - How will conversations be initiated?  
    - How will problem patrons be handled?  
    - How will software problems be reported?
  - Privacy:
    - How will the privacy of your users be protected?
  - Other(s):
    - You may address other issues that you deem appropriate for your selected type of library or discussed in the associated lecture.

Submission: Submit the Policy Development assignment as a Word document to the appropriate module in Canvas.
Marketing Plan

Purpose: To provide students with the opportunity to develop a marketing plan for a virtual reference service for an information setting of their choice.

Instructions:

For this assignment, you will be developing a marketing plan following the steps below:

- Choose a type of information setting of your choice, i.e. academic, public, medical, or legal; you will develop a virtual reference marketing plan for the selected setting.
- Choose the type(s) of virtual reference services that your marketing plan will cover, i.e. email, chat, text messaging.
- Develop a marketing plan for your selected type of library that includes the following:
  - A description of the clientele you are trying to whom you are marketing.
  - Provide the name of your virtual reference service, i.e. Ask a Librarian.
  - Design a logo/icon for your virtual reference service.
  - Explain how you will reach your audience, i.e. library website, social media, presentations, flyers, etc. Be creative in your approach to reaching your audience.
  - Examples of the promotional materials you would use, i.e. flyers, bookmarks, social media messages.

Submission: Submit your Marketing Plan assignment to the appropriate Canvas module.

Peer Reference Service

Purpose: To give students experience delivering virtual reference services and for students to develop the ability to reflect on their performance as a virtual reference librarian.

Instructions:

This is a role-playing assignment, and you will play the role of the librarian as well as the role of the patron.

Working in a group of 2 or 3 students assigned by the instructor, you will practice answering reference questions using one of the following communication channels (you can choose to use Canvas or an outside technology, but be sure you can capture the transaction):

- Chat
- E-mail
o Text messaging

Each member of the group will complete the following tasks:
  o Pose a reference question to a fellow group member via technology and interact with the group member you posed the question to in order to successfully complete the transaction.
    ▪ Reference questions should be substantive and NOT "ready reference." Also, avoid "trick" questions. Example: "What causes volcanoes to explode?"
  o Answer a reference question posed by a fellow group member, and interact with the group member in order to successfully complete the transaction.
  o Reflect on their role as the "librarian" by taking note of any special skills that were determined to be useful in order to provide the peer reference service.

Your completed assignment should contain the following elements:
  o The question you posed
  o The question you answered
  o Copies of electronic communication between you and your "patron" for the question you answered
  o Copies of electronic communication between you and your "librarian" for the question you posed
  o Written reflection report (750-1000 words) of being the "librarian" that describes the following:
    ▪ The successes and failures of your transaction as the "librarian"
    ▪ The special skills that were needed to be a successful "librarian"

Submission: Submit your Peer Reference Service assignment as a Word document to the appropriate Canvas module.

Chat with Guest Professional

Purpose: To have the opportunity to interact with a virtual reference professional.

Instructions: Students are expected to participate in the course chat that is scheduled in the Course Calendar. If a student cannot attend the chat, he/she needs to contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to make alternative arrangements.

Submission: Participate in the online chat and ask questions of the virtual reference professional.
Grading

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<td>Policy Development</td>
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<td>Marketing Plan</td>
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<td>Peer Reference Service</td>
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<td>Chat with Guest Professional</td>
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Technology Requirements

It is important to read and understand the Technology Requirements outlined by the Department of Information Science: [http://informationscience.unt.edu/technologyrequirements](http://informationscience.unt.edu/technologyrequirements). Be sure to note that Microsoft Office is the standard software for the Department.

Course Policies

**Attendance**

Students are expected to fulfill their online responsibilities, unless otherwise arranged with the instructor. Not meeting this requirement can impact your final grade.

**Communication**

Important course announcements will be posted in the “Announcements” feature of Canvas, and students are expected to monitor this area and read the posts.

Your Canvas e-mails will be read as soon as possible, but please DO NOT EXPECT immediate answers. We make every effort to answer your e-mails within 48 hours.

The Canvas discussions area is a public domain that will be seen by all students. If you have questions or concerns that you do not want to be made public, please direct them to the course faculty via Canvas e-mail.

PUT YOUR NAME ON EVERYTHING YOU SUBMIT.

**Grading**

You can expect to have your assignments graded and returned to you within a week or less of submission. If there are any delays in grading assignments, students will be notified via the “Announcements” feature in Canvas.
Late Assignments

Students are expected to submit all of their assignments on time unless other arrangements have been made with the instructor prior to the due date of the assignment(s).

University Policies

Academic Integrity Standards and Compliance

According to UNT Policy 06.003. Student Academic Integrity (https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003), academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive a "0" for that assignment or exam. Additionally, the incident will be reported to the Dean of Students, who may impose further penalty.

Note: In this course, plagiarism and/or cheating will not be tolerated.

ADA Accommodation

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one’s specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website at disability.unt.edu.

Acceptable Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor’s ability to conduct a class or other students’ opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom, and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student’s conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University’s expectations for student conduct
apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at http://www.unt.edu/csrr/student_conduct/index.html

**Emergency Notification & Procedures**

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Blackboard for contingency plans for covering course materials.