LIS5143 GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS
Fall 2011 Syllabus

Instructor

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Class Web Site: http://learn.ou.edu

COURSE STRUCTURE AND POLICIES

Catalog Description

LIS 5143 acquaints students with the basic reference sources that provide access to the publications of governmental organizations. United States government publications are stressed. Topics include the basic catalogs and indexes; depository systems; acquisition, selection, organization, use, and on-line retrieval of government publications. (Sp)

Purpose

This course is designed to introduce students to government publications; their development, organization, access, and use; and issues surrounding the provision of and access to government information. Emphasis is on the use of USA federal documents but also includes an introduction to state, local, tribal, and international government publications. Additional emphasis is on what is expected from a professional documents librarian in the field, as well as how non-documents reference librarians and non-librarian academics can effectively use government documents and information resources. The course will provide students with a basic knowledge of government documents and their uses. The affects of government information policy and technology on the dissemination of government information is also a constant theme throughout the course.

Student Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Describe the nature, organization, and use of publications of the U.S. Federal government.
- Identify and locate similar publications by state, local, tribal, and international governments.
- Use basic reference tools (both electronic and print) that provide access to the various publications of governmental organizations.
- Explain issues and trends that affect the provision of and access to government information.
- Explain the reference and research value of government information.
- Acquire a basic understanding of what is expected of librarians and other professional information occupations in the field of government documents.
• Understand how non-documents reference librarians, non-librarian academics, and others can effectively use government documents for research purposes.

Student Skill Objectives

In addition to achieving the primary substantive objectives, the course design will assist students in developing the following skills:

• Ability to identify relevant issue or topic information
• Experience discussing and defending ideas with peers in an asynchronous online environment
• Flexibility and adaptability to compose documents in a group environment using digital communication media
• Ability to critically analyze issues and prepare responses supported by reference to relevant professional and scholarly writing and present the responses in formally documented papers

Teaching/Learning Methods

This course is delivered in an online mode. Online course sessions, facilitated through the Desire2Learn course management system, utilize asynchronous and synchronous delivery that include small group discussion areas (discussion board, locker, and online chat sessions), class discussion board, and individual/group written assignments. Readings for selected topic areas will be assigned and available on electronic reserve. Individual and group assignments provide students experience in analyzing concepts and issues and reporting findings in formal, documented papers.

A. Presentations

A weekly overview/presentation will be posted at the web site. In order to ensure the most current information for those areas that are subject to change, the presentations will be made available the week prior to the dates for which the topic is scheduled. Students should view the weekly presentations in conjunction with doing the assigned weekly readings. The intent of presentations is to introduce the topic area, raise issues related to the topics, and stimulate further individual student study and consideration of the topic. Students are responsible for all content from the weekly presentation and readings for assignments.

B. Texts and Readings

There is one textbook (Forte, Hartnett, & Sevetson 2011) and supplemental readings (as needed for a topic area) for this class. The textbook is:


Weekly supplemental readings complement unit presentations and help expand students’ cognitive base in the subject area. The readings explore information and knowledge concepts at broad, conceptual levels and are intended to be both challenging and thought provoking. All supplemental readings are available through the course website (linked from a list of course supplemental readings in the course content area).

C. Discussion/Participation

Students are expected to actively participate in class discussions. Class discussions provide students with the opportunity to examine attitudes, test positions, explore ideas, and as a means of facilitating development of a personal professional philosophy.

All students are expected to welcome open expression of opinions, attitudes, and beliefs and to accept the legitimacy and value of dissent, whether the dissenting opinion is considered valid or not. Discussions are expected to reflect the tenor of a professional discussion among colleagues, just as is the case in discussion within a physical classroom.

D. Course Materials

Course materials are available at the class web site in the Desire2Learn course management system (https://learn.ou.edu).

Assignments

Requirements for successful completion of this course are summarized below. Full descriptions and instructions for each assignment are located in the Content area of the course web site.

A. Exercise Sets – Students will complete six exercise sets that require the use of government finding aides/resources to give students practical experience using the finding aides/resources. See Exercise Guidelines in the Content area.

B. Agency Paper – Working in small groups, students develop a research paper that documents and analyzes the history, organization, document production, and Internet presence of one federal agency in terms of the affects of current federal government information issues and trends on access to the agency’s information services and resources. The research paper requires formal documentation. See Assignments Guidelines in the Content area.

C. Group participation memo – Each group member will evaluate other group members’ participation in planning, developing, and writing the agency paper.

D. Participation- Students will discuss course readings for ten selected weeks. Discussion occurs in the course article discussion area. Each discussion includes an initial post and two substantial posts (minimum) in response to other students’ posts. See discussion area description for additional information.

E. Final Paper – Each student will complete a formally documented paper (1400-1600 words not counting references) critically analyzing a broad issue selected from a list of issues related to course topics covered throughout the semester. See Assignments Guidelines in the Content area.
Evaluation

Grading - The final course grade will be determined on the following basis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exercise Sets – individual (6 @ 8% each)</td>
<td>48 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency Paper – group (1 @ 20%)</td>
<td>20 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Participation Memo (1 @ 2%)</td>
<td>2 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>20 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper (1 @ 10%)</td>
<td>10 percent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Letter grades are assigned to all final graded work. General guidelines for evaluation are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Exceptional performance, exemplary work on all aspects of assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Work of good quality, clearly meeting requirements of assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Marginal work that does not meet standards for graduate level performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory work that exhibits multiple problems in meeting assignment requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Failure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Graduate College considers a grade of D to be a failing grade in terms of graduate degree credit. School of Library and Information Studies policy requires that any student receiving a grade of D or F be recommended for dismissal from the master's program.

Criteria for Evaluation

A. Writing

Both the substantive content and the quality of your writing will be considered. Substantive content includes adherence to the assignment PLUS well supported arguments that arrive at reasonable conclusions or solutions and appropriate critical analysis. Quality of writing covers clarity of expression and organization (i.e. introduction, organization of content in the body of the paper, and a conclusion), appropriate use of references, use of inclusive language, and correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

B. Submission of Written Work

All written work for this course will be submitted as a Microsoft Word file in the appropriate folder of the course Dropbox. The agency paper is also posted in the group discussion so students can make posts to other groups’ papers. Each file submitted through the Dropbox should use the following format:

Group number_Assignment Title and (First part 4X4)_ Assignment Title

Examples: Group 1_Agency Paper; and snea_Final Paper

For all assignments, written work should follow these requirements:
• Name of group or student on the first page of the assignment;
• Page numbers on each page (except title page, if one is used);
• Double-spaced, word-processed using Microsoft Word, with one-inch top, bottom, and side margins;
• Standard 12-point font;
• Assigned length exclusive of reference list; and
• Appropriate use of references to include: proper citation for all quotations and use of the ideas of others, and complete bibliography for agency paper (works consulted as well as works cited) and reference list for final paper.

Any paper submitted that does not follow these requirements will be returned for correction and resubmission and will be considered a late submission. Additional assistance for citing web sources is found in *The Chicago manual of style online* at [http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html)

C. Deadlines

All assignments must be submitted on time. Work submitted after it is due usually will be evaluated, if it is submitted within one week of the due date, but the grade will be reduced at least one letter grade. *Assignments submitted more than one week late will not be accepted.* Exceptions will be made only for illness or extraordinary emergency, and arrangements in these circumstances are the responsibility of the student.

**Student Evaluation of Course and Instruction**

At the end of the semester, each student will be asked to complete a standard evaluation form that elicits opinions about the quality and relevance of course content and the quality of instruction. The instructor will not see course evaluations until well after grades have been turned in to the registrar's office. This student input is used by the instructor for improving course content, teaching delivery efforts, and by the School for annual assessment and tenure and promotion decisions. This evaluation is administered online by the College of Arts and Sciences.

**Related Policies**

A. Incompletes

The Graduate College has strict conditions under which a student is given an incomplete in a regularly scheduled, letter-graded course. A grade of Incomplete (I) will be given only for a justifiable reason (due to unavoidable circumstances, not lack of planning on the student’s part) and only if the student is passing the course. It is the responsibility of the student to request a grade of “I” and to meet with the instructor as early as possible to determine the requirements for completing the course. Any incomplete granted must be removed by the deadline specified by the instructor. The time limit set for removal of an incomplete will take into account the circumstances of the situation but may not exceed one calendar year.
B. Class Participation

Since both small group and class discussion is a part of this course, active participation is expected. To participate effectively in this online course, the course web site should be visited several times a week to check for updates and announcements, postings in your small group discussion, and postings to the class discussion board. Student participation in the course through use of the course web site will be monitored through the course management system.

As noted in the OU SLIS Graduate Student Handbook:

Fundamentally, responsibility for education at the graduate level belongs to the individual student. Faculties provide the basic frame in which the study is undertaken, offer assistance in setting the parameters of study, and serve as facilitators and mentors. This approach to the learning environment is particularly necessary as a conceptual framework for the development of information professionals who must exercise critical thinking, analyze problems, and design solutions as a daily part of their work life, who must be independent and lifelong learners who also function effectively as team members in a diverse and dynamic information environment.

It is the policy of the University to excuse absences of students that result from religious observances and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of examinations and additional required class work that may fall on religious holidays. Students who plan to observe a religious holiday should notify the instructor as soon as possible in order to make appropriate arrangements.

C. Codes and Policies of Behavior

To protect its faculty and students, the School fully subscribes to the University's codes, policies, and procedures involving academic integrity and academic misconduct, grievances, sexual and ethnic harassment, and discrimination based on physical disability. You should acquaint yourself with both your responsibilities and your protections. Links are available from http://www.ou.edu/provost/pronew/.

D. Special Accommodations

Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent full demonstration of the student's abilities should contact the instructor in person as soon as possible to discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and to facilitate educational opportunities.

Please advise the instructor of such disability on the first day that this course site is open. The instructor will work with you and the Disability Resource Center to provide reasonable accommodations. The Disability Resource Center accepts requests from students for reasonable accommodation after the student has self-identified as an individual with a disability. The Disability Resource Center in Norman is located in Goddard Health Center, Suite 166, phone 405/325-3852 or TDD only 405/325-4173. Students in Tulsa should contact OU-Tulsa Student Affairs located in Room 1C 53, phone 918/660-3107.
**Academic Integrity**

"Honesty is a fundamental precept in all academic activities, and those privileged to be members of a university community have a special obligation to observe the highest standards of honesty and a right to expect the same standards of all others. Academic misconduct in any form is inimical to the purposes and functions of the university and therefore is unacceptable and rigorously proscribed." *University of Oklahoma Academic Misconduct Code*

You are required to understand and adhere to expectations for the academic integrity of your work and therefore you are required to read and carefully review the items posted at the URLs listed below.

Academic Integrity [http://www.ou.edu/provost/integrity/](http://www.ou.edu/provost/integrity/)


Examples of plagiarism [http://www.ou.edu/provost/integrity/plagiarismexample.html](http://www.ou.edu/provost/integrity/plagiarismexample.html)


**Writing Center**

Assistance in writing and in interpreting the standards for observance of the rules for use of ideas and material of others is available from the OU Writing Centers. Online assistance is available at [http://www.ou.edu/writingcenter/](http://www.ou.edu/writingcenter/). In Norman, the ConocoPhillips Writing Center is located in Room 280 Wagner Hall. In Tulsa, the OU/Tulsa Writing Center is located in Schusterman Campus Room 1C53.

**Disclaimer**

This syllabus represents the plan for this course and will be followed to the extent that it is feasible to do so in meeting the instructional goals of the course and the needs of the class. However, it is not and should not be interpreted as a contract between the student and the instructor. If necessary, due either to unforeseen circumstances or to unanticipated variations in class progress, it may be changed or adjusted as needed.

*John T. Snead 2011 ©

*This syllabus has been prepared using the historical syllabi for the Government Publications Course, 1985-2005, as well as other current LIS syllabi.*