ILT 104  
Information Retrieval and Evaluation Skills for the Social Sciences

Instructor: Amy Paterson (amy.paterson@ubishops.ca)  
Office: Reference Office (Library 132)  
Phone #: 819-822-9600 ext.2608  
Course Location: Library Orientation Room  
Office Hours: Monday 10am-12pm, Thursday 3pm-4pm, or by appointment

The objective of this course is to introduce students to the skills necessary to effectively complete their research assignments. Topics will include the correct use of library resources, including the online catalogue, periodical indexes, and other relevant databases. Other areas of study include the identification of key terms for effective searching, productive use of the Internet, and the critical evaluation of retrieved resources. Academic integrity, plagiarism and the correct citation of print and online sources in APA style are also taught. The course is practical, and students are given the opportunity for hands-on experience in the library's electronic classroom.

The course will be taught over 7 weeks, the last of these being an in-class final exam. Each session will be an hour and a half long, with the first half typically reserved for lecture and the second half for lab work.

Objectives

By the end of the course, students will have acquired a broad range of skills that will enable them to complete research assignments successfully.

- Students will have an understanding of the research process and develop critical thinking skills.

- Students will be able to define a research topic, identify key concepts with related search terms, and use these concepts within the framework of controlled vocabularies to locate appropriate research material.

- Students will be able to search and retrieve relevant print and online material from the library's resources.

- Students will be able to analyse and evaluate the quality and appropriateness of the material they retrieve from both the library and the Internet.

- Students will understand the difference between different types of resources (ie. primary v. secondary, scholarly v. non-scholarly) and be able to determine which would be most relevant in a given situation.

- Students will be capable of compiling and building a working, annotated bibliography.

- Students will understand how to avoid plagiarism and how to cite references properly using the APA citation style.
Evaluation

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lab Assignments (6)</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<td>Participation</td>
<td>5%</td>
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*Unless otherwise indicated, all assignments are to be completed individually and submitted electronically through Moodle*

Annotated Bibliography

This assignment can be completed in conjunction with a major research paper from one of your other courses. Please see the Moodle course for the full assignment description. Late bibliographies will be docked an automatic 5% per day (including weekends).

Lab Assignments

Lab assignments are to be completed during the second half of each class and are due before the end of class, unless otherwise indicated. Late lab assignments will **NOT be accepted**. There are six labs in total, worth 25% of your mark for the course, and I will drop your lowest mark.

Final Exam

The final exam will be completed in class on your last class. If for any reason, you are unable to attend this class, you must let me know in advance.

Participation

Participation is worth 5% of your mark, which you can obtain by contributing questions or helpful comments each week.

Course Outline

**Week 1—January 14**

*Lab #1 due at the end of class*

Topics to be covered:
- Introduction to ILT 101, review of the syllabus
- Introduction to the John Bassett Library
- Locating items in the BORIS catalogue
- Keywords, subject headings, Boolean operators

**Week 2—January 21**

*Lab #2 due at the end of class*

Topics to be covered:
- The research process
- What makes a source scholarly?
• Introduction to databases

**Week 3—January 28**
*Lab #3 due at the beginning of next class*

Topics to be covered:
• Writing a research paper—constructing a thesis statement, citing sources, composing a reference list
• APA format and citation style
• Plagiarism

**Week 4—February 4**
*Lab #4 due at the end of class*

Topics to be covered:
• Annotated bibliographies: What? Why? How?
• Alternatives to scholarly sources
• Critically evaluating resources
• If you’re going to search Google…

**Week 5—February 11**
*Lab #5 due at the end of class*

Topics to be covered:
• Canadian statistics sources

**Week 6—February 18**
*Lab #6 due at the end of class*

Topics to be covered:
• International statistics sources

**Week 7—February 25**

*Final in-class exam! Good luck!!*