I. Course Information:

**Online Database Searching and Services**

**LIS 605-1**

Thursday, 6:30-8:50 p.m.

r. 518

**Prerequisite: LIS-651(451)**

II. Instructor Information:

**Irene Lopatovska**

Email: ilopatov@pratt.edu

Phone: (will be given in class)

Listserv:

III. Course Description:

**Bulletin Description:** An introduction to computer searching methods in reference services is presented. Strategies and their relationship to the structure and content of on-line databases and CD-ROMs and the evaluation of search results are included. Emphasis is on laboratory experience with a wide range of databases as provided by vendors. Prerequisites: Take LIS-652(451); Sections of this course are reserved for graduate level students. May not be repeated.

**Detailed Description:** The course addresses the principles and practices associated with searching of a variety of information resources.

The course covers topics related to:

1. The content of various information resources;
2. Different models of information retrieval systems;
3. Principles of effective searching and various search strategies;
4. The process of mediation and interviewing;
5. Evaluation and presentation of search results;
6. The issues of professional concerns, such as professional ethics and life-long learning.

The course includes laboratory exercises using a variety of resources from vendors, such as DIALOG and LEXIS/NEXIS, the web, and digital libraries.

**Course Goals:**

The primary goal of the course is to introduce students to the philosophy, techniques and strategies of effective searching of contemporary information resources on behalf of users seeking information. The course covers both theoretical and practical aspects of searching in order to prepare students to cope with the ever-changing world of searching. The objectives are for students to achieve an integrated understanding of the complex relations in searching.

**Student Learning Objectives:**

1. Understand the basics of computer searching.
2. Understand and perform database searching.
3. Conduct a pre-search interview to identify user needs.
4. Develop and execute different search strategies and tactics.
5. Evaluate different electronic information sources.
6. Present search results to the end user.
7. Continue building familiarity with various electronic resources in varying disciplines, domains and formats.

Course Calendar/Schedule [subject to change]:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session #</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lectures &amp; Practice</th>
<th>Readings*</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
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<td>History</td>
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<td>User Modeling</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Library tour (6:30pm)</td>
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<td>Obtain and test logins to Dialog, Lexis/Nexis, Factiva</td>
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<td>Introduction to Pratt databases</td>
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<td>Exercise – test your internet browsing skills!</td>
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Access Pratt library electronic resources page and browse the collection of E-References. Access the following databases:

- **Business & Company Resource Center** (Gale)
- **Art Retrospective** (WilsonWeb)
- **EBSCO General Science Collection**

What subjects are covered and what particular titles are included in these databases? What search options are available in each database?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic/Activity</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Suggestion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dialog Corporation. <em>Successful searching on Dialog</em> (<a href="http://support.dialog.com/searchaids/success/">http://support.dialog.com/searchaids/success/</a>)</td>
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<td>A comprehensive manual. Includes detailed definitions of commands and a variety of features.</td>
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<td>&quot;Welcome to Dialog. This guide offers an introduction to help you get started using Dialog, the most powerful information resource in the world.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Page(s)</td>
<td>Section(s)</td>
<td>Tasks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Dialog Presentation</td>
<td>Review Dialog support materials and prepare your questions for the Dialog representative</td>
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</table>
Start Exercise 4 – Dialog and Search Engines |
| Oct. 30 | 9 | Practicing session |  |
| Nov. 6 | 10 | Digital Libraries  
Submit Exercise 4 |
| Nov. 13 | 11 | Information Retrieval  
Models  
Term Project Progress Reports |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Reference</th>
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<tr>
<td>13 Nov. 27</td>
<td>no class</td>
<td>Thanksgiving</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Submit Exercise 6 Be ready to discuss your term project progress Start Exercise 7 Exercise 8</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


16 Dec. 18

*If you do not like any of the assigned readings, please, find an appropriate substitute.

**IV. Course Requirements:**

**Textbook**


**Readings**


Ross, C. S. (2003). The reference interview: why it needs to be used in every (well, almost every) reference transaction. Reference and User Services Quarterly, 43 (1), 38-41


**Online manuals:**

Dialog Corporation. *Dialog New User Guide*. (http://support.dialog.com(guides/dialog_new_user/) "Welcome to Dialog. This guide offers an introduction to help you get started using Dialog, the most powerful information resource in the world."

Dialog Corporation. *Successful searching on Dialog*  (http://support.dialog.com/searchaids/success/) A comprehensive manual. Includes detailed definitions of commands and a variety of features.


**Student conduct and grading**

All assignments must be completed to receive a passing grade in the course.
Assignments must be submitted on time, so that they can be graded consistently and discussed in the class session following the due date. Put the date of submission on the cover page as well as your name, the course number, and the title of the assignment.

Except for documented medical and family emergencies, assignments submitted late will receive a lower grade, for the following reasons:

a) students who take more time to prepare their assignments have an unfair advantage over their classmates; (b) students who submit their assignments late often benefit from the review in class of their colleagues’ errors.

All assignments must be submitted electronically.

Exercises

Exercises are designed to help you master searching skills. Exercises will consist of practical tasks related to searching. For example, you will be asked to use DIALOG, LexisNexis, web search engines, and library resources to search for answers to given questions or explore features of these systems. Exercise problems will be posted on the class website. You will submit exercises electronically on the dates indicated in the Course Calendar. Some exercises will be done in class; others will be your homework assignments.

Exercises can be done in groups of 2-4 students – you will be given extra points for your teamwork! You are encouraged to change your group members. You are also encouraged to report on the team members who do not sufficiently contribute to assignments – your feedback impacts their participation grade!

The more thorough the execution and presentation of results the higher the grade!

Participation

Each student will be asked to select a lecture topic in which he/she will be an “expert”. Being an “expert” implies reading assigned literature extra thoroughly and being prepared to lead class discussion.

We will be discussing readings and assignments in class. Particular format of class discussions will be reviewed in class.

The higher and more substantive participation the higher the grade!

Missing classes

When you have to miss a class, please, notify the instructor and submit a 0.5-1 page summary of an article/chapter that you have read for the missing class.

Students with 3 absences* (for any reason, including documented medical reasons) can not expect to receive an A in the course

Students with 4 absences* or more will be asked to drop the course

Email communication
Term project (Paper and Presentation)

The term project is designed for you to perform a real search on behalf of a real user and summarize your findings in a paper.

1) You have to select a user who has a real information need that can be satisfied by searching DIALOG, LexisNexis, the web or other online information sources. [If you have difficulties locating a user, consult your peers. They might know more than one user with the information need]

2) Interview your user to find out the information need. If the need is complex (as I hope it is), you will interview your user several times to refine your search strategies.

3) Select your information sources and come up with the appropriate strategy.

4) Evaluate your results and make necessary adjustments to your search strategies.

5) Present results of your search to a user.

6) Keep records of steps 1 – 5 and write a paper based on your records. In your report:

- Describe a user (professional/personal affiliations), why you selected him/her, what is his/her information need.
- Describe how you interviewed a user. Did the user have a clear understanding of his/her need? Was the need clearly communicated? Did you have to have several conversations with the user in order to perform the most effective and efficient search? What was your overall experience with the interview process?
- Provide rationale for selecting information sources.
- Describe your evaluation techniques. Did you compare several results? How did you select the final answer for the user? Did you have to refine your search strategies in the search process?
- Describe how you presented your results to a user. If you communicated the results of your search in a written document, please, attach a copy of a document to your paper. [Respect your user’s anonymity. Remove all personal information that can reveal user’s identity].
- Describe your experience, what you learned, what you would have done differently.

The paper should not exceed 20 double spaced pages (excluding appendix).

The final paper is due on the last day of class.

Format

It is important to follow consistent format for all your assignments. The suggested format is APA [the course bibliography is an example of the APA style]:

All written assignments must have the following information in the top left corner of the front page:
student's name,
course number,
assignment or exercise number as listed in the Syllabus

If references to other works (articles, books,..) are included in the summary, they must be properly cited in the summary, e.g. Tenopir (2004).

All written assignments must double-spaced throughout.

Grading:

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\text{Grading} & = & \\
A & = & 4.0 \\
A- & = & 3.7 \\
B+ & = & 3.3 \\
B & = & 3.0 \\
B- & = & 2.7 \\
C+ & = & 2.3 \\
C & = & 2.0 \\
F & = & 0 \\
\end{array}
\]

For details on Pratt Institute grading system please refer to the Graduate Bulletin.

Grades for students' work will be determined as follows:

Exercise 1: 0%
Exercise 2: 9%
Exercise 3: 9%
Exercise 4: 0%
Exercise 5: 9%
Exercise 6: 9%
Exercise 7: 9%
Exercise 8: 0%
Class Participation: 15%
Term Project Presentation: 15%
Term Project Paper: 25%
TOTAL 100%

IV. Policies
Institute-wide policies listed in the “Community Standards” section of the bulletin.