

# IS 553: SPECIALIZED INFORMATION AGENCIES AND SERVICES

## SYLLABUS

Summer 2015

Objectives – Textbooks -- Assignments & Grading -- Class Policies

*“Whether termed ‘librarians’ or ‘information professionals,’ special librarians...have to be aware of management interests and to respond to these by providing a customized, tailor-made service; special librarians must be flexible, resourceful and knowledgeable about information resources. They must be both generalist and specialist in many fields: they must be pragmatic, and they must have the imagination to seek information from unlikely sources.” ---Peter Drucker*

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### **Course Description**

People who perform information services in organizations have various titles. Two of the most traditional are special librarian and information resources manager; people with these titles usually have responsibility for a collection and a service facility. Other titles include market researcher, competitive intelligence specialist, information analyst, knowledge manager or simply research associate; people with these titles gather and analyze external information, compare it to internal information and compile summary reports. People working in knowledge management often help formalize communities of practice and create databases for internal “tacit” knowledge of work practices. Still other information professionals work independently and run their own businesses.

Two examples of typical titles for self-employed librarians are information broker or information consultant.

Although titles differ and the organizational context affects the nature of services delivered, a common knowledge base and theoretical framework undergirds all these positions. Additionally, they share a need for a common set of professional and personal competencies. The knowledge base and theoretical framework for the class comes from the knowledge management literature. Relevant applications are drawn from the library/information science (LIS) literature in particular from the Special Libraries Association (SLA), the professional society for over 8,000 information professionals worldwide. Within the course, professional and personal competencies promulgated by SLA:

<http://www.sla.org/about-sla/competencies/>

## Objectives of the Course

"The core of knowledge management is the organization of processes in which new knowledge is developed, knowledge is distributed to those who need it knowledge is made accessible for current and future use and use by the whole organization and knowledge areas are combined."

The goal of the instructor is that each student learns:

- To define potential career paths in knowledge management
- To investigate current trends in knowledge management and their manifestations in business and industry
- To design appropriate information services with accompanying performance measures for a specific organizational environment
- To examine and practice management competencies in the framework of knowledge organizations
- To achieve self-reliance and self-confidence in presenting the need for information services to upper level management and other members of the organization.
- To develop strategies for continual development of leadership skills

## Textbooks

“The ultimate corporate resource has become information-the ultimate competitive advantage is the ability to use it-the sum of the two is knowledge management.” – Nigel Oxbow

Two textbooks have been selected for the class:

Carla O'Dell and Cindy Hubert. *THE NEW EDGE IN KNOWLEDGE: How Knowledge Management Is Changing the Way We Do Business*. Hoboken, NJ : John Wiley & Sons, 2011. ISBN 978-0-470-91739-8 (hardback).

Moran, Barbara B. and Stueart, Robert D. *LIBRARY AND INFORMATION CENTER MANAGEMENT* 8<sup>th</sup> ed. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2013. ISBN 978-1-59884-989-9 (pbk)

These texts provide complementary approaches. The Moran book was completely updated and chapters were added on topics such as ethics and marketing which we will discuss throughout the semester with a particular focus on corporate settings. The O'Dell book has a practical focus on knowledge management (KM) techniques including social media and mobile technologies while setting the context of learning what questions to ask so the right decision can be made at the right time. Especially in corporate settings the process of leveraging knowledge is a strategy for gaining a competitive advantage in the marketplace.

Additionally, you will want to explore other readings on relevant topics that are applicable to your chosen career path. To this end, you are invited to share one substantive reading for each class. The reading can come from the professional or business literature; it can be an article in a news magazine or newspaper, a chapter from a book (there are several on reserve for the class), a website or blog that you find helpful. The outside readings are to be posted to the course Blackboard site so all members of the class can access them. Your skill in concisely summarizing the key points of the reading will be good practice.

## Assignments and Grading

The course will be conducted by lecture, classroom discussion and assignments. Readings will extend the understanding of possible career options as well as the dynamics of particular settings and functional activities. You will want to participate actively and regularly in the class through postings to the Blackboard forum and regular attendance. Active involvement is fundamental to learning.

Providing encouragement to fellow classmates through your constructive comments, questions and suggestions will help to create an effective and enjoyable learning environment and will make you a good citizen of the class.

Six assignments are planned for you to develop appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes. You may propose an alternative assignment for any of the assignments. If you have particular needs and interests; the chances are high that we can work out an accommodation.

The assignments will be described in detail and posted to the Blackboard site.

Below are the grading weights for the assignments and your class participation:

### **Assignments**

Class Participation	10%
Assignment 1: Career Journal, Chapter One	15%
Assignment 2: Profile of an Industry	15%
Assignment 3: Environmental Analysis of an Organization	15%
Assignment 4: Designing Service Offerings with Performance Measures	15%
Assignment 5: Developing a Marketing Plan	15%
Assignment 6: Issue Paper on Your Choice of Topic	15%

The first and last assignments are individual. The second assignment is to be done as a team. Assignments 3, 4, and 5 may be done individually or as a team. If the latter option is chosen, all members of the team will receive the same grade unless there is overwhelming evidence why it should be otherwise.

My expectation is that all of you will do well and pass the course with a solid B; some of you will do outstanding work that will merit an A. Here are the SIS departmental graduate class standards:

A	Excellent	93% & above
B+	Very Good	86-92%
B	Good	80-85%
C+	Marginal	75-79%
C	Below graduate level	70-74%

## Class Policies

“The people who get on in the world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and, if they can’t find them, make them.” –

George Bernard Shaw

With the exception of the individual assignments, collaboration with your classmates is highly desirable and encouraged. Sharing your work and giving and receiving assistance from others in the class is valuable. My major interest is in your learning which will best proceed as we share questions, answers and experiences.

We will work from a schedule which will be handed out separately and is available on Blackboard. It shows the topics, readings, assignments and class activities. We may deviate from the schedule as opportunity arises, but if so, we will make sure you have sufficient notice about the change. Please plan to set aside each week about three-four hours for assigned readings, about three-four hours in planning and writing your assignments and three hours for class time.

Class policies which you should be aware of:

- All assignment due dates are posted in advance. Reading assignments should be done before each week’s live session (except for the first session). Any major changes in the schedule will be announced in class a week ahead of time and also posted on the “Announcements” section of the Blackboard site.

- It is my intention to make the class interesting and engaging for all of you.