

<b>ONLINE SEARCHING</b>  <b>MLIS 7110</b>  <b>SYLLABUS</b>	Class 14: Client Issues  Research Paper 3 Notes & Guidelines  Research Paper 3 Due 12/6
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## CATALOG DESCRIPTION

An introduction to information retrieval from popular online databases, to include the World Wide Web. The course addresses key concepts such as Boolean and keyword searches and the development of complex search strategies and algorithms. Prerequisite or corequisite: MLIS 7000.

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## COURSE OUTCOMES

1. Given a series of online searching exercises that simulate real-world client questions, students will be able to mediate the search process by:

- Interviewing the client to verify the information need(s)
- Selecting resources appropriate to the client's need
- Translating research questions into effective search statements

Locating actual source materials or delivering information to clients  
Evaluating the success of their search efforts

2. After completing research projects, students will develop a sense of the electronic information search environment at large, including the commercial database marketplace and free Web resources.

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## TEXTBOOK

*Online Retrieval: A Dialogue of Theory and Practice, 2nd edition* by Geraldine Walker and Joseph Janes. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited. Copyright 1999.

The text is available used through many online booksellers. The quickest way to obtain the print copy is through an out-of-print book service such as Alibris, ABE, or Addall. You can also try to obtain a copy through Interlibrary Loan.

Also, the text is an electronic book and is linked from the catalogs of many USG libraries through **GIL - GALILEO Interconnected Libraries** for the University System of Georgia. To access this electronic version from off-campus requires using a GALILEO password. Follow the link from inside the catalog record and you'll see the screen with links to "View" or "Checkout" the book. Checkout means only you can use the book for a four-hour period. Selecting "View" will let you go in and read the pages assigned, then lets you exit immediately so that the book is free for the next user. Printing online pages is restricted due to copyright laws.

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## METHODOLOGY

The class is predominantly an online course with most materials accessible via the Web. The syllabus includes links to these materials (e.g., lecture notes, illustrated explanations, guided search demonstrations, and articles). At least one face-to-face Saturday meeting will be required (on the Macon campus) with a second such meeting as an option. Adjunct materials provided by Dialog will be mailed to each student. Background reading will be assigned from your textbook and a few select articles.

In a virtual class such as this one, "attending class" becomes a matter of checking the class Web site for week-by-week learning activities and completing assignments according to due dates. Instruction will take place in seven basic assignment formats:

1. Readings (from your text or articles)
2. Review Exercises (to self-test your recall of concepts and terminology)
3. Online Tutorials & Demonstrations (to introduce you to database features and illustrate searching principles)
4. Guided Searches (directions provided in instructor's notes or from the Dialog manual step you through searches)
5. Feedback from Guided Searches (your reactions, successes, questions e-mailed routinely to the instructor)
6. Independent Searches (you perform searches on assigned topics without assistance and submit results)
7. Online Research Projects (submitted as papers)

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- **Completion of Review Exercises:**  
Assignments accompanying introduction of new material that allow you to test your ability to apply the terminology, concepts, and rules from that learning session will be included in selected lessons.
- **Viewing Tutorials & Demonstrations / Performing Guided Searches:**  
Tutorials, demonstrations of online resource features, and step-by-step instructions for searching these resources will be the focus of a number of class sessions. Links to these activities will be posted on the Web site. Completing these early on in the week will allow time to ask for additional guidance, if needed.
- **Submitting Feedback on Guided Searches:**  
Your reactions to these sessions will help the instructor to judge the effectiveness of the learning activities. Your feedback should be submitted to the instructor via e-mail immediately after you complete a guided search activity.
- **Conducting/Submitting Independent Searches:**  
Assignments that evaluate your ability to apply search techniques without assistance accompany most guided search sessions. The terms selected, search strategies used, and final results must be submitted to the instructor via e-mail before the date of the next class.\*
- **Research Paper #1: Annotated Database List**  
Select 10 databases (8 single-focus / 2 multi-disciplinary) from the USG University Core list or from the Valdosta list. Compile these into an annotated list. Annotations for each database entry must include: (1) Origin (society, agency, publisher that produces or publishes the database); (2) Subject coverage; (3) Date ranges of coverage; (4) Format (bibliographic index or abstract, numerical, full-text, other); (5) Type of material indexed (scholarly, professional, popular, other); (6) Frequency of updates (daily, weekly, monthly, etc.); and (7) Vendors that provide subscriptions to this database (if databases are available from more than one vendor, list as many companies as you find). At the end of your list, include a paragraph or two describing the sources that you used to find information about each database. Annotations should be short. Samples of annotations will be provided as guides. Paper should be no more than two or three typed pages.\* List of databases due September 7th. Final annotated list due September 21st.
- **Research Paper #2: Topic Comparison Searches**  
The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL, a Division of ALA) publishes a column called "Internet Resources" in its monthly publication *College and Research Libraries News*. Each column is a bibliography of resources on the Web pertaining to a particular subject or discipline. First visit the "Internet Resources Index" <<http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlpubs/crlnews/internetresources.htm>> to view a list of these bibliographies. Next, select a topic of interest to you and examine the bibliography on that subject. You will find that the topics are very broad (e.g., Dance, Physics, etc.). Select a more specific topic within one of these fields, preferably a topic with at least two facets to it, and one that would be a challenge to research for a client. For example, under Dance as a broad topic, you might focus on "ballet productions of Swan Lake." Under Physics, you might have a client interested in "government funding for particle accelerators." The bibliographies themselves may provide ideas for a topic. Once you have selected a topic, conduct searches using: (1) at least five of the cited Web sites from the ACRL bibliography and two general search engines. Look for any "vended" databases on the bibliography, and, if one of the databases is available through GALILEO, search your topic in it. If the bibliographer does not include any vended databases, select a database from GALILEO that you think might be appropriate for your topic and perform a search there. Write a paper reporting on the online sources you used and the level of success you achieved in gathering information from these sources with an emphasis on evaluating your findings (how much information you found, the quality/nature of the information you found, sample searches used). Would you return to these resources for this particular topic? Why or why not? Paper should be 5-6 typed pages, double-spaced, not including cover sheet.\* Deadline for submission is October 18th.
- **Final Research Paper: Documented Paper on an Online Searching Topic**  
Select a topic pertaining to online searching. Then, research it in the scholarly literature (articles from professional or refereed journals and reports, no newsletters or newspaper articles) using a selection of online databases covered in this course. The databases you select must include both DIALOG files and GALILEO databases. The topic you choose may

represent a practice-based approach to online searching (e.g., managing a fee-based online searching service) or a more theoretical perspective (e.g. research on relevance judgements of online search results). Identify 15 articles from professional or scholarly publications that seem the most relevant to your search and create a bibliography. The bibliography must conform to an identifiable citation style format (e.g., MLA or APA). Next, read at least 5 articles from your list of 15 citations and use the information from these articles to write an opinion paper on the topic. Attach your bibliography of citations and an appendix showing samples of search algorithms you used. Identify the databases used for each of these. A samples bibliography and search history appendix will be provided as guides. The paper with attachments should be about 10 pages (not including cover sheet), with the body of the paper double-spaced.\* Deadline for submission is December 6th.

\*All papers should be created in MS Word or saved as a RichTextFile on WordPerfect.

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## SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS

Readings, Tutorials & Demonstrations, and Guided Searches are largely for your own self-learning, but a few Review Exercises will be "collected" for instructor comment and evaluation. ALL Independent Searches must be submitted to the instructor for evaluation. ALL Research Papers must be submitted as well. Class materials will be posted every Wednesday of each class week, and exercises or searches to be submitted for that week will be explained.

The link called [This Week's Class](#) located at the top of this Syllabus will take you directly to those materials. The assignment exercises or searches posted on Wednesday are *due no later than the following Tuesday* unless otherwise stated on that week's notice. Online Research Project papers are due as marked on the [Course Requirements](#) section. If you miss a deadline for a graded activity, you will lose all credit for that activity unless you can arrange a mutually acceptable alternative with the instructor. Students who miss deadlines for any one of the three Online Research Project papers (for any reason) will be subject to a reduction of one letter grade for that particular paper.

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## GRADING

Letter grades will be assigned to each Research Paper separately and will count toward your final grade as:

- 15% Research Paper #1: Annotated Database List
- 20% Research Paper #2: Topic Comparison Searches
- 25% Final Research Paper #3: Documented Paper on an Online Searching Topic

Three letter grades will be assigned to your performance in the other assigned activities and will count toward your final grade as:

- 25% Independent Searches
- 10% Guided Search feedback
- 5% Review Exercises

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## ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

"Valdosta State University expects that graduate students will pursue their academic endeavors and conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner. All work that a student presents

to satisfy course requirements should represent his or her own efforts, including appropriate use and acknowledgement of external sources."

Specific regulations related to student conduct and behavior are contained in the *Student Handbook*, *Student Code of Ethics*. Please acquaint yourself with the full [VSU policy on academic dishonesty](#).

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**SPECIAL NEEDS STATEMENT**

Valdosta State University is an equal opportunity educational institution. It is not the intent of our institution to discriminate against any applicant for admission or any student or employee of the institution based on the sex, race, religion, color, national origin, or the handicap of the individual. It is the intent of the institution to comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and subsequent executive orders as well as the Title IX section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Students requiring classroom accommodations or modifications because of a documented disability should discuss this need with the professor at the beginning of the semester. Students not registered with the Special Services Program should contact Special Services in Nevins Hall, Room 2164, 229-245-2498.

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