

VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY  
MASTER OF LIBRARY & INFORMATION SCIENCE  
MLIS 7110 Online Searching  
Syllabus—Spring Semester 2008  
Three Credit Hours

**Instructor:**

Anita Ondrusek, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor  
MLIS Program  
Valdosta State University  
Office Phone: 229-333-5860  
E-mail: [alondrus@valdosta.edu](mailto:alondrus@valdosta.edu)

**Catalog Description**

An introduction to the 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.

**Course Outcomes**

Given a series of online searching exercises that simulate real-world client questions, students will demonstrate the ability to:

- Interview a client to verify information need(s)
- Identify searchable resources appropriate to information need(s)
- Translate research questions into effective and efficient search statements
- Navigate to and from adjunct files (indices, thesauri, saved documents)
- Interpret results output (citations, full records, full-text formats)
- Preserve findings in a form most accessible to the client
- Locate actual source materials or deliver location information to clients
- Evaluate the success of their own search efforts

Given a real-world environment of online information retrieval products, students will be able to draw comparisons among:

- Commercial vendors and marketplaces
- Databases of varying content, scope, format
- Interfaces based on usability
- Indexing and controlled vocabulary features
- Free Web resources

**Attendance**

This is a Web-delivered course with weekly assignments and most materials accessible via the Vista/WebCT course site. It is each student's responsibility to check the Vista/WebCT course pages as spelled out in the Course Calendar which will be posted on the WebCT course page the first day of class.

## Textbooks

*EBSCOhost User Guide August 2007.*  
support.epnet.com/uploads/kb/en\_ehostusr0707.doc

*Introduction to DIALOG for Information Professionals.*  
<http://gep.dialog.com/instruction/workbook/>  
Sections 1-8 may be downloaded as pdf files.  
Print copy covering Sections 1-4 supplied free to graduate LIS programs.  
Students will receive your copies in the mail.

## Instructor Availability & Support

Dr. Ondrusek checks her e-mail and telephone messages at least once daily throughout normal business hours (M-F, 9-5). By institutional policy, instructors are asked to communicate with students online through VSU accounts (WebCT/Vista and BlazeNet e-mail). If you are registered for the course as a non-degree student, a BlazeNet account will be assigned to you for this semester. Your BlazeNet login and password serve as your WebCT/Vista login and password. The BlazeNet login page is at <http://luminis.valdosta.edu/cp/home/loginf>.

All discussion posts and assignment submissions for this online course must be sent via WebCT/Vista. In the case that we encounter technical problems with the WebCT software, group e-mail assignments will be routed through BlazeNet. For instructions on using a student BlazeNet account, go to: <http://www.valdosta.edu/helpdesk/guides/blazenet/>.

## Graded Course Requirements

As a student in this class, you are expected to: (1) read or view all assigned background materials; (2) participate in all online discussions and class follow-up activities; (3) check the WebCT course site regularly for messages and posted materials; and (4) submit all projects on time and according to the format designated by the instructor. Assignments are usually graded on a 4.0 (A) to 1.0 (F) scale with plus and minus grades scaled in-between (e.g., 3.7=A minus and 3.5=B plus; 2.7=B minus and 2.5=C plus).

Independent Search Sets 2 sets of search problems will be assigned	40%
Discussion Posts	10%
Research Project #1 Commercial vendor and database analysis	15%
Research Project #2 Web search engine comparison	10%
Final Project Documented paper showing your search techniques on multiple databases to find materials on a multi-faceted topic for a client. Examples of your search histories and consultations with the client (who will be a classmate) must also be described.	25%

## Grading

Your final grade will be one of these letter grades:

Exceptionally exceeds minimum standards	A
Exceeds minimum standards	B
Meets minimum standards	C
Barely meets minimum standards	D
Fails to meet minimum standards	F

## Submitting Assignments

Deadlines for each graded activity are clearly stated on the MLIS 7110 Course Calendar posted on the course home page on Vista. Missing a deadline for any activity will result in a reduction in your grade unless you can arrange a mutually acceptable alternative with the instructor.

## Technical Requirements

All class materials will be placed on a password-protected Web site using the WebCT/Vista course management program. If you are a new WebCT user, go to the WebCT/Vista help pages at <http://www.valdosta.edu/vista/>. On the right margin are “Self Help” links. View the “Getting Started” tutorial first. Then return to the WebCT/Vista page and login using your BlazeNet email ID and password.

All Independent Searches and Projects must be submitted using a program compatible with VSU supported products. The preferred document format is **MS Word 2007**. Lower versions of MS Word are acceptable. If you are using WordPerfect or sharing documents with classmates who have a different version of Word, save your documents in Rich Text Format (rtf). Documents that can not be opened on VSU equipment will be returned to you for re-formatting. Keep electronic backup copies of each assignment and project you submit.

To view assigned guided searches and online tutorials, you will need the Adobe Acrobat Reader, the Flash viewer, and the PowerPoint Viewer (if you have PowerPoint, you have the Viewer already). So far, MLIS students and instructors have found that saving Powerpoint 2007 down to version 2003 is the best method to use for transfer to WebCT. Printing out guided searches and keeping them as reference materials for your independent search assignments is recommended, so a printer is necessary.

The university’s Information Technology department provides step-by-step guides on how to use VSU’s email and other sources. The IT Help Desk is at <http://www.valdosta.edu/helpdesk/guides/> and their phone hot line is 229-245-4357.

## Distance Learning Support

A VSU reference librarian, Ms. Shiloh Smith, is responsible for coordinating library services for off-campus VSU students. She may be reached by email at [shismith@valdosta.edu](mailto:shismith@valdosta.edu) or by phone at 229-245-3717. An online guide for distance education students is on the Odum Library Web site at [http://www.valdosta.edu/library/services/revised\\_students.pdf](http://www.valdosta.edu/library/services/revised_students.pdf).

## **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 policy at <http://coefaculty.valdosta.edu/trout/eced4300/Academic%20Dishonesty.doc>.

## **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 (ttv).

## **Student Agreement**

Enrollment in this class signifies that the student has agreed to abide by and adhere to the policies and regulations specified above. It is understood that the instructor may adapt or change this syllabus and the assignments contained within it according to circumstances that may arise during the course of the semester.