

**VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY
MASTER OF LIBRARY & INFORMATION SCIENCE**

**MLIS 7355 Advanced Classification
Syllabus--Fall Semester 2004**

Instructor

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Course Objectives

As a result of the course, students will grow in their ability to

1. Classify library materials using Library of Congress verbal and numeric schemes.
2. Classify library materials using Dewey Decimal Classification.
3. Apply the principles of thesaurus construction and use.
4. Identify and interpret relevant documentation and tools.

Mode of Delivery

Blended: Video conferencing over IP + WebCT.

Class Meetings

Saturdays, 10-5. Aug 28, Oct 2, Nov 6 and Dec 4.

Course Description

3 hours credit. Advanced study of the subject classification of recordable knowledge. Verbal and numeric approaches, including Library of Congress and Dewey Decimal classification schemes and the principles of thesaurus construction will be considered.

Course Prerequisite: MLIS 7300 or consent of the instructor.

Required Textbooks

The first two are in stock at the VSU Bookstore,
<http://services.valdosta.edu/bookstore/>

Aitchison, Jean, Alan Gilchrist, and David Bawden. *Thesaurus Construction and Use: A Practical Manual*. 4th ed. London: Europa Publications (Taylor & Francis Group), 2000.

Required Textbooks continued

Ferguson, Bobby. *Subject Analysis: Blitz Cataloging Workbook*. Englewood, Colo.: Libraries Unlimited, 1998.

One or the other of

Taylor, Arlene G. *Wynar's Introduction to Cataloging and Classification*. 9th ed. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 2000.

Or

Chan, Lois Mai. *Cataloging and Classification: An Introduction*. 2nd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, c1994.

Course Requirements

1. Classification assignments	40%
2. Thesaurus construction assignment	40%
3. Discussion Board assignments	10%
4. Final Exam	10%

Grading

General Grading Scale

A excellent work – among the best work seen at the graduate level

B satisfactory work – better than average work at the graduate level

C honest attempt – needs moderate to major revisions to be satisfactory

D perfunctory or missing work

Final Grading Scale

A – always satisfactory, often excellent

B – mostly satisfactory, occasionally excellent

C – sometimes satisfactory, often needs revisions

D – rarely satisfactory, often perfunctory, late or missing

F – lacking even an attempt to learn or do, dishonesty, plagiarism

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*.

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 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.

Attendance Policy

We will use “blended” course delivery. Most of the content will be delivered at face-to-face meetings, which will be supplemented by Web-delivered instruction. It is expected that students will make consistent, contributive attendance at the face-to-face sessions a high priority. If you are compelled to be absent, you remain responsible for all activities and material missed. If you miss a graded activity, you will lose all points for that activity unless you can negotiate a mutually acceptable alternative with the instructor. **A student who is absent for more than eight hours of convened class time (for any reason) will be subject to a reduction of one letter in the final course grade.** An alternative will be made available to students who find the UGA football game on October 2 an insurmountable obstacle to class attendance; discuss this with the instructor in advance.

Course Requirements

Classification assignments will be drawn chiefly from the textbooks. These assignments will be announced during classes. You will have time during classes to work on them, in collaboration with your colleagues, and may complete them between classes as needed. If you are compelled to be absent from class, you will need to make arrangements to get the assignments and to get access to the required tools. These assignments are due no later than Monday, December 6 at noon. You may turn them in at the last class or mail them to Elaine Yontz, 1100 Dellwood Drive, Valdosta, GA 31602.

Discussion Board assignments will be posted periodically within WebCT. New material will be posted by Fridays at noon. Check the site at least weekly.

Final Exam will be an essay exam. It will be distributed at class on December 4 and will be due via WebCT mail by Thursday, December 9 at 11:59 pm.

Thesaurus Construction assignment

You will create a “mini” thesaurus of 50-75 preferred terms on a subject of your choice.

You will use the process described in Section J of the *Thesaurus Construction* textbook.

There will be two products, a written report and a class presentation.

Your written report will include:

1. Definition of your subject
2. Bibliography of sources used
3. A description (500 words maximum) of the process you followed and any interesting problems you encountered
4. Subject field analysis, similar to Figure 35, p. 154.
5. Complete thesaurus, similar to Figure 38, p. 164.

Your class presentation will be approximately 20 minutes long. Plan to discuss the process you followed and any interesting problems you encountered. Also plan to share at least a portion of your complete thesaurus. *Practice* so that you use your time well without going overtime. Leave a few minutes for questions.

Presentations will be heard during class on December 4. Written reports are due via WebCT mail attachment by 7:00 p.m. on December 4.

To approach this assignment, study the *Thesaurus Construction* text from the beginning. It will give you strong and useful guidance. If you review each chapter carefully and in order, you will know exactly what to do when you get to Section J.

As an example: here are some of the steps I might use to begin a thesaurus on “Klezmer music.”

I would seek a strong definition of the subject and an identification of the boundaries of the subject. I would compare definitions and descriptions of the subject as found in reference works, other published sources, Web sites. I would synthesize what I found, consider my own concept of what I want my thesaurus to cover, and might conclude with something like:

Klezmer music: traditional instrumental music of Yiddish-speaking Jews. Scope to include Eastern European manifestations and the Americanized music of Jewish immigrants. Chronology includes the seventeenth through twenty-first centuries.

I would investigate the relevant vocabulary used in existing thesauri. I would look in general lists including *LCSH* and in more specialized thesauri. For a music subject, I would look at the terms used in such tools as *The Music Index* and *RILM Abstracts of Music Literature*.

I would look at many kinds of sources, including examples of the types of materials that would be indexed using my thesaurus. I would notice and list the concepts described and the words used to identify them. For a music topic, I might find mention of names of instruments, formats for musical pieces, scales used, performance venues, famous performers. I would talk with people who are knowledgeable about this kind of music, noticing what aspects they consider important and what they call these aspects.

I would examine the terms to identify synonyms and other relationships. I would then identify preferred, UF, BT, and NT.

The text will guide you in other needed aspects.