

## LIB 120 - Introduction to Information Literacy University of Rhode Island ■ Spring 2008

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		<b>Office Hour:</b>	Tuesday 10-11

**Class Listserv:** lib120-2@listserv.uri.edu  
**Class Web Site:** [http://www.uri.edu/library/staff\\_pages/amanda](http://www.uri.edu/library/staff_pages/amanda)

### What's Information Literacy?

Developments over the past twenty-or-so years have revolutionized the way we receive, use, and create information. University-level research, which requires reliable, quality sources, can often be done electronically. But where do you start? Should you use a print or electronic source? When is a resource too old to use? Who's behind that web site you found? And what makes that author really qualified to write about that topic? Asking yourself these questions is part of Information Literacy.

From paper to screen, from books to blogs, a good grasp of Information Literacy makes your research more effective and efficient, and improves your work in other courses. Information Literacy is the ability to "recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information. Information Literacy is common to all disciplines, to all learning environments, and to all levels of education. It forms the basis for lifelong learning." (American Library Association. Presidential Committee on Information Literacy. Final Report. Chicago: American Library Association, 1989.)

### Course Goals

Information is only useful if the user has the knowledge and skills necessary to manipulate it. In **LIB 120 - Introduction to Information Literacy** we will examine the world of information, gain an understanding of how information is organized, learn how to gather information, to analyze and evaluate its worth, and to use it effectively in research. The knowledge gained in the course will prepare you to conduct university-level research, and, beyond that, develop skills necessary for life-long learning. At the end of this course, you will have an annotated portfolio of your research that can be used now or in the future, and you will have acquired skills that will make your research for other classes -- and even your life outside of the university -- easier and more reliable.

### Student Objectives

- Understand the organization of information systems
- Recognize and articulate a research problem
- Develop appropriate and effective search strategies
- Select and use information retrieval tools
- Locate and retrieve information sources
- Analyze and critically evaluate information
- Organize and synthesize information
- Use and apply information effectively

## Required Materials

- A valid student ID, activated at the Circulation Desk
- A copy card with AT LEAST \$20 on it
- An account on RefWorks or similar bibliographic management software
- A working email address that you check at least every couple of days
- A 1”-2” three-ring binder for your semester project
- An open mind and a good attitude!

## Grades

Grades for the course will be A-F. Your grade will be based on the following criteria:

Criterion	Percent of Final Grade
Attendance, In Class Exercises, and Participation	20%
Homework Assignments	25%
Formal Presentations	20%
Quizzes	5%
Semester Project	20%
Final Exam	10%

Homework Assignments will be graded on a point system; Annotated Bibliographies are worth four points, other assignments are worth three. The grading scale for each is below.

### 4 Point Assignments

- 4 excellent work / comprehension
- 3 satisfactory work / comprehension
- 2 below average work / comprehension
- 1 unsatisfactory work / comprehension
- 0 not submitted

### 3 Point Assignments

- 3 excellent work / comprehension
- 2 satisfactory work / comprehension
- 1 unsatisfactory work / comprehension
- 0 not submitted

Grades for all other criteria and the Final Grade will be given on the following standard scale:

A	93-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69
A-	90-92	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	60-66
		B-	80-82	C-	70-72	F	Below 60

## Attendance and Participation

Attendance, participation, in-class exercises, and informal presentations are MANDATORY and constitute 20% of your grade. This class is based on the principle of “Learning by Doing,” as information literacy is attained through practice. I intend to teach you the skills you need to have to succeed, but in order to succeed you need to be on time and present. If you are unable to attend class, it is your responsibility to contact me by phone or email in advance to discuss due dates and so that you can get any materials distributed in class.

## Homework Assignments

The homework assignments completed during the semester will contain activities that supplement what we've covered in class. Most assignments will become **essential components** of your Paper Trail, and will include annotated bibliographies and a short (one page maximum) journal of your research ups and downs. Copies of assignments are available on the class website.

The due date for each assignment is in the Class Meeting List. When I return your assignments, you will receive feedback and you will have one opportunity to revise and resubmit your corrected assignment for a better grade. The due date for revisions will be listed on assignments when I hand them back, and they will generally be due a week later. Assignments not handed in will receive a grade of zero. *If you have any problems or concerns as you work on your homework assignments, please let me know so that I can help!*

**Keeping up on the assignments is absolutely essential to doing well in this class!** The assignments supplement the content of this course, build on the information that came before, and let you learn and practice the skills necessary to succeed in doing research. Mastering the skills for assignment 5 means that you'll understand the steps necessary to do well on assignment 6, and so on. Once an assignment is completed, we move on to the next section, and if you're still stuck on assignment 2 when assignment 5 is due, you'll be left in the dust. The assignments are a significant percentage of your grade; my comments on them will show me how you are doing in the course, and serve as your primary source of feedback.

Late Assignments: Assignments are due when they are due, period. University sanctioned events and/or documented personal tragedy may warrant an extension. Proof of persistent but thwarted work (as evidenced by discussion with me and demonstration of failed attempts) may also warrant an extension.

## Formal Presentations

Presentation 1: Team Database Presentation (10%) -- Teams of 2-3 will present a specific database to the class. You will have class time to investigate and learn to use the database, but you will need to work outside of class to prepare the in-class presentation and create a Fact Sheet about the database to distribute to the class. The presentation must include information about the database's content, coverage, audience, search mechanisms, and retrieval options.

Presentation 2: Information Issues Presentation (10%) -- Small groups will create presentations on a current Information Issue and formulate response to others' presentations. Time to read, investigate, and work on this project will be provided in class, but you may also need to prepare outside of class.

## Quizzes

Two short quizzes will be given during the semester. These will consist of multiple choice, matching, short answer, and/or essay questions, and will be given via WebCT outside of class time. You should allow an hour for each one, but they will most likely take no more than 30 minutes.

## Semester Project: The Paper Trail

The Paper Trail is an annotated portfolio of your research process, and is the culmination of the work done for this course. The topic can be from a course you are currently taking, or a topic relating to your major, but it must be submitted to me for approval. Specific instructions will be distributed so that you can see how everything will fit together, and I will place a sample project on Reserve. The Semester Project is due IN CLASS on the last day of class. Projects submitted after that date will lose ten points (one full letter grade) for each day late.

## Final Exam

The Final Exam will be a comprehensive exam that lets you put the skills you've acquired over the semester to use. The exam will be given during the Final Exam period.

## Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Students in this course are required to be academically honest, and are responsible for knowing the University's applicable policies. I will not accept any excuses for plagiarism or cheating, and students found cheating or plagiarizing will first be rewarded with a zero on the exercise, assignment, or exam in question. I reserve the right to pursue further penalties in accordance with University policies. If you are confused about what constitutes plagiarism or cheating in this or any other class, I will be happy to meet with you to look over your work and discuss it with you before you hand it in.

## Classroom Etiquette

- Please arrive on time - you may miss important announcements if you're late.
- Food and drink are not allowed in the Library classrooms.
- Cell phones should have their ringers turned off and should be put away during class.
- In class you will be using Library computers; do not save files or programs on these machines, or alter the computers' settings in any way. Other technology may be used with specific permission.

## Final Notes

My goal is to help you succeed at research and perform better in your other courses. I strongly encourage you to come by my office if you need assistance, are feeling overwhelmed, or just want to find out where it is. My office hour is listed on the first page of this syllabus. If the scheduled time doesn't work for you, let me know and we'll make an appointment to meet at a more convenient time. If you need help finding my office, ask at the Reference Desk, and the librarian or graduate student can direct you. *Please feel free to visit or contact me with any problems or concerns!*

The work in this course is complex and demanding. To do well, it is best to attend all classes, stay on top of all assignments, and review your notes regularly. You may also consult students at the Academic Enhancement Center (AEC) -- they can answer questions, clarify concepts, test your understanding, and show you how to study in the most effective ways possible. You can make an appointment or walk in anytime during office hours. For a complete schedule, go to <http://www.uri.edu/aec>, call (401) 874-2367, or stop by the 4<sup>th</sup> floor in Roosevelt Hall.

Any student with a documented disability is welcome to contact me early in the semester so that we may work out reasonable accommodations to support your success in this course. One should also contact Disability Services for Students, Office of Student Life, 330 Memorial Union, (401) 874-2098.

In addition to the policies listed in this syllabus, I follow the University of Rhode Island's Academic Regulations for grading, attendance, exams, cheating, plagiarism, and other policies and procedures. For details, please see the **University Manual** <<http://www.uri.edu/facsen/>>. I recommend that you familiarize yourself with the section covering regulations for students at [http://www.uri.edu/facsen/CHAPTER\\_8.html](http://www.uri.edu/facsen/CHAPTER_8.html). For further information on what rights and responsibilities you have, see the applicable sections of the **Student Handbook** at <http://www.uri.edu/judicial/>.