

# **INFO510: Information Sources and Services**

## **EXTENDED COURSE DESCRIPTION**

### **1. Description**

Presents applied information retrieval as the foundation for information services. Provides an overview of present-day online resources and their print counterparts. Focuses on the design and structure of tools used for answering questions and satisfying subject interests for patrons. Emphasizes techniques for building effective strategies for searching large-scale retrieval systems, including the Internet. Gives opportunities to compare search engines and to evaluate retrievals.

### **2. Prerequisite to:**

INFO 511: Information Resources and Services II

### **3. Exit Competencies**

Prepares the student to:

- Retrieve documents from a variety of electronic databases, with awareness of the interrelationships between them.
- Interview to determine what a patron is seeking and convert this into an effective search strategy or profile.
- Understand concepts of database design and use them to their advantage in strategy development.
- Know general principles of searching (domain, scope, natural language vs. controlled vocabulary, increasing and decreasing yield, differences between retrieval from databases and the Internet, etc.)
- Know principles of computerized searching (set formation, Boolean logic, truncation, proximity operators, non-Boolean searching, relevance ranking, co-occurrence ranking, profiling, etc.)
- Perform effective searches in major online systems (Dialog, Lexis/Nexis, OCLC FirstSearch, etc.) and on the Web.
- Compare online databases and Internet search engines for performance.
- Apply a range of tools for using Internet resources.

- Evaluate searches using standard principles.

#### **4. Course Content**

Principal topics and the approximate number of sessions devoted to each are:

- Models of literature-based information services and the Drexel information retrieval environment (1)
- The Dialog system and databases (3)
- Question negotiation, reference interview (2)
- OCLC FirstSearch (1)
- Internet capabilities (1)
- Lexis/Nexis and full-text searching (1)
- Search evaluation (1)

#### **5. Presentation and Evaluation**

Lecture, class discussion, in-class demonstrations and workshops, hands-on laboratory assignments. Assignments will include practical retrieval problem sets in online resources and a project in literature searching (the latter will be the basis for a literature review in INFO 511). Grade is based on discussion participation, exercises, and a final project.

#### **6. Course Materials**

- Required text: Walker, Geraldene and Joseph Janes. *Online Retrieval: A Dialogue of Theory and Practice*. 2nd ed. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 1999.
- Selected readings and Web sites.