

PRATT INSTITUTE SYLLABUS

Catalog Code: LRS 590-17

Department: Library

Course Title: Beyond Google

Term: Fall 2006

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Course Location: Brooklyn Campus

Number of Credits: 1

Prerequisites: None

Room: Engineering Rm. #214-D

Course Web Site: <http://beyondgoogle.pbwiki.com>

Elective: yes

Date of this syllabus: September 2006

Campus Office Hours & Location: (below)

Pratt Institute Library, Brooklyn Campus

Days/Hours: Oct. 5- Nov. 2; Thursdays, 1-4pm

Course description as it appears in the Catalog:

This course will help students develop critical skills in the retrieval, evaluation and use of information.

Course Overview:

This course will provide opportunities for learning and instruction about Information Literacy including the information search process. This course will place a special emphasis on the elements of the information search process (as outlined by Carol Kuhlthau, Professor, Rutgers University,) including: initiation, selection, exploration, formulation, collection, and presentation. The course will be taught through critical readings, discussion, visiting lectures, field trips, and presentation of individual research.

One of the functions of this course is to establish a framework for conducting intelligent independent research using print and electronic resources at any library or research center. Students will actively engage issues in the fields of library science and the humanities that will continue to develop as students' progress through their course work here at Pratt Institute.

The course examines many of the central issues in Information Literacy and information research processes. Topics include an introduction to information literacy best practices, research strategies, Google, online and print resources, and citation styles. Students will gain an understanding of copyright, fair use, plagiarism, and information ethics. The culture and theory of contemporary information related issues will be covered as well.

The professors will review and highlight important print and electronic resources related to research at Pratt Institute. While a basic understanding and appreciation of specialized print and electronic resources is beneficial, the emphasis of this course will be on developing an understanding of the fundamental skills and knowledge vital to successful scholarship.

The course will include in class and take home exercises and research activities. The class will be team taught by two Pratt Institute Librarians. Guest lecturers may be invited.

Goals:

- To introduce and develop a critical understanding of issues regarding library research
- To develop appropriate search strategies
- To selecting appropriate resources
- To gain a familiarity with standard print and electronic resources
- To effectively perform searches (print & electronic)
- To synthesize information (extracting, synopsising, & paraphrasing)
- To understand the relationship between print and electronic research tools
- To practice and apply critical reasoning skills through in-class discussions and presentations
- To understand plagiarism and appropriation
- To cite any source correctly
- To prepare students for success in performing research in a library

Objectives: Upon completion of course, students will be able to:

- Understand the need for accurate and authoritative information
- Understand how to select a topic
- Understand how to develop a thesis question/statement
- Understand how to convert a thesis statement into keywords
- Understand how to develop appropriate search strategies
- Understand how to select appropriate resources
- Understand how to effectively perform searches (print & electronic)
- Understand how to evaluate information
- Understand how to synthesize information (extracting, synopsising, & paraphrasing information)
- Understand how to adjust a topic and or a thesis based upon information retrieved
- Understand how to cite information appropriately and avoiding plagiarism

Requirements:

Class attendance/participation, course readings, in-class assignments, homework and a research portfolio are required of each student. Attendance is based on the guidelines provided in the 2004-2005 Pratt Institute Graduate Bulletin, p. 214: one unexcused absence will result in expulsion from the course. More than one absence will result in expulsion from the course. For further explanation please refer to the bulletin.

Methods of assessment/grades:

Grading policy: grades will range from A to F based on the following assignments (see below) and class participation. For further explanation please refer to pp. 201-202 of the Pratt Institute Graduate Bulletin 2004-2005.

Final Project: 45%

Students will demonstrate their development with regard to both information literacy and the information search process through the completion of a research portfolio and annotated bibliography. Students will choose a topic during the first week of class and complete elements of their research through assignments each week. The final research portfolio will include weekly assignments, research journal entries, an annotated bibliography, and a brief essay. The evaluation/grade will be based on the following: methodology, presentation of research, and style. Please refer to and use the MLA Style Guide, 7th edition when drafting your research paper and bibliography.

Final Presentation: 15%

During the last class meeting students will present and discuss the results of their research.

In Class Assignments & Weekly Take-Home Assignments: 15%

In class each week students will be presented with a series of exercises intended to reinforce some of the methodologies and concepts introduced in the readings and lectures. Students will have the option to work in groups or independently.

Successful and timely completion of weekly assignments is critical. All assignments must be brought, completed, to class on the day they are due. For every day (24 hours from the end of the class period) an assignment is late one-half of a letter grade will be deducted.

Participation in class discussions of weekly readings: 25%

The ability to comment on and discuss assigned readings as well as direct selected readings toward a critical understanding of current problems in Information Literacy and/or information research. Students will be required to briefly discuss weekly readings.

Field trips, Guests, Museum Gallery Visits

In-class visits to the Brooklyn Campus Library

Structure: This course consists of lectures, discussions, exercises, and in class activities. Students are expected to do all assigned readings, to examine reference materials as assigned, to come to class prepared to discuss readings, assignments, and to actively participate.

Attendance & Participation:

Prompt Attendance at all class meetings is required. A student who must be absent from a class meeting still has certain responsibilities:

- To inform the professor in advance, or if advance notice is not possible, as soon after the absence as possible (see above for phone numbers/email address)
- To arrange for delivery to the professor of any assignment due at the class meeting. Faxes and emailed papers will not be accepted
- To obtain notes, handouts, etc. from a classmate (in anticipation of this need, each student is advised to exchange telephone numbers with one or two others in the class).

Points are deducted for: unexcused absences, coming late to class, or leaving class early. Active participation includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Being informed by assigned readings and demonstrating this by contributing to class discussions,

- Asking relevant questions or challenging points raised in class,
- Suggesting new ways of looking at things.

Written Work: These guidelines must be followed for all assignments and papers. Assignments that do not meet these standards will be returned to the student for resubmission before grading. Proofread all work, whether it is a blog entry or a printed paper, before submitting it.

- Students must **always** keep second copies of all assignments that are turned in. In the case of a piece of written work becoming lost, regardless of fault, it is the responsibility of the **student** to provide a second copy.
- Papers are to be typed, double spaced with at least 1" margins on all sides of the paper. Use no less than 12-point type and number all pages.
- All assignments are to be free from spelling, grammatical, and typographical errors.
- Assignments will be prepared in accordance with the MLA (*Modern Language Association*) style available at <http://www.library.mcgill.ca/human/subguide/pdf/mla.pdf> and at <http://lib.pratt.edu/public/mla.pdf>. This includes underlining all titles of books or databases and placing quotation marks around all article titles.
- Papers are due at the beginning of class on the dates noted. Late papers will be marked down **one letter grade** unless the student has obtained prior permission of the professor (in the case of illness, etc.).
- All material quoted or paraphrased from another source **must** be properly cited.
- All blog entries must adhere to the same standards for clarity, spelling, grammar, typographical errors and citations as printed papers.

Cell Phone Policy: Cell phones are to be set to vibrate or turned off during class.

Student Agreement: Attendance at 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 class.

Recommended Readings:

Barthes, Roland. Mythologies. Noonday Press, May 1973. Paperback, ISBN: 0374521506.

Benjamin, Walter. Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction. Illuminations, trans. by H. Zohn, ed. with intro. by Hannah Arendt, NY: Schocken, 1969.
<http://bid.berkeley.edu/bidclass/readings/benjamin.html>

Foster, Hal. Recodings--art, spectacle, cultural politics. Port Townsend, Wash. : Bay Press, 1985.

Humes, Barbara. Understanding Information Literacy:
<http://www.libraryinstruction.com/infolit.html>

Kuhlthau, Carol. The Information Search Process.
<http://www.scils.rutgers.edu/~kuhlthau/Search%20Process.htm>

McLuhan, Marshall. Understanding Media. The MIT Press; Reprint edition (October 20, 1994).

Vaidyanathan, Siva. "A Risky Gamble with Google". Chronicle of Higher Education, volume 52, number 15, Page B7 (December 2, 2005).

Virillo, Paul. War and Cinema: The Logistics of Perception. Verso (August, 1989).

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Week One: (Meet in Engineering Room# 214-D)

Course Introduction

Information

- Who produces and distributes information?
- Information Lifecycle
- Format and function of different types of information (scholarly, popular, media sources, blogs, etc.)
- The organization of information and why it matters

Evaluating Information

Discussion on the essentials on evaluating any information:

- Audience
- Authority
- References/Citations
- Scope
- Comprehensiveness
- Currency
- Format
- Accuracy/Objectivity
- Organization of content
- Publisher

The Internet

- Meta-Tags
- Folksonomies
- The limits of Google- A discussion on how the Web's Search engines work and are influenced (Google Bombs, advertising, etc.)
- Delivery of electronic authorized e-information
- Understanding electronic information and terminology (Database, Record, and Field).
- Understanding the potentials in metadata based solutions such as XML for more precise searching.

In Class/Take Home Assignment:

Complete the "Evaluating Information" exercise.

Readings to review in Class:

Vaidhyathan, Siva. "A Risky Gamble with Google". Chronicle of Higher Education, volume 52, number 15, Page B7 (December 2, 2005).

Take Home Assignment:

Following instructions on the course wiki (<http://beyondgoogle.pbwiki.com>), select a research topic and create a blog. Make your first blog post a brief description of your research topic.

Required Reading:

Information Literacy: http://library.pratt.edu/info_lit.html

Week Two:

Discuss Readings

Understanding the Research Process

- Understanding the need for information
- Selecting a topic
- Develop a thesis question/statement
- Converting thesis statement into keywords
- Develop appropriate search strategies
- Selecting Appropriate Resources
- Effectively Perform Searches (Print & Electronic)
- Evaluating Information
- Synthesize Information (Extracting, Synopsizing, & Paraphrasing Information)
- Potentially adjusts topic and or thesis based upon information retrieved
- Citing Information/Avoiding Plagiarism

Research Strategies

- Develop an appropriate search strategy
- Resource Selection
- Background material and reference volumes (dictionary, encyclopedias, atlases, almanacs)
- Thesis Development
- MLA Style Guide

Using the OPAC

- Understanding Keyword searches vs. Subject Headings
- LCSH (Use, Use For, Broader Term, Related Term, See Also, Narrower Term)
- Broadening & Narrowing
- Boolean Searches
- Truncated Searches
- Classification Systems (Dewey and LCC)
- Discussion involving alternate places for gathering information (other catalogs (WorldCAT) & interlibrary loan)

Periodicals:

- Popular vs. Peer Reviewed Journals.
- Locating Information in Periodicals using Indexes/Citation Sources.
- Locating Periodicals in OPAC.
- Understanding Full-Text
- Performing searches using skills learned in OPAC lesson
- Digital Image databases (LUNA, etc.)

BREAK

Tour of the Library

In Class/Take Home Assignments:

- 1) Create a blog post in which you do the following: Write out your thesis statement. Convert your thesis statement into keywords. List keywords and possible synonyms. Attempt to convert keywords into Subject Headings or discover applicable subject headings based upon keyword searches in OPAC. List Subject Headings. Perform searches using keywords and subject headings. List a few applicable results discovered using keyword search. List a few applicable results discovered using subject heading search. Write a short evaluation on the quality of results obtained using both keyword and subject heading searches.
- 2) Using some of the tools introduced to you, locate periodical information relevant to your topic. Locate information relevant to your research in 3 peer reviewed journals, 3 popular periodicals, and 3 newspaper articles. Post citations for each article to your blog, accompanied by brief annotations. Describe the process you used to find your articles (which databases, search terms used).
- 3) Locate a minimum of 5 monographs that are relevant to your research topic. Post citations for each monograph to your blog, accompanied by brief annotations.

Required Reading:

Shirky, Clay. "Ontology is Overrated: Categories, Links, and Tags." [Weblog entry]. Clay Shirky's Writings About the Internet. http://www.shirky.com/writings/ontology_overrated.html

- OR -

Kroski, Ellyssa. "The Hive Mind: Folksonomies and User-Based Tagging." [Weblog entry]. InfoTangle. <http://infotangle.blogspot.com/2005/12/07/the-hive-mind-folksonomies-and-user-based-tagging/>

Week 3:

Discuss Readings

Databases:

- Choosing the right database
- Figuring out their idiosyncrasies

Smart Web Searching:

- Search engines.
- Metasearch
- Subject directories
- Privacy and personalization
- Web 2.0 technologies

Types of Sources:

- Primary
- Secondary
- Synthetic works (e.g. New York Times Index)

BREAK

In Class Exercise:

Subject Headings & Folksonomies

Required Readings:

Plagiarism: What It Is and How to Avoid It:

<http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>

Libraries' Introduction to MLA Style:

<http://library.pratt.edu/mla.pdf>

Optional Readings:

Barthes, Roland. *Mythologies*. (pp. 26, 53, 68, 97, 109-159)

- OR -

Baudrillard, Jean. *Simulations*. (pp. All)

Week 4:
Discuss Readings

Issues

- Preservation in the digital age
- Censorship and filtering
- Understanding Intellectual property, plagiarism, information commodification, Copyright and Fair use.
- Citation/Style Guides

In Class Exercise:

Understanding Plagiarism

Discussion of Final Project:

The final project will demonstrate the results of your research as well as the process you used to achieve them. Your final research portfolio will include an annotated bibliography, a research journal comprised of your blog entries, and a short essay detailing and evaluating your research process. See <http://beyondgoogle.pbwiki.com/Final%20Project> for details.

Required Readings:

Copyright guide from Cornell University and Laura Gassaway:
http://www.copyright.cornell.edu/training/Hirtle_Public_Domain.htm

Recommended Readings:

Benjamin, Walter. "Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." Illuminations.
<http://bid.berkeley.edu/bidclass/readings/benjamin.html>

Optional Reading:

Virillo, Paul. War and Cinema. (pp. All)

- OR -

Foster, Hal. Recodings. (pp. 13-33, 79-119, 139, 156-190)

Week 5:
Discuss Readings

Presentations and Discussion of Research Projects

Final Project Due