LONG ISLAND UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF INFORMATION AND COMPUTER SCIENCE
PALMER SCHOOL OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

SYLLABUS FOR LIS 747

SPECIAL LIBRARIES

TUESDAY, 4:30-6:20

MANHATTAN (NYU) CAMPUS

SPRING 2010

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Course Description: LIS 747 Special Libraries

A study of the characteristics, contexts, and roles of special libraries, and of information work in organizations, both profit and not-for-profit. Topics covered include the organization, the administration, the services and functions provided by, and the financial management of special libraries. Particular attention is given to the relationship between the special library and the organization within which it is embedded.

The relationship between Knowledge Management and Special Librarianship is also examined. The emphasis upon Knowledge Management is substantial because libraries in the corporate sector, the largest chunk of the spectrum of special libraries, are increasingly a component of and are subsumed under Knowledge Management, and to be successful, “librarians” must think of themselves primarily as key players in the organization’s KM effort.

Course Objectives

The goal of the course is to make students familiar with the role of special libraries and how library and information functions add value to the organization, and to assist students in pursuing a career in this sector. In addition, students will become familiar with the infrastructure and operational requirements for effectively supporting the information needs of organizations. Specifically, at the end of the course students will be able to:

- Understand the dynamics of information in organizations, and the role of special libraries therein.
- Define KM (Knowledge Management), learning organization, intellectual capital, and related terminologies in clear terms and understand the role of knowledge management in organizations.
- Understand the rapidly evolving nature of KM and the fashion with which in the corporate domain it has subsumed special librarianship.
- Identify and understand the numerous functions served by special libraries.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the concepts of special librarianship and be familiar first hand with several successful special library operations.
- Evaluate the impact of technology including telecommunications, networks, and the Internet and its derivatives upon KM and special library activities.
- Identify the contribution of special libraries in specific environments: managerial and decision making communities; finance and economic sectors; legal information systems; health information systems and others.
Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of intellectual capital and information and knowledge utilization in regard to the competitive advantage of organizations.

Understand and be able to utilize basic financial and budgeting concepts for special libraries operations.

Be aware of and articulate various career options in the field.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND SEQUENCE BY TOPICS (TENTATIVE)

The course starts on Tuesday January 19th. There will be no class Tuesday February 16th (Monday classes meet that day), nor Tuesday March 30th (Vacation).

1 Introduction: Why are Special Libraries “Special”?  
2 Information Related Developments in the Business Context  
3 Intellectual Capital & Knowledge Management  
4 Intellectual Capital & Knowledge Management  
5 Typical Functions of a Special Library  
6 Guest speaker (TBA)  
7 Impact of the Special Library  
8 Guest Speaker (TBA)  
9 Organizational Information Politics  
10 Special Library visit  
11 Economic Backgrounder, Budgeting  
12 Staffing and Human Resources  
13 Public Relations and Marketing - Long Range Planning  
14 Reports

A note as to the schedule. The schedule and sequence is not graven in stone. The exact schedule may, and probably will, vary, based on such factors as guest speaker availability and the dynamics of the course itself.

A note as to reading. Since assignments tend to pile up toward the end of the semester, try to get ahead on your reading as soon as possible. That will be when you have the time to do it, and the class will be more stimulating and lively if you do so.

COURSE APPROACH

This course will be taught in a lecture/seminar fashion with students expected to do a substantial amount of reading and to actively participate in class discussions. Since this is a seminar course in a rapidly changing field with complex interaction among its components, the exact sequencing
of course components may shift somewhat, as the course evolves.

**Term Paper & Reports**

There will be a required term paper. You should select a topic early, discuss your topic with the instructor, and be prepared to make an executive summary presentation to the class at the end of the term.

The term paper can be of two general types:

1.) You can research and report on special libraries and the issues facing special libraries in a particular sphere. For example a topic might be special libraries in the museum community; another might be special library service in the advertising agency.

Please note however that more will be expected than an upscale book report - you will be expected to not only have read the literature, but to have interviewed (face-to-face, telephonically, via email, or whatever) librarians and information officers in that sphere and be prepared to report to the class what the issues and concerns in that area are. Note also that you had best do some research and know the context of the field before your interviews.

2.) You can do a traditional theme oriented research paper. A theme might be something like the convergence of special librarianship and competitive intelligence, or the impact of social networking and SNA (social network analysis) on special libraries.

**EXAM**

There will be a take-home exam. It will consist of a modest number of essay questions, and there will be some choice among topics.

**EVALUATION**

The weighted distribution of the criteria for evaluations of performance will be:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Term Paper</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignments</td>
<td>15%</td>
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</tbody>
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It is anticipated that there will be guest lectures/discussions as well as presentations by the instructor. Students will be expected to make an oral presentations at the end of the course on their term paper topic.

Students are encouraged to start thinking about and working upon their topics as early as possible. The instructor will be glad to assist. Remember that you will be required to report on your area in December.
Estimates/Guidelines for Deployment of Non-Class Course Hours

Reading 85 Hours
Term (Research) Paper 45 Hours
Assignments 20 Hours

Texts: No required text, but, highly recommended reading:


READING LIST

Topics and Readings in rough sequence.

BACKGROUND: WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHY, ETC.


Christianson, Chapters 1-3;


INFORMATION RELATED DEVELOPMENTS IN THE BUSINESS CONTEXT


DATABASE CONCEPTS


TYPICAL FUNCTIONS OF A SPECIAL LIBRARY

Indexing, Abstracting, Organizing


Foskett, A.C. The Subject Approach to Information. 3rd Ed. London, Clive Bingley, 1977. (This is a classic, you should know about it; take a look if you have a chance.)


SDI (Current Awareness), “Clinical Teams, Bibliographic Instruction, Competitive Intelligence.


Christianson, read Chapters 4-6, 8, 9


THE IMPACT OF SPECIAL LIBRARIES

Griffiths, Jose-Marie & King, Donald W. Special Libraries: Increasing the Information Edge.

  - Managing Information for the Competitive Edge, Auster, Ethel & Choo, Chun Wei (eds.), New York, Neal Schumann, 1996;
  - Valuing Special Libraries and Information Centers, Washington, D.C., Special Libraries Association, 1993


ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION POLITICS


De Cagna, Jeff. “Your Attention Please: A Conversation with Tom Davenport” Information Outlook. 5 (9): 30-37, September 2001

Note: Larry Prusak, sponsored by the Palmer School, received an honorary degree from LIU in 2001. His undergraduate degree is from LIU-Brooklyn, and his MS in LIS is from Simmons.


THE DYNAMICS OF RESEARCH AND RESEARCH ORGANIZATIONS


ECONOMIC BACKGROUNDER AND BUDGETING FOR SPECIAL LIBRARIES


St. Clair, Guy & Reich, Martin J. “Knowledge Services, Financial Services, and Budgeting”, Information Outlook. 6 (6): 26-33, June 2002.


STAFFING AND PERSONNEL ISSUES


Christianson, Chapter 8.

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MARKETING


LONG RANGE PLANNING
