

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

**MLIS 7355 Advanced Classification
Syllabus--Fall Semester 2007**

Instructor

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Office hours by appointment, in person or online

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

WebCT Vista; Live Classroom.

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 Materials

Taylor, Arlene. *Introduction to Cataloging and Classification*. 10th edition. Libraries Unlimited, 2006. ISBN: 1591582350 2006 edition required.

Haynes, Elizabeth and Joanna F. Fountain. *Unlocking the Mysteries of Cataloging: A Workbook of Examples*. Libraries Unlimited, 2005. ISBN: 1591580080

Roe, Sandra K. and Alan R. Thomas, ed. *The Thesaurus: Review, Renaissance, and Revision*. Haworth Press, 2004. ISBN: 9780789019790

Required Materials continued

Headphones with attached microphone for use with Live Classroom software. Many are available for \$10-\$15.

Course Requirements

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|--------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Classification assignments | 30% |
| 2. Classification exercises | 30% |
| 3. Thesaurus construction assignment | 40% |

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

Special Needs Statement continued

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

This is an online class, with no required face-to-face meetings. Students' schedules will be considered in the identification of times for the optional Live Classroom sessions. The Live Classroom sessions will be archived for later viewing or reviewing.

Course Requirements

Classification assignments: These will be distributed during Live Classroom sessions or posted within WebCT. See specific assignment documents for details.

Classification exercises: Using Haynes/Fountain workbook. Details will be distributed during Live Classroom sessions or posted within WebCT.

Thesaurus Construction assignment: Due on Monday, December 3. Progress report due on Monday, October 22. See below.

Thesaurus Construction Assignment

Create a "mini" thesaurus of 50-75 preferred terms on a subject of your choice.

You may do this as a group assignment collaboratively with one or two other students if you wish.

Use the process described in the Roe/Thomas text, particularly the "Teach Yourself Thesaurus: Exercises, Readings, Resources" by Alan R. Thomas and "A Practical Exercise in Building a Thesaurus" by James R. Shearer. Additional pointers will be posted on the Homepage within WebCT.

Post your final written product on the WebCT Discussion Board.

Due date for posting of finished product: Monday, December 3.

Thesaurus Construction Assignment continued

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. List of raw terms, similar to Figure 1 in the Shearer article.
5. Completed thesaurus, similar to “Exercise 6 & 7 Solutions” in the Shearer article.

Do these things to get started:

- In the Roe/Thomas text, read these chapters *in this order*:
 - “Introduction”
 - “The Thesaurus : A Historical Viewpoint with a Look to the Future”
 - “An Interview with Amy J. Warner”
 - “Teach Yourself Thesaurus: Exercises, Readings, Resources”
 - “Thesaurus Evaluation”
- In the Roe/Thomas text, work through “A Practical Exercise in Building a Thesaurus.” Do each exercise in order, and compare your answers to the author’s. If you come up with different answers than the author did, try to see how the author got his answers and think about whose answers are better. This is partly art and partly science. You may decide that your answers are better than the author’s, particularly when different user groups are considered. There will be a topic on the discussion board for peer help as you work through this.

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, and 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

Thesaurus Construction Assignment continued

subject, I would look at the terms used in discipline-specific indexes such as *The Music Index* and *RILM Abstracts of Music Literature*. I would consider Web sites, listservs and blogs, particularly to identify colloquialisms and emerging terms.

I would look at many 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.

Progress Report due Monday, October 22 on WebCT Discussion Board. Post as file attachments any written work you have done so far, along with a description (250 words maximum) of the process you've followed so far and any interesting problems you've encountered.

File Preparation

File attachments must be in Word (.doc) or Rich Text (.rtf) formats.

If you are using Word 2007, save it down to 2003.