

School of Information Sciences University of Tennessee, Knoxville

SIS 531: Social Science Information Sources
Saturday morning: 9.30 - 12.10
Computer Only Class
William C. Robinson



Requirements

Completion of SIS 530 (Information Access and Retrieval) strongly desired.

This course is presented in a desktop to desktop mode using Centra software on Windows and MacIntosh computers. You are responsible for insuring that your home computer meets the Centra requirements and has that software installed. See [the Outreach Cyberclass WWW site](#).

Office

455 Communications Building [865-974-7918]
Email: wrobins1@utk.edu
web.utk.edu/~wrobinso/ {course materials are here rather than on BlackBoard}

Hours

9.00 - 12.00 Monday, Tuesday.
After class [brief questions only].

These are my official office hours, but I will be pleased to see you at other times. I am often available between 10.00 and 4.00 Monday through Wednesday and on Friday. If I am not in my office, leave a note in my Communications 451 mail box and I will get back to you.

Email is the easiest way for people who are not frequently on campus to reach me. I check my email at least twice each day during week days and once each day on weekends (when I am in town).

Disabilities

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a documented disability or if you have emergency information to share, please contact the Office of Disability Services at 2227 Dunford Hall, Knoxville 37996-4030, ods@utk.edu, or 865-974-6087 . This will ensure that you are properly registered for services. It is also important to discuss these issues with the teacher.

Scope

The purpose of this course is to introduce social science information sources with an emphasis on sources issued in the United States. Scholarly items receive more attention than popular ones. Sources examined will often be those available at larger university and public libraries. Some useful sources frequently found in public and school library media centers may not be discussed. Social science information is increasingly available in a variety of formats and this course will attempt to consider both print and digital materials, including those available via the Internet. The social science disciplines and professions covered are listed below.

Schedule

The following is an expected schedule of topics to be covered in the course. The nature of the topic, the amount of class discussion, and the discovery of new material may result in changes. We may not be able to cover all of the topics listed below.

Date	Topic	Assignment
25 August	Orientation Introduction	
1 September	SS General	Essay Due
8 September	Practice	
15 September	Services	SS General Exercises Due
22 September	Anthropology	Anthropology Exercises Due
29 September	Business	Business Exercises Due
6 October	Economics	Economics Exercises Due
13 October	Education	Education Exercises Due
20 October	Geography	Geography Exercises Due
27 October	History	History Exercises Due
3 November	Political Science	

		Political Science Exercises Due
10 November	Psychology	Psychology Exercises Due
17 November	Sociology	Sociology Exercises due
24 November	Because of the Thanksgiving Weekend, class will not meet	
1 December	Future of SS Reference	Pathfinder Assignment Due

Teaching Methods

Class room time will include teacher lecture and some student reporting and discussion. Lectures will focus on discipline introduction and information-seeking behavior. Students will comment on the required exercises with some emphasis on resource utility and audience. Please be prepared. You may be called upon.

Class Attendance

Class discussion is important. Learning is an active process and it is difficult for you to participate if you are not here.

The teacher will post a note on UTKSIS-L if he is unable to meet with the class. If this happens, a reasonable effort will be made to schedule a make-up meeting at a reasonably convenient time. Attendance at such a meeting is voluntary.

Outcomes

When you successfully complete this course, you should be able to:

- Define and discuss the importance and utility of social science information sources
- Select appropriate sources to meet particular needs, especially when to use digital and when to use print sources
- Identify and discuss the general characteristics and current state of several social science disciplines
- Identify and discuss the elements of an effective social science information program in a library or information agency
- Thoughtfully discuss the future of social science information in light of present trends

Assignments

Introduction

Students must submit papers to the ITC Blackboard Dropbox [online.utk.edu]. Papers are late if not received by midnight Knoxville time on the date due [Sunday if course taught on Saturday].

Papers must be in either RTF or DOC formats. Your full name plus page number should appear on a header on each page. Work should be double spaced. Brief in-text citations are OK, but sources used must be clearly identifiable. URLs need to include a date visited.

Specifics

Assignment One

Write a zippy essay on what social science information means to you and how you encounter this information in your daily life. The essay should be personal and anecdotal as if it was to be published in Reader's Digest. This assignment should encourage you to think thoughtfully about the role of social science information in your daily life. Worth 10 points.

Assignment Two

Complete three exercises from each exercise set. When an exercise is numbered 1, 1A, 1B, or similar each is a separate exercise.

Exercise responses should focus on utility for a particular audience. Comparison between print and WWW sources is normally expected. Critical comment is assumed, included thoughts on problems encountered and resource quality.

One way of organizing your exercise responses would be:

1. Question number
2. What does the user need?
3. What will you do first, second, etc.?
4. Which sources did you use [brief cite only]?
5. Which sources were most useful and why?
6. Is there a best source?
7. Did you find a reasonable "answer"?
8. Lessons learned? {especially important}

Each exercise set, except social sciences general, contains one required exercise and several options.

Exercises of your choice may be substituted after discussion with the teacher. Since teacher exercises focus on resources available at an academic research library, those interested in public and school library work may substitute similar queries and sources frequently found in those types of libraries.

Exercises are due by midnight Knoxville time when that subject is covered in class.

Each exercise set is worth 30 points.

Assignment Three

Select a social science topic of your choice. Smaller topics work best.

Prepare a [pathfinder](#) for your topic using a variety of appropriate items. Be aware of the difference between a pathfinder and a guide. A bit more on the [Robinson view of pathfinders here](#). If you wish, you may restrict yourself to information available on the WWW. [The Internet Public Library](#) has some excellent pathfinder examples for you to review. Your topics should probably be more limited than their's. Worth 40 points.

Text

There is a recommended text book: *The Social Sciences* by Herron [3d ed.]. This work was suggested by students who took the course previously. The work is especially good for the hard cover standards, but may be less valuable now that many libraries are reducing their hard copy reference collections. Please let me know if you find this work useful or not.

There is an enormous amount of disinformation as well as excellent social science information on the web. The best way to find the good stuff is via the Internet Scout Project **Scout Report**. For information, [go to the Scout web site](#). Anyone working with social science information on a regular basis, should subscribe to the Scout Report. It is the best way to keep up with what is new and good. Another excellent current awareness site is [the Librarian's Index to the Internet](#). You may wish to subscribe to their current awareness service. [Infomine](#) is another excellent general source. The BUBL Information Service is British but global and is arranged by DDC.

Warning

This is an introductory survey course intended to present basic information about social science information. The course is **not** comprehensive. Rather, you should leave the course with the feeling that your foot is in the door, and that you know enough to continue your education on your own. Obviously, one short course cannot give you the background or competencies necessary for a professional lifetime spent working with social science information.

It is important that you do your own work so that you can become familiar with the resources that you will need to use as an information professional.

Late work will be accepted within one week of the due date. Late work will receive a grade penalty so that B is the highest grade that may be earned. In cases where arrangements are made **BEFORE** the due date, late work will be accepted without penalty.

In addition to assignment specifics, **all** written work will be evaluated in terms of these criteria:

1. Quality of the presentation--neat and free from error
2. Quality of the writing--clear, direct, and correct

3. Quality of the organization--smooth, logical flow of content
4. Quality and amount of reflection, analysis, comparison, and evaluation
5. Use of the appropriate literature.

The following convention is used in evaluating student work:

- A = 93 - 100
- B+ = 86 - 92
- B = 80 - 85
- C+ = 75 - 79
- C = 70 - 74

Please see the teacher if you have special needs, objectives or problems.

Last major revision: July 2007.