

Specialized Information Agencies Course Syllabus

Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to the range of functions and activities performed by specialized information services. A specialized information agency is defined as information agencies and service providers which are supported by private companies, government agencies, not for profit organizations, professional associations or specialized professions. Specialized information agencies also include subject specialty units in academic or public library contexts. In a nutshell, a specialized information agency is distinguished by its customers, the products and services it provides, and its relationship to its parent organization.

Specialized information agencies perform all of the functions of a public or academic library. However, the context in which they function provides other challenges and opportunities. We will cover the functions and the contexts. We will explore what it means to work in a specialized information service on a daily basis. The goal of the course is to provide a progressive and realistic learning experience for the students – one that explores challenges as well as opportunities faced by professionals working in these environments.

The course will cover:

- the broad range of specialized information agencies and the products and services they provide to their parent organizations.
- Broad range of roles played by information professionals working in specialized information agencies
- Specialized information agency clients, products, services and markets
- Use of technical services, collection management and technology services in special agencies
- administrative, management and staffing functions
- special topics such as client relationship management, offshoring of services, supporting clients in a virtual organization, and in a global organization

Teaching and Learning Philosophy

The reason that I teach in graduate information science programs is to share with new professionals what I learn each day on the job. I have had the good fortune to have had some very interesting positions during my career, and have learned a lot over the past three decades. As a practicing information professional and strong advocate of knowledge management, I will share 'real world experiences' to complement the course content.

Your learning experience is my goal in teaching. To this end, the following teaching methods are used:

- Lectures and lecture notes are prepared prior to the start of class and are available to all students as a baseline;
- Learning objects are identified for each session so that you know what I hope to achieve;
- Key Takeaways are used as a feedback mechanism to let the instructor know what you got out of each session;
- In class discussion is strongly encouraged because I believe you have much to contribute to the course, too;
- The research paper provides an opportunity for you to synthesize what you have learned and to do some critical, creative thinking;

- Class participation and contribution to everyone's learning experience is a factor in your grade.

In over ten years of teaching in various disciplines, one lesson holds true – students learn as much from each other as they do from the instructor. This course – though conducted entirely online – is designed to create a learning environment in which you can learn from me and from one another. Critical to your success in the course is your willingness to think critically about the issues, and to share the knowledge you bring to or develop throughout the course. The course also provides the starting rather than the end point in your understanding of the economics of information.

Professional and Academic Standards and Behavior

Cheating and Plagiarism

When you write for this class or when you use information in your assignments, remember that the sources you use should be credited. Plagiarism involves using someone else's words without giving credit. Plagiarism is a violation of scholarly and professional ethics as well as University policy. Further information about this is available in Hill Toics, the UTK Student Handbook.

Class Attendance

Attendance of class sessions is expected because class discussions are an important part of mastering the content of the course. If you must miss a session, let the instructor know ahead of time. Because the course sessions are recorded, you are expected to listen to the recording for any session you must miss.

Assignments and Grading

Required Text and Readings

The required text for the course is Ellis Mount and Renee Massoud's Special Libraries and Information Centers: An Introductory Text. Fourth edition. Special Libraries Association, 1999. The text is almost ten years old but it provides the most comprehensive view of specialized information agencies. We will supplement our readings with current articles from professional journals.

Assignments

In order to provide a more meaningful learning experience for students, we will apply what we are learning to a real life special library or information agency. You will select a specialized information agency, and prepare:

1. Short (3 page) targeted profiles covering selected topics (see below)
2. Share your profile with the class in the form of a short presentation
3. 2012 Vision Statement for your selected library

Students will select a specialized information service as a context for exploring the course issues. You may propose a library or agency you are familiar with, or you may select from among the list of specialized library centers that have offered to work with the class. The list is presented below:

- National Geographic Society

- Congressional Research Service (Legislative)
- Law library
- Health sciences library
- Medical library
- Theological library
- Music library
- State Dept. Library
- Technology company library – Intel, Cisco, etc.
- Does Google have a library?

Targeted Library Profiles (50%)

Students will be expected to prepare five library profiles during the course. These are intended to be short (3 pages maximum) profiles describing various aspects of your library. These profiles are intended to describe the 'current' or 'as-is' state of the library. Profiles will cover your library's:

- Overview of the SIA (due Sept. 7)
- Clients and user community (due Sept. 14)
- Current information products and services offered (due Sept. 28)
- Marketing and client relationship management strategy (Oct. 12)
- Use of technology (due Oct. 26)
- Management style and staffing strategies (due Nov. 16)

In Class Presentations (10%)

Students will give a short description of their profiles in class the session after they are due. The purpose of this assignment is to contribute to the learning experience of your colleagues. You may use a powerpoint presentation but it is not required – you may simply “talk” about your assignment. If you do use powerpoint it should be no more than 3 slides long. These presentations will be graded as credit/no credit.

2012 Vision Statement (30%)

The profiles describe the 'as-is' or current state of affairs of the library. The vision allows you to describe where you think the SIA needs to be in 2012, given what you know about its customers, products and services, funding and its role in the organization. This is intended to be a creative exercise, but should be grounded in what you have learned throughout the course. Each week in the course, we will talk about future trends in each area – this will give you a baseline for your project. The Vision statement should be under 10 pages in length. The class project is due on December 7, 2008.

In Class Discussion and Participation (5%)

Each week students will find “Points to Ponder” interspersed within the lecture. In class discussions serve two goals: (1) provide an opportunity for students to learn from one another, and (2) help us to build a virtual learning community which we would have if we were in a physical classroom setting. Contributions to discussions are graded as credit/no credit.

Key Takeaway (5%)

Key takeaways are designed to help me track whether I'm being effective in teaching the concepts each week. Teaching in a virtual space is a challenge because I cannot see how

students are reacting to lectures or assignments. They are one or two sentences that describe the key idea or issue you took away from a session. There is no right or wrong idea. Key takeaways should be submitted within 24 hours after a session so they are fresh in your mind.

Grading Scheme

Grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

A	93-100%	Excellent performance
B+	86-92%	Very good performance
B	80-85%	Good performance
C+	75-84%	Marginal performance
C	70-74%	Below graduate level performance

Professional Associations and Resources for Specialized Information Agencies

Medical Library Association Corporate Information Services Section <http://ciss.mlanet.org/>

Special Libraries Association

Law Librarians

Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA)

Libraries Serving Special Populations (LSSPS)

American Association of Law Libraries

American Indian Library Association

American Society for Information Science & Technology

American Theological Library Association

Art Libraries Society of North America

Association of Jewish Libraries

Catholic Library Association

Church & Synagogue Library Association

Federal Library & Information Center Committee/Federal Library & Information Network

International Association of Technology University Libraries

Music Library Association

Theatre Library Association

Course Calendar

Sessi on	Date	Topic	Assignment Due
1	Aug. 26, 2008	Overview and Purpose of Specialized Information Agencies	
2	Sept. 2, 2008	Specialized Information Professionals	
3	Sept. 9, 2008	Information Products and Product Design	Profile 1 and Presentation
4	Sept. 16, 2008	Specialized Information Customers and Persona	Profile 2 and Presentation
5	Sept. 23, 2008	Information Services and Service Design	
6	Sept. 30, 2008	Marketing Specialized Information Products and Services	Profile 3 and Presentation
7	Oct. 7, 2008	Collection Development for SIA	
8	Oct. 14, 2008	Support Services and Functions	Profile 4 and Presentation
9	Oct. 21, 2008	Technology and Systems in SIA	
10	Oct. 28, 2008	Administration and Management of SIA's	Profile 5 and Presentation
11	Nov. 4, 2008	Financial Management and Cost Reporting	
12	Nov. 11, 2008	Special Topics: Knowledge Based Client Relationships	
13	Nov. 18, 2008	Special Topics: SIAs and Outsourcing	Profile 6 and Presentation
14	Nov. 25, 2008	Special Topics: SIAs in Virtual Organizations	
15	Dec. 2, 2008	Special Topics: SIAs in Global Corporations	Vision Statement

Session 1. Overview and Purpose of Specialized Information Agencies

Session Topics

- Definition of specialized information agency
- Historical Overview of SIAs
- Differences and similarities
- Types of SIAs
- Role of the SIA in parent organization
- Specialized Professional Associations
- Relationships to Parent Organizations
- Trends in Specialized Information Agencies
- Future Directions for SIAs

Read This

Ellis Mount and Renee Massoud. Special Libraries and Information Centers: An Introductory Text. Fourth edition. Special Libraries Association, 1999.

- Chapter 1: The Nature of Special Libraries and Information Centers, pp. 3-18
- Chapter 2: Typical Special Libraries and Information Centers in Action, pp. 19-26
- Chapter 3: The Nature of Information, pp. 27-40

Do This

- Begin thinking about the type of library you would like to work with during the course. Review the list of candidate agencies.
- Submit your key takeaway in the assignment box.

Session 2. Specialized Information Professionals

Session Topics

- Role of specialized information professionals
- Competencies for specialized information professionals
- Service Provisioning and Service Design
- Product Provisioning and Product Design
- SLA's Professional Competencies

Read This

Ellis Mount and Renee Massoud. Special Libraries and Information Centers: An Introductory Text. Fourth edition. Special Libraries Association, 1999.

- Chapter 25: Cooperative Activities and Networks, pp. 249-262.
- Chapter 26: Professional Organizations and Continuing Education, pp. 263-274
- Chapter 27: Employment in Special Libraries and Information Centers, pp. 275-284

Kellie Snow, Bart Ballaux, Birte Christensen-Dalsgaard, Hans Hofman, Jens Hofman Hansen, Perla Innocenti, Michael Poltorak Nielsen, Seamus Ross and Jørn Thøgersen, "Considering the User Perspective: Research Into Usage and Communication of Digital Information", D-Lib Magazine May/June, 2008, Vol. 14, No. 5/6
<http://www.dlib.org/dlib/may08/ross/05ross.html>

Do This

- Contact the special library of your choice to establish commitment for conversations and access to information over the course of the semester
- Submit your key takeaway in the assignment box

Session 3. Information Products and Product Design

Session Topics

- Primary information products
- Corporate information sources
- Corporate knowledge management
- Secondary information products
- Tertiary information products
- Directories of Expertise

Read This

Do This

- Submit your key takeaway in the assignment box
- Send Profile 1 to the instructor before the start of class

Profile 1 Instructions

Provide a short description of the library you have chosen to work with during the course. This profile should describe:

- Industry in which the corporation does business
- Products and services provided by the parent organization
- Type of economic sector (for-profit, not-for-profit, non-profits, etc.)
- Whether the parent organization is local, state, national or global/international organization
- History of the parent organization
- Competitors in the industry
- Number of employees, total revenue, total budget
- Placement of the information agency in the parent organizational structure
- Physical location of the information agency in the facilities
- Number of staff supporting the information agency

Session 4. Specialized Information Consumers and Persona

Session Topics

- Information consumption and use in specialized contexts
- Information Consumers
- User profiles and persona
- Persona characteristics
- Delivery channels

Read This

Jarod Spool, Three Important Benefits of Personas, User Interface Engineering, May 22, 2007. http://www.ue.com/articles/benefits_of_personas/

Usability.gov. Develop Personas <http://www.usability.gov/analyze/personas.html>

Do This

- Submit your key takeaway in the assignment box
- Send Profile 2 to the instructor before the start of class

Profile #2 Instructions

Provide a short description of the library you have chosen to work with during the course. This profile should describe:

- Types of internal clients the agency supports
- Types of external clients the agency supports
- Ratio of internal to external clients
- Languages, levels of domain expertise, technology sophistication of clients
- “Channels” used to send requests – email, in person, fax, telephone, live chat
- “Value factors” – what is most important – time, quality, coverage – to these clients

Session 5. Design of Information Services

Session Topics

- Search and retrieval services
- Current awareness services
- Document Delivery services
- Reference and advisory services
- Circulation services
- Editorial services
- Business intelligence
- Corporate records management

Read This

Ellis Mount and Renee Massoud. Special Libraries and Information Centers: An Introductory Text. Fourth edition. Special Libraries Association, 1999.

- Chapter 12. Retrieval Services, pp. 135-146
- Chapter 13. Current Awareness Services, pp. 147-150
- Chapter 14. Circulation Services, pp. 151-156
- Chapter 15. Editorial Services, pp. 157-162

Penka, Jeff. The technological challenges of digital reference: an overview. D-Lib Magazine February 2003 Vol. 9, No. 2.

Do This

- Submit your key takeaway in the assignment box

Session 6. Marketing Specialized Information Products and Services

Session Topics

- Marketing defined
- Value of marketing
- What to market
- How to market

Read This

Ellis Mount and Renee Massoud. Special Libraries and Information Centers: An Introductory Text. Fourth edition. Special Libraries Association, 1999.

- Chapter 9. Marketing and Public Relations, pp. 101-106

Peros, Janet. "Face Time: The Power of Person-o-Person Marketing" Information Outlook 9, no. 12 (Dec.2005), 25-27

Tompson, Sara. "Guerrilla marketing: agile advertising of information services," Information Outlook 7, no. 2(Feb. 2003), 6-29

Do This

- Submit your key takeaway in the assignment box
- Send Profile 3 to the instructor before the start of class

Profile #3 Instructions

Provide a short description of the library you have chosen to work with during the course. This profile should describe products and collections:

- Nature of the agencies collections
- Whether the collections are internally or externally produced
- How the materials are acquired
- Special expertise required to manage these collections
- How clients use these collections
- Custom products the agency creates to support clients

Session 7. Collection Development and Management

Session Topics

- Physical collections
- Electronic collections
- Collection development guidelines
- Electronic and print records management
- Archives management

Read This

Ellis Mount and Renee Massoud. Special Libraries and Information Centers: An Introductory Text. Fourth edition. Special Libraries Association, 1999.

- Chapter 19. Types of Library Materials, pp. 199-208
- Chapter 20. Collection Development, pp. 209-216
- Chapter 21. Weeding of Materials, pp. 217-222
- Chapter 22. Archives and Records Management, pp. 223-228

Skim through the following collection development policy statements:

North Atlantic Treaty Organization Collection Development Policy
<http://www.nato.int/STRUCTUR/library/bibref/coll-dev-pol2.pdf>

Collection Development Policy For The National Geospatial Digital Archive Version 0.5, June 20, 2006
http://www.ngda.org/reports/NGDA%20Reports/CDP_Draft.doc

Spink, Amanda and Jane Hicks, "Development of the Digital Ranch: A Lot of Bull on the Net!" D-Lib Magazine November, 1997. <http://www.dlib.org/dlib/november97/11spink.html>

Do This

- Submit your key takeaway in the assignment box

Session 8. Support Services and Functions

Session Topics

- Selection practices
- Procurement practices
- Acquisitions practices – licensing, access, etc.
- Cataloging for specialized clients
- Specialized knowledge organization structures
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Read This

Ellis Mount and Renee Massoud. Special Libraries and Information Centers: An Introductory Text. Fourth edition. Special Libraries Association, 1999.

- Chapter 16. Cataloging and Indexing, pp. 165-176
- Chapter 17. Acquisitions, pp. 177-184
- Chapter 18. Care and Preservation of Materials, pp. 185-196

Do This

- Submit your key takeaway in the assignment box
- Send Profile 4 to the instructor before the start of class

Profile #4 Instructions

Provide a short description of the agency you have chosen to work with during the course. This profile should describe the agency's marketing strategy and its approach to managing client relationships:

- Marketing techniques for products and services
- Outreach to current or potential clients
- Internal competitors for products and services
- External competitors
- Pricing or charge-back

Session 9. Technology and Systems for Specialized Contexts

Session Topics

- End user technologies
- Information management technologies
- Document management technologies
- Records management technologies
- Data management technologies

Read This

Ellis Mount and Renee Massoud. Special Libraries and Information Centers: An Introductory Text. Fourth edition. Special Libraries Association, 1999.

- Chapter 11: The Role of Technology, pp. 121-132

Jaca, Joycelyn, Bringing te libray right into the workplace: a challenge and a tool of survival for a telecommunications library. GLOBAL 2000 Worldwide Conference on Special Librarianship, 16-19 October 2000 in Brighton, UK

Do This

- Submit your key takeaway in the assignment box

Session 10. Administration and Management of CIS

Session Topics

- Planning
- Organizing
- Directing
- Controlling

Read This

- Robert D. Stueart and Barbara B. Moran, "Library and Information Center Management",

Ellis Mount and Renee Massoud. Special Libraries and Information Centers: An Introductory Text. Fourth edition. Special Libraries Association, 1999.

- Chapter 4: Role of the Manager, pp. 43-52
- Chapter 5: Relating to Top Management, pp. 53-62
- Chapter 7: Organizing and Staffing, pp. 79-88
- Chapter 8: Supervising, pp. 89-100
- Chapter 9: Managerial Techniques, pp. 107-120

Recommended Reading

Joseph R. Matthews, Strategic Planning and Management for Library Managers, Libraries Unlimited, 2005.

- Chapter 1. What are Strategies? Pp. 3-10
- Chapter 2. The Need for Strategies, pp. 11-28
- Chapter 4. Types of Strategies, pp. 43-56

G. Edward Evans and Patricia Layzell Ward, Beyond the Basics: The Management Guide for Library and Information Professionals, Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2003.

- Chapter 1. Exploring the External Operating Environment, pp. 3-30

Do This

- Submit your key takeaway in the assignment box
- Send Profile 5 to the instructor before the start of class

Profile #5 Instructions

Provide a short description of the agency you have chosen to work with during the course. This profile should describe the agency's use of technology:

- Types of systems used to manage collections
- Types of systems used to track clients and client requests
- Parent organization's attitude towards technology
- Use of web and internet to provide products and services
- Whether the technology is internally or externally hosted
- Who manages and maintains the systems
- Budget available for technology

Session 11. Financial Management and Cost Reporting

Session Topics

- Capital and administrative budgets
- Budgeting for materials, staffing, technology, facilities
- Budget elements
- Budget planning
- Budget control and monitoring
- Financial management systems
- Financial reporting
- Competing for financial resources
- Impact of budgets on services and products

Read This

Ellis Mount and Renee Massoud. Special Libraries and Information Centers: An Introductory Text. Fourth edition. Special Libraries Association, 1999.

- Chapter 6: Planning and Budgeting, pp. 63-78

Palmer, Barbara. Ongoing Crisis in Academic Journal Pricing is the Focus of Recent Colloquium. Stanford Report, November 15, 2006

<http://news-service.stanford.edu/news/2006/november15/journal-111506.html>

University of California Libraries' Collection Development Committee, "The Promise of Value-based Journal Prices and Negotiation," UC Report and View Forward, January, 2007.

<http://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/cdc/valuebasedprices.pdf>

Do This

- Submit your key takeaway in the assignment box

Session 12. Special Topics: Knowledge Based Client Relationships

Session Topics

- Adding value to clients
- Adding value to information
- Adding value to client decision making
- Adding value to client capabilities

Read This

Ross Dawson, Developing Knowledge-Based Client Relationships: The Future of Professional Services. Butterworth-Heinemann, 2000

- Chapter 1: Adding value to clients: the increasing knowledge component, pp. 3-30
- Chapter 3: Adding value to information: from information to knowledge, pp. 59-79
- Chapter 4: Adding value to client decision making: better strategic, line, and portfolio decisions, pp. 80-102
- Chapter 5: Adding value to client capabilities: enhancing processes and skills, pp. 103-122

Do This

- Submit your key takeaway in the assignment box

Session 13. Special Topics: Outsourcing

Session Topics

- Definition of outsourcing
- Original goals of outsourcing
- Outsourcing, offshoring and other shoring
- Outsourcing vendors
- Outsourcing of cataloging
- Outsourcing of selection
- Outsourcing of management
- Impact of outsourcing on services

Read This

Robert S. Martin, The Impact of Outsourcing and Privatization on Library Services and Management. A Study for the American Library Association. June 2008 http://www.acrl.org/ala/oif/iftoolkits/outsourcing/outsourcing_doc.pdf

Carol Ebbinghouse, "Library Outsourcing: A New Look". Searcher Vol. 10 No. 4 — April 2002 <http://www.infotoday.com/searcher/apr02/ebbinghouse.htm>

Bedford Mayor Nixes Library Outsourcing. American Libraries August, 2007. <http://www.ala.org/ala/online/currentnews/newsarchive/2007/august2007/bedfordnixes.cfm>

Do This

- Submit your key takeaway in the assignment box
- Send Profile 6 to the instructor before the start of class

Profile #6 Instructions

Provide a short description of the agency you have chosen to work with during the course. This profile should describe the agency's management style and philosophy, and its approach to staffing :

- Responsibilities of the agency managers – Financial, Hiring, control, directing
- Relationship of agency managers to parent organization
- Participation of agency managers in organizational decision making
- Role of agency staff in organizational teams and activities
- Staff development and recruitment strategies

Session 14. Special Topics: Information Services to Virtual Organizations

Session Topics

- Virtual Organizations Defined
- Working in a Virtual Organization
- Teleworking clients
- Distributed teams
- Collaborative work environments

Read This

Cochrane, Peter. World of Bits. Chapter 2. Everything's Coming Up Bits.
<http://infomgt.bi.no/wg82-86/proceedings/cochrane.pdf>

Davidow, William H. The Virtual Corporation: Structuring and Revitalizing the Corporation for the 21st Century

- Chapter 1. A New Kind of Business. Pp. 1-19.

Yager, Susan. Everything's Coming Up Virtual. ACM
<http://www.acm.org/crossroads/xrds4-1/organ.html>

Do This

- Submit your key takeaway in the assignment box
- Focus on developing your SIA Vision for 2012

Session 15. Special Topics: Information Services to Global Organizations

Session Topics

- Global organizations defined
- Management styles and cultures
- Managing complexity
- Information service challenges
- 24/7 Support Expectations

Read This

Cummings, Jonathon N. "Work Groups, Structural Diversity, and Knowledge Sharing in a Global Organization," Management Science Volume 50, No. 3, March 2004, pp. 352-364

Yaeger, Therese F., Thomas C. Head and Peter F. Sorensen. Global Organization Development: Managing Unprecedented Change. Information Age Publishing, 2006

- Chapter 1 Organization Development in a Changing World, pp. 3-16.
- Chapter 2. Fundamental Issues in Global Organization Development, pp. 1-30

Do This

- Submit your key takeaway in the assignment box
- Focus on developing your SIA Vision for 2012