

INFO 5530: Information Sources, Services, and Retrieval
Fall 2024

Course Type: Face-to-face

Instructor name/title: Lindsay McNiff

Office: Killam Library, 3rd floor Reference & Research Services Office

Contact info: lindsay.mcniff@dal.ca. Generally, I will respond to emails Monday to Friday, 9am-4:30pm. I may respond to email outside of these hours if I see it and if it is urgent; however, I do not guarantee a response outside of these hours.

Office hours: Please use my [Bookings link](#) or email me to set up an appointment

Course website: Brightspace

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course is both a theoretical and practical introduction to information services, sources, and retrieval (traditionally known as “reference work”) in an array of settings. We will discuss users and their information-seeking behaviours, major categories of online and print reference resources, evolving trends in the profession, community participation, and the practice of finding and connecting users with appropriate resources in the 21st century.

COURSE PRE-REQUISITES: *This is a required course. There are no prerequisites.*

LEARNING OUTCOMES: By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe and explain concepts, issues, and trends in information services
2. Analyze the information needs of patrons and various user groups
3. Identify appropriate information resources to meet specific needs
4. Approach factual and research-based reference questions and practice better searching skills
5. Create reference content in an online environment
6. Work effectively in groups to address specific information needs

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS: Course content will be available in Brightspace. Classes are in-person, but if a class meeting needs to move online, we will meet via Microsoft Teams. Students will learn to search a range of academic databases on a variety of platforms, specialized reference tools, as well as the public web. They will learn about tools for virtual reference and develop a firm grasp of LibGuides, a widely used library solutions software.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS: Teaching and learning will take place via recommended readings, class and group discussions, in-class exercises, and instructor and guest lectures. The lectures may not duplicate or summarize readings; students are expected to keep up with the reading. As this class involves developing professional skills, active and experiential learning techniques are incorporated. Assignments involve simulated questions and scenarios and in-class activities involve reference work and collaborative problem solving. Regular attendance is required, and **laptops should be brought to every class.**

LEARNING MATERIALS:

Course textbook: Wong, M.A., & Saunders, L. (2020). *Reference and information services: An introduction* (6th ed.). ABC-CLIO, LLC.

- Available as a [Dalhousie ebook](#)
- One course reserve copy available on 2-hour loan at Killam Library Service Point
- Some print copies are available for purchase at the Dalhousie Bookstore

Other readings: See course outline in Brightspace.

Note: To enable you to become accustomed to accessing articles yourselves (and thus become better searchers), most weekly readings are not linked to full text articles in the syllabus (in some exceptions, certain readings may be scanned and uploaded to Brightspace). In these cases, you will see the items listed on the syllabus without direct links.

METHODS OF EVALUATION

Detailed instructions regarding each assignment will be provided. Assessment of all assignments is directly related to attention to the instructions, clarity of expression and presentation, and evidence of significant analysis and reflection.

See also the [Grading Policy](#).

COMPONENT	DETAILS	DUE DATE	VALUE
Assignment 1: Informational interview	Students write a short report analyzing their experience meeting with an information professional	Week 3: Tues. Sept. 17, 11:59pm (suggested due date)	10%
Assignment 2: Reference questions	Students investigate and create detailed responses to stated information needs	Week 6: Tues. Oct. 8, 11:59pm	20%
Assignment 3: LibGuide	Students work in groups to create an online resource guide for a chosen topic. Students will also establish a group charter and evaluate their own and their teammates' contributions to the project.	Week 7 (charter): Tues. Oct. 15, 11:59pm Week 10 (project): Tues. Nov. 5, 11:59pm Evaluations due Friday, Nov. 8, 11:59pm	30%
Assignment 4: Search plan	Students create a strategy for compiling resources on a chosen topic	Week 12: Tues. Nov. 26, 11:59pm	30%
Participation	See participation rubric.	Ongoing	10%

		Participation self-assessment due Mon. Dec. 4, 11:59pm	
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PARTICIPATION EVALUATION RUBRIC

CRITERIA	WEIGHTING	INDICATORS
Participation (self-assessment)	50%	<p>Effective participation in this course may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coming to class prepared to discuss and consider the week's topics • Making thoughtful contributions to class discussions • Asking questions to clarify matters discussed • Actively listening to discussions and others' views • Responding to comments from others • Demonstrating interest in, and respect of, others' views • Sharing questions and reflections in written form (such as on optional discussion forums, Teams chat, or via email to me) • Participating in in-class exercises <p>(Thanks to Louise Spiteri for permission to adapt this list)</p> <p>Students will assess their own participation in this course. Participation self-assessment must be submitted by Mon. Dec. 4, 11:59pm.</p>
Activities (labour-based grading – you get full points for doing the work)	50%	<p>The student attends class and participates in in-class activities and discussions. The student completes assigned activities when required.</p> <p>If you are not able to attend a class, you have the option to make up these points by posting some comments about the week's readings to the "Continued conversations" discussion board.</p>
Bonus participation marks: MI Academic Support Series	+2% bonus for attending one; +3% for attending both	<p>The student attends either/both of the following workshops: <i>Finding & reading LIS literature</i> (Mon. Sept. 23, 10-11:30am online via Teams) OR <i>Organizing your research with Zotero</i> (Mon. Oct. 7, 1-2:30pm online via Teams)</p>

INTEGRATION OF [MI Competencies](#)

PROGRAM COMPETENCY	COURSE LEARNING OUTCOME	COURSE ASSESSMENT
Adaptation	1	1
Collaboration	6	3
Commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, accessibility, and decolonization	1,2,3	2,3
Communication	2,3,5,6	1,2,3
Digital and technological literacy	4,5	2,3,4
Evidence-based practices	1	4
Leadership	1,6	1,3
Learning	1,2,3,4,5,6	1,2,3,4
Management	1,2	3
User-centred design	6	2,3,4

CLASS POLICIES

Class recordings (F2F classes)

Lecture components will be recorded and made available for students who have to miss a class for health or other reasons. Guest speakers may or may not be recorded. Segments of class that are predominantly class or group discussion will **not** be recorded.

Class slides

The instructor's slides will always be posted before class on the day of class. Guest speaker slides may or may not be posted (and the timing may also vary).

Information for online sessions

While this is intended to be a F2F course, the professor may move some sessions online. If this happens, you will receive notice in advance and the class will meet on Teams.

Attendance

Class attendance is required in all MI courses and is included in the participation mark. Attendance records will be kept by the instructor. In this course, Attendance is factored into your Participation grade, and there are makeup options available for circumstances when you are unable to attend class.

Citation Style

MI courses use APA as the default standard citation style. Unless the instructor provides alternative written instructions, please use the APA citation style in your assignments to briefly identify (cite) other people's ideas and information and to indicate the sources of these citations in the References list at

the end of the assignment. For more information on APA style, consult Dalhousie Library website at <https://libraries.dal.ca/help/style-guides.html> or the APA's Frequently Asked Questions about APA

Use of AI-driven Tools

The use of AI-driven tools is not prohibited in this course; however, remember that the objective is for you to acquire the competencies and outcomes in this course. You are responsible for all work that you produce, whether assisted by an AI-driven tool or not. You must acknowledge all tools used to assist you. Please read assignment instructions carefully. If applicable, you must provide links to chat logs and discuss any use of AI tools directly. If the work that you produce is suspected to misrepresent your own competencies, you may be asked to complete a supplemental assessment to evaluate your mastery of course outcomes. More [information on citing Artificial Intelligence \(AI\) can be found here.](#)

Late penalties for assignments

A penalty for late assignments will be assessed, unless prior permission has been given by the instructor to submit an assignment late, which normally will be for extended illness, medical, or family emergencies only (see below). Late submissions will be assessed a penalty of five percent per day, including weekends. Assignments will not normally be accepted seven days or more after the due date; in such cases the student will receive a grade of zero.

INFO 5530 assignment deadlines

Most assignments in this course are due at midnight (11:59pm) the Tuesday evening before our class but will be accepted without penalty until 11:00am on Wednesday.

INFO 5530 Flex Days (please read this carefully)

- Each student in this course has **2 flex days** that can be used where possible for assignments
- It is **NOT possible** to use flex days on Assignment 3 (LibGuide)
- You **do not have to notify me** that you are using your flex days
- You may use both flex days on one assignment or spread them out across two assignments
- Once your flex days have been used, late penalties (5% per day) begin to accrue
- If you need a longer extension, please contact me
- Students with accommodations for extensions will be accommodated but still need to request extensions when needed (email is fine)

Student Declaration of Absence: Not used in this course.

30-minute reference questions (formerly in-class reference questions): Three times over the course of the term, students will complete a 30-minute reference question outside of class time. These are set up as quizzes in Brightspace, but please note that they are ungraded exercises for practice only. Submitting an answer to the questions counts toward your Participation grade; however, the answers themselves are not graded. The questions will become available immediately after class (2:25pm) in Weeks 4, 7, and 10, and remain available until Sunday at 11:59pm. Once you begin answering the question, you will have 30 minutes to submit your answer. The 30-minute time limit is in place not to test your speed at answering reference questions, but to put a time frame around your efforts and to give you practice.

GRADING POLICY

A+	90-100	Demonstrates original work of distinction.
A	85-89	Demonstrates high-level command of the subject matter and an ability for critical analysis.
A-	80-84	Demonstrates above-average command of the subject matter.
B+	77-79	Demonstrates average command of the subject matter.

B	73-76	Demonstrates acceptable command of the subject matter.
B-	70-72	Demonstrates minimally acceptable command of the subject matter.
F	<70	Unacceptable for credit towards a Master's degree.

ACCOMMODATION POLICY FOR STUDENTS

The Student Accessibility Centre is Dalhousie's centre of expertise for student accessibility and accommodation. The advising team works with students on the Halifax campus who request accommodation as a result of: a disability, religious obligation, or any barrier related to any other characteristic protected under Human Rights legislation (NS, NB, PEI, NFLD).

If there are aspects of the design, instruction, and/or experiences within this course that result in barriers to your inclusion please contact the Student Accessibility Centre. Please visit www.dal.ca/access for more information and to obtain the Request for Accommodation form.

A note taker may be required as part of a student's accommodation. Visit https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/accessibility/accommodations-/classroom-accommodation.html for more details.

Please note that your classroom may contain accessible furniture and equipment. It is important that these items remain in the classroom, undisturbed, so that students who require their use will be able to fully participate.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

In general:

The commitment of the Faculty of Management is to graduate future leaders of business, government and civil society who manage with integrity and get things done. This is non-negotiable in our community and it starts with your first class at Dalhousie University. So, when you submit any work for evaluation in this course or any other, please ensure that you are familiar with your obligations under the Faculty of Management's Academic Integrity Policies and that you understand where to go for help and advice in living up to our standards. You should be familiar with the Faculty of Management Professor and Student Contract on Academic Integrity, and it is your responsibility to ask questions if there is anything you do not understand.

Dalhousie offers many ways to learn about academic writing and presentations so that all members of the University community may acknowledge the intellectual property of others. Knowing how to find, evaluate, select, synthesize and cite information for use in assignments is called being "information literate". Information literacy is taught by Dalhousie University Librarians in classes and through Dalhousie Libraries' online Citing & Writing tutorials.

Do not plagiarize any materials for this course. For further guidance on what constitutes plagiarism, how to avoid it, and proper methods for attributing sources, please consult the University Secretariat's Academic Integrity page.

Please note that Dalhousie subscribes to software that checks for originality in submitted papers. Any paper submitted by a student at Dalhousie University may be checked for originality to support instructors in confirming that the student has not plagiarized from other sources. Plagiarism is considered a very serious academic offence that may lead to loss of credit, suspension or expulsion from the University, or even the revocation of a degree. It is essential that there be correct attribution of

authorities from which facts and opinions have been derived. At Dalhousie, there are University Regulations which deal with plagiarism and, prior to submitting any paper in a course; students should read the Policy on Intellectual Honesty contained in the Academic Calendar.

Furthermore the University's Senate has affirmed the right of any instructor to require that student assignments be submitted in both written and computer readable format, e.g.: a text file or as an email attachment, and to submit any paper to a check such as that performed by the plagiarism detection software. As a student in this class, you are to keep an electronic copy of any paper you submit, and the course instructor may require you to submit that electronic copy to plagiarism detection software. Use of third-party originality checking software does not preclude instructor use of alternate means to identify lapses in originality and attribution. The result of such assessment may be used as evidence in any disciplinary action taken by the Senate.

Finally: If you suspect a lapse in academic integrity by colleagues or a professor, you may confidentially share your concerns via DeanManagement@dal.ca.

Faculty of Management clarification on plagiarism versus collaboration:

There are many forms of plagiarism, for instance, copying on exams and assignments. There is a clear line between group work on assignments when explicitly authorised by the professor and copying solutions from others. It is permissible to work on assignments with your friends but only when the professor gives you permission in the specific context of the assignment. University rules clearly stipulate that all assignments should be undertaken individually unless specifically authorised.

Specific examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Copying a computer file from another student, and using it as a template for your own solution
- Copying text written by another student
- Submitting the work of someone else, including that of a tutor as your own

An example of acceptable collaboration includes the following:

- When authorised by the professor, discussing the issues and underlying factors of a case with fellow students, and then each of the students writing up their submissions individually, from start to finish.

UNIVERSITY STATEMENTS

This course is governed by the academic rules and regulations set forth in the [University Calendar](#) and the Senate.

ACCESSIBILITY

The Student Accessibility Centre is Dalhousie's centre of expertise for matters related to student accessibility and accommodation. We work collaboratively with Dalhousie and King's students, faculty, and staff to create an inclusive educational environment for students. The Centre is responsible for administering the university-wide [Student Accommodation Policy](#) working across all programs and faculties.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Everyone at Dalhousie is expected to treat others with dignity and respect. The Code of Student Conduct allows Dalhousie to take disciplinary action if students don't follow this community expectation. When appropriate, violations of the code can be resolved in a reasonable and informal manner—perhaps through a restorative justice process. If an informal resolution can't be reached, or would be inappropriate, procedures exist for formal dispute resolution.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Every person at Dalhousie has a right to be respected and safe. We believe inclusiveness is fundamental to education. We stand for equality. Dalhousie is strengthened in our diversity. We are a respectful and inclusive community. We are committed to being a place where everyone feels welcome and supported, which is why our Strategic Direction prioritizes fostering a culture of diversity and inclusiveness (Strategic Priority 5.2).

INTERNATIONALIZATION

At Dalhousie, “thinking and acting globally” enhances the quality and impact of education, supporting learning that is “interdisciplinary, cross-cultural, global in reach, and orientated toward solving problems that extend across national borders.”

RECOGNITION OF MI'KMAQ TERRITORY

Dalhousie University is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq. We are all Treaty people. For more information about the purpose of territorial acknowledgements, or information about alternative territorial acknowledgements if your class is offered outside of Nova Scotia, please visit <https://native-land.ca/>.

The Elders in Residence program provides students with access to First Nations elders for guidance, counsel and support. Visit the office in the McCain Building (room 3037) or contact the programs at elders@dal.ca or 902-494-6803 (leave a message).

FAIR DEALING POLICY

The Dalhousie University Fair Dealing Policy provides guidance for the limited use of copyright protected material without the risk of infringement and without having to seek the permission of copyright owners. It is intended to provide a balance between the rights of creators and the rights of users at Dalhousie.

COURSE SCHEDULE

PLEASE NOTE that this schedule and assigned readings may change slightly, particularly in the event of a campus closure. You will be notified of any updates/modifications.

Date of class	Topics	Reminders and assignments
Class 1. Sept. 4	Course introduction. History of information services.	Please complete the Group Work profile
Class 2. Sept. 11	The Reference Interview.	In-class reference interview exercises
Class 3. Sept. 18	Types of reference sources: Selection and evaluation Teaching & reference; LibGuides	Assignment #1 (Informational interview) SUGGESTED DUE DATE (Tues, Sept. 18, 11:59pm) LibGuides homework In-class reference sources exercise

Class 4. Sept. 25	Deconstructing databases	<i>30-minute reference question #1</i>
Class 5. Oct. 2	Ethical issues in information services.	Guest speaker Submit 2 insights on this week's readings
Class 6. Oct. 9	Assignment 3 support: Working in a team Information behaviour	Assignment #2 (Reference questions) due (by Tues, Oct. 15, 11:59pm) Assignment 3 group meetings Guest speakers
Class 7, Oct. 16	Indigenous librarianship. Reconciliation and libraries. Advanced searching	Guest speaker Submit 2 insights on this week's readings <i>30-minute class reference question #2</i>
Class 8. Oct. 23	Health libraries Controlled vocabulary	Guest speaker Submit 1 insight on this week's audio
Class 9. Oct. 30	Web searching Source evaluation	Submit 2 insights on this week's video and/or audio
Class 10. Nov. 6	Information and the justice system. AI in libraries	Assignment #3 (LibGuide) due (by Tues, Nov. 5, 11:59pm) Guest speaker <i>30-minute reference question #3</i>
Nov. 14 – NO CLASS (Study break)		
Class 11. Nov. 20	Answering data reference question Focus on academic libraries	Guest speaker Submit 2 insights on this week's readings
Class 12. Nov. 27	Panel discussion. Course wrap-up.	Panel speakers Assignment 4 (Search Plan) due Tues, Nov. 26, 11:59pm

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