Department:

Library Science

Course Description:

This course will cover the fundamentals of a reference desk, including both print and online reference resources, databases used to provide services to patrons, conducting the reference interview, interacting with patrons of differing nationalities and needs, follow-up services, online reference, and techniques for pushing information to patrons. The course will also emphasize time management, communication, teamwork, conflict resolution, problem solving, reference machines, and outreach. In addition, the course will look at the theoretical framework of reference services guiding librarians, as well as major trends in library reference services and information sciences and what the future may bring.

Course Competencies:

Upon completion of the course, the student should be able to:

1. Explain the fundamental idea and purpose of a reference desk.
2. List and discuss the various databases available.
3. Conduct a reference interview.
4. Describe and explain the permutations of reference inquiries.
5. Describe the primary skills needed at a reference desk.
6. Discuss possible future trends in library services.

Course Content:

A. Fundamentals of reference
   1. Information resources
      a. Print
      b. Online
   2. Databases
      a. Subject matter
      b. Depth required
      c. Information required
B. Conducting the reference interview
   1. Query tips
   2. Rephrasing
   3. Condensing
   4. Pinpointing
   5. Follow-up
C. Reference desk skills
   1. Time management with patrons
   2. Training
   3. Teamwork
   4. Conflict resolution
   5. Problem solving
   6. Dealing with unusual problems or patrons
   7. Machines and reference duties

D. Theory

E. Future of reference services

Learning Assessments:

Course competencies will be assessed by use of class assignments, library assignments, reading assignments, papers, exams, and final paper/project.

Instructional Materials:


Guidelines for Requesting Accommodations Based on Documented Disability or Medical Condition

It is the intention of Highland Community College to work toward full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, to make instructional programs accessible to all people, and to provide reasonable accommodations according to the law.

Students should understand that it is their responsibility to self-identify their need(s) for accommodation and that they must provide current, comprehensive diagnosis of a specific disability or medical condition from a qualified professional in order to receive services. Documentation must include specific recommendations for accommodation(s). Documentation should be provided in a timely manner prior to or early in the semester so that the requested accommodation can be considered and, if warranted, arranged.

In order to begin the process all students must complete the “Disabilities Self-Identification Form” at this link: https://highlandcc.edu/pages/disability-services.

This form can also be accessed at the Highland Community College homepage under Students Services/Student Resources/Disability Service or by contacting the Disabilities Coordinator.