

Planning an Interdisciplinary Humanities Information Literacy Course

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In Spring 2009, as the subject specialists for Art, Dance, Literature, Music, Religion and Theatre, we began to teach an advanced level credit-bearing information literacy course, LIB250: Humanities Research Sources and Strategies.

LIB250 Web2.0 Applications...

Google Docs

- ~ Brainstorming course content and organization
- ~ Planning individual class sessions, outlines and syllabus
- ~ Running log for course improvement suggestions
- ~ Student research project submissions

Blog

- ~ Course syllabus
- ~ Supplementary resources
- ~ Daily student responses to individual classes

Mindmaps

- ~ Reference resources
- ~ Sources of a creative work (primary, secondary and tertiary)
- ~ Subject subdivisions for primary sources



"I thought the mind map was a great tool that was effectively utilized during class...the presentation on WorldCat was great. I never knew that it even existed, so to learn something new and useful made this class that much more interesting!"

LIB250 Course Assignments...

The Content: Research project

- ~ Select arts or humanities research topic
- ~ Create annotated bibliography, including examples of each type of source covered
- ~ Present research findings and experience to the class, with required visual component

The Profession: Interview with faculty or practitioner

- ~ Questionnaire provided by instructors
- ~ Write-up and reflection on interview
- ~ Class presentation

Their Response: Daily class blog

- ~ Feedback on each class session
- ~ Application of class content to research topic



"Zotero is amazing! I really appreciated being walked through that program...it made it super easy to learn how to work. I found a great source, and easily got it into my final project write up with Zotero!"



"I absolutely loved the special collections and rare books room. It was cozy and really made me feel inspired and intellectual. It was so interesting and exciting for me to see a signed collection of Robert Frost poems, among other rare and beautiful books!"

LIB250 Instructor Challenges...

Planning

- ~ Marketing to students
- ~ Meeting minimum enrollment (10 students)
- ~ Deciding at what depth to cover each discipline
- ~ Variations among the disciplines (e.g. terminology, methodologies)
- ~ Organizing the course (by resource format, discipline or theme)

Teaching

- ~ Coordinating four different instructors' materials and presentations
- ~ Accommodating non-humanities majors and minors
- ~ Bringing student focus beyond their own research topics
- ~ Encouraging student responses, interactions and reflections during class time and in blog discussions
- ~ Repetition of concepts and strategies across disciplines

LIB250 Plans for Improvement...

- ~ Remove limit to only humanities majors and minors
- ~ Streamline placement of technology applications used in class
- ~ Focus on "how to" rather than "show and tell"
- ~ Greater emphasis on citations and research process documentation

