I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

A seminar-oriented introduction to online and offline health information resources, useful to both consumers and health care professionals, for understanding health promotion and disease/disorder prevention, epidemiology, diagnosis, treatment, prognostic assessment, and management. Includes allopathic and alternative/complementary/integrative information approaches, as well as genetic and evidence-based approaches and resources. Resources of the National Library of Medicine (NLM), other NIH agencies, and the Medical Library Association (MLA) are emphasized. Requirements include (1) completion of assignments involving familiarization with medical terminology and common disease management patterns, formulation of search strategies, searching various resources, and a comprehensive examination on these topics; (2) completion of an individualized health reference guide for future career and personal use; (3) completion of one or more extensive and intensive information searches on an idiopathic disease or major health problem.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To acquire initial working knowledge of the following health topics, concepts or entities and their corresponding information resources:
   
   • basic medical terminology and the characteristics of major diseases and disorders, including preventive measures, etiology, epidemiology, diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis;
   • key health organization services, including those of NLM, NIH, CDC, MLA, and major health science center libraries (such as Briscoe Library at UTSCSA, and the Texas Department of Health Library);
encycledias, monographs, etc.);

• evidence-based health web sites, including those for complementary/alternative/integrative health care;
• genetic and bioinformatics information resources;
• information retrieval thesauri subject headings, search strategies, and key, related guides;
• major bibliographic databases, including MEDLINE and others.

2. To compile an individualized health reference resource guide that incorporates the kinds of information resources mentioned in the first objective (above) for future career and personal use.

3. To conduct an in-depth search or a series of searches on one or more assigned, major health problems (e.g., an idiopathic (Unknown origin) disease, cancer, cardiovascular disease, arthritis, etc.)

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

1. Completion of a comprehensive open book examination on the health resources and venues included under the first objective above (30% of course grade).

2. Completion of an individualized health reference guide for future career use, including preparing for job interviews, finding information for health professionals, consumers, or your own use. The reference guide should include the topics and sources of the kind mentioned in the first objective above (30% of grade.)

3. Submission of the results of one or more extensive and intensive, long term (multi-decade) information searches on an assigned disease or disorder. The search should appropriately utilize the kinds of approaches, entities or resources mentioned in the first course objective above: relevant terminology; organizational resources; print, online and web resources; evidence-based, complementary and genetic sources; information retrieval aids; other bibliographic resources (30% grade).

4. Positive, constructive and proactive class participation and the sharing of insights and information with classmates (10% of grade).

IV. REQUIRED BOOKS


ISBN: 0-910965-44-7. You may purchase from Amazon.com or other vendor.


V. EXAMPLES OF OTHER USEFUL BOOKS (Not required)


VI. GUIDELINES FOR COMPLETING REQUIREMENTS

1. **Open Book Exam**: We will cover the various topics listed under the first objectives in class and also in the required books and readings. The exam will test your familiarity with the services and resources of NLM and other key organizations; printed reference sources; the usefulness of various web sites and their evidence-based characteristics; genetic resources; searching strategies and thesauri; bibliographic databases; the potential use of electronic medical libraries; and general disease categories. The exam will consist of a several short-answer questions.
2. **Health Reference Guide**: A few medical reference departments develop customized guides for their own reference desks, as do other groups or individual health information professionals. The guide that you prepare should demonstrate broad coverage of health information resources and demonstrate a good start in organizing information resources for your own use in your professional career (and for personal purposes) well into the future. The guide may be prepared in electronic format or for a binder that accommodates standard 8 ½ x 11 inch photocopied papers and carefully screened, downloaded print outs. You should state the specific objectives of your guide and include a table of contents. The organization of the guide should sub-serve the guide’s objectives. Guides may be organized totally or partially on the basis of disease or other biomedical categorization, by web category, by form of literature, by evidence-based rating, or by a topical concern listed below the first course objective above. However, when addressing a given major disease category (e.g. cancer or cardiovascular disease), it is often useful to aggregate relevant conventional, alternative, genetic, web, online, offline, and search strategy information under that disease category. Other ways to organize the guides might be useful. Submitted guides will be graded on the basis of (a) your statement of each objective and the extent to which your guide serves stated objectives, (b) coverage of the breadth of relevant sources, (c) the extent of which the guide treats the various categories of reference resources listed under the first course objective, and (d) the guide’s apparent adequacy as a basis for expanding, adapting and revising it in the future.

3. **Long-term Search**: A general health problem (e.g., an idiopathic disease or other general, problematic disease or disorder) will be assigned/selected in class. Your job is to become the “class expert” on this disease or disorder and share with us the results of your in-depth search on the topic. This is a specialized exercise in depth rather than breadth. You should consider older, pre-allopathic approaches (such as folk medicine or oriental medicine) for dealing with the problem, allopathic and additional complementary approaches, literature, database and web resources, genetic approaches, prevention, evidence-based findings, etc. You should aim to support both consumers and professionals in their quest for information about the disease or problem. Searchers will be graded according to their coverage of major relevant sources for the extended time period, consideration of conventional, complementary and genetic approaches, evidence-based assessments, and apparent usefulness to health professionals and to consumers. Please be prepared to share your findings and insights with the class as we progress through the semester.

**VI. COURSE CALENDAR.**

**Monday**

January 26
Preview of course
The reference (inquiry) process
Terminology
Introductions

**February 2**
Terminology
Overview of major web sites
MEDLINEplus
MEDLINE/PubMed
*Supersearchers (S)*: pages 1-10 (Introduction)

Start skinning/reading selectively about six chapters a week from Davis, *Internet*, two parts per week from *Merc Manual*, and about 100 pages per week from *Alternative Medicine*. Be familiar enough with content to refer back to it to read before commencing a search. Skim *Internet*, Introduction and first four parts, pp. i-vii, 1-56; skim *Merc Manual* (online), Parts 1 & 2.

**February 9**

Terminology and acquiring disease knowledge prior to search
Reference works
MESH and other NLM Guides
PubMed tutorials
Discussion of *Supersearchers*, pages 11-26 (Cavanaugh)
Complementary/alternative approaches
Evidence-based approaches
Skim *Internet*, pp.57-120; *Merc*, Parts 3 & 4.

**February 16**

Terminology and disease background
MEDLINEplus reference sources
PubMed
Discussion of *Supersearchers*, pages 27-40 (Brahmi)
Evidence-based approaches
Genetic approaches
Skim *Internet*, pp.121-190; *Merc*, Parts 5 & 6; and *Alternative Medicine*, pp. 1-59.

**February 23**

Terminology and background
PubMed
CINHAL
Discussion of *Supersearchers*, pages 41-56 (Emmett)
Long-term searching
Skim *Internet*, pp. 191-266; *Merc*, Parts 7 & 8; and *Alt. Med.*, pp. 62-161.
March 1
Long-term searching
Web of Science
Discussion of *Supersearchers*, pages 57-72 (Allen)
Capstone and field study options

March 8
Discussion of reference guide projects
Discussion of *Supersearchers*, pages 73-100 (Steward and Allee)
Discussion of long-term, in-depth searches
Complementary approaches

March 15 Spring break; no classes

March 22
Health reference guides
Discussion of *Supersearchers*, pages 101-112 (Eshleman)
Other online resources, including web

March 29
**DUE: HEALTH REFERENCE GUIDES**
Exam review
Discussion of *Supersearchers*, pages 113-126 (Geyer)
Online bibliographic and Web resources

April 5
Discussion of forthcoming exam
Discussion of *Supersearchers*, pages 127-140 (Levis)
Online bibliographic and Web resources

April 12
**OPEN BOOK EXAM**
Elaboration of Reference Guides
Discussion of *Supersearchers*, pages 141-159 (Snow)
April 19
Discussion of Exam answers
Long-term searches

April 26
Discussion of long-term searches
Course survey

May 3
Last class
Skim *Internet*, pp. 943-1038; *Merc.*, Appendices; *Alt. Med.*, pp. 952-977.
**DUE: LONG-TERM SEARCH REPORT.**