

**Course number, title, and section:** LIBR 2416: Reference Services and Resources: W01

**Term:** January – April 2026

**Platform:** Brightspace.

**Credits:** 3

### **Course Description:**

This 13-week, 3-credit course in Langara's diploma program in library and information technology is designed to introduce the learner to the major aspects of reference work. The focus of activity in this practical, hands-on course will be on a detailed exploration and mapping of resources for a variety of subject areas.

Resources in different formats will be explored, along with the best approaches to support the reference process in any library environment.

Library service models have changed considerably with the advent of AI and other online resources. Current training involves a focus on these tools. While students will familiarize themselves with traditional hardcopy resources, it is essential for them to master online resources.

The instructor will emphasize the importance of sensitivity to the needs of all library patrons and reference service users, including representatives of different demographic groups including seniors, new Canadians, ESL learners, and persons with physical and emotional challenges.

### **Prerequisite(s):**

Although there are no formal prerequisites for **LIBR 2416**, it is assumed that participants have already taken **LIBR 1111** and are concurrently enrolled in **LIBR 2411**. These two courses provide important background in terms of the technical knowledge, skills and techniques required for selecting, evaluating, using, searching and creating reference resources.

**Transfer Credit:** For information regarding transfer and articulation, please go to the BC-TRANSFERGUIDE, <http://bctransferguide.ca/>.

**Instructor:** Guy Robertson

**Contact information:**

E-mail: [grobertson@langara.ca](mailto:grobertson@langara.ca)

**Learning Outcomes:**

After completing this course, the learner will have acquired the knowledge, values and skills to be able to:

- Discuss current issues in reference service.
- Develop strategies for personal and professional growth within the field.
- Describe how informational resources are created, organized and published.
- Identify and evaluate common types of reference questions and requests.
- Demonstrate effective reference interview techniques.
- Describe the needs of different demographic groups, including seniors, new Canadians, and patrons with physical and emotional challenges.
- Develop successful strategies for responding to informational requests.
- Identify and evaluate appropriate resources for any informational request.
- Demonstrate the use of standard reference tools in all formats.
- Conduct successful searches, using effective search strategies, in selected databases and other online resources.

**Textbook and Course Materials:**

There is no textbook for LIBR 2416. Reading materials are distributed during lectures and exercises. Students can benefit from access to texts referred to throughout the course:

- Richard E. Bopp and Linda C. Smith, *Reference and information services: an introduction. Fourth edition. 201.1* (Available as an online book through the Langara library)
- Kay Ann Cassell, *Reference and information services: an introduction. Fifth edition. 2023.* (Available as an online book through the Langara library)

### Assignments

Course participants are responsible for a variety of learning activities including: weekly readings, discussions, "in-class" exercises, a reference observation exercise, as well as assignments and term projects. As active student participation is important for the success of any course, and essential for learning in the online course environment, there is a participation mark for the course.

Specifically, there will be **short weekly exercises /activities, six assignments, and a term project**, with weighting distributed as follows:

Function	Grade weighting
Activities and Exercises	15%
Assignments 1 - 6	60%
Term project	15%
Participation	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Note: All exercises, assignments, term project and reference observation must be completed in order to pass the course.

**Grading Guidelines:**

The Library Technician Grading Scheme will apply to LIBR 2416, as follows:

A+ = 96-100%

A = 91-95%

A- = 88-90%

B+ = 84-87%

B = 80-83%

B- = 77-79%

C+ = 71-76%

C = 65-70%

C- = 60-64%

D = 50-59%

F = Below 50%

**Policies:**

As a student at Langara, you are responsible for familiarizing yourself and complying with the following policies:

[E1003 - Student Code of Conduct](#)

[F1004 - Code of Academic Conduct](#)

[E2008 - Academic Standing - Academic Probation and Academic Suspension](#)

[E2006 - Appeal of Final Grade](#)

[F1002 - Concerns about Instruction](#)

[E2011 - Withdrawal from Courses](#)

[B5003 - Copyright Compliance](#)

## ***Tentative course schedule and background readings:***

**Please note that this document may be revised and updated throughout the Semester.**

**Week 1      Reference process & practice: background & principles**  
Explore Brightspace course environment  
Course overview, learning outcomes, requirements and assignments

### **Foundational sources:**

**Chapter 2:** Information and the Community  
Bopp & Smith, **Reference and Information Services**  
Chapter 1: History and Variety of Reference Services

**Week 2      Reference process & practice: evaluating reference tools**  
Evaluating reference resources/core collections/ready reference  
The information industry

### **Foundational sources:**

Bopp & Smith, **Reference and Information Services**  
**Chapter 2:** Toward a Philosophy for Reference Service  
**Chapter 11:** Selection and Evaluation of Reference Sources

**ASSIGNMENT 1** introduced

**TERM PROJECT** introduced

**Week 3      The tools: controlling periodical literature**  
Indexes/abstracts/databases/search engines

### **Foundational sources:**

Bopp & Smith, **Reference and Information Services**  
**Chapter 19:** Indexes and Abstracts

**Week 4**     **Reference process & practice: reference interview**  
Reference interview/issues in reference service  
Evaluating reference requests

**Foundational sources:**

Bopp & Smith, **Reference and Information Services**  
**Chapter 3:** The Reference Interview  
**Chapter 4:** Bibliographic Control, Organization of  
Information, and Search Strategies  
**Chapter 5:** Electronic Reference Services  
**Chapter 6:** Instruction as a Reference Service  
**Chapter 8:** Evaluation of Reference Services

**ASSIGNMENT 1** due

**ASSIGNMENT 2** introduced

**Week 5**     **The tools: biographical sources**  
Biographical dictionaries, directories and web sites

**Foundational resources:**

Bopp & Smith, **Reference and Information Services**  
**Chapter 14:** Sources of Biographical Information

**ASSIGNMENT 3** introduced

**Week 6**      **Reference process & practice: online/email/virtual reference**  
E-mail/online reference  
Role of www resources & services  
Library skills/information literacy

**ASSIGNMENT 2** due

**Week 7**      **The tools: dictionaries/encyclopedias**  
Dictionaries/encyclopedias  
Atlases/gazetteers

**Foundational sources:**

Bopp & Smith, **Reference and Information Services**  
**Chapter 15:** Dictionaries  
**Chapter 16:** Encyclopedias  
**Chapter 17:** Geographical Sources

**ASSIGNMENT 3** due

**ASSIGNMENT 4** introduced

**Week 8**      **The tools: almanacs/directories**  
Almanacs/yearbooks/quick facts  
Directories/handbooks/manuals

**Foundational sources:**

Bopp & Smith, **Reference and Information Services**  
**Chapter 12:** Directories  
**Chapter 13:** Almanacs, Yearbooks, and Handbooks

**ASSIGNMENT 5** introduced

**Week 9**      **Core resources: business**  
Business/consumer information

**ASSIGNMENT 4** due

**Week 10**      **Core resources: literature**  
Literature/humanities

**ASSIGNMENT 6** introduced

**TERM PROJECT** due

**Week 11**      **Core resources: medical**  
Medical/consumer health

**ASSIGNMENT 5** due

**Week 12**      **Core resources: legal/governmental**  
Legal/government publications & resources

**Foundational sources:**

Bopp & Smith, **Reference and Information Services**  
**Chapter 20:** Government Documents and Statistics Sources

**Week 13**      **Core resources: social sciences**  
Social sciences/education

Note: This week's session can include the Reference Assessment Test.

**ASSIGNMENT 6** due