

**Librarian Support in Large Enrollment Courses
Mellon Faculty Institute on Undergraduate Research
Examples from 2005-2006**

Near Eastern Studies 18: Introduction to Egyptology

Enrollment: ~100, non-majors, mostly freshmen

Environment: Large auditorium, with weekly meetings in section

4 Sections, 2 GSIs

Assignment Description:

Students select an artifact from the Egyptian collection in the UC Berkeley Hearst museum and write about it, using 3-5 scholarly sources to help them contextualize the object's cultural significance. Instructor requires they consult at least one book and one article from the journal literature in archaeology.

Librarian Contribution:

Librarian designed sequence of 3 short tutorials with accompanying worksheets to guide the information-gathering process and introduce skills and concepts transferable to work in other disciplines (including the concept of discipline-based journals).

Implementation Details:

GSIs reviewed and offered librarian feedback on tutorial and worksheet drafts, ensuring their familiarity with the sources and strategies covered. Tutorial linked from course web site. Students required to complete worksheets and return to GSIs in section for points toward final grade. Section time is devoted to discussion of issues and problems related to their search for sources. Students referred to library reference desks for any problems GSIs are unable to address.

Environmental Science 10: Introduction to Environmental Sciences

Enrollment: ~150, non-majors, mostly freshmen

Environment: Large auditorium, with weekly meetings in section

6 Sections, 6 GSIs

Assignment Description:

In preparation for weekly section meetings, students complete exercises in Field Manual, a group of which require gathering information from instructor-designated web sites such as census.gov. Following the assignment consultation, a new component, entitled "Question the Source," is integrated with each exercise in this group. Joined with the task of gathering information from a source, students are now prompted to answer questions about the source itself and reflect on the implications for the authority and reliability of the information found there.

Librarian Contribution:

After close review of course Field Manual, librarian proposed "Question the Source" concept, pinpointing existing exercises where it could be integrated, and drafting sample question sets for each information source.

Implementation Details:

Librarian worked directly with lead GSI on concept. Lead GSI finalized questions sets, drafted acceptable responses for grading key, updated Field Manual, and met with fellow course GSIs in advance of semester to discuss assignment rationale, etc

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Political Science 120a: Introduction to International Relations

Enrollment: ~300, mostly PS majors, juniors-seniors

Environment: Large auditorium

No section meetings, 6 GSI graders

Assignment Description:

Students select from among 4 broad topics covered in the course (“effects of globalization in developing countries,” “nuclear proliferation in the Post Cold War era,” etc.) and prepare an annotated bibliography on the topic.

Librarian Contribution:

Librarian designed a research skills assessment—prompting students through activities that included following a citation trail, searching the library catalog, and finding scholarly articles, and requiring them to make note of their successful as well as failed strategies. Completion of activity followed by librarian’s discussion/demo during regular class meeting time, which was honed to address the major difficulties students had had and the questions that they had raised. Handout addressing main areas of difficulty also provided in class.

Implementation Details:

Course instructor introduced goals and expectations of research activity in lecture. GSIs collected completed worksheets, assigning points toward final assignment grade (points or no points). GSIs returned worksheets to librarian for review one week before librarian’s in-class presentation. Librarian reviewed sample in preparation for presentation, and drafted summary of student strengths and weaknesses for course instructor.

Political Science 1AC: Introduction to American Politics

Enrollment: ~500, mostly non-majors, mostly freshmen

Assignment Description:

Students are assigned to a current member of the U.S. House of Representatives whom they investigate throughout the semester, compiling a series of fact sheets and brief analytical pieces related to campaigns and elections.

Librarian Contribution:

The information students need to find in order to complete the assignments for this course is often very specific (e.g., the size of the campaign contribution a candidate received from a particular interest group), sometimes fugitive, and dispersed across a range of sources freshmen would typically not be familiar with. The librarian designed a tailored “Resource Tip Sheet” to minimize time students would have to spend searching unproductively, and maximize the time they could then devote to reading and analysis.

Implementation Details:

Tip Sheet is posted to course web site by the start of the semester, giving students the opportunity to get started as early as possible.