LIS618
Online Information Retrieval Techniques

subject to change: 2003–10–07

The latest version of this document is available on the web at http://openlib.org/home/krichel/lis618n03a/.

Course Description
This course will introduce the students to the theory of information retrieval and its application in large-scale commercial database system and on the WWW.

Course objectives
On completing this course, students

- will have been introduced to information retrieval models;
- will have been introduced to several commercial database systems and be aware of their strengths and weaknesses;
- will have been introduced to expert search strategies with web search engines and databases.

Prerequisites
Students should have a basic command of the Apple OS-X operating system because the machines in the lab run on this operating system, and the instructor has no clue.

Instructor
Thomas Krichel
Palmer School of Library and Information Science
C.W. Post Campus of Long Island University
720 Northern Boulevard
Brooklyn, NY 11548–1300
krichel@openlib.org
work phone: +1–(516)299–2843
private phone: +1–(718)507–1117
**Class structure**

Classes will be held on Sundays afternoon between 13:40 and 17:30 in the multimedia lab of the Electronic Resources Center of the Bobst Library at New York University. There will be a mixture of lectures and hands-on work in the lab. Provisional class details are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 2003–09–13</td>
<td>Introduction to the course and to Information Retrieval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2003–09–20</td>
<td>preparing to search and Dialog 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 2003–10–05</td>
<td>IR performance and Dialog 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 2003–10–12</td>
<td>vector model and Nexis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 2003–10–19</td>
<td>other issues in information retrieval, EBSCO, web of knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 2003–10–26</td>
<td>Google and Amazon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 2003–11–02</td>
<td>Westlaw and factiva</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Readings**

The powerpoint slides of the instructor are the reading. The slides may point to other sources of reference as required. Database practice makes for a master searcher, only reading about them is not getting students very far. The session on Google will make use of a new book on Google hacks published by O'Reilley and Associates. Some slides on teaching Dialog have been given to the instructor, mail him if you want a copy. Some reference questions to work on are available.

**Assessment**

Each student will have to prepare a search exercise and report as detailed in the first lecture. This report must not exceed 7 pages. Appendices will be discarded. It will count for 50% of total grade. It is due on November 9. The remaining 50% will come from quizzes held at the start of each lecture except the first. Quizzes will last around 10 minutes and focussed on a precise short answer. The worst quiz performance will be discarded when the average is being computed.