

TO: Charles Kratz, Dean of the Library & Information Fluency
Library Advisory Committee
FROM: Jean W. Harris, Professor in the Political Science Department
DATE: June 15, 2015

RE: Spring 2015 Information Literacy Stipend Report

During the Spring 2015 semester, in consultation with Librarian Kevin Norris, I integrated into my section of Political Science 131—American National Government II several student learning outcomes related to information literacy standards. The information literacy student learning outcomes for this course stated that by the end of the semester, students who actively engaged in class lectures and discussions, engaged in active reading of course material, and diligently completed all research and written assignments will be able to:

- Conduct effective search strategies to gather information suitable to the topic, audience, purpose, context and speaker
- Evaluate sources for credibility

To fulfill these information literacy student learning outcomes students were assigned relevant readings, worked with Kevin Norris during two scheduled class meetings in a Weinberg Library classroom where they had hands-on learning experiences conducting Internet searches and database searches on topics related to national government and politics, and completed three research exercises/projects, two of which included the requirement to evaluate (and report on) the credibility of their sources (see page 3 for exercises).

online) and other on-line sources that offer assistance in conducting research, including how to cite sources.

In addition to learning opportunities provided in consultation with Kevin, I also invited Librarian Kristen Yarmey to speak with my students about advantages of and concerns raised by the use of new social media in today's politics. Kristen included in her presentation and discussion with students the importance of evaluating the credibility of information found online and privacy concerns related to new social media, including how the Internet is used by organizations and individuals (including politicians and political parties) to mine data on Internet users.

I am confident that in consultation with Kevin, and with presentations by and discussions with Kevin and Kristen, the information literacy student learning outcomes were met by the students in my PS 131 class during the Spring 2015 semester. My confidence is grounded in the development of the students' abilities to conduct effective research for the research projects and their abilities to evaluate the quality and credibility of their sources, which were evident in their written research projects and in response to test questions.

One example of students' knowledge regarding information literacy is found in their answers to a short essay question on the cumulative final exam for this class. In their responses to the

LIBRARY EXERCISE
AMERICAN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT II (PS 131)

Choose one of the following topics (circle the one you chose):

- Domestic surveillance and privacy
- Identification cards as an invasion of privacy
- Airport security and the rights of privacy

For the topic you chose conduct a search for each of the following:

- Scholarly article
- Popular article from a magazine or newspaper
- An internet source from a non-government organization
- An internet source from a branch of government (state or federal)

Give the citation for each of the above in correct APA format. Then evaluate the source using the following criteria: currency, authority, and point of view or bias.

CONGRESSIONAL MEMBER RESEARCH EXERCISE