

2014

From the Reference Desk: Reviews of Reference Titles

Tom Gilson

Against the Grain, gilsont@cofc.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg>



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Gilson, Tom (2014) "From the Reference Desk: Reviews of Reference Titles," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 26: Iss. 6, Article 31.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.6966>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.

Book Reviews — Monographic Musings

Column Editor: **Debbie Vaughn** (Adjunct Instructor, Clemson University) <vaughn.deborah@gmail.com>

Column Editor's Note: Since libraries, and academic libraries in particular, typically follow a fiscal year that differs from the calendar year, January 1 isn't always the "professional new year." However, the season of "Auld Lang Syne" can still inspire new projects or fresh ideas for the coming semester. New *ATG* reviewer **Tamara Rhodes** investigates a new title that considers library instruction and instructional design. As the *Online Learning Librarian* at *East Carolina University*, she is well-versed in online resources for library instruction. Many thanks to **Tamara** for her contribution to this month's *MM*. Happy New Year and happy reading, everyone! — *DV*

Su, Di. *Library Instruction Design: Learning from Google and Apple.* Chandos Information Professional Series. Oxford: Chandos, 2014. 978-1843347415. 168 pages. \$80.00.

A declaration that rings throughout librarianship as a whole these days is that libraries aren't just about books any longer. For academic librarians especially, we need to be instructors and masters of technology as well. This statement is affirmed in **Di Su's** *Library Instruction Design: Learning from Google and Apple.*

If you are a librarian interested in library instruction, technology, or both, this title will grab your attention as it did mine. You'll want to open it up and see just how **Google**, **Apple**, and library instruction can be related. And you'll get there, but you have to wade through the introductory chapters first.

The intention of this book is to "present viewpoints on library instruction theories and practices and offer suggestions...on library instruction program design of both philosophical and practical levels." **Su's** idea is well placed. Just as the **Virginia Mason Medical Center** in Seattle looked to the management style of **Toyota**, there

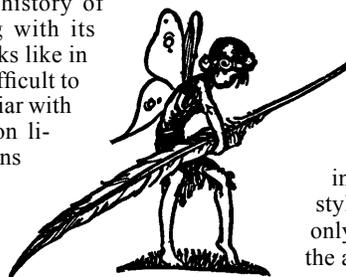
is much to learn from other industries of public service.

This title has six chapters that set up the variables of the topic in great detail, library instruction more so. This makes sense considering **Di Su** is an Associate Professor and a Head of Information Literacy. His expertise comes in handy at the end where, after the seventh conclusion chapter, you'll find multiple appendices that layout possible library instruction plans based on what is learned from the **Google** and **Apple** design philosophies. In the first two chapters, you will get a definition and history of library instruction, along with its philosophy and what it looks like in practice. These are a bit difficult to get through if you are familiar with or have read other texts on library instruction as it contains similar information. This leads into chapters on the design philosophies of **Google** and **Apple** with

bits of interesting history on the ways and whys they were formed. Then finally, what you've been waiting for, a look at the particular philosophies and principles that can be applied to library instruction. To bring it home, the final two chapters, which are the most interesting, discuss the particular design styles of each and parse through them while relating it to instruction.

Much of the comparisons made by **Su** between the design philosophies and library instruction seemed a bit cursory and common knowledge, but his focus on the bottom-up, top-down styles regarding the use of user data was incredibly interesting. While **Google** relies heavily on user feedback, **Apple** prides itself on being secretive because they should already know what the users want without them asking. Wondering how this plays out in library instruction? Read this book to find out! Also helpful was the practical section where he suggests instructional programs that would work for each style and provides a sample teaching scenario, one-shot for bottom-up and credit bearing for top-down. Although the samples would have been better received if it used either/or for both styles, it was helpful to see the styles in action.

Overall, this title gets you thinking outside the box and entertaining the idea of looking to other industries to guide instruction styles. It is an intriguing read, if only for chapters three to six and the appendices. 🍌



From the Reference Desk

by **Tom Gilson** (Associate Editor, *Against the Grain*, and Head of Reference Emeritus, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC 29401) <gilson@cofc.edu>

The *Encyclopedia of Language Development* (2014; ISBN: 978-1452258768, \$195) is a recent offering from **SAGE Reference** that adds to their collection of specialized, single-volume reference works. Edited by

Patricia J. Brooks
and **Vera Kempe**,
the *Encyclopedia*



contains some 200 articles in a traditional A-Z arrangement that explore the "miracle" of language development.

The study of language development is a highly interdisciplinary field that draws from disciplines ranging from neuroscience and psychology to education, linguistics, speech and hearing studies, and genetics. A look at the Reader's Guide with its broad subject categories reinforces this observation in addition to providing a sense of the coverage. Individual articles address specific concepts and theories, research models and methods, cognitive and biological issues, social and family impacts, disabilities and disorders, and special populations including nonhuman primates.

Besides the Reader's Guide, finding aids include numerous "see also" references and a

thorough general index. Each entry is signed and has its own bibliography of further readings. Value-added features include a resource list of books and articles, journals, associations, and Websites; a glossary; a chronology; and an appendix of world literacy statistics.

The *Encyclopedia of Language Development* is an informed and scholarly work that employs fact-filled descriptions and explanations of the topics covered. Given that ongoing research is essential to the discipline, there are numerous references to relevant sources and scholarship throughout. Although there are some illustrations, this volume is text dense. While the informed and interested lay reader will find the *Encyclopedia* helpful, it is obviously intended for students, faculty,

continued on page 51

and professionals in the field. In addition to offering discussions of relevant topics, this work provides a service to the scholarly community by furnishing a resource that offers an accessible overview of a diverse field with solid background information, answers to specific questions, and discussions of current research.

Depending on need, academic libraries will find the *Encyclopedia of Language Development* appropriate for either reference collections or circulation. It is also available electronically via **SAGE Knowledge** | Online ISBN: 9781483346441.

Salem Press has added another title to one of its successful history reference series. *Defining Documents in American History: The 1920s, 1920-1929* (2014; ISBN 978-1-61925-493-0, \$175; e-ISBN: 978-1-61925-494-7, \$175) is a single-volume work that provides the text of 45 primary source documents along with critical essays arranged in ten broad categories with a focus on the decade after World War I. It reflects America's transition after the war to peace time as well as a turning away from the progressivism of **Woodrow Wilson** toward a more inward looking and materialistic perspective.

The individual documents mirror different aspects of topics ranging from the **Sacco-Vanzetti** to the Scopes Monkey trial; the administrations of **Harding**, **Coolidge**, and **Hoover** to important international agreements; and from women in modern America to African American affairs to emerging industries and cultural change.

Each document is accompanied by a critical essay that describes the document covering major themes; places the document in context; and analyzes its relevance and meaning. Coupling each document with these critical insights is a useful approach. It gives modern students and interested readers a flavor of the times as well as thought-provoking observations about the issues being treated. Value-added appendices include a chronology, a bibliography, a list of Web resources and an index.

Defining Documents in American History: The 1920s, 1920-1929 will be a worthwhile addition to a variety of libraries from high school to undergraduate to the local public library branch. It may also be more suitable for circulating collections in many libraries. This is especially true given **Salem Press'** practice of providing access to eBook versions of purchased print titles.

This year **Grey House** published the tenth edition of one of its more popular statistical references. *America's Top Rated Smaller Cities: A Statistical Handbook* (2014; ISBN: 978-1-61925-278-3, \$225) is a two-volume set that provides key information and statistics on 126 smaller cities with populations ranging from 25,000 to 100,000 that the editors feel are the best in **America**. According to the publisher 17 of the cities covered are new.

The two volumes are handy and easy to navigate. The basic arrangement is by state and then alphabetically by city. Drawn from numerous sources, each city entry starts off with a descriptive background and continues with a series of bulleted lists that provide the city's rankings in areas like business and finance, the environment, health and fitness, real estate, safety, retirement, sports and recreation, women and minorities, and miscellaneous. This information is followed by statistical tables on essentials like demographics, city finances, the general economy, income, employment, taxes, transportation, cost of living, housing, health, education, public safety, recreation, climate, and other environmental factors. The sources of the information are fully referenced. There are also appendices that offer comparative statistics, metropolitan area definitions, information on government type and county, as well as lists of chambers of commerce and state departments of labor.

However, there is one caveat. Often the facts and figures cited in many of these profiles are for the larger metropolitan areas in which these smaller cities are located. Despite this, the profiles in *America's Top Rated Smaller Cities* offer a useful and fascinating snapshot of the cities covered. Spending time with this reference would benefit not only a family that is considering moving to one of these smaller cities to live. A business owner thinking of re-locating, a company trying to expand its market, or a sales person interested in a new territory would all find valuable facts and figures here.

And according to the **Grey House** Website they are now offering buyers of the 2014/2015 two-volume print set free access to the online version of *America's Top-rated Smaller Cities*. Of course, this title can also be purchased solely in eBook format from a number of vendors including: **Gale's Virtual Reference Library (GVRL)**; **MyiLibrary**; **EBSCO**; **Overdrive**; **Davidson Titles**; and **Follett**. (EBook ISBN: 978-1-61925-296-7)

Extra Servings

SAGE Reference has a number of future offerings to think about, including:

- *The Encyclopedia of Educational Technology* (March 2015, 978-1-4522-5822-5, \$375) is a two-volume set edited by **J. Michael Spector** that highlights "how to leverage the power of technology to support teaching and learning ... exploring how to approach, adapt, and use innovative technology to help achieve true gains in student performance, even in the face of perpetually evolving devices, services, and techniques, this two-volume encyclopedia focuses on core topics and issues that will retain relevance over time. Readers can peruse more than 300 cross-referenced A-to-Z articles, each written by a distinguished scholar and all organized in a Reader's Guide.
- *The Encyclopedia of Education Economics and Finance* (Nov. 2014, ISBN: 978-1-4522-8185-8,

\$375; eISBN: 978-1-4833-4659-5, available through **SAGE Knowledge**) is "designed as an introduction to the field for those who work in education settings, as well as for policymakers, undergraduates, and general lay readers interested in better understanding the debates about education funding and policy, this two-volume resource provides accessible, nontechnical, intuitive explanations of key concepts and empirical findings..."

Salem Press also has a couple of recent releases on their list:

- *Cyclopedia of Literary Characters*, Fourth Edition - five volumes (November 2014, 978-1-61925-497-8, \$455; e-ISBN: 978-1-61925-498-5 \$399) is a new edition that examines more than 29,000 major characters from 3,500 important works of literature. New to this edition are 245 characters published in popular works of fiction from 2000 to 2012" and "combines the characters profiled in the first three editions of *Cyclopedia of Literary Characters* (1963, 1990, 1998)... These character descriptions can be used alone to begin researching character development and motivation in a novel. They also can be used as a starting place for analyzing an epic play or novel and its author's writing style and technique..."
- *Forensic Science* - three volumes (April 2015, 978-1-61925-729-0, \$364; e-ISBN: 978-1-61925-730-6, \$364) is a "comprehensive reference source on the theory, techniques, and applications of the various forensic sciences... one of the fastest-growing subjects in academic curricula ... The topic list of **Salem's** new reference set has been carefully constructed to cover the full range of the forensic sciences, whose incredible variety can be seen in the titles of some of the set's core essays: Forensic Accounting, Forensic Anthropology, Forensic Archaeology, Forensic Botany, Forensic Entomology, Forensic Geoscience, Forensic Nursing, Forensic Odontology, Forensic Palynology, Forensic Pathology, Forensic Photography, Forensic Psychiatry, Forensic Psychology, Forensic Sculpture, and Forensic Toxicology..."

ABC-CLIO/Greenwood has some new encyclopedias, including:

- *Women's Rights in the United States: A Comprehensive Encyclopedia of Issues, Events, and People* (December 2014, ISBN: 978-1-61069-214-4, \$415; eBook, eISBN 978-1-61069-215-1, call for pricing) is a four-volume set with "more than 800 entries," in which "editor **Tiffany**

continued on page 52

From the Reference Desk
from page 51

K. Wayne, with advising editor **Lois Banner**, examines the issues, people, and events of women's activism, from the early period of American history to the present time. This comprehensive reference not only traces the historical evolution of the movement, but also covers current issues affecting women, such as reproductive freedom, political participation, pay equity, violence against women, and gay civil rights."

- **Religion and American Cultures: Tradition, Diversity, and Popular Expression**, Second Edition (December 2014, ISBN: 978-1-61069-109-3, \$399; eBook, eISBN: 978-1-61069-110-9, call for pricing). "This revised and expanded edition... presents more than 140 essays that address contemporary spiritual practice and culture with a historical perspective. The entries cover virtually every religion in modern-day America as well as the role of religion in various aspects of U.S. culture. Readers will discover that Americans aren't largely Protestant, Catholic, or Jewish anymore, and that the number of popular religious identities is far greater than many would imagine..."

Oxford University Press has released two new works in their *Oxford Encyclopedias of the Bible* series:

- The *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Law* (January 2015, ISBN: 9780199843305, \$395) offers "130 A-Z entries, written by more than 100 international authors, making this the authoritative resource on the subject..."

- The *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Theology* (March 2015, ISBN: 9780199858699, \$395) consists of "nearly 170 signed A-Z entries, by more than 150 international scholars... extensive overviews of key topics, including information on both the trajectory and reception history of theological issues," and "thorough coverage of traditional theological perspectives, such as Forgiveness and Grace, and modern concerns, such as Wealth and Poverty..."

In addition, **Oxford University Press** recently announced the launch of *Oxford Historical Treaties (OHT)* on the **Oxford Public International Law** platform. "*Oxford Historical Treaties* is a comprehensive online resource of nearly 16,000 global treaties concluded between 1648 and 1919 — between the Peace of Westphalia and the establishment of the League of Nations.

(The source for these treaties is *The Consolidated Treaty Series*, compiled by the late distinguished scholar **Clive Parry** of **Downing College, Cambridge University**, and published by **OUP** in 231 print volumes...)

H.W. Wilson is publishing a new edition of a classic:

- **Famous First Facts, 7th Edition** (December, 2014, ISBN: 978-1-61925-468-8, \$195). This edition "is updated and expanded with new entries reflecting the latest developments and discoveries, and newly organized for easier access to information. The seventh edition includes more than 8,000 firsts, over 1,000 new to this edition. Fields updated include science and technology, military history, and politics, describing events that have occurred since the 2006 edition..."

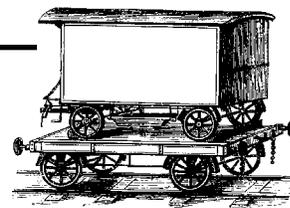
Routledge has also released a new edition of a standard reference:

- *European Union Encyclopedia and Directory 2015* (November 2014, ISBN: 978-1-85743-737-9, \$1,015.) "provides in-depth information on all matters relating to the European Union (EU): the financial crisis affecting the eurozone is covered in depth, including details of recent developments; progress regarding the recent and future expansion of the Union is addressed; and the EU's legal and social frameworks, the environment and external relations are discussed..."

And last but not least, **Wiley-Blackwell** is also planning a couple of new reference works:

- The *International Encyclopedia of Language and Social Interaction*, three volumes (March 2015, ISBN: 978-1-118-61110-4, \$495) is a "reference work with contributions from leading global scholars, available both online and as a three-volume print set. It successfully brings into a single source explication of all relevant work that is developing internationally."
- The *International Encyclopedia of Digital Communication and Society*, 3 volumes (February 2015, ISBN: 978-1-118-29074-3, \$495) "offers critical assessments of theoretical and applied research on digitally-mediated communication, a central area of study in the 21st century... with the aim of bringing together international and interdisciplinary perspectives."

Both of these titles are published with a regularly updated online edition. For further information see <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com>



Collecting to the Core — Arabic Resources in Translation: The History of al-Tabari

by **Meryle Gaston** (Librarian for Middle Eastern Studies, Davidson Library, University of California, Santa Barbara; Middle Eastern History, Languages, and Literatures Editor, *Resources for College Libraries*) <gaston@library.ucsb.edu>

Column Editor: **Anne Doherty** (*Resources for College Libraries* Project Editor, CHOICE/ACRL) <adoherty@ala-choice.org>

Column Editor's Note: The "Collecting to the Core" column highlights monographic works that are essential to the academic library within a particular discipline, inspired by the *Resources for College Libraries* bibliography (online at <http://www.rclweb.net>). In each essay, subject specialists introduce and explain the classic titles and topics that continue to remain relevant to the undergraduate curriculum and library collection. Disciplinary trends may shift, but some classics never go out of style. — AD

Over the years I have guided many undergraduate students to resources on the Middle East, as undergraduates are often lost when asked to find primary sources for research in Middle East history courses. Throughout my reference and instruction work I have learned that students' need for primary sources is the most troublesome because undergraduates

are almost always limited to materials in English, and these sources are rarely available. Despite the recent growth of Middle Eastern studies in the American academy (and the public's attention), finding primary resources in translation from the modern Middle East remains problematic. More works from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries are being translated, often with an eye to popular works and trending topics, especially memoirs, autobiographies, and other monographs by prominent regional figures. Classical history, however, is another story. The problem is that while there are extant sources dating to earlier times, they are in Middle Eastern languages, most commonly Arabic. While a few translations have been available in the past, the number of translations into English was quite scarce. Fortunately, in the last few decades the quantity of translations has been growing. Most are good and accurate, often with critical apparatus. In fact, as bibliographer at **UC-Santa Barbara**, I will acquire almost any translation of a Middle

continued on page 53