From the Other Side of the Street - Time to Hit the Books

Thomas Bacher
Purdue University Press, bacher@uakron.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg
Part of the Library and Information Science Commons

Recommended Citation
Bacher, Thomas (1998) "From the Other Side of the Street - Time to Hit the Books," Against the Grain: Vol. 10: Iss. 5, Article 30.
DOI: https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.3009

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.
I don’t know about you, but autumn always makes me think about the past and about the future. Maybe this phenomenon is based on my early upbringing in Duluth, Minnesota where there were only two seasons—winter which lasted from September through May and bug season which took up the other three months. (Prehistoric mosquitoes are still alive and well on the shores of Lake Superior. Some families have gone for overnight camping trips without ever returning.) So when those first snows and dips in temperature invaded the Zenith city, I was concerned that our supplies might not last until the Spring thaw. It was a time to ponder. Autumn is also a time to begin again. Universities throughout the country see a grand influx of fresh and not-so-fresh faces. Hopes ride high as turning leaves overshadow the steel sky grayness with vibrant patches of activity. In the spirit of learning anew, I searched the diverse course catalogs of many hallmarked and not-so prominent universities and colleges to discover the best offerings for the library and publishing communities.

Librarianese for the Non-Librarian, Instructor William Safire. Interdisciplinary 305. Especially designed for information product developers, publishers and faculty members. Prerequisite: Must be over the age of reason. This sophisticated course is a discovery in entomology. Learn to decipher Library of Congress acronyms. Learn why discharge is not a bad term outside of the Oval office. Find out why circulation has nothing to do with your blood system or why Beethoven is not something you drop into boiling water. Not intended for the serious library major.

It’s Legal. It’s for Librarians, Instructor Team: Johnny Cochran, F. Lee Bailey, and Jerry Spence with a special lecture by Kenneth Starr on “If you lie to Elsevier, is that perjury?”. Law S121. This innovative course takes librarians on a legal journey through contracts and licensing agreements. Prerequisite: Several viewings of “Ally McBeal”, “The Practice”, and “Perry Mason.” Learn the difference between content fee and access fee. Get pointers on why to ask the question “Why?” three times when one of your vendors asserts that all information costs must escalate at 8–10% annually. Discover innovative techniques on how to really count the number of authorized users at your institution. Even though examples are derived from actual case work, the legal team disavows all knowledge of wrongdoing or impropriety. Students must sign a release waiver before classes begin.

Publishing for the New Generation, Instructor: HALL 10,000. CompSci 2001. Get into the mind of the next generation of information providers. Prerequisite: All students must read: Kidder, The Soul of a New Machine; Heinlein, Stranger in a Strange Land; and Gates, The Road Ahead. HALL 10,000, developed by Microsoft as a replacement for everybody, synthesizes all global knowledge and ports it to one location. The system is paired with a dynamic print imaging system to produce bound copies of personalized books in minutes. Use up-to-date search techniques to construct a document (current limit 224 pages) that...
can cover anthropological implication of red ants in the Andes or zoosporae distribution in inner city America. No skills necessary, ever again.

Where Have All the Shelves Gone? Storage in an Era of Virtual Space, Instructor: David Copperfield. Art 321. Prerequisite: A rabbit and a hat. Taught by the magician extraordinary, this workshop provides the novice with a set of basic techniques to make ranges, shelves and even floors of books vanish into thin air and reappear at the fifty-yard line of your institution’s football stadium at half-time of the big homecoming game. Learn to levitate whole volumes of the heaviest (in terms of isotope) serials and drop them into the Dean’s office whose star professor uses this information at least once every two years. Also, discover innovative sight gags that allow you to turn promises into monetary reality. Recommended for deans and department heads.

The Dark Side of Publishing, Instructor: Jamaal Swinerid (pseudonym), Lit 333. Prerequisite: Confession or similar activity. See instructor for approval. A definitive and intensive survey by a once top publishing executive who is now in the Federal Witness Protection Program, this distance-learning course will answer all of the following questions. 1. Why do publishers charge at least twice as much for cloth titles as they only cost a few dollars more than a paper edition? 2. Why do publishers rely solely on institutions to support their serial publications? 3. Do publishers really know what WIPO is? 4. What is the difference between profit margin and profit margin? No cameras or recording devices will be allowed.

Customer Service: Who Needs It? Instructor: to be announced. ConsumerSci 900. Prerequisite: Some knowledge of dental tools. Primarily aimed at the Reference librarian, this course asks the question “What if?” Participants will be presented with the “no customer” scenario (i.e., what if you had a library and no one came). Tasks will include avoiding boredom by completing the Sunday New York Times crossword puzzle, preventing Carpal Tunnel Syndrome by using antiquated techniques to search the Web, deciding on how many times your phone should ring before you pick it up, and using creative ways to say that it’s just not your job.

Surveillance and Security, Instructor: Jane Reno. CriminalJust 486. Prerequisite: No criminal record. As library walls “come tumbling down” and self-service innovation eliminates jobs, take the first step toward a new career. Drawing on her vast knowledge of crisis situations, Reno provides ten key, core skills for the recent graduate in the high-paying security field. Learn how to operate a concealed camera, to record even your closest friends’ phone conversations, and to get in the “back door” of almost any computer system. Transform yourself into a sleuth with the flair of Mata Hari, and the cunning of Kim Philby. Enrollment limited. Sign up now! Call 1-800-GET-REAL.

Papa Lyman from page 78

p.135 of this work that the “great” 9th may be used “profitably” etc? I haven’t had my hands on a 9th or even an 11th for years but I’ll wager that Sheen’s advice is still valid.

As I remember it, the Century Encyclopedia was the most used. It’s been so long since I’ve seen a Century I can’t give a proper bibliographic description of it—it’s even gone from my Wilson’s Cumulative Book Index 1928-1932... Of course we had sets of the Complete Works of ... (famous authors). My friend Cliff Hillegass had not come out with his Cliff’s Notes until many years later—1958.

We were also fortunate to have a better than average public library, named Beckbookman Library. It was not then a public library funded library—The Beck family, contemporaries and peers of William Allen White, a leading Kansas newspaper publisher, were the prime supporters along with several “literary” clubs.

Now that I’m started on the subject I’ll include more about Kansas public libraries in my story about the Ellis Collection—next time.

Bibliography


Wilson’s Cumulative Book Index 1928-32.

<http://www.against-the-grain.com>