Instructor: Nancy Roderer, Johns Hopkins University
Email: through Elms (preferred) or nroderer@jhmi.edu
Phone: 410-502-7092
Office hours: by appointment, on campus for class

Class time: Thursday 5:30-8:15 pm, September 3 – December 10 + exam
Class location: PLS1113
Class information online: http://elms.umd.edu/

Catalog Description and Objectives

Nature and roles of information and information institutions; information behavior; studying information behavior; information policy; the information professions.

Upon satisfactory completion of this course, students will:

- Understand fundamental concepts in the study of information and its use
- Appreciate the role of institutions in generating and disseminating information to users
- Understand components and functions of information systems and services and how they relate to users’ needs and behaviors
- Be acquainted with methods of inquiry for the study of information and information use
- Understand users of information deeply in terms of their goals, workflows, social and content needs, behaviors, preferences, and more.
- Be aware of key information policy issues that affect the profession and users’ lives
- Be aware of the core values, ethics, and social responsibilities of information professionals and the roles of professional associations and organizations
- Be prepared for further study in information needs, information generation, information transfer, and information systems.

Course Requirements

This course will be conducting primarily as a seminar, with class discussion based on readings from the textbook and the literature. Occasional guest lecturers will complement the material provided in the textbook and readings.

There are two categories of readings: those that are to be read by all students, and those that will be assigned to teams of two students for presentation to the class. In general, the textbook provides overviews of topics which will be further explored by other readings. Readings are indicated in the syllabus.
Since this is a seminar, class discussion is an important component of the course experience and of your grade.

**Reading List**


Textbook is available from the bookstore. Alternates are amazon.com and the publisher, Information Today. Contact Information Today at 800-300-9868 or 609-654-6266 x152. When ordering the book, say that you are a student in my Information Use class and request the ASIST discount price of $39.60/copy plus shipping. TEXTBOOK IS ALSO ON RESERVE in MCKELDIN LIBRARY.

An additional useful resource is


Articles and chapters assigned for classes are listed on the calendar below.

*Academic Integrity: It is the obligation of all members of the University of Maryland, College Park community to promote the highest standards of academic integrity. The University has a student-administered honor code, posted on the web at [http://www.shc.umd.edu/code.html](http://www.shc.umd.edu/code.html). The code prohibits students from cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two classes without authorization, buying papers, submitting fraudulent documents, and forging signatures.*

**Assignments**

*Article reviews – Most of the articles read are to be presented by teams of two students assigned as primary reviewers. They will read the article thoroughly, following reference trails if appropriate, prepare a presentation on the article designed to elucidate the key points of the article, and facilitate a class discussion. Class discussion should include consideration of the implications of the article for the practice of library and information science. It is up to each group of two students to decide how to present the article, and what role each will play. Blackboard, handouts, power points, etc. may all be used to facilitate communication of the material.

The articles presented on September describe key models of information use. Presenters should focus on the models themselves, including how they were developed. Presenters should plan for 45 minutes per article, with about 30-35 minutes for the team presentation and the remaining time for class discussion.*
The remaining articles to be presented generally discuss specific studies of information behavior/use. Presenters should summarize the perspective of the author, the population reported on, model(s) used, methods of data collection, methods of analysis, and research findings. Presenters should plan for 30 minutes per article, with about 25 minutes for the presentation and the remaining time for class discussion.

To provide constructive feedback from your peers, each article presentation will be evaluated by three students using a form provided (a copy is included in this syllabus). The form will be filled out during class, turned in to the instructor for her review, and given to the presenters at the following class.

* User needs analysis – These are the major assignments and are described in an attachment. They will be carried out by small groups working on a selected user population, and will be presented in two stages.

* Exam – A final take home exam will test student’s mastery of the concepts explored in the class.

* Class participation – Students are expected to be prepared for class and to actively participate in the discussion. Information use is best understood through the application of many different perspectives, and students are expected to consider the course materials based on their previous education and experience and to share those insights with the group.

**Grades**

All work done for the class will be evaluated and a grade assigned. Most of the assignments involve presentation to the class, and will be graded on both content and clarity of presentation. The use of the blackboard, handouts, power points, etc. to facilitate communication of the material is encouraged. Grades for the course will be calculated as follows:

- Article review – 20 points
- User needs analysis, part 1 – 20 points
- User needs analysis, part 2 – 20 points
- Class participation – 20 points
- Final exam – 20 points
Calendar of classes

September 3 - Introductions, review of syllabus, information needs and services

September 10 and 17 - Models of information behavior

Textbook: TIB Chapter 3 (Wilson), Theories 63 and 64 (Taylor), 25 (Leckie) and 16 (Dervin) to be read before class. Each student should also read at least one of the four supporting papers for theories to be discussed.

Articles:


On September 17, class will meet in MCK 6107. In addition to discussing the Dervin article. Guest instructor Karen Patterson will provide hands-on instruction in finding the information behavior literature

Models exercise

September 24 – Methods

Overview of methods of data collection on information use
Methods exercise
Discussion of group assignments and formation of groups

October 1 - Information use by occupations

Textbook: TIB Theorie 14, 17 and 28

Articles:


October 8 - Information use by role, demographics

Textbook: TIB Theories 8, 22 and 46

Articles:


October 15 – Library and Information Policy, Ethics, and Responsibilities (all students review all materials)


ALA's Code of Ethics:

http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/statementspols/codeofethics/codeethics.htm
ASIS&T Professional Guidelines

MLA Code of Ethics for Health Sciences Librarianship
http://www.mlanet.org

ALA Statements and Policies
http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/statementspols/statementspolicies.cfm

ALA Washington Office Issues
http://www.ala.org/ala/washoff/woissues/issues.cfm

Association of Research Libraries Public Policies
http://www.arl.org/pp/index.shtml

October 22 – Group Presentations (see User Needs Analysis part 1)

October 29 – Publisher perspective on information use - guest speaker John Tagler

November 5 - Implications of information use patterns for libraries

Textbook: TIB Theory 2, 29 and 43

Articles:


November 12 – Information use in medicine – guest speaker Blair Anton
November 19 - Information use models and theories

Textbook: TIB Chapter 1 and Theories 5, 39, 50, and 69

December 3, 10 - Group presentations (see User Needs Analysis assignment part 2)

Models revisited/reinforced, summary of the course
Distribution of final exam

December 17 - Exam due CLASS WILL NOT MEET
**User Needs Analysis Assignments**

**Purpose:** Small teams of students will develop a profile of a particular type of information user and elucidate the implications of that profile for library and information operations.

Examples of user groups are:
- policy makers
- physicians
- general public
- urban residents
- students
- academic library users
- agricultural researchers
- legislators
- nurses
- teachers
- senior citizens
- social workers
- scholars (subdivided by fields)
- engineers
- children
- public library users
- historians
- psychologists
- scientists (subdivided by fields)

Information about both the user and implications of the user profile for library and information services can come from a variety of sources:
- Research reports in the scholarly literature (at least 3 of these are required for the profile)
- Reflective essays and accounts in the professional literature or other authoritative sources
- Data collection from members of the user group
- Data collection from information professionals who work with the user group

The assignment will be carried out and reported on in two parts:
- an initial review of the literature, and
- the user profile

Small groups will be identified in class on September 17. Before class, think about what groups you are interested in and why. We will form groups of 3-5 people each.

**Initial Literature Review**

The task here is to do a comprehensive literature review about the information habits of the population that you have selected for study. Your report should include
- a definition of the user group studied
- a description of the methods used to do the literature review
- bibliographic information, including abstract, for each article, book chapter, or report identified as useful.

Reports are due by October 21 and will be presented in class on October 22.

**User profile**

The user profile will build on the initial literature review and may also include original data collection by the project team. It will describe the information behaviors of the population of interest, presenting the behaviors in the form of a model, and will discuss
the implications of the profile for library and information services. The profile must be
developed using one of the models of information needs/behavior discussed in class
(Wilson, Taylor, Leckie, Dervin, or other) as a guide. The profile should address
information needs, user preferences for types of information, difficulties in accessing or
using information, and other relevant aspects of information behavior.

Each group should prepare both an oral and a written report. In preparing both, the group
should imagine that they are reporting to professional colleagues (which is the case) and
use appropriate standards. The format and length of the written reports should be
whatever is best for the task; previous reports have been about 15-20 pages. The report
must be internally consistent in style and format and free of typographical, spelling,
grammatical and other errors.

The required elements of the written report are these:
- Executive summary (no more than one page)
- Statement identifying the model used in the analysis with a brief discussion of why it
  was chosen. It is not necessary to fully explain the model.
- Description of original information sources used, if any.
- Profile of the information user
- Discussion of implications for library and information services
Other sections may be added to the report. The sections listed above are required.

The full reports must be posted in the group's project space at least one day in advance of
presentation to the class. Class members are asked to read the executive summary, user
profile and implications section of each group report in preparation for class.

The profile developed by each group will be presented in class on December 3 or 10.
These presentations will be informal, and will emphasize the profile of the user group
studied, organized according to the model used, and recommendations for library and
information services serving the user group. Time allotted for group presentations will
depend on the number of groups, but will be announced in advance of the presentations.
Article Presentation Peer Evaluation

Article Presented: ________________________________

Reviewer’s Name: ________________________________

Date:___________________________________________

The purpose of a peer evaluation is to provide constructive feedback to the presenters of an article. There are two parts to the evaluation, a numeric rating of the content of the presentation and your comments on both content and style. Six people will be asked to review each presentation. Please complete the evaluation during class and turn it in to the instructor before leaving. She will review the evaluations and then pass them on to the presenters at the next class.

1. Informative Value (Circle one)

1= I learned little about the topic; in fact, I was confused.
2= The presentation was marginally helpful, but I don’t feel fully informed
3= What was presented was useful, but I the topic was so broad, I don’t feel fully informed
4= I feel fully informed on the topic
5= I feel fully informed on the topic and would refer a professional colleague to the paper

2. Your Feedback

Please provide your colleagues with feedback that will help them to improve future presentations. Here are some guidelines:

- Provide a phrase that capture the essence of the article paper, and that will support your assessment. For example, “I learned _____ about [the topic].” Or, “I didn’t understand the part of your report that dealt with _____.”
- Provide some helpful feedback about the presenter’s style. For example, “I found it difficult to hear you.” Or “The visual aids you used were particularly effective.”
- Supply the presenter with some insight as to why you gave a particular rating. For example, “I was very interested in what you said because you seemed enthusiastic.” Or “I wasn’t sure why you chose this topic; making it relevant to the course would have helped me to understand.”

As you do this, be sure to follow these guidelines for constructive, effective feedback:
- Be specific.
- Use an example.
- Judge the paper and presentation, not the person.
- Report your own response, by making “I” statements.
- Be sensitive to the emotional impact of your feedback.
- Be positive and constructive with the goal of helping the presenter to improve.

Write your feedback on the back of this form.