Course objectives:

- To understand the nature of the social science disciplines: their literature, research methodologies, and information problems.
- To understand the information needs of users of social science information: researchers; practitioners, and others.
- To gain a working knowledge of the social science information system, the literature, and the tools of access.

Class Schedule:

July 14      Introduction: What is social science
July 16      Sources of social science information
              Users of social science information
July 21      political science
July 23      geography
July 28      sociology
July 30      anthropology
Aug 4        history
Aug 6        economics
Aug 11       business
Aug 13       psychology
Aug 18       other social sciences; paper due
Aug 20       scholarly communication; wrap up
Class projects/deliverables

Term project: 65 percent of grade; due next to last class (Aug. 18)

Each student will select an area or topic of interest. The topic selected should be one that can be researched across all the disciplines covered in the course. Examples range from women’s studies to gerontology to terrorism. As we move through the different social science disciplines, students will review how that discipline treats the topic of their choice. As part of each class, students will provide an oral report on their findings. This will help inform us all about how the different dimensions of the social sciences complement each other, what unique insights each provides, and provide a context for our class. Students will compile their weekly reports into a written term paper (roughly 25 pages) that integrates the material and includes a more formal summary of what the student has concluded about the nature of social science information based on the semester’s work.

Option 2. If you prefer, you can prepare your paper in the form of a pathfinder. Some examples of pathfinders somewhat relevant to this course are at the Harris Library at Case Western Reserve University http://msass.case.edu/harrislibrary/LibStudents/pathfinders/ (see, for example, the pathfinder on poverty). Another example is at University of Oklahoma: http://www.ou.edu/ap/lis5703/pathfinders/gradingcriteria.htm provides an outline to use and http://www.ou.edu/ap/lis5703/pathfinders/example.htm provides a fictitious example of a social science pathfinder.

The research guides at the University of Maryland library site also are relevant (and also may be useful for you to use to find resources. See http://www.lib.umd.edu/UES/library_guides_subject.html. The public policy research guide is probably the most relevant.

If you choose the pathfinder option, you still need to conclude with a summary of your thoughts about the nature of social science information based on the semester’s work.

Book review: Read and prepare a 2-3 page review of a book in one of the social science disciplines. It can either be a current book or a classic. The review should include your own evaluation as well as some citations of what other reviewers have written. Get approval for the book from instructor. 15 percent of grade; due August 6

Each student will pick one discipline only for each of the following assignments. The disciplines should all be different and the assignment will be due the day we discuss that discipline in class.
Professional Associations: Locate a professional association for one of the social science disciplines and come to class prepared to discuss its issues, activities, membership, etc.

Professional journals: Identify a professional journal for one of the social science disciplines and come to class prepared to discuss its format, content, scope, etc.

Article from a professional journal: Read an article from a current/recent professional journal and discuss its relevance, methodology, findings, etc.

Introductory textbook: Locate an introductory college textbook for the discipline in current use and review its content, major themes, etc.

For any class in which you have not prepared one of the above assignments, please be prepared to share current event/news story that pertains to that discipline, or to share a government document that pertains to the discipline, or to discuss more fully one or the reference sources cited in the textbook.

Class participation (20 percent) Includes coming to class on time, participating enthusiastically in class discussions, providing helpful comments, sharing sources found in the course of your research, and generally being an asset to the class. In addition, the presentations about you topic and the presentations on professional associations, professional journals, etc., contribute to this part of your grade.

Preparations for specific classes

July 16. Come to class prepared to discuss your views on the nature of the social sciences. Read chapter 1 of the textbook, paying special attention to the essay, defining the social sciences. Also read chapters 1 and 2 of the second edition (1990) of Tse-chung Li, Social Science

Reference Sources. (available through e-reserve) Find a news article based on a social science topic and be prepared to discuss its relevance. Begin to narrow down your topic choices for your term project.

July 21. Finalize your topic. Be prepared to discuss how your topic is treated in the literature of political science.

July 23. Be prepared to discuss how your topic is treated in the literature of geography.

July 28. Be prepared to discuss how your topic is treated in the literature of sociology.

July 30. Be prepared to discuss how your topic is treated in the literature of anthropology.

Aug. 4. Be prepared to discuss how your topic is treated in the literature of history.
Aug. 6. Book review due. Be prepared to discuss how your topic is treated in the literature of economics.

Aug 11. Be prepared to discuss how your topic is treated in the literature of business.

Aug 13. Be prepared to discuss how your topic is treated in the literature of psychology.

Aug 18. Final paper due

Aug 20. Read resource materials on scholarly communication and be prepared to discuss in class.

**Code of Academic Integrity**, administered by the Student Honor Council.

This Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit

http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/whatis.html

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Office hours: following class or by appointment