1. Description and Goals
This is a core course in the Master of Library Science (MLS) program. It provides an introduction to information technology as it is used in libraries, archives, schools, and (increasingly) everyday life. Emphasis is placed on the design of systems for connecting users with information. The goals of the course are to:

- Understand basic principles behind the operation and design of computers and networks.
- Understand technologies for the organization, management, and delivery of structured and unstructured information.
- Understand user-centered design principles for information systems.
- Develop competence in basic Web design.

The textbook for the course is "D is for Digital" by Brian W. Kernighan. The book is both good and cheap. While you can likely survive the course without the book, the book does an excellent job explaining concepts. All additional course material will be available on the course homepage.

This course assumes that you already have the following skills:
- Create a document using a word processing program such as Microsoft Word, WordPerfect, or OpenOffice.
- Send and receive email, including attachments.
- Find Web pages using a search engine; navigate Web sites.
- Print documents, Web pages, and other documents.

These skills are not taught as a part of this course. If you have concerns about mastery of these skills, please contact me before the second class session.
Finally, it is required that you have regular access to a computer and an Internet connection throughout this course. A laptop is preferable. If you have a laptop, it would be useful to bring the laptop to class, especially for the lab sessions (see below).

2. Approach
This course is organized into two-week blocks, each focusing on a particular topic (see syllabus for more details). The first session of each block will be primarily devoted to building fundamental concepts, where emphasis is placed on ideas. These sessions will be conducted along a more traditional lecture format with discussions at appropriate junctures. The second session of each block will be devoted to technology presentations, i.e., "labs". The purpose of each lab is to help you acquire the necessary skills in applying information technology to solve real world problems. Each lab will consist of demos and hands-on exercises that complement the concepts introduced in the previous session. If you have a laptop, make sure to bring it to the lab sessions.

3. Grading
Components of the final grade are as follows:

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<tr>
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<th>Scheme 1</th>
<th>Scheme 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Project</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<td>Participation</td>
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The scheme which results for the highest grade (on an individual basis) will be used. Scheme 1 rewards consistent effort through the course, while Scheme 2 allows individuals who stumble initially to make up for it at the end of the course.

It is possible to earn extra credit by going above and beyond the expectations of the assignment.

3.1 Assignments
There will be a total of five homework assignments due throughout the semester. Together, they are worth 20% (or more) of your final grade. Assignments are designed to help you learn the material, so please use them for that! You are allowed to collaborate with others (as many people as you'd like), but you must turn in your own assignment. For example, you could work together in a group, but each person must write up their solutions individually.
All completed assignments should be posted on the Web, on your homepage. At the end of the semester, you'll have a complete record of your accomplishments (i.e., a Web portfolio). For the first assignment, please email me the URL of your homepage. For convenience, you are encouraged to use your OIT account to host your files. Note that you can choose to make your homepage public or private—this will be discussed in class.

Assignments are due before the class indicated on the syllabus. Late policy: each person has two free late days to be used, no questions asked, during the course. When turning in a late assignment, clearly mark at the top that you are using a late day. After you use your two late days, assignments up to two days late will get half credit. Assignments more than two days late will not be graded.

3.2 Midterm
There will be an in-class midterm on 10/29 during class. The midterm will cover material in the previous lectures and will be open notes.

3.3 Final Project
More information will be posted on a separate page for the final project.

3.4 Class Participation
Each class is critical to your learning experience, and I expect you to come to class prepared (having read all assigned readings, ready to engage). I also expect active participation, not passive reception of the material. Your energy in contributing to class discussions and hands-on exercises will make this class an enjoyable experience for all of us. Class participation is worth 10% of your total grade.

I have a simple way for assessing class participation. In the beginning, everyone starts out with five points (out of a total of ten). Depending on the factors discussed above, this score will be increased or decreased as appropriate. Note that you can also earn participation credit through online discussions by answering other students’ questions or asking particularly insightful questions.

This term we will be using Piazza for class discussion. The system is highly catered to getting you help fast and efficiently from classmates, the TA, and myself. Rather than emailing questions to the teaching staff, I encourage you to post your questions on Piazza. If you have any problems or feedback for the developers, email team@piazza.com.


4. Academic Integrity
The University of Maryland, College Park has a nationally recognized 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.shc.umd.edu.

5. Course Policies
The University has a legal obligation to provide appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities. Please inform the professor of any accommodations needed relative to disabilities at the start of the semester.

Also, University of Maryland policy states that students should not be penalized due to observances of their religious beliefs. Please inform the professor of such instances at the start of the semester so that appropriate steps can be taken.