UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, COLLEGE PARK

Public Library Seminar (LBSC 724)
3 credit hours
Spring 2013 Syllabus
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A. Catalog Description of Course
Organization, support, and service patterns of public libraries. The public library in national, state, and local contexts.

B. More Detailed Description
This course is intended for students interested in pursuing a career in public library service or who have an interest in the role and contribution of the public library to society. The course focuses on the history of the public library in the United States, the social contributions of public libraries, public library services and roles, the building of the public library profession/professionals, the ethics and values of public libraries, the policy and political context in which public libraries reside, and the ways in which public libraries transform communities.

C. Goals of Course
The primary goals of this course are to prepare students to:

- Understand the historical development of public libraries in the U.S.;
- Understand how the public library has evolved over time;
- Understand the policy and political context of public libraries;
- Understand the community and social context in which public libraries reside;
- Understand the traditional and emerging services and roles of public libraries;
- Be familiar with the ethics and values of public librarianship; and
- Develop skills to plan, implement, and evaluate public library programs.

D. Course Approach and Expectations of Student Participation
The course is taught through a hybrid online and face-to-face approach. We will use Canvas as our main means of instruction, but will meet as a class six (6) times during the semester: January 28, February 18, March 4 & 25, and April 8 & 29. We will also have a field trip April 22 to the Howard County Miller Branch library. When we meet, we will meet Mondays from 5:30PM – 8:15PM at the Shady Grove Campus, in SG-II, room 3012.
The course content is accessible via [http://elms.umd.edu](http://elms.umd.edu) in the Spring 2013: Public Library Seminar site to which all registered students have access once logged into the new ELMS (Canvas). The course material will consist of readings, recorded lectures, and other forms of making content available and interaction possible. We will also have guest speakers during most of our face-to-face classes, and also online using Adobe Connect.

The required text for the class is:


The course will be conducted as a seminar. It is essential that each student participates in the discussions of course materials. Participation means active involvement in class discussions. Students read the assigned readings for each week PRIOR TO THAT WEEK. The students are expected to question, challenge, argue, and discuss issues and topics related to that session's readings. Failure to participate in the course will result in a letter grade of F for this component.

### E. Assignments and Grading

Your grade will be based on five items:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Grading</th>
<th>Due Dates</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Throughout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Library Community Assessment</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>March 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Library</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>April 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transforming Communities Presentations and Paper</td>
<td>30% (10% presentation; 20% Paper)</td>
<td>Presentations: April 29 Papers: May 13</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Written materials for this course should be double-spaced, using 12-point Times New Roman font. The margins should be 1 inch on each side. Citations—both in the text and in the references section—should conform to the most recent style manual of your choice (e.g., APA, Chicago). Pages should be numbered and the format consistent. Papers are to be submitted via ELMS on their specified due dates.

1. **Participation** (15% of final grade). You are expected to read all of the assignments, to think through the issues they raise, and to articulate your thoughts on the materials. In this course, each week’s assignments include both reading assigned articles and examining assigned websites. As a hybrid course, our discussions will occur via discussion boards in Canvas (asynchronous) and in-person when we meet. Students should post to the discussion boards at least twice during the weeks we do not meet – once to initially answer or comment on posted questions and again to comment on/expand on posted comments by other students. Students should feel free to introduce their own questions and observations based on the readings to engage in further discussion.
Absences are excused in cases of illness, religious observances, and other reasons in line with university policies.

2. **Public Library Community Assessment** (30%). Students should select a public library (the choice is yours), along with the community it serves (e.g., a particular county, city, township, etc.). For this assignment, students should ask:

1) Who/what is the library’s service population?
2) What are the library’s demographics (e.g., Professional and overall FTEs, circulation, operating budget, collection, etc.)?
3) What seem to be the community’s challenges? To the extent possible, look at high school graduation rates, overall education levels, poverty, unemployment, and other indicators.
4) In what ways (preliminary assessment) do you consider that the library is meeting the community’s challenges?

Students should include demographic information about the community and institutional metrics about the library and agency selected, especially relying on the discussions and points raised in the assigned readings that discuss library and e-government management practice. Institutional metrics might include Professional and overall FTEs, Operating Budget, Collections, Public Access Computers, Circulation. Service population demographics might include income levels, high school/college education rate, unemployment, Internet access in the home, percentage of population in poverty, unemployment rate, immigrant populations. Your preliminary look at how the library is meeting community needs might include looking at Jobs/employment programs, Information Literacy and Technology Training courses offered, health information programs.

In other words, examine the statistical resources offered by federal and state agencies (census, economic data, transportation data, social information about education levels and schooling, public library data, etc.) and develop a profile of the library and its community. You may want to highlight any notable trends you can identify (e.g., population growth, shifts in demographics since last census). We will build on this assignment during the semester.

I will work with you to identify a library. I would like to avoid overlap in libraries students select. As a courtesy, it would be appropriate to ask the librarian at the library you wish to select if he/she is willing to let you use the library as the focus of your assignments. This serves two purposes: 1) it explains why you are so interested in the library and are asking questions, and 2) it provides the librarian an opportunity to explore aspects of the library from your perspective.

The paper should be in the 15-page double-spaced range, and I would anticipate use of graphs and tables to facilitate the presentation.

3. **Your Library** (25% of final grade). For this assignment, go in-depth on the public library you selected for the Public Library Community Assessment. Look at its organizational structure, service hours, number of branches, size/space for each branch, programs offered, etc. In short, this assignment is about you getting to know the structure of the library, how it runs, and the services provided. You may want to focus on a particular branch (i.e., the main branch).
for this assignment and do a more thorough analysis on that branch, but you should still provide at least an overview of the entire library system.

Sources of information may include documents, interviews with staff, interviews with library users, personal observation local newspaper reports, the library’s website, blogs, etc. Please identify your sources.

Examples of what to look for:

- Foreign language collections and services (including website).
- Citizenship/English as a foreign language classes.
- Youth programming.
- Early childhood programs.
- Employment assistance (resume writing, interview skills).
- Partnerships with community organizations (e.g., workforce agencies, health agencies).

The paper should be in the 10-15-page double-spaced range.

4. **Transforming Communities: Final Paper and Presentation** (30% of your final grade). Looking across the community attributes, challenges, and needs (Public Library Community Assessment assignment), in combination with your assessment of the library (Your Library assignment), develop a paper that reviews how the library is—or could be—transforming its community. Things to consider:

- How is the library developing its services and making its resource selections?
  - Are community needs considered? If so, how?
- Is the library working with any community organizations to provide services/meet community needs?
- What challenges in particular is the library attempting to address?
  - How does the library determine it is successful?
- What trends are facing the community (e.g., diversity, population growth, more youth, more seniors, Internet access) that the library should be/is considering in its services/resources?
- Are there community goals (e.g., a strategic plan/vision)?
  - How are library services/resources helping to realize these strategies/vision?

You will present the results of your assignment during the April 29 class. The final paper is due Monday, May 13, 2013.

Papers should be approximately 15 double-spaced pages.

**F. Classroom Environment**
As a graduate seminar, the classroom environment should be professional and respectful. Discussions should be based on course readings and critical thinking. Remember—your classmates may have different perspectives on issues than you, but they still deserve your
respect. As another aspect of respect in the classroom environment, turn off or mute all phones and other communication devices during our in-person class sessions. If you use your laptop in the classroom, limit the usage of the computer to course-related reasons (i.e., taking notes).

G. Students with Disabilities
Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Disability Support Services office, and (2) discuss any necessary academic accommodation with their teachers. This should be done at the beginning of the semester.

H. Extensions
Timeliness is extremely important in graduate work, and extensions will only be available during personal emergencies. Students who need to request an extension should discuss the matter in advance with the professor. If an extension is granted, the work must be submitted within the extension period to avoid grade penalties. Unexcused delays in submission of the paper will result in a deduction of half of a letter grade for each day the paper is late, while unexcused delays in presentations will result in a deduction of half a letter grade for each class meeting the presentation is late.

I. Academic Honesty
Work submitted in this course will be individual and original, in line with the University’s Academic Honor Code and Honor Pledge. Engaging in any academic dishonesty will result in consequences in line with university policies. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to plagiarism, cheating, buying work, multiple submissions of the same paper, forging signatures, submitting fraudulent documents, and facilitating the academic dishonesty of others. When writing papers, be sure to carefully and thoroughly cite all materials you use in writing your paper and make sure all ideas and quotations are properly acknowledged.

J. Emergency Preparedness
Information about the status of the campus is available at www.umd.edu. If the campus is closed, please make sure to stay safe. Information about possible rescheduling of course activities will be provided via e-mail once the campus has reopened.

K. Office Hours & Contact Information
I am always available to you by appointment. Send me an e-mail (jbertot@umd.edu) and we will set up a time to meet – by phone, skype, or chat, or in person. I will work around your schedule to the extent possible.

L. Weekly Topics, Readings, and Review Material
The class begins on January 28, 2013 (our first meeting, and it will be face-to-face) and ends May 13, 2013 (due date of final paper). With online content, class lectures and content will be available to students the Monday of each week that we do not meet as a class. Discussions will take place throughout the week via the discussion boards. I encourage students to bring in outside readings and observations to enhance our discussions.
M. Weekly Topics and Assignments

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTORY MATTERS; OVERALL SERVICE CONTEXT; PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN THE US (JANUARY 28 – IN PERSON CLASS)
   A. Introduction to course and discussion of course expectations
   B. Overview of topics and concepts to be covered
   C. Setting the public library context
   D. Public libraries in the US: definitions, data, and more

Preparation:
   • McCook: Chapters 1 & 4 (pages 76-77)

WEEK 2: HISTORY OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN THE US (FEBRUARY 4)
   A. Public library development in the US
   B. Movements
   C. Supporting public libraries

Preparation:
   • McCook: Chapters 2 & 3

WEEK 3: PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS, PLANNING, ROLE-SETTING, AND STATISTICS (FEBRUARY 11)
   A. Public library standards
   B. Planning and role setting
   C. Public library statistics

Preparation:
   • McCook: Chapter 4
   • Maryland Public Library Statistics FY2010 (http://www.sailor.lib.md.us/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=76177)
   • Some sample state public library standards
     o Texas (https://www.tsl.state.tx.us/plstandards/toc.html)
     o Indiana (http://www.in.gov/library/standards.htm)
     o Wisconsin (http://pld.dpi.wi.gov/pld_standard)
     o Virginia (http://www.lva.virginia.gov/lib-edu/ldnd/standards/default.asp)
WEEK 4: POLICIES AND POLITICS (FEBRUARY 18 – IN PERSON CLASS)
A. Policies regarding public libraries
B. The policy context – and affecting/impact of policies
C. The politics of information access

Preparation:
- McCook: Chapter 5
- Maryland public library law (http://www.sailor.lib.md.us/uploadedFiles/sailor/links/MD_PUBLIC_LIBRARIES_2010.pdf)
- IMLS Strategic Plan http://www.imls.gov/about/strategic_plan.aspx#

Guest Speaker: Carlos Manjarrez (Director of the Officer of Planning, Research and Evaluation; Institute of Museum and Library Services)

WEEK 5: ADMINISTRATION, STAFFING, AND MANAGEMENT (FEBRUARY 25)
A. Library organization
B. Library boards
C. Library staff
D. Unions
E. Rural and small public libraries
F. Some emerging trends

Preparation:
- McCook: Chapter 5
- For some humor, see the section on “you know you are a rural librarian if….” At http://arsl.info/category/resources/

DUE March 1: Public Library Community Assessment Assignment

WEEK 6 – LIBRARY STRUCTURE AND DESIGN (MARCH 4 – IN PERSON CLASS)
A. The building – old and new
B. Library design in the 21st century

Guest Speaker: Andrea Brestler, Director of the Wicomico Public Library, and also President of the Association of Rural and Small Libraries
Preparation:
• McCook: Chapter 6
• Space considerations: http://www.bdcnetwork.com/evolving-library
• Library Design Showcase 2011: http://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/librarydesign11

WEEK 7 – PUBLIC LIBRARY PROGRAMMING (MARCH 11)
A. Adult services
B. Youth services
C. Special populations

Preparation:
• McCook: Chapters 8 & 9

WEEK 8 – SPRING BREAK (MARCH 18)

WEEK 9: LIBRARY INFRASTRUCTURE (MARCH 25 – IN PERSON CLASS)
A. Technology
B. Broadband
C. Public access

Preparation:
• Public Libraries and the Internet (http://www.plinternetsurvey.org)
  o Review the 2011-2012 report from the Public Library Funding & Technology
    Access report
  o Explore the issue briefs/issue areas in broadband, digital literacy, community
    access, e-government, and employment
• Building Digitally Inclusive Communities.
  o Institute of Museum and Library Services, University of Washington,
    International City/County Management Association. (2012). Building Digital
    Communities: A framework for action. Washington, DC: Institute of Museum and
    Library Services. Available at:
    http://www.imls.gov/assets/1/workflow_staging/AssetManager/2140.PDF.

Guest Speaker: Mike Walsh (Sailor Network Operations Manager; Sailor Operations Center:
http://www.sailor.lib.md.us/about/)

WEEK 10: THE CONNECTED NATURE OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES (APRIL 1)
A. State libraries
B. Consortia
C. Professional associations

Preparation:
• McCook: Chapter 10
• Sailor (www.lib.md.us)
• Maryland Library Association (http://www.mdlib.org/)
• American Library Association (www.ala.org)
• Tampa Bay Library Consortium (http://tblc.org/)
• Maryland AskUsNow! (http://www.askusnow.info/)

DUE April 5: Your Library Assignment

WEEK 11: LIBRARIES AND THE FUTURE (APRIL 8 – IN PERSON CLASS)
   A. Where are public libraries headed?
   B. Roles of the future

Preparation:
   • McCook: Chapter 12

Guest Speaker: Jim Fish (Director, Baltimore County Public Library)

WEEK 12: E-CONTENT AND E-SERVICES (APRIL 15)
   D. The electronic library
   E. Social media
   F. E-books, e-content
   G. Building a digital library

Preparation:
   • Maryland Digital Cultural Heritage (http://www.mdch.org/)
   • E-books and Libraries FAQ (http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/sites/ala.org.transforminglibraries/files/content/Ebooks20and20libraries20FAQ.pdf).

WEEK 13: TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES THROUGH PUBLIC LIBRARIES (APRIL 22; VISIT TO THE HOWARD COUNTY MILLER BRANCH)
   A. Community issues and challenges
   B. Library roles in meeting community challenges

Preparation:

Guest Speaker/Tour: Susan L. Stonesifer (Manager, Miller Branch)
Address: Howard County Library System, 9421 Frederick Rd., Ellicott City, MD 21042
WEEK 14: PRESENTATIONS (APRIL 29 – IN PERSON CLASS)

WEEK 15: CLASS WRAP-UP (MAY 6)
   A. Concluding comments

DUE: May 13 – Final Paper

N. Syllabus Change Policy
This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.