



Learning Outcomes

This course will focus on the use of information by individuals, including the theories, concepts, and principles of information, information behavior, and mental models. Methods for determining information behavior and user needs, including accessibility issues, will be examined; strategies for using information technology to support individual users and their specific needs will be explored.

To address these areas, the course will review:

- Principles of information access, information behavior, and user needs
- Models and theories that explain information needs and behavior
- Different types of user populations and their differing information needs
- The impacts of literacy, inclusion, and digital divides
- The roles of information technologies in supporting information needs and behavior
- Techniques and methods for assessing user needs and information behavior

After successfully completing this course you will be able to:

- Describe key principles of information behavior and user needs.
- Articulate strengths and weaknesses of different methods, models, theories, and techniques for expressing and studying information needs, use, and behavior.
- Examine the diverse information needs and behavior of different user groups.
- Identify various ways that information technology can be used to meet and evaluate user needs.
- Determine appropriateness of techniques and methods for assessing the information needs and information behavior of different user groups.

Class Meets

Tuesdays & Thursdays
11:00am – 12:15pm
PHY 4221

Dr. Kathy Weaver

keweaver@umd.edu

Office Hours

PHY 4221

Tuesdays 12:15-1:00pm

OR by appointment

Teaching Assistant

Rachel Mattos

rmattos@umd.edu

Office Hours

Thursdays 12:15-2:00pm

Hornbake 4th Floor

Student Lounge

Prerequisites

INST 311

Course Communication

I will send information to students via ELMS announcements.

Students must contact me via email

(keweaver@umd.edu) to

discuss questions,

absences, or

accommodations.

Here is a link with helpful guidance on writing

professional emails

([ter.ps/email](#)).

Required Resources

1. Course website:

elms.umd.edu

2. Text Books:



Understanding Human Information Behavior: When, How, and Why People Interact with Information
By Ruth St. Jean & Corinne Gorham
Forthcoming 2018 and 2019
Forthcoming from Rowman & Littlefield Publishers

Case, D. O. & Given, L. M. (2016). *Looking for Information: A Survey of Research on Information Seeking, Needs, and Behavior* (4th ed.).

Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing. [ISBN: 978-1-78560-968-8]

Access as an ebook for free through our library.

umaryland.on.worldcat.org/oclc/923550250

St. Jean & Gorham (DRAFT). *Understanding Human Information*

Behavior: When, How, and Why People Interact with Information.

Forthcoming from Rowman & Littlefield Publishers

3. Other Readings

Other relevant readings will come from journals, trade publications, newspapers, conference proceedings, etc. as helpful. Links have been provided in the course schedule to a number of readings; additional assigned readings will be available through our class ELMS/Canvas site (in Files under “Readings”). All journal articles are also accessible through UMD Libraries. At any point in the semester, please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any trouble locating or accessing assigned readings.

Campus Policies

It is our shared responsibility to know and abide by the University of Maryland’s policies that relate to all courses, which include topics like:

- Academic integrity
- Student and instructor conduct
- Accessibility and accommodations
- Attendance and excused absences
- Grades and appeals
- Copyright and intellectual property

Please visit www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html for the Office of Undergraduate Studies’ full list of campus-wide policies and follow up with me if you have questions.

Activities, Learning Assessments, & Expectations for Students

Everyone begins the course with full in-class participation credit, and I hope all of you will retain it to the end. However, deductions will be made from an individual’s in-class participation credit if (e.g., being absent when there is an in-class assignment).

Before Class: You should complete all listed readings before class. Lectures will be brief and will cover course material, but you will only develop a deep enough understanding of the material for tests, assignments, projects, and discussion through completing the assigned reading. You are responsible for keeping up with readings per the schedule. You are responsible for setting your own reading pace to keep ahead enough to be prepared for class discussions and in-class assignments. You are also responsible for knowing where we are in our class discussions.

Attendance: Students are to come to all class meetings unless there is a university-accepted reason (e.g., illness). You are expected to attend every class. Keep in mind that much of the learning for the course occurs in class. You cannot participate in this learning if you are not present.

Class starts on time: Being late for class affects our learning experience and potentially in-class assignments. Be sure to come to class on time.

Absences: If you have to miss a class due to an illness or similar reason, contact the instructor before the class begins.

During Class: During class, we will have lectures, discussions, and in-class activities. Bring pens, papers, and assigned reading with you to class. Students should participate in class discussions and welcome the participation of others. A participation grade will be assigned and designated by the amount of participation each student contributes to course discussions and in-class activities.

In Class Assignments: There will be in-class assignments that you will be expected to complete during the class period. These in-class assignments have been designed to help you have a deeper understanding of the concepts while receiving support from the instructional team, in addition to working with your team on your team's projects.

Team Project: You will work in teams of 4-5 students on an Information Retrieval project. The project will involve understanding a real information retrieval scenario and working with your team to have a deep understanding of course concepts related to the project, and then present your findings to the class. The team assignments will be given the week of October 1, and you will be expected to work with your team for the remainder of the semester, and present your final recommendation the last week of class.

Collaboration: You are expected to work collaboratively as teams throughout the course of the project. Each assignment should be collaboratively envisioned, planned, implemented, and written up with every member contributing equally to each part. Each team member will **individually** submit a confidential Team Member Evaluation Form to report the relative effort/contribution of each person including yourself for each major project deliverable. Evaluations will be factored into your grade.

Team Presentation: You will be expected to present your Information Retrieval project results. The presentations will be a 15 minute in-class presentations (including a 3-minute Q&A). All students viewing the presentations will complete a feedback form, based on their knowledge of information retrieval needs and assessments gained throughout the semester, offering their opinion about the strengths and weaknesses of the projects.

Individual Homework Assignments: There will be homework assignments that help with your learning in this course.

Mid-term Practice Quizzes: There will be 2 quizzes administered before the mid-term exam. The goal of these quizzes is for you to understand what type of questions will be on the mid-term and practice studying for mid-term exam.

Mid-term Exam: A mid-term exam will be administered to test your understanding of the concepts and skills introduced in class and readings.

Final Exam: There will not be a final exam in this class. Your final evaluation will be your group project presentation. Each team member will be expected to participate in the presentation, which will translate into a grade equivalent to a final exam grade.

Late Assignments: All assignments must be submitted on ELMS. Assignments must be turned in by 11:59pm on the day they are due. The general policy in this class is that late assignments (both individual and team assignments) will be deducted 15% of its points after 11:59pm, and an additional 10% of its points each day they are late. Late assignments will be accepted according to this policy up to three days after the assignment due date. Assignments more than five days late will not be accepted. It is at the instructor's discretion to accept late work and assign late point deduction. Because the last half of the semester's assignments in this course accumulate for the final project, it is crucial to follow the assignment schedule.

Meeting with Dr. Weaver: We will not have class on Thursday, October 17 or Tuesday October 22. Instead, your team will meet with Dr. Weaver to discuss your project plan. You will receive information about how to sign up for a time slot for meeting after your team has been assigned.

Extra Credit Work: Students sometimes ask for some extra credit work in an attempt to bring up grades. Extra credit work will not be given on an individual basis. However, there will be several opportunities for you to earn extra credit during the semester. They will be announced ahead of time so you can plan accordingly. I strongly suggest you take the opportunity to participate in the extra credit work, as it can make a significant difference in your final grade.

Course-Specific Policies

No computers, phones or tablet devices are permitted during our class lectures. I understand and have considered arguments for permitting laptop and tablet computers in the classroom. However, in my experience (and based on the research evidence) the reality is that they present an irresistible distraction and detract from the cooperative learning environment. Researchers have found that these distractions do in fact interfere with learning and active participation. In addition, there are studies that show that taking notes by hand uses a different part of your brain than taking notes with a computer. You will most likely be in a situation after graduation where you will not be allowed to use a computer in a meeting for note taking, so I'd like you to take this opportunity to practice note taking by hand. Therefore, the use of computers and phones will not be permitted during class lectures (except when required for DSS accommodations).

However, after the lecture during each class, there will be activities that will require a computer. So be sure to bring your computer or tablet with you to complete these in-class activities.

I expect you to make the responsible and respectful decision to refrain from using your cellphone in class. For more information about the science behind the policy watch: <http://youtu.be/WwPaw3Fx5Hk>

Making Up Missed In-Class Work. When you miss an **individual assignment** due to an excused absence, you may submit the assignment for full credit before the start time of the next class. For **group assignments**, you should submit a reflection on your group's work on the day you missed and your group's project since the in-class assignment was done. **Make up exams** will only be given for excused absences that are proven by relevant paperwork (e.g., a doctor's note). In such cases, make up times should be scheduled with the instructor.

Responding to Email. All email concerning the class should be addressed to the instructor. I will make every effort to answer your email in a timely fashion. However, you should not necessarily always expect to get an immediate reply (e.g., when it is several hours before an assignment is due). Be sure to include “INST 352 IUNA” at the beginning of the subject line of your email.

Showing Respect. You are expected to show your respect to all people and projects in class. For example, when you evaluate others’ ideas or other teams’ projects, show your respect for their effort and outcomes, and then provide your comments or suggestions in a way to help improve.

Get Some Help!

You are expected to take personal responsibility for your own learning. This includes acknowledging when your performance does not match your goals and doing something about it. Everyone can benefit from some expert guidance on time management, note taking, and exam preparation, so I encourage you to consider visiting <http://ter.ps/learn> and schedule an appointment with an academic coach. Sharpen your communication skills (and improve your grade) by visiting <http://ter.ps/writing> and schedule an appointment with the campus Writing Center. Finally, if you just need someone to talk to, visit <http://www.counseling.umd.edu>.

Everything is free because you have already paid for it, and **everyone needs help...** all you have to do is ask for it.

Grades

Grades are not given, but earned. Your grade is determined by your performance on the learning assessments in the course and is assigned individually (not curved). If earning a particular grade is important to you, please speak with me at the beginning of the semester so that I can offer some helpful suggestions for achieving your goal.

All assessment scores will be posted on the course ELMS page. If you would like to review any of your grades (including the exams), or have questions about how something was scored, please email me to schedule a time for us to meet.

I am happy to discuss any of your grades with you, and if I have made a mistake I will immediately correct it. Any formal grade disputes must be submitted in writing and within one week of receiving the grade.

Learning Assessments	#	Points Each	Category Total	Category Weight
Homework: Out-of-class assignments submitted on ELMS	2	100	200	10%
Participation/In-class Assignments: individual and group assignments and contributions to class discussions	26	10	260	10%
Team Project:				50%
Project Assignment 1	1	50	50	10%
Project Assignment 2	1	50	50	10%
Project Assignment 3	1	50	50	10%
Project Assignment 4	1	50	50	10%
Project Presentation	1	100	100	10%
Team Meeting with Dr. Weaver	1	50	50	10%
Practice Quizzes	2	20	40	5%
Midterm Exam	1	150	150	15%
Total Points:			1000	100%

Final letter grades are assigned based on the percentage of total assessment points earned. To be fair to everyone I have to establish clear standards and apply them consistently, so please understand that being close to a cutoff is not the same thing as making the cut (89.99 \neq 90.00). It would be unethical to make exceptions for some and not others.

Final Grade Cutoffs				
+ 97 - 100%	+ 87 - 89.9%	+ 77 - 79.9%	+ 67 - 69.9%	
A 93 - 96.9%	B 83 - 86.9%	C 73 - 76.9%	D 63 - 66.9%	F <60.0%
- 90 - 93%	- 80 - 82.9%	- 70 - 72.9%	- 60 - 62.9%	

Date	Topic	Reading	Homework Exams
Wk1: Aug 27&29	Introduction and Course Overview: Information Behavior	LI Chapter 1 (thru 1.1.6) UHI Chapter 2	
Wk2: Sept 3&5	Defining Information and History of the Field	LI Chapter 4 UHI Chapter 3 R-1	Homework 1: Due 9/8
Wk3: Sept 10&12	Reading and Understanding Scholarly Articles	UHI Chapter 7	Homework 2: Due 9/15
Wk4: Sept 17&19	Related Concepts	UHI Chapter 4 LI Chapter 6 (6.6 & 6.7 only) LI Chapter 2	
Wk5: Sept 24&26	Information Literacy	UHI Chapter 5 UHI Chapter 6 R-2	
Wk6: Oct 1&3	Research Design Guest Speaker 10/1: Dr. Jen Golbeck	UHI Chapter 8 LI Chapter 9 R-3	Practice Quiz 1: In Class 10/1 Group Assignments: 10/1
Wk7: Oct 8&10	Investigating User Information Behavior	UHI Chapter 9 (p.1-9) UHI Chapter 10 R-4	Group Project Assignment 1: Due 10/11
Wk8: Oct 15&17	User Experience	UHI Chapter 9 (p.9-12) R-5	Practice Quiz 2: In Class 10/15 <i>No Class 10/17: Groups Meet with Dr. Weaver</i>
Wk9: Oct 22&24	User Experience and Usability	R-6 R-7 R-8	<i>No Class 10/22: Groups Meet with Dr. Weaver</i> Group Project Assignment 2: Due 10/27
Wk10: Oct 29&31	Accessibility	R-9 R-10	Review for Exam: In Class 10/31
Wk11: Nov 5&7	Health Information	R-11 R-12	Mid-term Exam: In Class 11/5
Wk12: Nov 12&14	Information Behavior Theories and Models	UHI Chapter 12 R-13	Group Project Assignment 3: Due 11/17
Wk13: Nov 19&21	Online Contributors and First Responders	R-14 R-15 R-16	Group Project Assignment 4: Due 12/1
Wk14: Nov 26&28	Thanksgiving		Group Meeting: 11/26
Wk15: Dec 3&5	Group Presentations		Group Presentation Order TBA

UHI = StJean & Gorham: Understanding Human Information: When, How and Why People Interact with Information

LI = Case & Given: Looking for Information: A Survey of Research of Information Seeking, Needs and Behavior

R-# = Reading Assignment on ELMS