COLLEGE OF INFORMATION STUDIES  
Spring 2016

LBSC 622  Information and Universal Usability

INSTRUCTOR  Dr. Mega Subramaniam  
4121E Information Policy and Access Center  
Hornbake Building, South Wing,  
University of Maryland, College Park  
(301) 405-3406 (office)  
mmsubram@umd.edu  
Follow me on Twitter - @mmsubram  
Preferred communication: Canvas messaging system

OFFICE HOURS  Can be arranged by appointment

COURSE SPACE  https://myelms.umd.edu/login

CLASS TWITTER  @LBSC622; hashtag #lbsc622

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course follows Diverse Populations, Inclusion and Information (LBSC 620) and builds on the concepts of that course. This course focuses on the use and challenges of information services and technologies to provide equal experiences and outcomes to all users. Laws, standards, approaches, component concepts, access needs, and technologies in relation to physical and online information environments.

COURSE GOALS

Goals of this course are to increase students’ knowledge of:

• The limitations that many diverse populations experience in their desire to gain information for education and for pleasure.
• The need for libraries and other information institutions to improve the technology available to the special needs of their patrons.
• The types of materials that should be part of every collection and service.
• The variety of programming options that should be available, at minimal cost.
• The ways in which libraries and other information institutions can take on a leadership role in assuring Universal Usability to all of their patrons both within their buildings and within the community.
• Organizations with which libraries may wish to partnership to increase services to diverse populations.
READINGS

As assigned (See list at the end of this syllabus).
All articles are available through Course Reserve link in Canvas.

COURSE METHOD

There will be 7 modules assigned for this class that will run for a total 14 weeks of full instruction. The first week is dedicated to course introduction, and the last week is dedicated to final project presentations.

In order to engage various learning styles in an online environment, this course will utilize a variety of instructional strategies to deliver the content and various assessment methods to measure the achievement of learning objectives for each module. There will be only two synchronous meetings throughout the semester. We will meet in the first/second week via Adobe Connect, and the date/time will be determined via a Doodle Poll that will be distributed the first day of class. If candidates are unable to attend the meeting, candidates must view the recording of the session. We will have another synchronous meeting in the middle of the semester (optional attendance, but a Doodle Poll will be administered to find a best time that works for the majority of candidates in Week 7). This meeting will be a Q&A meeting about the final project and any aspects of the course. In preparation for the Adobe Connect session, please make sure that you run the system test to ensure compatibility with Adobe Connect - https://umdischool.adobeconnect.com/common/help/en/support/meeting_test.htm

It is essential that candidates read the course readings, participate in discussions planned for each module, and complete all the assignments. Candidates must read the assigned readings before completing the discussion activity planned for each module. Lectures for each module will be released at least ONE week before the actual module begins. For example, the recorded lecture for Module 3 will be released on Feb 22. The only exception is the release date for Module 1 lecture, which will be released immediately after our first synchronous meeting.

Based on critical examination of course readings, each candidate should develop an analytical stance concerning the issues in the course. The candidates are expected to question, challenge, argue, and discuss issues and topics related to that week’s readings.

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—others may have different perspectives on issues than you, but they still deserve your respect.
ATTENDANCE POLICY

Regular participation in this class is the best way to grasp the concepts and principles being discussed. However, in the event that participation must be missed due to an illness, the policy in this class is as follows:

1. For every medically necessary delayed participation, a reasonable effort should be made to notify the instructor in advance of the class. The notification (can be in the form of a message through Canvas or phone) must identify the module that your participation will be delayed and the reason for the delay, and acknowledging that the information provided is accurate.

2. If a candidate is delayed more than TWO times consecutively, the instructor may require documentation signed by a health care professional.

3. If a candidate is unable to submit an assignment before or on the due date, he or she is required to notify the instructor in advance (via a message through Canvas or phone), and upon returning to class, send the documentation of the illness, signed by a health care professional, via email.

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 instructor. 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 or asynchronous participation will result in a deduction of half of a letter grade for each day the paper/participation is late.

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 the instructor. This should be done by the second week of class.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Please check the University’s inclement weather number (301-405-SNOW [7669]) and the UMD homepage (http://www.umd.edu), which is used for inclement weather and other emergency situations. While local television and radio stations report on University closings, the information is not always correct. Information about the status of the campus is available at http://www.umd.edu/emergencypreparedness/. Information about possible rescheduling of synchronous activities and assignment deadlines will be provided via Canvas once the campus has reopened.
ACADEMIC HONESTY

Work submitted in this course will be individual (unless indicated as group work) 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.

GRADING

Students grade will be determined through performance on four components: (1) class participation; (2) lead/response to module discussion; (3) accessibility assignment; and (4) a final project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class discussion</td>
<td>350</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lead/response to module discussion</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility assignment</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final project</td>
<td>250</td>
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Each component is expected to reflect the highest professional standards, and both substantive and technical quality will be considered in determining student’s grade for each. Thoroughness, accuracy, salience, and effective organization are required; correct English grammar, spelling, punctuation, and usage are expected. Adherence to University policies on matters of intellectual integrity is also imperative. Attendance at each class is required unless prior arrangements have been made.

Grade range that will be used to determine the final grade for this class is 95+ percentage will be an A; 90-94.9 percentage will be an A-; 85-89.9 percentage will be a B+; 80-84.9 percentage will be a B; and below 80 will be a B-.
## COURSE SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week/Module/Dates</th>
<th>Topic(s)</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) – Module 0</td>
<td>Introductions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 25 – Jan 31</td>
<td>Course Overview</td>
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<tr>
<td>(2 &amp; 3) – Module 1</td>
<td>Universal usability</td>
<td>Participation for Module 1 –</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 1 – Feb 14</td>
<td>Universal design</td>
<td>Due Feb 14</td>
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<td>Universal design for learning</td>
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<td>(4 &amp; 5) – Module 2</td>
<td>Accessibility law and standards</td>
<td>Final project proposal - Due Feb 28</td>
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<td>Feb 15 – Feb 28</td>
<td>Section 508</td>
<td>Participation for Module 2 –</td>
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<td></td>
<td>WCAG</td>
<td>Due Feb 28</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cognitive disability guidelines</td>
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<td>(6 &amp; 7) – Module 3</td>
<td>Accessibility and the blind</td>
<td>Accessibility assignment –</td>
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<td>Feb 29 – Mar 13</td>
<td>Accessibility and the deaf</td>
<td>Due Mar 11</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Screen readers</td>
<td>Participation for Module 3–</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Close captioning</td>
<td>Due Mar 13</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 – Spring Break</td>
<td>YOU HAVE NOTHING TO DO THIS WEEK!</td>
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<td>Mar 14 - 20</td>
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<tr>
<td>(9 &amp; 10) – Module 4</td>
<td>Accessibility and Autism spectrum disorder</td>
<td>Participation for Module 4 –</td>
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<td>Mar 21 – Apr 3</td>
<td>Accessibility and other cognitive disabilities (dyslexia etc.)</td>
<td>Due Apr 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>(11 &amp; 12) – Module 5</td>
<td>Accessibility and older adults</td>
<td>Participation for Module 5 –</td>
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<td>Apr 4 – Apr 17</td>
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<td>Due Apr 17</td>
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<tr>
<td>(13 &amp; 14) – Module 6</td>
<td>Accessibility and immigration/ELL learners</td>
<td>Participation for Module 6 –</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 18 – May 1</td>
<td>Accessibility and socio-economically challenged community</td>
<td>Due May 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>(15) – Module 7</td>
<td>What’s ahead for universal usability?</td>
<td>Participation for Module 7 –</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 2 – May 8</td>
<td>Class wrap-up</td>
<td>Due May 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>(16) – Final module</td>
<td>Final Project Presentations and Reports</td>
<td>Final Project Reports and</td>
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<td>May 9 – May 16</td>
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<td>Presentations – Due May 12</td>
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## ASSIGNMENTS/EVALUATION

### Classroom participation (35% of your final grade)

Class participation points will be based on active asynchronous participation during the 14 weeks where actual course content will be discussed - Module 1 through Module 7 (50 points per module). For each module, candidates will do the following: (1) Complete the readings for the module; (2) View a pre-recorded lecture and/or read lecture notes; and (3) Complete the discussion activity assigned for each module that will count toward the participation points.
To clarify point (3) above, for each module, the candidates will provide responses to questions/prompts that will be shared in the pre-recorded lectures or lecture notes, via the Discussion Board in Canvas. Typically, the instructor requires ONE main posting (answering questions or react to prompts that are provided), and respond to at least two of your peers’ postings in a constructive manner. Please take note that you will only be able to participate in these activities in a timely manner if you have completed the readings for the module, and have watched the lecture presentations/read the notes for that module.

**Leading/Responding to Module Discussions on the Discussion Board (20% of your final grade)**

For each module, there will be three/four candidates who will serve as moderators and responders to the postings that will be posted by your classmates. You will sign-up for ONE MODULE (Module 1 through 7) that you would like to serve as moderator via a Google Doc within Canvas. The instructor will notify when the Google Doc will be shared during the first synchronous session. Sign-up to serve as moderators are on first come first serve basis. No more than four people can serve as moderators for each module. As a moderator, you will:

- Respond to at least four postings of your peers (in addition to posting your own answers/responses to the questions/prompts of the module). Make sure you respond to a posting that has not been responded by other moderators for the week. Your responses must also be substantive – either in the form of agreement, disagreement, and critique with supportive points to clarify your stance. Questions are also welcomed, but you must indicate why you are asking these questions;
- Summarize what have been discussed and highlighted from the postings in the discussion board for that module (between 1000-2000 words). You must also indicate your agreement and disagreement with the themes that emerged in the discussion (and include reasons why you agree or disagree). This summary must be posted either on the day that the module participation is due or the day after.

Because there will be three/four moderators for each module discussion, the instructor will take the role of an observer. Additionally, the instructor will read and grade every posting in the discussion board. The instructor will only intervene if there are intense disagreements and/or candidates become disrespectful or unprofessional in their postings. If such incidents happen, the moderators must bring these to the instructor’s attention immediately.

**Accessibility assignment (20% of your final grade)**

For this assignment, you will select a library website, a collection of online archives, a museum website, or an eGovernment portal (e.g., USA.gov) and conduct an accessibility assessment of the site designed to determine the extent to which the site conforms to various accessibility standards and practices. You must use the WAVE tool ([http://wave.webaim.org](http://wave.webaim.org)) to determine the accessibility of one or more pages in the
website (indicate the exact URLs). Write an analytical paper on FOUR major accessibility issues with the website. Begin the paper with a discussion on why you have chosen to highlight these FOUR accessibility issues by aligning them with one or more guidelines nested under the FOUR WCAG principles: POUR (perceivable, operable, understandable and robust). As you highlight these four issues, also indicate what are the relevant Section 508 guidelines that can be referenced by the web developer to resolve these issues (if any). The write-up should be no more than six (6) typed, double-spaced pages in 12-point type in total, with standard one-inch margins.

The accessibility assignment is due on March 11, 2016 at 11.59 pm EST. There is an example of an exemplary assignment that was completed last year (shared with permission) in the Files area in Canvas.

**Final Project (25% of your final grade)**

It is vital that concepts that you have learned in this course be applied in real-life contexts. Taking a final exam or writing a final theoretical paper will not measure the achievement of the objectives for this course. Hence, the instructor provides TWO options for the final project, taking into the consideration that you may fall into one or more of the following categories: (A) a part-time student and working full-time; (2) have an inflexible schedule that hinders group collaborations; and (3) would like to apply what you have learned in a context/information environment that you may already be employed in or would like to work for upon graduation.

**OPTION 1**

You will work in a team of no more than THREE students to complete a project that provides an opportunity for you to conduct a thorough groundwork and/or provide recommendations for programming and services that are customized for underserved and disadvantaged patrons or targeted to benefit disadvantaged populations and/or work directly with a population that is disadvantaged or underserved. You and your team will work with the District of Columbia Public Library’s (DCPL) Center for Accessibility. These projects can range from creating a fully captioned video for services for the deaf, bringing stakeholders of a community to brainstorm an inclusive solution for an existing problem, making recommendations to make Wikipedia accessible by engaging the community to provide these recommendations, etc. In Week 3, the instructor will share the project descriptions for all the projects that are being offered by DCPL. While some of these projects can be completed remotely, some projects require you and your team to run an event at the DCPL MLK Branch. Hence, choose this option widely. Depending on the number of team members (two or three members), the scale of the projects can be adjusted.

Past students in this course have successfully completed many fascinating projects with DCPL, and have published their final project reports as journal articles and book chapters. See [http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/abs/10.1108/S0065-283020150000040010](http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/abs/10.1108/S0065-283020150000040010) for an example.
OPTION 2
If collaborative work is not feasible for you this semester, and/or if you already have a project in mind that is similar in contexts and concepts to the DCPL projects, you can pitch a project that you would like to work on individually.

The deliverables for the final project will be (regardless of which option you choose):

(1) A project proposal no more than 2 pages (single-spaced pages in 12-point type, with standard one-inch margins) that describes the project, the objectives of the project, the expected outcomes and deliverables, major activities, timeline, and the major responsibilities of each team member (if done collaboratively).

(2) A 10-12 pages (single-spaced pages in 12-point type, with standard one-inch margins) report that describes the project, the objectives of the project, the outcomes and deliverables, activities/method, and recommendations (the content of this report may be different based on the project that you select, please contact instructor before constructing the report). You may include addendum (if needed, not included in the page count). References are also not included in the page count.

(3) A 20-30 minutes presentation using VoiceThread. Information about using VoiceThread will be communicated to the class in March. In this presentation, you (or the group) will summarize your report orally. Prepare an engaging and creative presentation that will allow optimal sharing of your knowledge gained during the project with your peers.

(1) is due on **Feb 28, 2016 at 11.59 pm**. (2) and (3) is due **May 12, 2016 at 11.59 pm**. More information about this assignment will be provided through the semester.
READINGS

Module 1


Module 2


Module 3


*Please review all sub-menus under Technology: Hearing Aids, Cochlear Implants, Implantable Devices, Hearing Assistive Tech, Captioning, Telephones, Get in the Hearing Loop.


Module 4

pp. 86-98.


**Module 5**


**Module 6**


Module 7
