LBSC 602-0101 Serving Information Needs
College of Information Studies, University of Maryland
Fall 2013
Mondays 5:30 to 8:15 PM
Hornbake Building, Room 0105

Instructor:
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Office Hours: Mondays, 3:30 to 5:00 PM or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION: How can we best help people with their needs for information? In this course, we will focus on the skills needed to successfully interact directly with individuals from diverse populations in the course of helping to fulfill their needs for information. We will approach this topic from a number of different directions, including information professional practice and information behavior theory. The course will touch on the following topics: collection development, reference services, user education, information literacy, search strategies, and policies and ethics of the information profession.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an appreciation of the role of institutions in generating and disseminating information to users.
2. Demonstrate awareness of the core values, ethics, social responsibilities, and information policy issues that affect the profession and users' lives and the roles of professional associations in supporting them.
3. Analyze the effect of technologies on resources, service delivery, and uses of collections and information resources.
4. Explain the role of information services in supporting the lifelong learning of diverse populations.
5. Analyze models and theories of user behavior and understand how they can inform the practice of serving the information needs of users from diverse populations.
6. Apply concepts, principles, and techniques of reference and user services that provide access to relevant and accurate recorded knowledge and information to various user groups.
7. Apply methods of interacting successfully with individuals of various groups using current media (face-to-face, e-mail, Web, instant messaging, etc.) to provide consultation, mediation, and guidance on their use of recorded knowledge and information (e.g., conduct successful reference interviews).
8. Explain techniques to identify, locate, evaluate, and synthesize information from various sources for use by diverse user groups.
9. Demonstrate an understanding of concepts, issues, and methods related to the evaluation, selection, and “weeding” of resources.
10. Develop policies and procedures designed to assess and serve the information needs of diverse user groups.
11. Create experiential learning experiences for user education, including development of training materials, presentations, and use of media.
TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS: The primary methods of instruction for this course will include lecture, guest speakers, course readings, and presentations and in-class discussion relevant to course readings. You will be expected to have read the assigned readings in preparation for each class meeting. Additionally, you will be expected to actively participate in class discussions.

READING MATERIALS: There is one required text for this course:

NOTE: An electronic version of this text can be accessed free of charge through our course Canvas site. Alternatively, it can be purchased through Amazon.com (either as a paperback or for Kindle): http://www.amazon.com/Librarians-Guide-Online-Searching-Suzanne/dp/1610690354

Additional assigned readings are available through our class Canvas site.

The following books have been placed on reserve in McKeldin Library for your use:


Although it is not required for this course, you may wish to browse through some of the following relevant journals/magazines and/or sign up to receive automatic alerts as new issues come out:

**Information Behavior/General:**
- *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology (JASIS&T)*
- *Library & Information Science Research (LISR)*
- *The American Archivist*
- *Journal of Information Science (JIS)*
- *The Information Society*
- *Information Processing & Management (IP&M)*
- *Journal of Documentation (JDOC)*
- *Information Research* (http://informationr.net/ir/)
- *First Monday* (http://www.firstmonday.org/)


Searching:

- Online: Exploring Technology & Resources for Information Professionals
- Information Today
- Searcher: The Magazine for Database Professionals
- Online Searcher: Information Discovery, Technology, Strategies
- Library Journal
- EContent

Reference:

- Internet Reference Services Quarterly
- Reference and User Services Quarterly (RUSQ) [Formerly Reference Quarterly (RQ)]

COURSE POLICIES:

Attendance: Students are expected to attend every class and to be present on time. If you will be unable to make a class, please e-mail me beforehand and please be sure to check in with a fellow student following class so that you can catch up on anything you missed. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class session. Absences will only be excused in accordance with University policy (illness, religious observances, participation in University activities at the request of University authorities, and compelling circumstances beyond your control). Any planned absences due to religious observances must be communicated to me in writing during the first two weeks of class. Students may miss one class session with no penalty; thereafter, each unexcused absence will result in your grade being lowered by one step (for example, an A- will become a B+). Repeated tardiness may be considered an unexcused absence.

Class Participation: Students are expected to actively participate in every class. This will require that you finish all assigned readings prior to each class session. Participation forms an integral part of your own learning experience, as well as that of your classmates. Your participation in classroom discussions will count for 10% of your final grade. Class participation grades will take into account both the quantity and quality of your contributions to class discussions; however, the quality of your contributions (whether questions, viewpoints, responses to others’ questions, etc.) to a meaningful, ongoing discussion will be much more heavily weighted. Classroom discussions should remain professional and respectful at all times. Please be sure to silence your cell phones before entering class. Laptop use is permitted during class, but only for class-related activities.

Written Work: All written work should be proofread and revised as necessary before you submit it. Use Times New Roman 12-point font and one-inch margins. All documents should be single-spaced. Be sure to organize your papers, using section and subsection headings to identify portions of your work. Use APA Style for in-text citations and reference lists. There are many resources about APA style available on the Internet. See, for example, http://www.lib.umd.edu/ues/guides/citing-apa and http://www.apastyle.org/learn/faqs/index.aspx.

Submitting Assignments: Each assignment must be submitted before the beginning of class on the indicated due date through our Canvas site (“LBSC602”). Please submit only one file per assignment (Word or pdf format for papers; PowerPoint for presentations), naming your file using the following convention: LastName_FirstName_Assignment#_Date (e.g. ‘Smith_John_Assignment2_10122013’). Additionally, a hardcopy of each assignment is due at the beginning of the class session on the specified due date.

Late Work: Unless you are facing an emergency situation AND you request an extension from me at least 48 hours in advance of the due date, late work will automatically be graded down by one step for each day that it is late. Assignments more than seven days late will not be accepted.

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 the
University of 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 www.shc.umd.edu. To further exhibit your commitment to academic integrity, remember to type and sign the Honor Pledge on all examinations and assignments: “I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this examination (assignment).” When submitting an assignment electronically, there is no need to sign the pledge – your submission of the assignment with this sentence included implies your signature.

All assignments in this class must reflect your own original work. You must cite and properly attribute any material quoted or paraphrased from some other source. Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism, cheating, buying assignments, submitting the same paper more than once, forging signatures, submitting fraudulent documents, facilitating the academic dishonesty of others, etc. Infractions may result in a penalty, such as a failing grade on a specific assignment or for the entire course or even expulsion from the University. Please read and adhere to the University of Maryland Code of Academic Integrity (http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/docs/III-100A.pdf). You may also find this Office of Student Conduct definition of academic dishonesty to be helpful: http://osc.umd.edu/OSC/AcademicDishonesty.aspx.

Emergency Preparedness: Please see the University’s Emergency Preparedness Website (http://www.umd.edu/emergencypreparedness/) for information about the current status of the campus. If a class session needs to be rescheduled, I will e-mail you as soon as possible.

Syllabus Change Policy: This syllabus is subject to change with advance notice. If a change becomes necessary, I will announce the change in class and e-mail all of you.

Student Course Evaluations (CourseEvalUM): Toward the end of the semester (Tuesday, December 3rd through Sunday, December 15th), you will have an opportunity to evaluate this course. Your participation in these evaluations is integral to the success of our school. Your feedback will remain completely confidential and will be immensely valuable in improving our school’s teaching effectiveness and learning environments. Beginning December 3rd, please go to https://www.courseevalum.umd.edu/ to complete your evaluation of this course. If over 70% of the students in the class complete their evaluation, you will be able to access the aggregate results through Testudo (if you have completed all of your course evaluations).

Special Accommodations: If you need any accommodations due to a disability, please first register with the Disability Support Service (DSS) office (http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS/) and file any required documentation, and then see me as early as possible in the semester to let me know. We can then work with DSS to determine how to best accommodate your needs.

Academic Assistance:

    Learning Assistance Service (http://www.counseling.umd.edu/LAS): If you’re experiencing difficulties in keeping up with the academic demands of this course, please consider contacting the Learning Assistance Service, 2202 Shoemaker Building, 301-314-7651. Their educational counselors can help with time management, reading, math learning skills, note-taking and exam preparation skills. All of their services are free to UMD students.

EVALUATION:

Your final grade will be calculated based on the weighting of course assignments shown in the following table. Please note that revision and resubmission of assignments for the purpose of obtaining a higher grade will not be permitted. Also, you will not be allowed to drop any of these grades. All assignments must be submitted through our class Canvas site (‘LBSC602’) prior to the start of class on the due date indicated. Please also bring a print-out of your assignment to hand in to me at the beginning of the class session. Please note that your slides
or any other electronic materials you’ve prepared for your user instruction presentation need to be uploaded to Canvas no later than noon on December 2nd.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Assignment Description</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>Every class meeting</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Library/Information Center Visit Report</td>
<td>September 23, 2013</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-P</td>
<td>User Instruction Assignment: Team Proposal</td>
<td>October 7, 2013</td>
<td>Check-off</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>User Group Information Behavior Profile</td>
<td>October 14, 2013</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Search Strategy Assignment</td>
<td>October 21, 2013</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>4a</td>
<td>Reference Interview In-Class Practicum</td>
<td>November 4, 2013</td>
<td>Check-off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4b</td>
<td>Reference Services Comparison Paper</td>
<td>November 11, 2013</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>User Instruction Assignment: Executive Summary (5-ES); Presentation (5-Pr); Pathfinder (5-Pf)</td>
<td>December 2, 2013</td>
<td>30% (total)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5-Ev</td>
<td>User Instruction Assignment: Self, Peer, &amp; Team Evaluations</td>
<td>December 9, 2013</td>
<td>Check-off</td>
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Please see the last few pages of this syllabus for specific instructions regarding each of the assignments. The weighted average of your grades on all of the assignments (including your class participation grade) will be converted to a letter grade according to the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weighted Average</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>97.0 and above</td>
<td>A+</td>
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<tr>
<td>94.0-96.9</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>90.0-93.9</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>87.0-89.9</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>84.0-86.9</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>80.0-83.9</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77.0-79.9</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>74.0-76.9</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70.0-73.9</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67.0-69.9</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64.0-66.9</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60.0-63.9</td>
<td>D-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Below 60.0</td>
<td>F</td>
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### COURSE SCHEDULE:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
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</table>
| 1    | 9/9  | Course Overview/ Evolving Landscape of Librarianship and Information Services | **Required:**  
**Recommended:**  
Library Test Kitchen. See [http://www.librarytestkitchen.org](http://www.librarytestkitchen.org) |  |
| 2    | 9/16 | Information Services and Information Professionals | **** Meet in McKeldin Library, Room 6107 **** |  |
|      |      | | **Required:**  
**Recommended:**  
Select OCLC reports, for example:  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Readings</td>
<td>Assignment Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>10/21</td>
<td>Information Literacy/ User Instruction</td>
<td><strong>Guest Speaker:</strong> James Patrick Timony (Adaptive Technology Librarian, DC Public Library) [Topic: Technology and Accessibility]</td>
<td>3. Search Strategy Assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Readings</td>
<td>Assignment Due</td>
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| 8    | 10/28| Reference and Information Services | **Guest Speaker:** Megan Dwyre, Archives II Reference  
[Topic: Archival Reference Services] | |
|      |      |       | **Required:**  
| 9    | 11/4 | The Reference Conversation | **Required:**  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Readings</td>
<td>Assignment Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>11/25</td>
<td>Effects of Technology on the Information</td>
<td>Required:</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>12/2</td>
<td>User Instruction Presentations (Week 1)</td>
<td>** *** User Instruction Presentations ***</td>
<td>5. User Instruction Assignment: Executive Summary (5-ES); Presentation (5-Pr); Pathfinder (5-Pf)</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>12/9</td>
<td>User Instruction Presentations (Week 2);</td>
<td>** *** User Instruction Presentations ***</td>
<td>5. User Instruction Assignment: Self, Peer, and Team Evaluations (5-Ev)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Course Wrap-up</td>
<td>** *** Course Wrap-Up ***</td>
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Assignment 1: Library/Information Center Visit Report

Due Date: September 23, 2013 (5%)

Visit a library or other information center. If you are undecided about what type of library to visit, public libraries have a broad range of programs and services and are available to all members of the community. At the beginning of your field trip, it is recommended that you introduce yourself to a librarian and indicate why you are there.

1. Observe the library environment – is the building centrally located, a pleasant place in which to be? Within the library, is locating services (e.g., children's services, reference services, public access computers, circulation services, etc.) easy to do? Are books, journals, films, etc. easily accessible?

2. Observe library users and what they are doing (e.g. attending programs (what programs?), using reference services, working on public access terminals, looking for specific book titles or journals, browsing, etc.). What are their ages? How diverse a group do users appear to be?

3. Observe library staffing. Are librarians and/or other staff readily available to users? Does there appear to be sufficient staff or are library users waiting for service in some areas? If the latter, what types of services are users waiting for?

4. Be an information user. You may wish to have a question in mind before your visit to the library. After your visit, assess how satisfied you were with your ability to access information – did the information you found meet your needs?

5. Check the library's website. How useful an information resource is it in terms of information about the library and its programs, access to library collections, connection to databases for reference use, etc.?

6. Overall, what was positive in the environment and activities you observed? If there were negative observations, how would you suggest they be corrected?

Prepare a 1-page (single-spaced) paper, responding briefly to each of the above questions. Be prepared to talk about your experience in class.

Rubric:

I. Description of Library or Information Center (10 points)
   ● Has the student described his/her selected library or information center?
   ● Has the student discussed accessibility of the various types of resources available?

II. Observations of Users (15 points)
   ● Did the student describe the users they observed and the activities they were engaged in?

III. Observations of Library or Information Center Staff (15 points)
   ● Did the student describe the availability of library or information center staff to users?
   ● Did the student describe any areas or types of services for which there seemed to be insufficient staff?

IV. Using the Library or Information Center (20 points)
   ● Did the student make use of the library or information center?
   ● Did the student assess his/her satisfaction with his/her ability to access the information needed?
V. Using the Library or Information Center Website (10 points)
   ● Did the student describe the usefulness of the library or information center Website for various types of purposes?

VI. Overall Assessment of Library or Information Center Environment and Activities (20 points)
   ● Has the student described both positive and negative aspects of the library or information center environment and of the activities they observed?
   ● Has the student suggested potential improvements in regard to any negative observations they made?

VII. Overall Writing Quality (10 points)
   ● Is the student’s writing clear, well-organized, and easy-to-understand?
Assignment 2: User Group Information Behavior Profile

Due Date: October 14, 2013 (20%)

For this assignment, you will select a particular user population, research what has already been learned about the information behavior of your selected group, and consider the implications of these findings for information professionals who assist them with their information needs.

You may choose any user population you wish. Once you have chosen your user population, find at least three papers that report results from empirical studies of the information behavior of this population. After carefully reading these articles, prepare a 3- to 5-page (single-spaced) paper containing the following sections:

- Introduction: Who is your selected user population? What motivated you to select this particular population?
- Literature Review: What have we already learned about the information behavior of this population?
- Implications: How might these findings be used to inform/improve the practices of information professionals who assist individuals from this population with their information needs?
- Potential Significance/Impact: Why are the implications that you’ve identified important? What might be the impact if information professionals adapt their practices to better suit the population(s) with whom they work?
- Ideas for Future Research: What else do we need to know about the information behavior of your selected population? How would having this knowledge potentially improve our ability to assist this population with their information needs?
- References: Please provide a list of your references, using APA style.

Rubric:

I. Introduction (10 points)
   - Has the student described his/her user population?
   - Has the student explained his/her motivation for selecting this user population?

II. Literature Review (20 points)
   - Did the student provide a synthesized discussion of the findings from at least three empirical studies of the information behavior of his/her selected population?

III. Implications (25 points)
   - Has the student included a discussion about how the findings from their selected articles might be used to inform or improve the ways in which information professionals go about helping members of this population with their information needs?

IV. Potential Significance/Impact (20 points)
   - Has the student explained why the implications they have identified are of potential significance?
   - Has the student discussed the potential impact(s) of information professionals learning from these empirical findings and using this knowledge to adapt the ways in which they assist this population with their information needs?
V. Ideas for Future Research (15 points)
   ● Has the student discussed what else we still need to know about the information behavior of his/her selected population?
   ● Has the student explained how having this information could lead to an improvement in how we help this population with their information needs?

VI. Overall Writing Quality (10 points)
   ● Is the student’s writing clear, organized, and easy-to-understand?
   ● Has the student included a references list, using APA-style citations?
Assignment 3: Search Strategy Assignment

Due Date: October 21, 2013 (10%)

Working in pairs, identify a substantive information need that one of you is currently facing. This information need must be one that will require use of at least two different library databases. Work together to draft a search strategy that reflects how you plan to go about gathering the information you need. This plan should include both the names of the information resources you intend to consult, as well as the ways in which you will interact with these resources. Then carry out this search strategy, adapting it as necessary as your search evolves.

Write a 2- to 3-page (single-spaced) paper in which you:

1. Describe the information need and the context surrounding this need.
2. Delineate the initial search strategy that you and your partner developed, indicating the information resources you intended to consult and how you intended to interact with each resource. Also, provide a rationale for your plans.
3. Recount how you actually carried out your search, describing and explaining how and why your search adhered to and/or deviated from your initial plan. Be sure to also describe any non-search activities in which you engaged in an attempt to further your progress.
4. Evaluate your search process – talk about the usefulness and usability of the various information resources you used and about which of your search strategies worked well and which did not. Talk about how you might carry out this search if you were to repeat it – which of your strategies would you keep, which would you adapt (how?), and which would you discard?
5. Discuss the usability and/or usefulness of the information resources you used. How might their usability and/or usefulness be improved? Please provide specific, concrete suggestions.

Rubric:

I. Description of Information Need (10 points)
   ● Have the students described the information need?
   ● Have they explained the context surrounding this information need?
   ● Have they chosen to focus on a substantive information need that necessitated the use of at least two library databases?

II. Initial Search Strategy (15 points)
   ● Have the students described the initial search strategy that they developed?
   ● Have they provided a rationale for their plan?
   ● Have they included a list of the information resources they intended to use?
   ● Have they described how they were planning to interact with these information resources?

III. Search Process (20 points)
   ● Have the students recounted how they actually carried out their search?
   ● Have they explained how their search evolved and how and why it adhered to and/or deviated from their initial plan?
   ● Have they included any non-search activities they carried out in the process of completing this assignment?
IV. Evaluation of Search Process (25 points)
● Have the students discussed what went well and what did not go so well during their search?
● Have they described how they would conduct this search if they were to carry it out again?

V. Evaluation of Usability/Usefulness of Information Resources (20 points)
● Have the students talked about the usefulness and usability of the different information resources they used in the course of their search?
● Have the students suggested ways in which the usability and/or usefulness of the information resources they used might be improved? Have they provided specific, concrete suggestions?

VI. Overall Writing Quality (10 points)
● Is the students’ writing clear, organized, and easy-to-understand?
Assignment 4a: Reference Interview In-Class Practicum and Assignment 4b: Reference Services Comparison Paper

Due Dates:
- Assignment 4a: November 4, 2013 (check-off)
- Assignment 4b: November 11, 2013 (25%)

Assignment 4a: Reference Interview In-Class Practicum

Purpose & Background:
The reference interview is one of the key activities of an information professional, regardless of the setting (e.g., libraries, archives, special information environments.) Developing the skills needed to engage in and complete a successful interview with a patron requires practice. The purpose of this exercise is to provide the opportunity to develop those skills through a role-playing activity, simulating the reference interview experience in class to allow for feedback and peer review and to prepare you for real-life reference services interactions.

Instructions:
In pairs, students will create a reference interview process. Utilizing behavior models and practices from the course readings and subsequent discussions, each student pair will develop a 10-minute long question and answer experience that could realistically occur in an information setting of their choosing. One student will act as the information professional, the other as the patron. The pairs will practice this role-playing independently and will “perform” the experience in class. The instructor will give feedback, and the class as a whole will provide constructive critique of the performance based on the following criteria:
- Application of best practices in the provision of reference service as found in the readings
- Construction of the simulated questions and answers
- Demonstration of effective communication skills as performed

NOTE: This part of the assignment will not be graded, but rather will serve as practical experience (along with instructor feedback and peer review) as preparation for part b.

Assignment 4b: Reference Services Comparison Paper

Purpose & Background:
Asking and answering questions is a key activity of all information professionals that occurs in a variety of settings. Librarians and archivists continue to provide reference services in-person and via telephone, as well as via email, discussion forums, and chat services. In addition, a variety of free or fee-based question and answer services have cropped up in non-library or archive settings, such as ChaCha, Yahoo! Answers, and a variety of specialized online communities. It is important to recognize how these services are similar or different in order to know when one is more appropriate than another, as well as how to effectively interact when using different media. The purpose of this assignment is to get you thinking about the similarities and differences among these services so that you can effectively navigate and participate in them.

Instructions:
The following steps should be completed:

1. For this assignment, you will pose a reference question via three different services. Your question may relate to a paper you are writing or a personal information need. It should be something you are genuinely interested in. It should not be a ready reference question that can be answered by Googling. It should be a question (or series of questions) that is likely to lead to a reference interview or at least
some back-and-forth with the answerer. When developing your question, also make sure you have a scenario of why you need the answer.

2. Decide on three different types of reference services to which you will pose your question. Make sure all three are significantly different services. A small list of the different services available is provided below to get you started, but please feel free to try something not listed here.

3. Ask your question of all three services. Feel free to ask your question multiple times if your initial experience doesn’t give you much to talk or write about. You can play around with more than just three types of services, but you should end up focusing on just three in your write-up. Otherwise, you won’t have enough space.

4. Write a 5- to 6-page (single-spaced, 12 point font) paper comparing your experiences with the three different services. Your write-up should state the question you posed, identify the three services you used and how the interviews unfolded, and compare the overall interactions, drawing attention to the similarities and differences among the services and across your experiences. Your paper should consider how the underlying platform and nature of the service impacted the experience. You should relate your experiences to several concepts from the readings (e.g., approximately three to six references to class readings we’ve covered or perhaps pertinent readings from another class). You should consider things like the level of interaction and negotiation of the question, the quality and timeliness of the response, your overall satisfaction with the answer, the enjoyability of the interaction, etc. Try to do more than simply state the obvious. You may supplement your own experience with the experiences of others that you may have observed in the same setting if desired, although this is not required. At least 2.5 pages should be dedicated to the comparison, so don’t spend too much space discussing the nuances of what you did. Instead, spend the space analyzing your experiences and comparing and contrasting them, focusing on how the medium affected each experience.

Example Q&A Services:
You may want to familiarize yourself with a broad array of question-answering services before settling on the ones you will use for your assignment. Be sure that the services you select are appropriate for the question you plan to ask. A few examples of different services include (but are certainly not limited to):

● Face-to-face interaction at the reference desk of a public library, UMD academic library, or archive.
● Telephone interaction via a library telephone reference service (e.g., Enoch Pratt in Baltimore at 410-396-5430 see http://www.prattlibrary.org/locations/infoservices/index.aspx?id=7644; Montgomery County Public Libraries Ask-a-Librarian Telephone Reference 240-777-0001; McKeldin Library 301-405-0800
● Asynchronous interaction via a library or non-library service (e.g., Internet Public Library at http://www.ipl.org/div/askus/; Yahoo! Answers (http://answers.yahoo.com/); A specialized online help-based community; or another service – see Yahoo's list of Ask-an-Expert services at http://dir.yahoo.com/Reference/Ask_an_expert/)
● Mobile phone Q&A services (e.g., ChaCha – see http://www.chacha.com/)
● Any other platform you want to try (e.g., posting your question on Facebook or Twitter in a status feed)

Rubric:

I. Description of the information need/reference question(s) (10 points)
● Has the student described his/her information need?
● Has the student explained for what purpose this information was needed?
● Has the student provided the specific reference question(s) he/she posed to the three services he/she elected to consult?

II. General description of the three services selected (10 points)
● Has the student provided general descriptions of each of his/her three selected services?

III. Description of the student’s interactions with each of the three services selected (20 points)
● Has the student described his/her interactions with each of his/her three selected services?

IV. Comparison/Contrast of the three selected services (30 points)
● Has the student provided an in-depth analysis of the similarities and differences between each of the three services they selected?
● Has the student discussed how the underlying platform and the nature of each service impacted his/her experiences?
● Has the student evaluated his/her interactions with each of the services, as well as the quality and the timeliness of the responses provided by each of them?
● Has the student assessed each of the services in terms of how much he/she enjoyed interacting with them and how satisfied he/she felt with the responses received?

V. References to the literature (20 points)
● Has the student referenced relevant course readings in his/her discussion of his/her experiences with the various services they consulted?

VI. Overall Writing Quality (10 points)
● Is the student’s writing clear, organized, and easy-to-understand?
● Has the student included a references list, using APA-style citations?
Assignment 5: User Instruction Assignment

Due Dates:
5-P. Team Proposal: October 7, 2013 (check-off)
5-ES. Executive Summary (10%); 5-Pr. Presentation (15%); 5-Pf. Pathfinder (5%): December 2, 2013 (30% total)
5-Ev. Self, Peer, & Team Evaluations: December 9, 2013 (check-off)

The purpose of this assignment is to give you experience with preparing and presenting a user instruction session targeted to a particular audience, as well as creating a relevant pathfinder.

You will work in teams of 3 to 4 students for this project. As a group, choose a topic and identify an audience for your presentation. For example: “information literacy for college freshmen” or “finding reliable health resources for women diagnosed with breast cancer” or “understanding personal digital archives for senior citizens” or “job seeking for low income job seekers.” Teams can choose whatever topic and user group they would like; however, their proposal must be approved before they begin.

Deliverables:
- Team Proposal (check-off)
- Executive Summary (10%)
- Presentation (15%)
- Pathfinder (5%)
- Self, Peer, and Team Evaluations (check-off)

I. Team Proposal (check-off) [Due October 7, 2013]
Each team will prepare a 1-page proposal that lists the team name, the project name, the members of the team, and your proposed topic and audience.

II. Executive Summary (10%) [Due December 2, 2013]
Each team will write a 5-page executive summary on the information seeking behaviors of the audience they chose for their user instruction presentation. Paper will include an explanation of why the team selected this particular audience, a brief literature review, an analysis of the implications of the chosen group’s information needs, and a discussion of why the group chose to do the presentation and pathfinder the way they did.

III. Presentation (15%) [Due December 2, 2013]
Each team will have 30 minutes to present an instruction session to their classmates on the use of library and Internet resources on the group’s topic. You should plan to talk for approximately 22 minutes, and then solicit questions from the audience during the remaining 8 minutes. To ensure that everyone is able to present, each group will be cut off at 30 minutes. Be sure to practice your presentation several times so that you are sure that you can finish within your allotted time. Don’t be afraid to make your audience’s learning fun.

* Make sure that your presentation is built around the information needs/behaviors of your chosen audience. *

IV. Pathfinder (5%) [Due December 2, 2013]
Each group will create a one-page pathfinder consisting of at least 10 resources, including databases, books, journals, and Internet resources. Groups are encouraged to be creative with the layout and presentation of their pathfinder. Pathfinders can be in physical or digital form.
V. Self, Peer, and Team Evaluations (check-off) [Due December 9, 2013]
Students will evaluate themselves and their peers on the following items:

- creativity
- resources chosen
- presentation skills
- contribution to the team/project

Teams will also be asked to evaluate their performance as a whole. What did you learn? How well did you work together?

These evaluations will be taken into consideration by the professor when grading the various elements of this assignment.

Rubrics:

II. Executive Summary (10%)
- Has the team described their selected audience and topic and explained why they chose to focus on this particular audience and topic? (15 points)
- Has the team provided a brief literature review that discusses empirical findings relating to the information behavior of their selected audience? (20 points)
- Has the team described the potential implications of these findings for the design of their user instruction presentation and pathfinder? (25 points)
- Has the team explained how the findings from the literature and their implications informed their design of the user instruction presentation and pathfinder? (30 points)
- Is the summary clearly written and easy to follow and understand? (10 points)

III. Presentation (15%)
- To what extent did the presentation take into account the user group and the information needs and information seeking behaviors of that particular group? (40 points)
- How well did the team present, both individually and as a group? (20 points)
- How well did the team make use of (and stick to) their allotted time? (10 points)
- How well did the team engage their audience? (20 points)
- How well did the team respond to questions and comments from the audience? (10 points)

IV. Pathfinder (5%)
- How relevant and comprehensive are the resources included in the pathfinder? (30 points)
- To what extent do the format and presentation of the pathfinder take into account the user group and the information needs and information seeking behaviors of that particular group? (40 points)
- What degree of creativity is exhibited in the look and/or functionality of the pathfinder? (20 points)
- How clearly laid out and easy-to-use is the pathfinder? (10 points)