

## **INST 352-0201 Information User Needs and Assessment**

College of Information Studies, University of Maryland

Fall 2017

Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 12:00 to 12:50 PM

Benjamin Building, Room 1121

### **Instructor:**

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**Graduate Student Teaching Assistant:** Gagan Jindal, Doctoral Student, [gjindal@terpmail.umd.edu](mailto:gjindal@terpmail.umd.edu)

**Office Hours:** Mondays, 2:00 to 3:30 PM or by appointment

[NOTE: Please send any emails regarding the class to both me and Gagan, and include “INST 352” in the subject line. Please allow 24 hours for email responses Mondays – Fridays, 48 hours on weekends/holidays.]

### **Catalog Description** [*Pre- or co-requisite: INST 201 (Formerly INST 301)*]

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.

### **Extended Course Description**

This course will introduce students to the myriad relationships between users and the information they seek. The first part of the course will first introduce students to the concepts and the importance of understanding the information needs (what is being sought) and information behavior (how it is being sought and what is being done with the results) of users, as well as the methods of accessing and assimilating information employed by users (physical, cognitive, and social). The course will next introduce a range of the major models and theories employed in exploring information needs and behavior.

The second part of the course will focus on users and user populations. Several weeks will be devoted to the discussion of different user populations and the ways in which populations may interact differently with information. Factors examined will include age, race, socio-economic status, education level, literacy levels, ability, migration, immigration, and orientation, etc. Considerations of users will include detailed examinations of issues of literacy, inclusion, and digital divides in terms of the roles of information and information technologies in supporting information needs and behavior.

The third and final part of the class will focus on assessment techniques and issues. Major approaches to assessment – such as usability, accessibility, user experience, and human computer interaction – will be examined in detail, as will many methods and techniques that can be used in assessment. The ethics of assessment will also be explored. Across these areas of focus in the course, students will gain an understanding of the myriad issues pertaining to the use of information. In this course, students will learn:

- 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; and
- Ethical considerations in assessment.

## Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students 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; and
- Determine appropriateness of techniques and methods for assessing the information needs and information behavior of different user groups.

**Course Materials:** There is one required textbook for this course:

Case, D. O. & Given, L. M. (2016). *Looking for Information: A Survey of Research on Information Seeking, Needs, and Behavior* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing. [ISBN: 978-1-78560-968-8]

**Other Readings:** Other relevant readings will be assigned from journals, trade publications, newspapers, edited books, conference proceedings, etc. as necessary. Links have been provided in the syllabus to a number of readings; additional assigned readings are available through our class Canvas site (under “Course Reserves”). All journal articles are also accessible through UMD Libraries. At any point in the semester, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any trouble locating assigned readings. Any changes to course readings will be announced in class and via ELMS.

**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](http://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 any questions.

### ***Policy on Academic Misconduct***

Cases of academic misconduct will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct irrespective of scope and circumstances, as required by university rules and regulations. It is crucial to understand that the instructors do not have a choice of following other courses of actions in handling these cases. There are severe consequences of academic misconduct, some of which are permanent and reflected on the student’s transcript. For details about procedures governing such referrals and possible consequences for the student, see:

<http://osc.umd.edu/OSC/Default.aspx>.

It is very important that you complete your own course assignments, and do not share any work. The best course of action to take when a student is having problems with an assignment is to contact the instructor.

### ***University of Maryland Code of Academic Integrity***

The University of Maryland, College Park has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity, administered by the Student Honor Council. This Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student, you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, see:

<http://shc.umd.edu/SHC/Default.aspx>.

### ***Special Needs***

Students with disabilities should inform the instructor of their needs at the beginning of the semester. Please also contact the Accessibility & Disability Service (ADS) Office (<https://www.counseling.umd.edu/ads/>; 301-

314-7682). ADS will make arrangements with the student and the instructor to determine and implement appropriate academic accommodations. Students encountering psychological problems that hamper their course work are referred to the Counseling Center (<http://www.counseling.umd.edu/>; 301-314-7651) for expert help.

**Academic Assistance: Learning Assistance Service** (<https://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.

**Academic Assistance: Writing Center** (<http://www.english.umd.edu/academics/writingcenter>): The University of Maryland Writing Center has tutors available in person and online to help you improve your writing, research, and critical thinking skills. The Writing Center also hosts a Grammar Hotline: 301-405-3785.

**Emergency Preparedness:** Please see the University's Emergency Preparedness Website (<http://prepare.umd.edu/>) 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.

### **Course Specific Policies:**

**Attendance:** Students are expected to attend every class and to be present on time. If you will be unable to make it to 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. As per University policy, students may submit a self-signed note for a medically necessitated absence from a single lecture during the semester. Any student missing more than one lecture is required to provide documentation from the Health Center or from an outside health care provider that verifies the dates of treatment and time frame during which the student was unable to meet academic responsibilities.

**In-Class Behavior:** Students are expected to actively participate in every class. This will require that you finish all assigned readings prior to each class session. Please be on time for class and stay until the end, unless you have made special arrangements with me. Entering late and leaving early is distracting to the instructor and to other students. If you must enter late or leave early, please take the seat nearest an exit and enter or leave as quietly as possible. In general, be aware of the people around you and avoid doing things that will disturb them or otherwise prevent them from fully engaging with the content. Put your phones on silent before the start of class. If you need to make/take a phone call, leave the classroom before doing so. Any student creating a disruption will be asked to leave for the day.

**Missed Deadlines:** If you will not be able to meet an assignment deadline, contact me at least 48 hours before the due date to explain why you will need to submit the assignment late; requests will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. If you need to miss an exam because of outside circumstances (e.g., a religious holiday, military duties, work/athletic team travel), you must email me at least 48 hours before the exam to reschedule your exam time. If you miss an exam due to other circumstances (e.g., oversleeping), you will not be able to make up the exam. Assignments submitted more than seven days late will not be accepted. Exam extensions will not be granted beyond seven days.

**Late Assignments:** A 10% penalty will be deducted for each day or part of a day that an assignment is late. Please prepare in advance so that you will not encounter technical difficulties that will result in your work receiving a late penalty. If you have a conflict with the due date, assignments can always be submitted early.

**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. The version posted on Canvas will always be the most up-to-date.

**Guidelines for Written Assignments:** All written assignments should be submitted via ELMS, by the date and time indicated on the syllabus. 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. Many resources about APA style are available on the Internet [e.g., <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>; <http://www.apastyle.org/learn/faqs/index.aspx>].

## Assignments and Grading:

### I. Class Participation (15%)

Students will engage in small group and class-wide discussions on topics from the readings. Throughout the semester, we will have in-class activities and online discussion questions to reinforce course content. The only way to receive credit for in-class activities is to be present during class, as you will be required to turn in a sheet of paper with your name on it at the end of that class session. For online discussion questions, you will have 24 hours from the time the question is posted to submit a response.

Note: The lowest two grades for activities and online discussion questions during the semester will be dropped.

### II. Written Assignments (35% total)

1. **Information Behavior Analysis (15%) [Due by 11:59 PM on Monday, 9/25]:** Describe one of your own recent information seeking experiences in 500-750 words. You can use one of the six scenarios on pages 19-39 in Chapter 2 of the Case book, or, if none of these fit, pick something else. Discuss what this behavior demonstrates about your information needs, how and where you look for and use information, and the information problems you face in your life. Your discussion should make clear that you have thought about and understand the concepts of information, information needs, information seeking, and information behavior as discussed in course readings.

Here are some questions to consider as you work on this assignment: What factors may have prompted this information need? What kinds of sources did you consult (books, friends, intermediaries, search engines, etc.?) In what ways did these sources prove helpful or not helpful? What kinds of barriers did you note? What advantages do you have because of your education, training, or prior knowledge? Were you satisfied with the outcome of the information seeking process?

**Assessment:** This assignment will be graded based on your selection and discussion of a recent personal information seeking experience; evidence of critical thinking; adherence to the length requirement; adherence to the formatting and citation requirements; and, clarity and precision of thought in your writing.

2. **Research Article Analysis (20%) [Due by 11:59 PM on Friday, 11/17]:** Select a research article that discusses the information needs of any user group of interest to you. For this assignment (750-1,000 words), please provide a summary of the reading and an assessment of it (e.g., What have you learned about this user group's information needs? What questions does it raise for you?).

**Assessment:** This assignment will be graded on your selection and discussion of a relevant article; evidence of critical thinking; adherence to the length requirement; adherence to the formatting and citation requirements; and, clarity and precision of thought in your writing.

### III. Mid-term exam (25%) [Exam will be posted on ELMS at 8:00 AM on Monday 10/23; Completed exams are due by 11:59 PM on the same day (10/23), via ELMS]

A mid-term exam will be administered to test the students' understanding of the concepts introduced in the course. This is an open book, open notes, take-home exam. You may consult any of the course materials (and other outside materials if you wish) in figuring out the answers to the questions. However, you may NOT discuss the exam with ANYONE, whether they are taking the class or not. If you have any questions, direct them to me, either in my office hours or by e-mail ([bstjean@umd.edu](mailto:bstjean@umd.edu)). I will post the exam on ELMS at 8:00 AM on Monday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>; you will have until 11:59 PM on Monday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> to submit your completed exam.

**IV. Final Exam (25%) [Exam will be posted on ELMS at noon on Sunday, 12/17; Completed exams due by 10:00 AM on the next day (Monday, 12/18), via ELMS]**

A final exam will be administered to test the students' understanding of the concepts introduced in the course. This is an open book, open notes, take-home exam. You may consult any of the course materials (and other outside materials if you wish) in figuring out the answers to the questions.

However, you may NOT discuss the exam with ANYONE, whether they are taking the class or not. If you have any questions, direct them to me, either in my office hours or by e-mail ([bstjean@umd.edu](mailto:bstjean@umd.edu)). I will post the exam on ELMS at noon on Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup>; you will have until 10:00 AM on Monday, December 18<sup>th</sup> to submit the exam.

**Grading:** Your course grade will be determined by your class participation, written assignments, a midterm exam, and a final exam. The weight of each component is listed in the Assignments and Grading section (see above). Please note that revision and resubmission of assignments for the purpose of obtaining a higher grade will not be permitted. Any challenges to a grade must be submitted in writing via email *within one week*. After considering the issue, I will adjust your grade if appropriate and inform you of my decision within one week. Please note that requesting reconsideration of a grade could result in a lower grade if additional problems are detected. Final grades will be submitted 48-72 hours following the close of the Final Exam period. Please note that I do not round grades up. Final grades will be assigned using the following categories:

A+	97-100	B+	87-89.9	C+	77-79.9	D+	67-69.9	F	Less than 60
A	93-96.9	B	83-86.9	C	73-76.9	D	63-66.9		
A-	90-92.9	B-	80-82.9	C-	70-72.9	D-	60-62.9		

**Course Schedule**

Week	Topic	Readings	Assignments Due
Week 1 (8/28, 8/30, 9/1)	Introduction and Overview	Case & Given, Ch. 1 & Ch. 2	
Week 2 (9/6, 9/8)	Core Concepts: Information, Information Needs, Information Behavior	Case & Given, Ch. 4  <b>[NOTE: No class on Monday 9/4 (Labor Day)]</b>	
Week 3 (9/11, 9/13, 9/15)	Information Seeking; Information Needs	Case & Given, Ch. 5	
Week 4 (9/18, 9/20, 9/22)	Related Concepts	Case & Given, Ch. 6	
Week 5 (9/25, 9/27, 9/29)	Theories and Models of Information Behavior	Case & Given, Ch. 7	Assignment 1: Information Behavior Analysis (due Monday, 9/25 by 11:59 PM, via ELMS)

Week	Topic	Readings	Assignments Due
Week 6 (10/2, 10/4, 10/6)	Theories and Models of Information Behavior (cont'd)	Case & Given, Ch. 8  <b>W: Guest Talk: Nancy Roderer, Adjunct Lecturer at UMD iSchool and Professor Emerita, Johns Hopkins University, Division of Health Informatics</b>	
Week 7 (10/9, 10/11, 10/13)	Research Design	Case & Given, Ch. 9 (up through 9.2.5)	
Week 8 (10/16, 10/18, 10/20)	M/W: Research Methods for Assessing Information Needs  F: Midterm review	M/W: Case & Given, Ch. 9  F: Midterm Review	
Week 9 (10/23, 10/25, 10/27)	M: Midterm  W/F: Research Methods for Assessing Information Needs (cont'd.)	[NOTE: <b>No class on Monday, October 23<sup>rd</sup></b> – Please work on your midterm exam and submit it by 11:59 PM that evening]  W: Case & Given, Ch. 9 (continued)  F: Library Orientation with Rachel Gammons, Head of Teaching & Learning Services (McKeldin Library, Room 6107)	Midterm (Take-home exam will be posted at 8:00 AM on Monday, 10/23; Completed exams are due by 11:59 PM on 10/23, via ELMS)
Week 10 (10/30, 11/1, 11/3)	Usability and Accessibility	Review: <i>Usability Evaluation Basics</i> ( <a href="https://www.usability.gov/what-and-why/usability-evaluation.html">https://www.usability.gov/what-and-why/usability-evaluation.html</a> ) Watch: <i>10 Usability Heuristics</i> ( <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hWc0Fd2AS3s&amp;feature=youtu.be">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hWc0Fd2AS3s&amp;feature=youtu.be</a> ) Review: <i>10 Usability Heuristics for User Interface Design</i> ( <a href="https://www.nngroup.com/articles/ten-usability-heuristics/">https://www.nngroup.com/articles/ten-usability-heuristics/</a> ) Quesenbery, W. (2009, Feb. 16). <i>Usable Accessibility: Making Web Sites Work Well for People with Disabilities</i> : <a href="http://www.uxmatters.com/mt/archives/2009/02/usable-accessibility-making-web-sites-work-well-for-people-with-disabilities.php">http://www.uxmatters.com/mt/archives/2009/02/usable-accessibility-making-web-sites-work-well-for-people-with-disabilities.php</a> Fox, S. (2011). <i>Americans living with disability and their technology profile</i> . Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project. <a href="http://www.pewinternet.org/2011/01/21/americans-living-with-disability-and-their-technology-profile/">http://www.pewinternet.org/2011/01/21/americans-living-with-disability-and-their-technology-profile/</a> Jaeger, P. T. (2015). Disability, human rights, and social justice: The ongoing struggle for online accessibility and equality. <i>First Monday</i> , 20(9). Available: <a href="http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/6164/4898">http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/6164/4898</a>  <b>M: Guest Talk: Paul Jaeger, Professor, Diversity Officer, and Co-Director of iPAC</b>	



Week	Topic	Readings	Assignments Due
Week 14 (11/27, 11/29, 12/1)	<p>M/W: Health Information Behavior of Older Adults  (Choose any 2 of these 3 readings)</p> <p>W/F: Health Information Behavior of Teenagers  (Choose any 2 of these 3 readings)</p>	<p>Turner, A. M., Osterhage, K., Hartzler, A., Joe, J., Lin, L., Kanagat, N., &amp; Demiris, G. (2015). Use of patient portals for personal health information management: The older adult perspective. In <i>AMIA Annual Symposium Proceedings</i> (Vol. 2015, p. 1234). American Medical Informatics Association. <a href="https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4765678/">https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4765678/</a></p> <p>Medlock, S., Eslami, S., Askari, M., Arts, D. L., Sent, D., de Rooij, S. E., &amp; Abu-Hanna, A. (2015). Health information-seeking behavior of seniors who use the Internet: A survey. <i>Journal of Medical Internet Research</i>, 17(1). <a href="https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4296102/">https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4296102/</a></p> <p>St. Jean B. (2012). "I just don't know what I don't know!": A longitudinal investigation of the perceived usefulness of information to people with type 2 diabetes. Research paper presented at the <i>ASIS&amp;T 2012 Annual Meeting</i>, Baltimore, MD, October 26-30, 2012. <a href="http://onlineibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/meet.14504901030/pdf">http://onlineibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/meet.14504901030/pdf</a></p> <p>Kent, E. E. et al. (2013). Talking about cancer and meeting peer survivors: Social information needs of adolescents and young adults diagnosed with cancer. <i>Journal of Adolescent and Young Adult Oncology</i>, 2(2), 44-52. <a href="https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3684139/">https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3684139/</a></p> <p>Schnall, R., Okoniewski, A., Tiase, V., Low, A., Rodriguez, M., &amp; Kaplan, S. (2013). Using text messaging to assess adolescents' health information needs: An ecological momentary assessment. <i>Journal of Medical Internet Research</i>, 15(3). <a href="https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3636211/">https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3636211/</a></p> <p>Kodama, C., St. Jean, B., Subramaniam, M., &amp; Taylor, N. G. (2017). There's a creepy guy on the other end at Google!: Engaging middle school students in a drawing activity to elicit their mental models of Google. <i>Information Retrieval Journal</i>. <a href="https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10791-017-9306-x">https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10791-017-9306-x</a></p>	

Week	Topic	Readings	Assignments Due
Week 15 (12/4, 12/6, 12/8)	M/W: Information Behavior of Online Content Contributors  W/F: Information Needs of First Responders	<p>Zhang, X., Liu, S., Deng, Z., &amp; Chen, X. (2017). Knowledge sharing motivations in online health communities: A comparative study of health professionals and normal users. <i>Computers in Human Behavior</i>, 75, 797-810.</p> <p>St. Jean, B., Rieh, S. Y., Yang, J. Y., &amp; Kim, Y.-M. (2011). How content contributors assess and establish credibility on the Web. Research paper presented at the <i>ASIS&amp;T 2011 Annual Meeting</i>, New Orleans, LA, October 9-13, 2011. Available: <a href="http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/meet.2011.14504801163/epdf">http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/meet.2011.14504801163/epdf</a></p> <p>Chakraborty, R., Agrawal, M., &amp; Rao, H. R. (2014). Information processing under stress: A study of Mumbai Police first responders. <i>IIMB Management Review</i>, 26(2), 91-104. <a href="http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0970389614000299">http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0970389614000299</a></p> <p>Hughes, A. L., St Denis, L. A., Palen, L., &amp; Anderson, K. M. (2014, April). Online public communications by police &amp; fire services during the 2012 Hurricane Sandy. In <i>Proceedings of the 32nd annual ACM conference on Human factors in computing systems</i> (pp. 1505-1514). ACM. <a href="https://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/34676306/HughesStDenisPalenAndersonPoliceFireSandy.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAIWOWYYGZ2Y53UL3A&amp;Expires=1502511325&amp;Signature=ThELS9ECYDOccjIGfTHDUBrIJSg%3D&amp;response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3DHughes_St_Denis_Palen_Anderson_Police_Fi.pdf">https://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/34676306/HughesStDenisPalenAndersonPoliceFireSandy.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAIWOWYYGZ2Y53UL3A&amp;Expires=1502511325&amp;Signature=ThELS9ECYDOccjIGfTHDUBrIJSg%3D&amp;response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3DHughes_St_Denis_Palen_Anderson_Police_Fi.pdf</a></p> <p><b>F: Guest Talk: Diane Travis, PhD Student &amp; Research Coordinator: “The Distinctiveness of First Responders’ Information Needs”</b></p>	
Week 16 (12/11)	Review for the Final Exam	In-Class Review for the Final Exam	
Final Exam	Final Exam (Take-home exam will be posted at noon on Sunday, 12/17; Completed exams are due by 10:00 AM on Monday, 12/18, via ELMS)		

**Note:** This is a tentative schedule, and subject to change as necessary – monitor the course ELMS page for current deadlines. In the unlikely event of a prolonged university closing, or an extended absence from the university, adjustments to the course schedule, deadlines, and assignments will be made based on the duration of the closing and the specific dates missed.