INST 352-108 Information User Needs and Assessment
College of Information Studies, University of Maryland
Spring 2019
Online

Instructor:
Chad J. Doran, PhD
Lecturer

Cdoran2@umd.edu

Welcome to **Information User Needs and Assessment!**

Introduction This course is offered entirely online via the University's Enterprise Learning Management System (ELMS), asynchronously. ELMS is user-friendly and very easy to use! Teaching and learning in ELMS will be a rich and rewarding experience. It gives us the ability for online discussions and communications in a number of forums, described below. If you have problems with ELMS, please go to https://umd.service-now.com/itsc. If you have other questions or problems, please let me know.

Please read the entire syllabus at the beginning of the course. It provides a roadmap for how the course is organized and how it will proceed. Please also access the course web site and become familiar with the material under each heading.

Catalog Description [Prerequisites: INST 311 (plus INST 201 either prior to or concurrent with this course)] This course will focus on the use of information by individuals, including the theories, concepts, and principles of information, as well as user 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 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. The third and final part of the course will include a closer examination of 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.

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. An eBook version of this textbook can be accessed for free through our library: https://umaryland.on.worldcat.org/oclc/923550250. If you would prefer, you can rent or purchase a copy through the University Book Center: https://umcp.bncollege.com/webapp/wcs/stores/ servlet/BNCB_TextbookDetailView?catalogId=10001&item=N&langId=-1&productId=600006642925&storeId=15551 or through Amazon: https://www.amazon.com/Looking-Information-Research-Seeking-Behavior/dp/1785609688/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1502833037&sr=1-1 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].

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 "Files"). All journal articles are also accessible through UMD Libraries. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any trouble locating assigned readings at any point in the semester.

Online communication: There will be three Webex meetings that will take place throughout the semester. The first will take place on 1/28 and will provide an introduction to the course. The second will take place on 3/13 and will provide a review session for the midterm, and the third will take place on 5/13 and will provide a review session for the final. Throughout the semester, I will use the *Announcements* tool to disseminate information each week prior to class, including information about the readings, course schedule and assignments. I will also e-mail the class from time to time, and occasionally messages are disseminated in both e-mail and via the *Announcements* tool.

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 any questions.

Policy on Academic Misconduct

Cases of academic misconduct will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct (https://www.studentconduct.umd.edu/) 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 for 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: https://www.president.umd.edu/sites/president.umd.edu/files/documents/policies/III-100A.pdf It is very important that you complete your own course assignments, and do not share any work. The best course of action to take if you are having problems with an assignment for a class 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 (https://www.president.umd.edu/sites/president.umd.edu/files/documents/policies/III-100A.pdf), administered by the Student Honor Council (http://shc.umd.edu/SHC/Default.aspx). 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.

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: If you're experiencing difficulties in keeping up with the academic demands of this course, please consider contacting the University of Maryland Counseling Center, 1101 Shoemaker Building, 4281 Chapel Lane, 301-314-7651, https://www.counseling.umd.edu/. The Counseling Center has provided some links to on-campus and online academic resources here: https://www.counseling.umd.edu/academic/.

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 (https://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.

You should have plenty of time to complete all the work in the course, particularly given the fact that you don't need to travel to campus or attend any classroom sessions.

Course Specific Policies:

Attendance: Students are expected to actively participate in online discussions and forums – this will require that you **finish all assigned readings prior to each class session**.

Missed Deadlines: You should have plenty of time to complete all the work in the course, particularly given the fact that you don't need to travel to campus or attend any classroom sessions. 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.

Late exams (midterm or final) will not be accepted and will receive a grade of 0. 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 you will not be able to make up the exam.

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 post an announcement on our ELMS site. The version posted on ELMS 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. Please remember to include your name on all of your work. 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].

Modules: Each week in the semester will be associated with an online module. This module will be posted on ELMS on Fridays by 11:59 PM via the *Announcements* tool. The module will include all of the required readings for the week and the associated lecture slides. The lecture slides are meant to guide you through the readings. I recommend reviewing the lecture slides and supplementing them with your own notes from the readings to ensure you understand the material for this course. However, the lecture slides are not comprehensive of all of the material in the readings and may include additional information. You are responsible for all of the material in the readings and the lecture slides. The modules will also include directions and/or a link to each week's discussion board post (which will be graded for class participation). The modules will have detailed information on your other assessments for this course, such as your writing assignments, midterm, and final exam. Carefully review all of the materials in each module to ensure you meet all of the requirements for class this semester.

Assignments and Grading:

I. **Class Participation (20 points total)**

You are expected to actively participate in our online class discussion boards in Canvas. Each student must make a **minimum of two (1-2 paragraph length) posts on our Canvas discussion board every week (<ins>one original post and one response to a classmate's post</ins>)**. The topic for each week's discussion will be posted on ELMS by Monday morning each week to allow you enough time to make a meaningful

contribution. Discussion posts regarding weekly readings or other related course topics are **due by 11:59 PM on the Wednesday of each week**. Late discussion or response posts will not be accepted.

Participation is an integral part of your own learning experience, as well as that of your classmates. Your participation in online discussions will count for 20% of your final grade. Course participation grades will take into account both the quantity and quality of your contributions to online 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. All discussions should remain professional and respectful at all times.

II.   **Written Assignments (40 points total)**

1. **Information Behavior Analysis (15 points) [Due by 11:59 PM on Monday, 3/4]:** Describe one of your own recent information seeking experiences in 500-750 words. Discuss what your experience 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.

   Please consider the following questions 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 encounter? 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 that you have read the required readings and understand the central concepts relevant to this assignment; evidence of critical thinking; adherence to the length, formatting, and citation requirements; and clarity and precision of thought in your writing.

2. **Research Article Analysis (25 points) [Due by 11:59 PM on Monday, 4/15]:** First, select a particular user group that interests you, such as people with visual impairments, physicians, homeless parents, or first-generation college students. Next, find a **peer-reviewed research article** that describes a study of the information behavior of your selected user group. The article must contain a "Methods" or "Methodology" section and must present the authors' findings relating to their study participants' information needs, seeking, and/or use. After carefully reading your selected article, write a brief paper (1,000 – 1,500 words). Please be sure to include the following components: (1) A summary of the article (be sure to state the authors' research questions and describe their findings); (2) A critical assessment of the recruitment, data collection, and data analysis methods used by the researchers; (3) A discussion of how the study findings might be used to help the user group you have selected; and (4) Two ideas for future research on the information behavior of this user group.

Assessment: This assignment will be graded based on your selection and discussion of a relevant article; evidence that you have read the required readings and understand the central concepts relevant to this assignment; evidence of critical thinking; adherence to the length, formatting, and citation requirements; and clarity and precision of thought in your writing.

III. Exams (40 points)

All exams (quizzes, midterm and final) are identified on the syllabus and will take place online. You are free to use your textbooks, notes, and other resources. You must complete the exams on your own – you may NOT discuss the exams with other students – if you have any questions, direct them to me.

1. **Quizzes (10 Points):** There will be five quizzes administered on ELMS to test your knowledge of topics throughout the semester.

2. **Midterm Exam (15 points):** The midterm will be administered on ELMS on Wednesday, March 27th.

3. **Final Exam (15 points):** The final will be administered on ELMS on Monday, May 20th.

Grading: Grades are not given, but earned. Your course grade will be determined by your class participation, written assignments and exams. The points assigned to 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. If earning a particular grade is important to you, please speak with me any time so that I can offer some helpful suggestions for achieving your goal.

You will receive all scores in ELMS. If you would like to review any of your grades (including the exams), or have questions about how something was scored, please email me. It's important that you feel as though you are treated fairly in this course, and there will never be a negative consequence to you for opening a conversation:

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

Date	Topic	Readings and Class Activities	Assignments Due
1/28	Overview and Introduction to Information Behavior	Webex Meeting on 1/28 from 7:00 – 8:00 PM EST to provide an overview of the class.	

1/30	Overview and Introduction to Information Behavior	Case & Given, Ch. 1 & Ch. 2	**Class Bio Post due by Wednesday 1/30 by 11:59 PM, via ELMS)**
2/4, 2/6	Core Concepts: Information, Information Needs, Information Behavior	Case & Given, Ch. 4	**Discussion Forum Posts due Wednesday 2/6 at 11:59 PM)** **Quiz 1: (due Wednesday 2/6 by 11:59 PM via ELMS)**
2/11, 2/13	Information Seeking; Information Needs	Case & Given, Ch. 5	**Discussion Forum Posts due Wednesday 2/13 at 11:59 PM)** **Quiz 2: (due Wednesday 2/13 by 11:59 PM via ELMS)**
2/18, 2/20	Related Concepts	Case & Given, Ch. 6	**Discussion Forum Posts due Wednesday 2/20 at 11:59 PM)** **Quiz 3: (due Wednesday 2/20 by 11:59 PM via ELMS)**
2/25, 2/27	Theories and Models of Information Behavior	Case & Given, Ch. 7	**Discussion Forum Posts due Wednesday 2/27 at 11:59 PM)**

3/4, 3/6	Theories and Models of Information Behavior (cont'd)	Case & Given, Ch. 8	**Assignment 1: Information Behavior Analysis (due Monday 3/4 by 11:59 PM, via ELMS)** **Discussion Forum Posts due Wednesday 3/6 at 11:59 PM)**
3/11	Research Design and Ethics	Case & Given, Ch. 9	
3/13	Midterm Review	**Webex Meeting on 3/13 from 7:00 – 8:00 PM EST to provide a review for the midterm.**	**Discussion Forum Posts due Wednesday 3/13 at 11:59 PM)**
3/18, 3/20	**No Class – Spring Break**		
3/25, 3/27	Reading and Understanding Scholarly Journal Articles	How to Read (and Understand) a Social Science Journal Article: http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/files/instructors/How_to_Read_a_Journal_Article.pdf Reading a Research Article Quickly and Efficiently. http://www.prchn.org/Downloads/Reading%20a%20Research%20Article%20Quickly%20and%20Efficiently.pdf How to (Seriously) Read a Scientific Paper: http://www.sciencemag.org/careers/2016/03/how-seriously-read-scientific-paper	**Midterm Exam (due Wednesday, 3/27 by 11:59 PM, via ELMS)** **Discussion Forum Posts due**

			Wednesday 3/27 at 11:59 PM)
4/1, 4/3	Digital Divide & Digital Inclusion	Anderson, M. & Perrin, A. (2016, Sept. 7). *13% of Americans don't use the internet. Who are they?* http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/09/07/some-americans-dont-use-the-internet-who-are-they/ *What is Digital Inclusion?* https://www.webjunction.org/explore-topics/digital-inclusion.html Tsetsi, E., & Rains, S. A. (2017). Smartphone Internet access and use: Extending the digital divide and usage gap. *Mobile Media & Communication*, doi: 10.1177/2050157917708329 [See "Readings" folder on our ELMS site] *Ted Talk:* **Let's bridge the digital divide!**	**Discussion Forum Posts due Wednesday 4/3 at 11:59 PM)**
4/8, 4/10	User Experience	The Definition of User Experience (watch short video) (https://www.nngroup.com/articles/definition-user-experience/) Review: User Experience Design - http://semanticstudios.com/user_experience_design/ Lamb, K. et al. (2016). User experience in the newly refurbished CUED Library space: Exploring the study needs and habits of library users through ethnographic and UX methods. https://www.repository.cam.ac.uk/bitstream/handle/1810/256152/Lamb_et_al-2016-User_experience_in_the_newly_refurbished_CUED_Library_space-VoR.pdf?sequence=5&isAllowed=y	**Discussion Forum Posts due Wednesday 4/10 at 11:59 PM)**

| 4/15, 4/17 | Usability and Accessibility | Review: *Usability Evaluation Basics* (https://www.usability.gov/what-and-why/usability-evaluation.html) Watch: *10 Usability Heuristics* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hWc0Fd2AS3s&feature=youtu.be) Review: *10 Usability Heuristics for User Interface Design* (https://www.nngroup.com/articles/ten-usability-heuristics/) Quesenbery, W. (2009, Feb. 16). *Usable Accessibility: Making Web Sites Work Well for People with Disabilities*: http://www.uxmatters.com/mt/archives/2009/02/usable-accessibilitymaking-web-sites-work-well-for-people-with-disabilities.php Fox, S. (2011). *Americans living with disability and their technology profile*. Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project. http://www.pewinternet.org/2011/01/21/americans-livingwith-disability-and-their-technology-profile/ Jaeger, P. T. (2015). Disability, human rights, and social justice: The ongoing struggle for online accessibility and equality. *First Monday, 20*(9). Available: http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/6164/4898 | **Research Article Analysis (due Monday, 4/15 by 11:59 PM, via ELMS)** **Discussion Forum Posts due Wednesday 4/17 at 11:59 PM)** |
| 4/22, 4/24 | Voting-related Information Behavior | Moeller, J., de Vreese, C., Esser, F., & Kunz, R. (2014). Pathway to political participation: The influence of online and offline news media on internal efficacy and turnout of first-time voters. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *58*(5), 689700. https://claesdevreese.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/moeller-devreese-esser-kunz_2014.pdf *Why are Millions of Citizens Not Registered to Vote?* http://www.pewtrusts.org/-/media/assets/2017/06/ei_why_are_millions_of_citizens_not_registered_to_vote.pdf | **Discussion Forum Posts due Wednesday 4/24 at 11:59 PM)** |

| 4/29, 5/1 | Health Information Behavior | Turner, A. M., Osterhage, K., Hartzler, A., Joe, J., Lin, L., Kanagat, N., & Demiris, G. (2015). Use of patient portals for personal health information management: The older adult perspective. In *AMIA Annual Symposium Proceedings* (Vol. 2015, p. 1234). American Medical Informatics Association. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4765678/

 Medlock, S., Eslami, S., Askari, M., Arts, D. L., Sent, D., de Rooij, S. E., & Abu-Hanna, A. (2015). Health information–seeking behavior of seniors who use the Internet: A survey. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, *17*(1). https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4296102/

 Schnall, R., Okoniewski, A., Tiase, V., Low, A., Rodriguez, M., & Kaplan, S. (2013). Using text messaging to assess adolescents' health information needs: An ecological momentary assessment. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, *15*(3). https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3636211/

 Kodama, C., St. Jean, B., Subramaniam, M., & 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. *Information Retrieval Journal*. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10791-017-9306-x | **Discussion Forum Posts due Wednesday 5/1 at 11:59 PM)**

 Quiz 4: (due Wednesday 5/1 by 11:59 PM via ELMS) |
| 5/6 | Information Behavior of Online Content Contributors | Zhang, X., Liu, S., Deng, Z., & Chen, X. (2017). Knowledge sharing motivations in online health communities: A comparative study of health professionals and normal users. *Computers in Human Behavior, 75*, 797-810.

 St. Jean, B., Rieh, S. Y., Yang, J. Y., & Kim, Y.-M. (2011). How content contributors assess and establish credibility on the Web. Research paper presented at the *ASIS&T 2011 Annual Meeting*, New Orleans, LA, October 9-13, 2011. Available: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/meet.2011.14504801163/epdf | **Discussion Forum Posts due Wednesday 5/6 at 11:59 PM)** |

5/8	Information Needs of First Responders	Chakraborty, R., Agrawal, M., & Rao, H. R. (2014). Information processing under stress: A study of Mumbai Police first responders. *IIMB Management Review*, *26*(2), 91-104. http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0970389614000299 Hughes, A. L., St Denis, L. A., Palen, L., & Anderson, K. M. (2014, April). Online public communications by police & fire services during the 2012 Hurricane Sandy. In *Proceedings of the 32nd annual ACM conference on Human factors in computing systems* (pp. 1505-1514). New York: ACM. https://dl.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=2557227	**Discussion Forum Posts due Wednesday 5/8 at 11:59 PM)** **Quiz 5: (due Wednesday 5/8 by 11:59 PM via ELMS)**
5/13	**Final Exam Review**	**Webex Meeting on 5/13 from 7:00 – 8:00 PM EST to provide a review for the final exam.**	
5/20	**Final Exam (Due by 5/20 at 11:59 PM 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.