A. Instructor, Office Hours, & Contact Information

Ursula Gorham, JD, PhD
Lecturer, College of Information Studies
Office: 4121D Hornbake (office hours by appointment – in person or via phone/Skype)
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Phone: (301) 405-0660

Please allow for email responses within 24-hours Mon-Fri and 48 hours on weekends and holidays.

B. Description of Course & Learning Objectives

“Speak truth to power? Rather speak truth to the powerless” – Leonard Cohen

A large portion of the activities of information professionals have become educational in the digital age. Information literacy and inclusion are the crux of the public good that all information organizations provide to their users. Librarians, often utilizing public access technology, assist users with locating and understanding information; archivists need to guide users through materials; and information managers need to train employees to effectively use new systems.

By the end of this course, students will be able to:
• Describe the educational functions of different information organizations
• Analyze current public policy issues related to information literacy and inclusion
• Identify best practices in the development and implementation of information literacy and inclusion programs
• Propose methods for evaluating information literacy and inclusion programs
• Develop a plan for implementing an information literacy and inclusion program

C. Course Approach and Expectations of Student Participation

The course is taught asynchronously online using Canvas. The course content is accessible via http://elms.umd.edu. The course material will consist of readings, recorded lectures, discussion threads, and other forms of making content available and interaction possible. Your participation will take place via the discussion threads in Canvas. Participation means active involvement in class discussions. It is essential that every student contribute to our online discussions and demonstrate a clear knowledge of the course materials. Students are expected to question, challenge, argue, and discuss issues and topics related to each weekly session's readings.
D. Classroom Environment

As a graduate level course, the online environment of our classroom should be professional and respectful. Discussions should be based on course readings and critical thinking. Remember--your classmates may have different perspectives on class content than you, but they still deserve your respect.

E. Students with Disabilities
Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Disability Support Services office, and (2) discuss any necessary academic accommodation with their teachers. This should be done at the beginning of the semester.

F. Extensions
Timeliness is an essential component of graduate work, and extensions will only be available during personal emergencies. Students who need to request an extension should discuss the matter in advance with the professor. If an extension is granted, the work must be submitted within the extension period to avoid grade penalties. Unexcused delays in submission will receive an automatic 10% deduction for every day late.

G. Academic Honesty
Work submitted in this course will be individual and original, in line with the University’s Academic Honor Code and Honor Pledge. Engaging in any academic dishonesty will result in consequences in line with university policies. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to plagiarism, cheating, buying work, multiple submissions of the same paper, forging signatures, submitting fraudulent documents, and facilitating the academic dishonesty of others. When writing papers, be sure to carefully and thoroughly cite all materials you use in writing your paper and make sure all ideas and quotations are properly acknowledged. Please visit http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/code.html for more information on the University’s Code of Academic Integrity.

H. Syllabus Change Policy
This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice. Any changes will announced via Canvas and/or email.

I. CourseEvalUM
Participation in the evaluation of courses through CourseEvalUM is a responsibility that students hold as members of our academic community. Student feedback is confidential and important to the improvement of teaching and learning at the University. Please use http://www.courseevalum.umd.edu to complete course evaluations at the end of the semester.

J. Course Materials
There is no required text for the course. All readings will be available to students online or in another accessible format. Nearly all the required journal article readings are accessible through
the University’s library e-journal/database holdings accessible at http://www.lib.umd.edu. Journal articles that are not readily accessible through UMD Libraries are available in Course Reserves or Files on the ELMS site, as indicated in the syllabus.

K. Assignments and Grading
Your grade in this course will be based on four items:
1. Class participation (20%)
2. Information Literacy Lesson Observation (20%)
3. Information Inclusion Plan (50%)
4. Information Inclusion Plan Presentation (10%)

Guidelines for written materials for the course include:
- Full name and paper title at the top of the paper
- Single-spaced
- 12-point Arial or Calibri font
- 1-inch margins
- In-text citations and references section in APA style (http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/)
- Numbered pages should be numbered
- Consistent formatting
- Free of grammatical errors and typos

Submitting Assignments: Each assignment must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. on the indicated due date through our Canvas site.

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. For any assignment submitted more than seven days past the due date, I will decide on a case-by-case basis whether to accept it.

1. Classroom participation via online discussion posts (20% of final grade): I will post two or three graded discussion threads per module. You should plan on posting at least twice to each posed discussion question: once as an initial response to the question, and a second time to respond/react to classmate postings. Your first post should be made no later than Sunday night of the 1st week of the module. All posts regarding weekly readings are due at the end of the module (i.e., by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday of the 2nd week).

Contributions will be assessed based on substance, the incorporation of reading materials, and your insights/assessment. I do not have hard and fast rules regarding the expected length of discussion posts, as I evaluate them based on quality, rather quantity – 50-150 words is a good ballpark figure though. Failure to participate via online discussion posts will result in a letter grade of F for this component.

Assessment: Your classroom participation will be graded based on the insightfulness of your comments; your careful consideration of other students’ comments; and your ability to draw on
the course readings, external resources, and personal experiences to justify and support your claims.

2. Information Literacy Lesson Observation (20% of final grade, due by 11:59 pm on February 26th):

Before Week 5, you should arrange to observe an information literacy lesson taught at the information organization of your choice. This could be an academic, public, or school library or a government or archival institution. It would be wise to align the information organization you choose for your observation with the setting you choose for your Information Inclusion Program Plan, although that is not required. After you have observed a lesson, you should write a 4-6 page paper discussing the type of organization, goals of the lesson, the context of the lesson (including the characteristics of the audience), the content within the lesson, the teaching style in which the content was presented, whether the lesson was part of a larger instructional program, successful practices in the lesson and/or instructional program, improvements that might be made to the lesson and/or instructional program, and any other observations you made about the lesson. You can include comments from the participants and the teacher as well.

Assessment: Your paper will be graded based on the details of the lesson and its context; the analysis of and reasons for the successes and opportunities for improvement of the lesson and/or instructional program; your adherence to the length requirement; your adherence to the formatting and citation requirements; evidence of critical thinking; and clarity and precision of thought in your writing. Your paper should follow the guidelines for written materials provided above.

3. Information Inclusion Program Plan (50% of final grade, due by 11:59 pm on May 14th):

Building on course readings and discussions, your information literacy lesson observation, and research into other initiatives, this assignment will result in the creation of a plan for an information inclusion program and lesson in an information organization. The final version of the Plan should be approximately 12-15 pages, made up of: a context/needs assessment, program overview, a sample teaching plan for the program, and a cover letter describing your pitch to the appropriate supervisor for why the program should be initiated. This Plan should be presented in a way that demonstrates your knowledge of information literacy issues and instruction, as well as the need for inclusion in program designs.

You are strongly encouraged to submit a draft for each part – for feedback from the instructor but no grade – as detailed below:

- Context/needs assessment (draft due by 11:59 pm on March 19th)
  - The student can choose any information organization, the issues the proposed program will address, and the goals of the plan, but the best plans will focus on populations that have been largely ignored by organizations to this point. The context and needs assessment section should address the populations that will most likely be participants, the benefits to those populations, the potential barriers to recruitment, and the potential psychological barriers to participation, as well as the best practices available for addressing these issues. The context and needs
assessment section should use findings from research to justify the approaches employed and, where applicable, point to existing programs in which these approaches are currently being employed. This section should be approximately 3-5 pages in length.

- **Program overview (draft due by 11:59 pm on April 2nd)**
  - The program overview should cover the program goals, the information needs addressed, the logistics of the program (length, anticipated budget, the setting, etc), and a rough schedule of the individual lessons that will be taught during the program. You need only to list the topic that each lesson will cover; you will choose one of these lessons to flesh out in the teaching plan component of the plan. This section should be approximately 3-5 pages in length.

- **Teaching plan (draft due by 11:59 pm on April 16th)**
  - After determining the lesson on which you want to focus, you will develop an in-depth teaching plan for this topic. The plan should be detailed enough that someone who has never taught the course can pick it up and carry out the lesson. You should include: lesson objectives, an outline of the lesson, materials needed, and assessment strategies. This section should be approximately 4-5 pages in length.

- **Cover letter/pitch (draft due due by 11:59 pm on April 30th)**
  - After completing the other three parts of the plan, you will write a one-page cover letter for your project to the supervisor who would give you approval for carrying out the plan. This should sell the idea and summarize the context, information needs, audience, general teaching plan, and why it will benefit both your organization and your user group. This section should be 1 page in length.

The following is a list of resources that may help you as you begin to work on your Program Plan:

- ACRL, Information Literacy Best Practices: Exemplary Programs ([http://www.ala.org/acrl/aboutacrl/directoryofleadership/sections/is/iswebsite/projpubs/bestpractices-exemplary](http://www.ala.org/acrl/aboutacrl/directoryofleadership/sections/is/iswebsite/projpubs/bestpractices-exemplary))
- WebJunction: Programming ([https://www.webjunction.org/explore-topics/programming.html](https://www.webjunction.org/explore-topics/programming.html))

Assessment: Your paper will be graded based on your inclusion of the elements listed above; your use of research and professional resources to justify the elements of your plan; the connections between the elements of the plan; your adherence to the length requirement; your adherence to the formatting and citation requirements; evidence of critical thinking; and clarity and precision of thought in your writing. Your Program Plan should follow the guidelines for written materials provided above.
4. **Information Inclusion Program Plan Presentation** (10% of final grade, due by 11:59 p.m. on May 7th): Develop a 10-minute presentation that highlights key elements of your Program Plan. For this presentation, you are “pitching” your proposal your supervisor.

You may use VoiceThread or another tool to record the presentation – I will be flexible with how you do the presentation so long as you provide me with a link or file that I can share with the class. In addition to submitting the proposal to me, you must also upload the presentation (either the file or a link) to the discussion threads that I’ll be setting up so that you may view one another’s presentations. You will be divided into two groups and are expected to watch the presentations created by other members of your group (not the whole class). The discussion threads for that final week will be used to facilitate discussion about the presentations – you are expected to comment on presentations, ask follow-up questions, and otherwise offer feedback to other members of your group.

Assessment: Your presentation will be graded based on the quality of the presentation (e.g., organization, delivery, and time management) and your coverage of all main elements of the grant proposal.

### M. Letter Grades

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### N. Topics and Readings for Modules

This course is broken up into 8 modules – each of the modules except Module 8 (Student Presentations) span two weeks. During each two-week period, you are expected to first read.review/listen to the materials set forth below and then participate in the discussion threads (which will be open for the entire module).

**Module 1: Course Overview; Information Organizations and the Public Good**

(Week 1 (1/25-1/29) - Week 2 (1/30-2/5))


### Module 2: Educational Functions of Information Organizations
(Week 3 (2/6-2/12) - Week 4 (2/13-2/19))


### Module 3: Defining Information Literacy
(Week 5 (2/20-2/26) - Week 6 (2/27-3/5))

**Information Literacy Lesson Observation due by 11:59 pm on 2/26**


Module 4: Digital Divides and Digital Inclusion
(Week 7 (3/6 -3/12) -Week 8 (3/13-3/19))

**Context/Needs Assessment DRAFT due by 11: 59 pm on 3/19**

- Review: Digital Inclusion Initiatives ([http://digitalinclusion.umd.edu/content/initiatives](http://digitalinclusion.umd.edu/content/initiatives))

**SPRING BREAK (Week 9 (3/20-3/26))**

Module 5: Strategies for Teaching Information Literacy
(Week 10 (3/27-4/2) - Week 11 (4/3-4/9))

**Program Overview DRAFT due by 11:59 pm on 4/2**

Module 6: Approaches to Information Literacy and Inclusion Programs in Different Information Organizations
(Week 12 (4/10-4/16) - Week 13 (4/17-4/23))

**Teaching Plan DRAFT due by 11:59 pm on 4/16**

- Review Digital Literacy Case Studies: [https://www.webjunction.org/content/dam/WebJunction/Documents/webJunction/DLG_AppendixC_v2.pdf](https://www.webjunction.org/content/dam/WebJunction/Documents/webJunction/DLG_AppendixC_v2.pdf).

Module 7: Evaluation and Assessment of Information Literacy and Inclusion Programs
(Week 14 (4/24-5/1) - Week 15 (5/2 – 5/7))

**Cover Letter DRAFT due by 11:59 pm on 5/1**

**Information Inclusi**on Plan Presentation due by 11:59 pm on 5/7


Module 8: Student Presentations
(Week 16 (5/8-5/14))

*Information Inclusion Plan due by 11:59 pm on 5/14*