INST 622: Information & Universal Usability

Spring 2019 Course Syllabus*

PROFESSOR
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Office Hours: By appointment

* Please consider our syllabus a living document that is subject to modification with prior notification and based upon the needs of all class members.
GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION

Pre/Corequisites: Suggested: INST 620 Diverse Populations, Inclusion, & Information

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

Course Goals: The intent of this course is to increase students’ knowledge of:
- The limitations that many diverse populations experience in their attempt to gain information for education and for pleasure.
- The need for libraries and other information institutions to improve the technology available to address the special needs of their patrons.
- The types of materials that can be used to support library collections and services.
- The variety of programming options that can be made available.
- The ways in which libraries and other information institutions can assume a leadership role in ensuring Universal Usability to all users both within their buildings and within the community.
- Organizations with which libraries may wish to collaborate to increase services to users with disabilities and other special needs.

Course Delivery: Our course is hosted using Canvas. Each distance learning course offered through the College of Information Studies has its own space within this system which typically includes the syllabus, lectures, a forum for class discussions, and a place to submit assignments. Access our course site at: https://myelms.umd.edu/login. For questions regarding technical aspects of the course site please visit: http://helpdesk.umd.edu/.

Course Materials: In order to fully participate in and successfully complete this course, students must have:
1. Reliable access to the Internet.
2. The ability to record and upload text, audio, and video documents.

Textbook/Readings: There is NO required textbook for this course. Required readings are available through our course site.
**COURSE COMMUNICATION**

**Discussion Threads:** You will participate in discussions that focus on issues related to our course topics. To allow for sufficient time to consider the topic and post thoughtful responses, almost all discussions will take place over a two-week period. The expectation is that discussions will involve robust interactions among students. You are expected to actively engage with your classmates during each discussion thread; guidelines for responses will appear in each discussion prompt. To keep discussion threads manageable, you will be assigned to a specific discussion group; a student or pair of students will be designated to create discussion starters (prompts) and lead each discussion thread. **Please be sure to make discussion posts in your assigned discussion area unless otherwise instructed.** I will monitor all discussions and will post responses and/or questions as appropriate/necessary.

Contributions to discussion threads are graded. Each post should be well thought out and clearly stated and will be assessed on these criteria. The content of each post should indicate that required documents have been read in their entirety. You may include anecdotes from work and/or personal experiences, completed assignments, things learned in other courses, or descriptions of other relevant readings, etc. Please keep these discussions on the specified topic.

**Other Discussion Boards:** A “Faculty Office” discussion board is provided so that you may post questions of a general nature that you want me to answer. If a question posted in this forum does not receive a response within 48 hours, please feel free to send me an email asking me to check the board. Questions related to your specific situation should be sent via email.

A “Student Café” discussion board is provided for you to post additional comments on a discussion topic or for informal discussions on other relevant topics. The decision to read messages in the Student Café is optional. Discussions specific to individual students are not appropriate for placement in the Student Café and should take place via email or other forms of private communication.

**Direct/Private Communication with Professor Hill:** The primary method that you should use to contact me is the messaging function located within Canvas. If you do not receive a response to your message within 48 hours, please feel free to send me a gentle reminder via email: rfhill@umd.edu. If your situation is urgent, please be sure to indicate this either in the subject line or the body of your email. **Please note that I try not to access emails after 8:00 PM on weeknights and not at all on weekends.**

**Other Means of Communication:** You may also request a chat session (i.e. Skype, Google Hangout, Adobe Connect) or phone conversation.
ASSIGNMENTS & ASSESSMENT

You will be assessed via one or more of the following methods:
1. Individual assignments;
2. Team assignments;
3. Participation in discussions.

Unless otherwise stated, all assignments must be submitted on by 11:59 p.m. on the date listed. Timeliness is extremely important in graduate work, and extensions will only be available during personal emergencies. Candidates who need to request an extension should discuss their concerns with the instructor. If an extension is granted, the work must be submitted within the extension period to avoid grade penalties.

Unexcused delays in submission of assignments will result in a deduction of one full letter grade for each day the assignment is late.

Assignment Formatting: Unless otherwise specified, all written assignments should be formatted as follows:
1. Use either Arial or Times New Roman in 12-point font;
2. Save your assignments as .doc or .docx;
3. Always include your name, date, course name/number, and assignment title on the first page; no running head is required on subsequent pages;
4. Pages must be double spaced, numbered, and include a one-inch margin all around (unless otherwise noted in the assignment instructions);
5. Use consistent section titles/subtitles to organize your papers;
6. Use American Psychological Association (APA) format for citations/references. It is best to purchase the latest edition of the APA Publication Manual but an excellent resource is found at Purdue University's Online Writing Lab at: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/

Brief Assignment Descriptions (Full descriptions and grading rubrics appear on course site):

Syllabus Quiz (worth 10 points)
This quiz is intended to ensure that you have clarity about course expectations.

Written Assignment 1: Closed Captioning Experience (worth 20 points)
Your discussion post will do double-duty in this assignment which gives you the opportunity to experience creating captions for a video that you have recorded.

Written Assignment 2: Librarian Interview (worth 50 points)
This assignment requires you to choose a library at which to conduct an interview with a library staff member regarding how they plan programs and services that provide the highest level of access for patrons. You will produce a paper on your findings from the interview.

Written Assignment 3: Evaluating Website Accessibility OR Evaluating Physical Accessibility (worth 100 points)
For the third assignment, you will have an opportunity to choose from two options. You may either (1) evaluate the accessibility of an information organization's website or (2) conduct an accessibility evaluation in a specific information organization.
Written Assignment 4: Accessibility Project Proposal (worth 100 points)
You will work alone or in a team of up to three people to design a project that identifies a problem and proposes a plan to create/revise a product, event, or service that will aid in providing appropriate levels of accessibility and/or increased inclusivity.

Participation in Discussion Threads (worth 70 points)
To facilitate regular interactions, you will be assigned to a discussion group to participate in discussion threads. Discussion leaders will post prompts for each discussion (your instructor will facilitate two discussion threads). The participation portion of your final grade will consist of an assessment of the quality of your posts related to each discussion topic.

GRADING SCALE
The chart below shows how final letter grades are assigned based upon points earned for each assignment.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>POINTS Earned</th>
<th>LETTER GRADE</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>329-350</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>315-328</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>305-314</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>294-304</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-86.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>280-293</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-83.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>270-279</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>259-269</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>74-76.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>244-258</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-73.9</td>
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FINAL NOTE ABOUT ASSIGNMENTS
Please know that I am not a proponent of “busy work.” Each assignment has been designed to allow for creativity and authentic assessment. I am very interested in your perspective and I believe that everyone will be successful in this class. My expectation is that you will create and submit assignments reflective of high-quality graduate work.
UNIVERSITY STATEMENTS

**Academic Integrity:** The academic community of the University of Maryland, the College of Information Studies, and your instructor require the highest standards of professional ethics and personal integrity from all members of the community. Work submitted in this course will be individual (unless indicated as group work) and original, in line with the University’s Academic Honor Code and Honor Pledge. Engaging in any academic dishonesty will result in consequences in line with university policies. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to plagiarism, cheating, buying work, multiple submissions of the same paper without prior approval, forging signatures, submitting fraudulent documents, and facilitating the academic dishonesty of others. When writing papers, be sure to carefully and thoroughly cite all resources you use and make sure all ideas and quotations are properly acknowledged.

The University’s Code of Academic Integrity is found at: [http://president.umd.edu/administration/policies/section-iii-academic-affairs/iii-100a](http://president.umd.edu/administration/policies/section-iii-academic-affairs/iii-100a)

**Students with Disabilities:** The University of Maryland is committed to creating and maintaining a welcoming and inclusive educational, working, and living environment for people of all abilities. The University of Maryland is also committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of the University, or be subjected to discrimination. The University of Maryland provides reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals. Reasonable accommodations shall be made in a timely manner and on an individualized and flexible basis.

Discrimination against individuals on the grounds of disability is prohibited. The University also strictly prohibits retaliation against persons arising in connection with the assertion of rights under this Policy.

Accessibility & Disability Service (ADS) facilitates reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals. For assistance in obtaining an accommodation, contact Accessibility and Disability Service at 301.314.7682, or adsfrontdesk@umd.edu. More information is available from the Counseling Center at [https://counseling.umd.edu/ads/](https://counseling.umd.edu/ads/).

Please discuss your need for academic accommodations with me by the second week of class.

For a complete listing of all University policies, see the UMD Office of the President website: [https://www.president.umd.edu/administration/policies](https://www.president.umd.edu/administration/policies).
### COURSE CALENDAR

**Notes:** 1. Links to each week’s readings and activities appear on the course site.  
2. Full references for weekly readings appear in readings list below calendar.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MODULE/ DATES</th>
<th>TOPICS</th>
<th>READINGS/VIEWINGS</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENTS/ACTIVITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Week 1 1/28-2/3 | • Getting Acquainted, Getting Started      | Read:  
1. Syllabus  
View:  
1. Course overview  
2. Professor Hill’s Disclaimers & Declarations | • Record/post intro video (by 11:59 PM, 2/3/19)  
• Submit syllabus quiz (by 11:59 PM, 2/3/19)  
• Read prompt for Discussion #1 |
|               | • Introductions                             |                                                        |                                                                                        |
|               | • Course Overview                           |                                                        |                                                                                        |
|               | • Universal Design                          | Read:  
View: Mini-lecture and/or other video | • View classmates’ intros (responses optional)  
• Sign up for discussion topic you will lead/co-lead  
• Submit written assignment #1 by participating in Discussion #1 (by 11:59 PM, 2/10/19) |
| Week 2 2/4-2/10 | • Universal Design for Learning            | Read:  
View: Mini-lecture and/or other video | No discussion activities  
• Create Project ENABLE account |
|               | • Evolution of Disability Language          | Read:  
1. Hamburger, A. (1918)  
2. Macdonald, V.M. (1922)  
View: Mini-lecture and/or other video | • Read prompt for Discussion #2 |
| Week 3 2/11-2/17 | • Disability Laws, Policies & Standards     | Read:  
1. ARL (2014)  
2. McHale (2011)  
3. PE site: Module 2, ADA tab  
4. US Access Board  
View: Mini-lecture and/or other video | • Participate in Discussion #2 |
|               | • Disability & Accessibility               | Read:  
4. PE site: Module 1, Experiencing Disability & related tabs  
No viewings | • Read prompt for Discussion #3  
• Submit written assignment #2: Librarian Interview by 11:59 PM, 3/10/19 |
| Week 6 3/4-3/10 | • Disability & Inclusion                    | Read:  
3. McGowan et al (2018) | • Participate in Discussion #3 |
<p>|               | • Course Overview                           | View: Mini-lecture and/or other video                  |                                                                                        |</p>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 8 3/18-3/24</td>
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<td><em>SPRING BREAK</em></td>
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<td><strong>View</strong>: Mini-lecture and/or other video</td>
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<td><strong>View</strong>: Mini-lecture and/or other video</td>
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<td><strong>No viewings</strong></td>
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<td>Week 13 4/22-4/28</td>
<td>▪ Evaluating Accessibility</td>
<td><strong>Read</strong>: PE site: Module 3, Evaluating Your Library’s Accessibility, Action Plan, Facilities Design tabs</td>
<td>▪ Read prompt for Discussion #6</td>
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<td><strong>No viewings</strong></td>
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<td><strong>View</strong>: Mini-lecture and/or other video</td>
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<td>Week 15 5/6-5/12</td>
<td>▪ Course Wrap-up</td>
<td><strong>Read</strong>: (Schwartz, 2016)</td>
<td>▪ Participate in Discussion #7</td>
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<td><strong>View</strong>: Course wrap-up video</td>
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<td>Week 16 (Sort of) 5/13 &amp; 5/14</td>
<td>▪ Celebrating successful course completion</td>
<td><strong>No readings</strong></td>
<td>▪ Submit written assignment #4: Accessibility Project Proposal by 11:59 PM, Sunday, 5/19/19</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>No viewings</strong></td>
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Reading List

Below is a full listing of the assigned and optional readings for the semester.

**WEEK 1: GETTING ACQUAINTED/GETTING STARTED**

**Please read and re-read our course syllabus and view all areas of our course site.**

**WEEK 2: UNIVERSAL DESIGN**


**Optional sites to explore:**
- Kaboom (focuses on children/play): [https://kaboom.org/resources/build_playground_toolkit/accessibility/universal_design/seven_principles_universal_design](https://kaboom.org/resources/build_playground_toolkit/accessibility/universal_design/seven_principles_universal_design)
- The Center for Universal Design. (1997). The principles of universal design, version 2.0. [https://www.ncsu.edu/ncsu/design/cud/about_ud/udprinciplestext.htm](https://www.ncsu.edu/ncsu/design/cud/about_ud/udprinciplestext.htm)

**WEEK 3: UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING**


**WEEK 4: EVOLUTION OF DISABILITY LANGUAGE**


**Optional site to explore:**
- Disability is Natural: [https://www.disabilityisnatural.com/people-first-language.html](https://www.disabilityisnatural.com/people-first-language.html) (focus especially on the links to brief articles and handouts)
WEEK 5: DISABILITY LAWS/POLICIES/STANDARDS


WEEK 6: DISABILITY & ACCESSIBILITY


4. Project ENABLE site, Module 1, Experiencing Disability & all related tabs
**Optional readings:**


   ▪ Hearing Loss Association of America http://www.hearingloss.org/content/technology (click various links to view information about assistive technology related to hearing impairment)

WEEK 7: DISABILITY & INCLUSION


WEEK 8: SPRING BREAK—NO READINGS

WEEK 9: OLDER ADULTS & ACCESSIBILITY


**Optional site to explore:**

   ▪ American Library Association, Older Adults: http://www.ala.org/tools/atoz/older-adults

   (Specifically the section titled Blogs, Toolkits, and other Online Resources)
WEEK 10:
ACCESSIBILITY & IMMIGRANTS, ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS
**Optional article:**

WEEK 11: ACCESSIBILITY & PEOPLE WITH SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

WEEK 12: LIBRARY POLICIES, PROCEDURES, & PRACTICES

WEEK 13: EVALUATING ACCESSIBILITY
1. Project Enable site, Module 3, Evaluating Your Library's Accessibility, Library Accessibility Action Plan, Facilities Design tabs *(be certain to view the ADA and UD checklists)*

WEEK 14: WHAT’S AHEAD FOR UNIVERSAL USABILITY AND INFORMATION ACCESS?

WEEK 15: COURSE WRAP-UP

WEEK 16:
No readings.
Dr. Renee F. Hill

I am passionate about and committed to researching and teaching about issues that involve examining methods for increasing understanding of diversity issues in Library and Information Studies. My work focuses on examining information needs and information access as they relate to diverse populations (e.g., members of various racial/ethnic groups, individuals with disabilities).

I earned a Bachelor's degree in Exceptional Student Education at Florida Atlantic University and taught middle school special education in south Florida. I earned both my Master's and Ph.D. in Library and Information Studies at Florida State University.

On a personal note, I was born in Houston, TX and raised in Fort Lauderdale, FL. I feel very fortunate to have joined UMD's iSchool after having been a faculty member at Syracuse University for a number of years and am excited to live in the great state of Maryland. I am married to Thomas Hill and we have five children ranging in age from 5 to 26. I am a voracious reader who enjoys a variety of topics and genres—I am particularly proud of my collection of novels by African and African American authors.

**Acknowledgements:** My sincerest thanks go to:

- Dr. Mega Subramaniam who graciously shared resources and assisted me with structuring some of the elements of the course.
- All of you for enrolling in this class and being committed to excellence in information provision.