LBSC 602-0101 Serving Information Needs  
College of Information Studies, University of Maryland  
Spring 2020  
Thursdays 6:00 to 8:45 PM  
Hornbake Building, South Wing, Room 0109

Instructor:  
Beth St. Jean, Associate Professor  
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College of Information Studies  
University of Maryland, College Park  
301-405-6573  
bstjean@umd.edu

Office Hours: Thursdays, 4:00 to 5:00 PM or by appointment.

Our Liaison Librarian: Rachel Gammons, Head of Teaching and Learning Services, 4100C McKeldin Library, rgammons@umd.edu, 301-405-9120. [Research Guide: https://lib.guides.umd.edu/information_studies]

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 effects 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, 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: This book is on physical reserve for your use at McKeldin Library. In addition, all assigned readings from this textbook are available as pdf files on our class Canvas site. If you would like, you can purchase or rent this text through our University Book Center (https://umcp.bncollege.com/shop/umcp/textbook/librarians-guide-to-online-searching-60008554183), or through Amazon.com, which offers the text as a paperback or for Kindle (https://www.amazon.com/Librarians-Guide-Online-Searching-Cultivating-dp-1440861560/dp/1440861560).

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)*
*Journal of the Society of Archivists*
*The American Archivist*
*Archivaria*
*Archival Issues*
*Library & Information Science Research (LISR)*
*Journal of Information Science (JIS)*
*The Information Society*
*Information Processing & Management (IP&M)*
*Journal of Documentation (JDCC)*
*Information Research* (http://informationr.net/ir/)
*First Monday* (http://www.firstmonday.org/)
*D-Lib Magazine* (http://www.dlib.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 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. 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.

Course 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, as well as in your group projects throughout the semester, will count for 10% of your final grade. Please be aware that both the quantity and quality of your contributions to class discussions will be taken into account, but that 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, and include your name on every page. Use APA Style for in-text citations and reference lists. There are many resources about APA style available on the Internet. This one by the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) is very useful: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html. Also, the American Psychological Association (APA) has a very helpful FAQ available here: 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_02142020’).

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 (e.g., an A- will become a B+) 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 http://www.shc.umd.edu/SHC/Default.aspx. 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 (https://president.umd.edu/administration/policies/section-iii-academic-affairs/iii-100a). You may also find this Office of Student Conduct definition of academic dishonesty to be helpful: https://www.studentconduct.umd.edu/academic-dishonesty.

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.

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.

Student Course Evaluations (CourseEvalUM): Toward the end of the semester, 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. I will e-mail you to let you know when the course evaluation system will be available. At that time, 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 Accessibility & Disability Service (ADS) Office (https://www.counseling.umd.edu/ads/) 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 ADS to determine how to best accommodate your needs.

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/. The University also has a Graduate School Writing Center (GSWC) (https://gradschool.umd.edu/graduate-school-writing-center) that offers many types of writing-related assistance to UMD graduate 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. Please note that your slides and any other electronic materials you’ve prepared for your user instruction presentation (such as your pathfinder) need to be uploaded to Canvas by noon on 11/26 (even if your team will not present until 12/3).
<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>Course Participation</td>
<td>Every class meeting</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Library/Information Center Visit Report [Individual]</td>
<td>February 13, 2020</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>5-P</td>
<td>User Instruction Assignment: Proposal [Team]</td>
<td>February 27, 2020</td>
<td>Check-off</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Search Strategy Assignment [Individual or Team]</td>
<td>March 12, 2020</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>User Group Information Behavior Profile [Team]</td>
<td>April 2, 2020</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4a</td>
<td>Reference Interview In-Class Practicum [Pairs]</td>
<td>April 9, 2020</td>
<td>Check-off</td>
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<tr>
<td>4b</td>
<td>Reference Services Comparison Paper [Individual]</td>
<td>April 16, 2020</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>User Instruction Assignment: Executive Summary (5-ES); Presentation (5-Pr); Pathfinder (5-Pf) [Team]</td>
<td>May 7, 2020</td>
<td>30% (total)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5-Ev</td>
<td>User Instruction Assignment: Self, Peer, &amp; Team Evaluations [Individual]</td>
<td>May 11, 2020</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 course 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</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>
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<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>
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<tr>
<td>67.0-69.9</td>
<td>D+</td>
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<tr>
<td>64.0-66.9</td>
<td>D</td>
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<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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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week</td>
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<td>Topic</td>
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<td>Assignment Due</td>
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| 4    | 2/20   | Models and Theories of User Behavior | **Required:**  
**Plus, choose one of the three readings listed below:**  
| 5    | 2/27   | Search Strategies              | **Required:**  
**Recommended:**  
| 6    | 3/5    | Research Design, Methodology, and Methods | **Required:**  
| 7    | 3/12   | Collection Development         | **Guest Speaker: Fiona Jardine, Doctoral Candidate [Topic: Information behavior of people who exclusively pump breast milk]**  
**Required:** | 2. Search Strategy Assignment |
<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>8</td>
<td>3/26</td>
<td>Information Literacy/User Instruction</td>
<td>Guest Speaker: James Patrick Timony, Librarian, Adaptive Technology, DC Public Library Center for Accessibility [Topic: Technology &amp; Accessibility]</td>
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<td><strong>Recommended:</strong></td>
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<td>Week</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Readings</td>
<td>Assignment Due</td>
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| 10   | 4/9   | The Reference Conversation             | **Required:**
**4a:** Reference Interview In-Class Practicum |
| 11   | 4/16  | Scholarly Communication and Open Access | **Guest Speaker: Terry Owen, Digital Scholarship Librarian, University of Maryland Libraries [Topic: Open Access at UMD] (tentative)**  
**Required:**
**Plus, choose one of the two readings listed below:**  
**Recommended:**  
**4b:** Reference Services Comparison Paper |
| 12   | 4/23  | Policies and Ethics                    | **Guest Speaker: Sarah Avant, Branch Manager, Calvert Library**  
**Required:**
Skim, but pay particular attention to the following sections:  
A.1: Mission, Priority Areas, Goals  
B.1: Core Values, Ethics, and Core Competencies  
B.2: Intellectual Freedom  
B.3: Diversity  
B.4: Equity and Access  
B.5: Libraries and the Public Good  
B.8: Services and Responsibilities of Libraries |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
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<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
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</table>
| 13   | 4/30 | Effects of Technology on the Information Professions | **Also, select three to five of the readings listed below:**  
http://www.ala.org/advocacy/sites/ala.org.advocacy/files/content/proethics/codeofethics/Code%20of%20Ethics%20of%20the%20American%20Library%20Association.pdf  
ALA Core Values of Librarianship (Adopted January 2019). Available:  
http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/corevalues  
Required:  
**Plus, choose one of the three readings listed below:**  
**Recommended:**  
*** User Instruction Presentations ***  
Due: A5. User Instruction Assignment: Executive Summary (5-ES); Presentation (5-Pr); Pathfinder (5-Pf) [NOTE: Any files you will need for your presentation are due by 2 PM]  
*** Self, Peer, and Team Evaluations (5-Ev) [due by noon on Monday, 5/11] *** |
| 14   | 5/7  | User Instruction Presentations; Course Wrap-up | |

10
Assignment 1: Library/Information Center Visit Report [Individual]

Due Date: February 13, 2020 (5%)
Visit a library, archive, or other information center. If you are undecided about what type of information center 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, archivist, or other type of information professional and indicate why you are there.

1. Observe the environment – is the building centrally located, a pleasant place in which to be? Within the building, 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 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 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. 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 information center's website. How useful an information resource is it in terms of information about the center and its programs, access to its 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. Please submit your paper through the Assignments section of our Canvas site and be prepared to talk about your experience in class.

Rubric:

I. Description of the Information Center (10 points)
   ● Has the student described his/her selected information center?
   ● Has the student discussed accessibility of the information center and 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 Information Center Staff (15 points)
   ● Did the student describe the availability of 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 Information Center (20 points)
   ● Did the student make use of the information center?
   ● Did the student assess his/her satisfaction with his/her ability to access the information needed?

V. Using the Information Center Website (10 points)
   ● Did the student describe the usefulness of the information center Website for various types of purposes?

VI. Overall Assessment of Information Center Environment and Activities (20 points)
   ● Has the student described both positive and negative aspects of the 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: Search Strategy Assignment [Individual or Team]

Due Date: March 12, 2020 (10%)

For this assignment, you will write about the search strategies you (or your team) used to locate sources you need for assignment 3 – your user group information behavior profile. Begin this assignment by drafting a search strategy that reflects how you plan to go about gathering the information you needed. This plan should include both the names of the information resources you intend to consult, as well as the ways in which you plan to interact with these resources. Then carry out this search strategy, adapting it as necessary as your search evolves. Please be sure to use at least two library databases as part of this assignment.

Write a 2- to 3-page single-spaced paper (for an individual) or a 5- to 6-page single spaced paper (for a team), in which you:

1. Describe the information need and the context surrounding this need.
2. Delineate the initial search strategy that you (or your team) 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 (e.g., I heard something relevant on the radio on my way in to work last week).
4. Evaluate your search process – 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)
   ● Has the student/team described the information need?
   ● Has the student/team explained the context surrounding this information need?

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

III. Search Process (20 points)
   ● Has the student/team recounted how they actually carried out their search?
   ● Has the student/team explained how their search evolved and how and why it adhered to and/or deviated from their initial plan?
   ● Has the student/team included any non-search activities they carried out in the process of completing this assignment?

IV. Evaluation of Search Process (25 points)
   ● Has the student/team discussed what went well and what did not go so well during their search?
   ● Has the student/team 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)
   ● Has the student/team talked about the usefulness and usability of the different information resources they used in the course of their search?
   ● Has the student/team 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 writing clear, organized, and easy-to-understand?
Assignment 3: User Group Information Behavior Profile [Team]

Due Date: April 2, 2020 (25%)

For this assignment, you will research what has already been learned about the information behavior of the audience you have selected for your user instruction assignment (assignment 5), and consider the implications of these findings for information professionals who assist this user group with their information needs.

Each team member needs to identify at least three papers that report results from empirical studies of the information behavior of your selected population. After carefully reading these articles, prepare a paper(s) of approximately 8 to 10 single-spaced pages 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 team described their user population?
   - Has the team explained their motivation for selecting this user population?

II. **Literature Review (20 points)**
   - Has the team provided a *synthesized* discussion of the findings from at least three empirical studies (per student) of the information behavior of their selected population?

III. **Implications (25 points)**
   - Has the team 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 team explained why the implications they have identified are of potential significance?
   - Has the team 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 team discussed what else we still need to know about the information behavior of their selected population?
   - Has the team 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 writing clear, organized, and easy-to-understand?
   - Has the team included a references list, using APA-style citations?
Assignment 4a: Reference Interview In-Class Practicum [Pairs] and
Assignment 4b: Reference Services Comparison Paper [Individual]

Due Dates:
Assignment 4a: April 9, 2020 (check-off)
Assignment 4b: April 16, 2020 (20%)

Assignment 4a: Reference Interview In-Class Practicum (4/9)

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:
Working in pairs, students will role-play two reference interview interactions, each taking on the role of information professional during one of the interactions and the role of customer during the other interaction. Using the reference conversation/interview skills you’ve learned through readings and class discussions, the student role-playing the information professional should try to assist the customer with his/her true information need. The pairs will practice this role-playing independently and will then “perform” the experience in class. Each pair will have 5- to 10-minutes total to conduct their two interviews 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

The purpose of this assignment is to gain an understanding that the question asked is often not an articulation of the actual information need. The goal of these role-plays is to elicit the customer’s actual information need, rather than simply answering the first question that he/she poses to you.

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 (due 4/16)

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 4- to 5-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.


- Asynchronous interaction via a library archives [e.g., Smithsonian Institution Archives Reference Inquiries (https://siarchives.si.edu/what-we-do/reference-inquiries), or non-library service (e.g., Yahoo! Answers (http://answers.yahoo.com/), or via a specialized online help-based community; or another service


- 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)
Rubric (for Assignment 4b):

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 three to six 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**: February 27, 2020 (check-off) [Team]
- **5-ES. Executive Summary (10%)**; **5-Pr. Presentation (15%)**; **5-Pf. Pathfinder (5%)**: May 7, 2020 (30% total) [Team]
- **5-Ev. Self, Peer, & Team Evaluations**: May 11, 2020 (check-off) [Individual]

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 4 to 5 students for this project. As a team, choose a topic and identify an audience for your presentation. For example: “information literacy for college freshmen” or “reaching out to potential users of archives” 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 February 27, 2020]

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. Also, please explain the team’s interests and goals in selecting this topic/audience and delineate the roles that each of you will take on in the completion of this assignment.

II. Executive Summary (10%) [Due by 6 PM on May 7, 2020]

Each team will write a 5-page executive summary on the information seeking behaviors of the audience they chose for their user instruction presentation. This paper will include an explanation of why the team selected this particular audience, a brief literature review (cite at least 6 to 10 empirical studies related to your selected audience’s information behaviors), an analysis of the implications of the chosen user group’s information needs, and a discussion of why the team chose to do the presentation and pathfinder the way they did. While teams are free to draw on the User Group Information Behavior Profile (Assignment 3) they prepared earlier in the semester, the Executive Summary is a separate assignment and must not contain large passages of text that have been simply copy-pasted verbatim from the team’s Information Behavior Profile.

III. Presentation (15%) [Due by 2 PM on May 7, 2020]

Each team will have 30 minutes to present an instruction session to their classmates on the use of library and Internet resources on the team’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 team 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 user group ***

IV. Pathfinder (5%) [Due by 2 PM on May 7, 2020]

Each team will create a one-page pathfinder consisting of at least 10 resources, including databases, books, journals, and Internet resources (as appropriate for your audience). Teams are encouraged to be creative with the layout and presentation of their pathfinder. Pathfinders can be in static form (such as a pdf) or they can be in digital form (such as a website, LibGuide, or Pinterest board).

*** Make sure that your pathfinder is built around the information needs/behaviors of your user group ***
V. Self, Peer, and Team Evaluations (check-off) [Due by noon on Monday, May 11, 2020]
Each student will evaluate themselves and their peers on the following items:

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

Please also evaluate the performance of your team 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 referencing at least 6 to 10 sources 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 team? (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)