A. 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.

B. Learning Objectives
At the conclusion 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.

C. Course Approach and Expectations of Student Participation
This is an online course that uses Canvas as our main means of instruction. The course content is accessible via [http://elms.umd.edu](http://elms.umd.edu) in the LBSC602-ML01: Serving Information Needs site. Each week’s content will consist of numerous readings and a lecture. Readings that are not linked on the syllabus or are behind a pay well will be placed in that week’s corresponding folder under the Files tab on ELMS.

*I have not listed the lecture for each week for each individual unit,* but I have listed the readings. You are responsible for reading and viewing all relevant materials before the date noted on the syllabus. **Lectures for each week will be placed under the Files folder of ELMS.**

D. Students with Disabilities
I take the need to provide reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities very seriously. If you have a documented disability, please provide me with a letter from the University’s Disability Support Service and I will follow their suggested guidelines.

E. Extensions
Students should manage their time well and submit assignments in a timely manner. I will initially deduct half a letter grade for any assignment that is more than an hour late, and I will deduct an additional letter grade for every 24 hours that passes. This does include discussion board posts.

*If two of the assignments, exclusive of discussion board posts, are turned in more than 48 hours late then I will only accept any future late assignments with appropriate documentation (doctor’s note, obituary, et cetera). Likewise, the final deliverables for Assignment 5 will not be accepted more than 48 hours late without documentation of an emergency situation.*

I understand that most students in this course have busy lives outside of the classroom, including work schedules. It is for this reason that I will post lectures and other course materials well in advance of when their respective units must be completed, thus allowing students to plan ahead and mitigate these issues.

If personal or family emergencies occur, I will make case-by-case exemptions for this. In such circumstances, though, you need to contact me as soon as is reasonable. If you know you will be facing delays in the course, please quickly send me an e-mail at breal@umd.edu as soon as you possibly can.

F. 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.

**G. Office Hours**
Since this is an asynchronous online course, “Office Hours” are offered on an as-needed basis. E-mail questions – either through ELMS or breal@umd.edu – will be answered within 24 hours. If you wish to meet with me via phone or Skype, I will strive to arrange this within 48 hours of a request.

**H. Weekly Topics, Readings, and Review Material**
The class begins on August 29, 2016 and ends December 10, 2016. **The date for each class is the start of that week.** Initial discussion board posts are due by the end of the following Thursday, and responses to other students are due by the end of the following Sunday. Lectures for each lesson will be posted at least three days in advance of the unit start date.

**I. Syllabus Change Policy**
This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice and discussion with students.
## J. Weekly Topics and Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings / Activities</th>
<th>Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 3</strong></td>
<td>9/11 – 9/17</td>
<td><strong>Optional In-Person Activity</strong>&lt;br&gt;Tuesday, 9/12, 2:00 - 3:00 PM&lt;br&gt;Library Orientation&lt;br&gt;Rachel Gammons, Head of Teaching and Learning Services, McKeldin Library&lt;br&gt;Room 6107, McKeldin Library</td>
<td><strong>Assignment</strong>&lt;br&gt;✓ Assignment 1: Library /</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Required</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Models and Theories of User Behavior</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Discussion Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Chapter 1: Information behavior: An introduction. (pp. 3-18)  
- Chapter 7: Models of information behavior (pp. 141-175)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 5</th>
<th>Search Strategies</th>
<th>Optional In-Person Activity</th>
<th>Discussion Board</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/25 – 10/1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tuesday, 9/26, 2:00 - 3:00 PM</td>
<td>✓ Week 5 Class Discussion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Recommended**  
### Information Behavior of International Students

Settling in an Unfamiliar Geo-Spatial Environment  
Chiyoung Oh, Doctoral Candidate  
Room 0115, Hornbake Building, South Wing

#### Required

- Chapter 1: Introduction to library databases (pp. 1-8)
- Chapter 2: Database structures for everyone: Records, fields, and indexes. (pp. 9-26)
- Chapter 3: The searcher’s toolkit: Part 1. (pp. 27-48)
- Chapter 4: The searcher’s toolkit: Part 2 (pp. 49-62)

#### Recommended:


#### Assignments
✓ Assignment 5A  
User Instruction Proposal (Sept. 30)

### Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 6</th>
<th>Research Design, Methodology, and Methods</th>
<th>Required</th>
<th>Discussion Board</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Blakesly, E. (2016). The constraints of practice, or we work in libraries, that's why we can't do research. *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 42(1), 635.  
### Week 7
10/9 – 10/15

**Collection Development**

**Required**


**Recommended:**


### Discussion Board

✓ Week 7 Class Discussion

### Assignments

✓ Assignment 2: Search Strategy (Oct. 14)

---

### Week 8
10/16 – 10/22

**Information Literacy/ User Instruction**

**Optional In-Person Activity**

Tuesday, 10/17, 2:00 - 3:00 PM
Chat Reference
Paul Chasen, Maryland AskUsNow! Statewide Coordinator
Room 0115, Hornbake Building, South Wing

**Required**


| Week 9  
10/23 – 10/29 | Reference and Information Services | Required |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Recommended:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Week 9 Reference and Information Services**


**Recommended:**


**Week 10  
10/30 – 11/5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Reference Conversation</th>
<th>Required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discussion Board**

- ✓ Week 10 Class Discussion

**Assignments**

- ✓ Assignment 3: User Group Profile (Oct. 28)


**Recommended:**


Week 11  
11/6 – 11/12  
Policies and Ethics  

**Required**  

**American Library Association (ALA) Policy Manual** (Revised January 2013). 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

**Also, select three of the readings listed below:**
- [ALA Core Values of Librarianship](http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrac/ethics/values.cfm) (Adopted June 29, 2004).

**Discussion Board**
- ✓ Week 12 Class Discussion

**Assignments**
- ✓ Assignment 4: Reference Comparison (Nov. 11)
● **American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) Ethical Principles** (Approved April 5, 1999).


● **SAA Core Values Statement and Code of Ethics** (Approved May 2011).


● **Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE) Diversity Statement** (Approved September 30, 2012).

**Recommended:**

---

**Week 12**  
11/13 – 11/19  

**Scholarly Communication and Open Access**

**Optional In-Person Activity**  
Tuesday, 11/14, 2:00 - 3:00 PM  
Open Access at UMD  
Terry Owen, Digital Scholarship Librarian, University of Maryland Libraries  
Room 0115, Hornbake Building, South Wing

**Required**  


---

**Discussion Board**  
✓ Week 13 Class Discussion
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 13</th>
<th>Thanksgiving Break</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11/13 – 11/19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 14</th>
<th>Effects of Technology on the Information Professions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11/20 – 11/26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 15</th>
<th>User Instruction Presentations (Wk 1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11/27 – 12/4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| No readings, work on completing assignment 5 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discussion Board</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Week 14 Class Discussion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Semester reflection |
| Small group pathfinder |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Assignment 5 (December 4) - submit through Canvas + post on small group discussion board</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| ✓ 5A Exec. Summary |
| Week 16 12/5 – 12/12 | User Instruction Presentations (Wk 2) + Course Wrap-up | No readings, view, respond, and post questions to classmates’ presentations + pathfinders | Discussion Board  
✓ User Presentations (December 10)  
Assignments  
✓ Course Evaluations | ✓ 5B Presentation  
✓ 5C Pathfinder |
K. Assignments and Grading
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’) on the due date.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Assignment Description</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>Every week</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Library/Information Center Visit Report</td>
<td>Sept. 16, 2017</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Search Strategy Assignment</td>
<td>Oct. 14, 2017</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>User Group Information Behavior Profile</td>
<td>Oct. 28, 2017</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Reference Services Comparison Paper</td>
<td>Nov. 11, 2017</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>User Instruction Assignment</td>
<td></td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5A</td>
<td>Proposal</td>
<td>Sept. 30, 2017</td>
<td>Check-off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5B</td>
<td>Executive Summary</td>
<td>Dec 4, 2017</td>
<td>(10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5C</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>Dec 4, 2017</td>
<td>(10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5D</td>
<td>Pathfinder</td>
<td>Dec 4, 2017</td>
<td>(5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Letter Grade Equivalents
A+ 98-100    B+ 87-89    C+ 77-79    D+ 67-69
A 93-97      B 83-86     C 73-76     D 63-66
A- 90-92     B- 80-82    C- 70-72    D- 60-62
                        F 0-59

Message board posts and other online assignments may be submitted following the default formatting established on ELMS.

Papers that are submitted to the instructor should be submitted as Microsoft Word documents, allowing for easy markup. Papers should be double spaced, in 12 point Times New Roman or a similar, easy-to-read font, and have 1” margins. Please do not include a cover page, but do include your name, the course number and name, semester, and instructor name in one of the upper corners of the first page.

Please use APA style for citations.
If your paper falls short of or exceeds the suggested length, do not adjust the margins, spacing, or font size. If you have completed the requirements of the assignment in less than the required length or clearly needed more space to adequately express your analysis, I will not deduct points. However, if you have not taken enough time to fully complete the assignment or you did not edit your work to make it concise, this will affect your grade regardless of formatting changes.

*The following assignment descriptions are abbreviated. Full descriptions are included on the ELMS site for the course as separate documents.*

**Participation and Discussion** (20% of final grade).

I will post some initial thoughts and questions about each week’s materials. This will be the starting point for each week’s conversation, but if you have questions or comments related to the unit that fall outside of my remarks, feel free to go in that direction.

Students are required to make an initial post by midnight each Thursday, and they must respond to at least one other student by the end of the following Sunday. Your initial post should refer heavily to the readings and the lecture, even if framed as a response to another student. Your responses should build on your fellow students’ ideas. Length is not important – around one to three paragraphs is about right – but substance is. *You may also post your weekly discussion posts and responses as video or audio recordings, if you prefer to do so this way.*

Students are responsible for posting to the first week’s discussion – basic introductions, with no required responses – as well as nine additional weeks. This will allow students to skip posting for several weeks, but you are still responsible for reading through the posts. *I may select several weeks to make mandatory, and these will come with at least one-week advance notice.*

I have listed several weeks when students may visit Dr. Beth St. Jean’s in-person version of this same course. If you do so, please ask Dr. St. Jean to let me know that you are present. In these cases, you make skip that week’s discussion or select another week to skip.

I hope that this is unnecessary, but some basic ground rules: It is essential to maintain a collegial tone with your fellow students. If you disagree with a fellow student, disagree politely. Likewise, it is not the job of students to police the forums. If you have a problem with a fellow student’s tone or behavior, please bring this to my attention and I will follow-up.

**Assignment #1 – Library / Information Center Visit Report** (10%). 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. Write a 3-4 page, double spaced paper in which you:

1. Observe the environment – is the building centrally located, a pleasant place in which to be? Within the building, can you easily locate specific service areas (e.g., children’s services, reference services, public access computers, circulation services, etc.)? 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 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?

This is perhaps the least formal of your assignments, so while you are welcome to directly cite course literature and other materials, you are not required to do so.

Due on Saturday, September 16

Assignment #2 – Search Strategy (15%). Identify a substantive information need that you are currently facing. This information need must be one that will require use of at least two library databases. For information about library databases, see Rachel Gammons’ guide, *Information Studies for the Online MLS iSchool Students*. Draft a search strategy that reflects how you plan to go about gathering the information you need. This plan should include both the names of the information resources you intend to consult, as well as the ways in which you will interact with these resources. Then carry out this search strategy, adapting it as necessary as your search evolves

Write a 5-6 page double-spaced paper in which you,

1. Describe the information need and the context surrounding this need.

2. Delineate the initial search strategy that you and your partner 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 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 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. How can these be improved? Please provide specific, concrete suggestions.

6. Provide a list of references, using APA style

Due on Saturday, October 14.

Assignment 3 - User Group Information Behavior Profile (15%). 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.

Find at least three scholarly sources that describe the information behavior of your selected population. You may look outside library literature if you are unable to meet this requirement within the discipline. You can also include up to two additional popular sources (blogs, news articles, websites, etc). After carefully reading these articles, prepare a paper(s) of approximately 7-9 double-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 you learned about the information behavior of this population?
- **Implications**: How might these findings be used to inform/improve 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 be 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.

Due on Saturday, October 28.

Assignment 4 – Reference Services Comparison Paper (15%). Asking and answering questions is a key activity of all information professionals. Librarians and archivists 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:

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 through Google. Instead, this 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. While you can use the University of Maryland Libraries, I recommend that you try other sources first.

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 6-8 page (double-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 the level of interaction and negotiation of the question, the quality and timeliness of the response, your overall satisfaction with the answer, and the enjoyability of the interaction. 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 4 pages should be dedicated to the comparison, so do not spend too much space discussing the nuances of what you did. Instead, focus on comparing and contrasting your experience and how each medium affected the experiences.

Due on Saturday, November 11.

Assignment 5 – User Instruction (25%). The purpose of this assignment is to give you experience with preparing and presenting a user instruction session, as well as creating a relevant pathfinder. You will complete this in sections, including an initial proposal (due Sept. 30), executive summary, presentation, and pathfinder (all due Dec 4). You will also review and provide feedback on one another’s projects, which will take place during the final week of the semester (Dec 3 - Dec 10).
To complete this assignment, you will select a topic and identify a vulnerable or underserved community for your presentation/pathfinder. For example, “services for veterans with PTSD” or “public health resources for trans* population” or “job seeking for recent immigrants” or “computer literacy for senior citizens.” For guidance on underserved groups, the American Library Association’s [Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach](http://www.ala.org). Your proposal must be approved (assignment 5A) before you begin parts 5B - 5D.