Instructor:

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Office: 4121D Hornbake (office hours by appointment – in person or via phone/Skype)
Email: ugorham@umd.edu
Phone: (301) 405-0660

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

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. This 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 effect 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 de-selection 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 course is taught online using Canvas; course content is accessible via http://elms.umd.edu (“LBSC 602”). The primary methods of instruction for this course will be pre-recorded lectures, course readings, presentations and online discussion relevant to course readings.

READING MATERIALS:


NOTE: This text can be purchased at our University Book Center (http://umcp.bncollege.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/BNCBHomePage?storeId=15551&catalogId=10001&langId=-1) or through Amazon.com either as a paperback or for Kindle (http://www.amazon.com/Librarians-Guide-Online-Searching-Cultivating/dp/161069998X/). A copy of this text has been placed on reserve at McKelding Library. Also, an ebook version of the text can be accessed for free by going to the UMD Libraries catalog entry for this book: https://umaryland.on.worldcat.org/oclc/809411093?databaseList=638. If necessary, you may use the previous edition of the book (published in 2012) – the chapter numbers are different but much of the content is the same. An ebook version of this edition is also available through UMD Libraries.

Links have been provided in the syllabus to a number of a journal articles; additional assigned readings are available through our class Canvas site (under “Course Reserves”). All journal articles are also accessible through UMD Libraries. At any point in the semester, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any trouble locating assigned readings.

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)*
- *Library & Information Science Research (LISR)*
- *The American Archivist*
- *Journal of Information Science (JIS)*
- *The Information Society*
- *Information Processing & Management (IP&M)*
- *Journal of Documentation (JDOC)*
- *Information Research* (http://informationr.net/ir/)
- *First Monday* (http://www.firstmonday.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*
COURSE POLICIES:

Course Participation: Students are expected to actively participate through the class discussion boards in Canvas. One or two discussion questions focused on the readings will be posted each week – you are expected to make a minimum of two posts related to each question. Your first post should be made no later than Thursday morning. In addition, in association with particular assignments, you are expected to make a post (as specified in this syllabus). All posts regarding weekly readings are due at the end of the week (i.e., by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday).

Participation forms an integral part of your own learning experience, as well as that of your classmates. Your participation in classroom discussions will count for 15% of your final grade. Contributions will be assessed based on substance, the incorporation of reading materials, and your insights/assessment. I do not have hard and fast rules regarding the expected lengths of discussion posts, as I evaluate them based on quality, rather quantity – 50-150 words is a good ballpark figure though. Failure to participate via online discussion posts will result in a letter grade of F for this component.

Classroom discussions should remain professional and respectful at all times.

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. Use APA Style for in-text citations and reference lists. There are many resources about APA style available on the Internet. See, for example, https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/ and http://www.apastyle.org/learn/faqs/index.aspx.

Submitting Assignments: Each assignment must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. on the indicated due date through our Canvas site (“LBSC602”).

Late Work: Unless you are facing an emergency situation AND you request an extension from me at least 48 hours in advance of the due date, late work will automatically be graded down by one step for each day that it is late. For any assignment submitted more than seven days past the due date, I will decide on a case-by-case basis whether to accept it.

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 www.shc.umd.edu. 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 (http://www_president.umd.edu/policies/docs/III-100A.pdf). You may also find this Office of Student Conduct definition of academic dishonesty to be helpful: http://osc.umd.edu/OSC/AcademicDishonesty.aspx.

**Syllabus Change Policy:** This syllabus is subject to change with advance notice. If a change becomes necessary, I will send an email, as well as post an announcement on our Canvas site, to inform you of the change.

**Student Course Evaluations (CourseEvalUM):** Toward the end of the semester, you will have an opportunity to evaluate this course (https://www.courseevalum.umd.edu). 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. If over 70% of the students in the class complete their evaluation, you will be able to access the aggregate results through Testudo.

**Special Accommodations:** If you need any accommodations due to a disability, please first register with the Disability Support Service (DSS) office (http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS/) 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 DSS to determine how to best accommodate your needs. Please note that the Center for Academic Success (CAS) (http://www.shadygrove.umd.edu/campus-services/cas) is the Disability Support Services office at the Universities at Shady Grove.

**Academic Assistance:** If you are experiencing difficulties in keeping up with the academic demands of this course, please consider contacting the Learning Assistance Service, 2202 Shoemaker Building, 301-314-7693. Their educational counselors can help with time management, reading, math learning skills, note taking and exam preparation skills. All of their services are free to UMD 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 (“LBSC 602”) by 11:59 on the due date indicated.**

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<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Assignment Description</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>Every week</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Library/Archive/Information Center Visit Report [Individual]</td>
<td>September 18, 2016</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Search Strategy Assignment [Pairs]</td>
<td>October 9, 2016</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>User Group Information Behavior Profile [Individual or Team]</td>
<td>October 23, 2016</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4a</td>
<td>Reference Interview Practicum [Pairs]</td>
<td>November 6, 2016</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<td>4b</td>
<td>Reference Services Comparison Paper [Individual]</td>
<td>November 20, 2016</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>User Instruction Assignment [Individual or Team]: Proposal Executive Summary Presentation, and Pathfinder</td>
<td>October 2, 2016</td>
<td>Check-off</td>
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<td>December 4, 2016</td>
<td>25% (total)</td>
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Check-off details:
- Executive Summary -- 10%
- Presentation -- 10%
- Pathfinder -- 5%

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 class 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 above</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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<td>80.0-83.9</td>
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|  | **1837m3160l5t43v.**  
The Concept of Information  
**September 15th at 1:30 pm, EST (via Adobe Connect):** Library Orientation by Tahirah Akbar-Williams, Education and Information Studies Librarian, Mckeldin Library, University of Maryland.  
(Library/Archive Information Center Visit Report) due by 11:59 p.m. on 9/18  
Discussion Posts: Week 3 Readings  
****If you have a preferred partner for Assignment 2, please email me by 9/20.** |
|  |  |  |
|  | **4**  
Models and Theories of User Behavior  
Discussion Posts: Paragraph re: Assignment 1 (Library/Information Center) |
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**Plus, read one of the following:**


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**5  9/26-10/2  Search Strategies**


- Chapter 1: Introduction to library databases
- Chapter 2: Database structures for everyone: Records, fields, and indexes.
- Chapter 4: The searcher’s toolkit: Part 2.


**Recommended (available through UMD Libraries):**


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**Assignment 5 proposal due by 11:59 p.m. on 10/2**

**Discussion Posts: Week 5 Readings**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Guest Speaker</th>
<th>Assignment/Assignments Due by</th>
<th>Discussion Posts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 6    | 10/3-10/9 | Understanding Research/Research Methods | **Guest Speaker:** Ricky Punzalan, Assistant Professor, Archives and Museum Studies [Topic: User Studies in Archives] (pre-recorded)  
Discussion Posts: Week 6 Readings |
**If you have a preferred partner for Assignment 4a, please email me by 10/16.** |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9</th>
<th>10/24 - 10/30</th>
<th>Reference and Information Services</th>
<th><strong>Guest Speaker:</strong> Megan Dwyre, Archives II Reference [Topic: Archival Reference Services] (pre-recorded)</th>
<th>Discussion Posts: Week 9 Readings</th>
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<td>on 10/23</td>
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**Recommended (available through UMD Libraries):**


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Guest Speaker</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>11/1-11/6</td>
<td>The Reference Conversation</td>
<td><strong>Guest Speaker:</strong> Paul Chasen, Statewide Coordinator, Maryland AskUsNow!. November 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; at 1 pm (EST) (via Adobe Connect).</td>
<td>Assignment 4A (Reference Interview Practicum) due by 11:59 p.m. on 11/6 Discussion Posts: Audio/Video file or transcript for Assignment 4a; Week 10 Readings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>11/7-11/13</td>
<td>Policies and Ethics</td>
<td><strong>Guest Speaker:</strong> Paul Jaeger, Associate Professor, Diversity Officer, &amp; Co-Director of the Information Policy and Access Center [Topic: Serving the Information Needs of People with Disabilities] (pre-recorded)</td>
<td>Discussion Posts: Feedback to two teams re: Assignment 4a (Reference Interview Practicum); Week 11 Readings</td>
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<td>American Library Association (ALA) Policy Manual (Revised January 2013). Available: <a href="http://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/policymanual">http://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/policymanual</a>. Skim, but pay particular attention to the following sections:</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
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 to five of the readings listed below:
http://www.ala.org/advocacy/proethics/codeofethics/codeethics
ALA Core Values of Librarianship (Adopted June 29, 2004). Available:
http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/statementspols/corevalues
American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) Ethical Principles (Approved April 5, 1999). Available:
http://www.aallnet.org/main-menu/Leadership-Governance/policies/PublicPolicies/policy-ethics.html
http://www2.archivists.org/governance/strategic-plan/2013-2018
SAA Core Values Statement and Code of Ethics (Approved May 2011). Available:
http://www2.archivists.org/statements/saa-core-values-statement-and-code-of-ethics
http://www.sla.org/about-sla/vision-mission-core-value/
Medical Library Association Code of Ethics for Health Sciences Librarianship (6/2010). Available:
http://www.mlanet.org/p/cm/ld/fid=160
http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/diversity
http://www.asis.org/AboutASIS/professional-guidelines.html
Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE) Diversity Statement (Approved September 30, 2012). Available:
http://www.alise.org/assets/documents/alise-diversitystatement-board_approved4member_vote.pdf
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Reading Details</th>
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  **Plus, choose one of the two readings listed below:**  


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Assignment 5 executive summary, pathfinder, and presentation due by 11:59 on 12/4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>11/28 - 12/4</td>
<td>Please also post presentations and pathfinders on the relevant discussion board when submitting assignments</td>
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|   |   | Post questions/comments for classmates regarding their presentations and pathfinders by 12/8 |
|---|---|Respond to classmates’ questions/comments regarding your presentation/pathfinder by 12/11 |
| 15 | 12/5 - 12/11 | |

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14

12/5 - 12/11
Assignment 1: Library/Archive/Information Center Visit Report [Individual]

Due Date: September 18, 2016 (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 staffing. Are librarians and/or other staff readily available to users? Does there appear to be sufficient staff or are library 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. Also, please post a 1-paragraph entry about your experience conducting your library/archives/information center visit to the relevant discussion board in Canvas no later than Sunday, September 25th – this will count for one of your discussion questions that week.

Rubric:

I. Description of the Information Center (10 points)
   • Has the student described his/her selected library or information center?
   • Has the student discussed accessibility 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 Staff (15 points)
Did the student describe the availability of 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 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 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

Due Date: October 9, 2016 (10%)

Working in pairs, identify a substantive information need that one of you is currently facing. This information need must be one that will require use of at least two different library databases. Work together to 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.

Note: If you have a preferred partner, please email me by September 20th. I will send out an email with team assignments by September 25th.

Write a 2- to 3-page (single-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 (e.g., use natural language vs. Boolean operators). 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., reviewed abstracts, used a citation management tool, took notes).
4. Evaluate your search process – talk about the usefulness and usability of the various information resources you used and about which of your search strategies worked well and which did not. 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 team described the information need?
   • Has the team explained the context surrounding this information need?

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

III. Search Process (20 points)
   • Has the team recounted how they actually carried out their search?
   • Has the team explained how their search evolved and how and why it adhered to and/or deviated from their initial plan?
   • Has the 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 team discussed what went well and what did not go so well during their search?
- Has the 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 team talked about the usefulness and usability of the different information resources they used in the course of their search?
- Has the 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

Due Date: October 23, 2016 (20%)

For this assignment, you will be researching what has already been learned about the information behavior of the group you have chosen to focus on for Assignment 5 and consider the implications of these findings for information professionals who assist them with their information needs.

Find at least three (3) papers that report results from empirical studies of the information behavior of this population. After carefully reading these articles, prepare a 3- to 5-page (single-spaced) paper 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.

Note: If you have chosen to work with someone else on Assignment 5, it makes sense to work together on this assignment as well. If so, each team member needs to find three (3) papers and your paper should be between 6-8 (single-spaced) pages.

Rubric:

I. Introduction (10 points)
   - Has the student/team described his/her user population?
   - Has the student/team explained his/her/their motivation for selecting this user population?

II. Literature Review (25 points)
   - Did the student/team provide a synthesized discussion of the findings from at least three empirical studies of the information behavior of his/her/their selected population?

III. Implications & Potential Significance Impact (40 points)
• Has the student/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?

• Has the student/team explained why the implications they have identified are of potential significance?

V. Ideas for Future Research (15 points)
• Has the student/team discussed what else we still need to know about the information behavior of his/her selected population?
• Has the student/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 student/team included a references list, using APA-style citations?
Assignment 4a: Reference Interview In-Class Practicum and
Assignment 4b: Reference Services Comparison Paper

Due Dates:
Assignment 4a: November 6, 2016 (5%)  
Assignment 4b: November 20, 2016 (20%)

Assignment 4a: Reference Interview In-Class Practicum

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 customer/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/patron during the other interaction. If you have a preferred partner, please let me know by October 16th. I will email team assignments by October 20th and the reference scenarios by October 24th. The scenario will include a question to pose to your partner and a description of your actual information need. 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/patron with his/her true information need.

Note: 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 this role-playing exercise is to elicit the customer/patron’s actual information need, rather than simply answering the first question that he/she poses to you.

You have several options in terms of how you complete this assignment. You may conduct a synchronous session -- in person, online, or via the telephone -- and record the audio/video. Alternatively, given the fact that you may have difficulty coordinating schedules with your partner, you have the option of conducting the interview via email or via chat. If you decide to do it via email, you’ll need to provide the chain of messages between the “librarian” and the “patron” (this can be done, for example, by cutting and pasting all of the emails into a Word document). If you decide to do it via chat, you’ll need to provide the transcript (I know this is possible through Google but I’m not sure about other email services).

Additionally, by November 6th, each team should post a video/audio file or transcript of their interactions to the relevant discussion board. During the following week (11/7-11/13), each student should review the work of two other teams and provide feedback to those teams. I will let you know which teams you will be reviewing when I email you on October 24th. Please note that your class participation grade this week includes the feedback you provide to your two teams. This feedback should consist of constructive comments regarding team members’ performance based on:
Application of best practices in the provision of reference services as found in the readings
Construction of the simulated questions and answers
Demonstration of effective communication skills as performed

Assignment 4b: Reference Services Comparison Paper

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 3- 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. 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 or archive.
- Asynchronous interaction via a library (e.g., Ask NYPL ([http://www.nypl.org/ask-nypl](http://www.nypl.org/ask-nypl)), or non-library service (e.g., Yahoo! Answers ([http://answers.yahoo.com/](http://answers.yahoo.com/)); or, a specialized online help-based community.
- Mobile phone Q&A services (e.g., ChaCha – see [http://www.chacha.com/](http://www.chacha.com/))
- Any other platform you want to try (e.g., posting your question on Facebook or Twitter in a status feed)

Note: If you would like to use any of the UMD reference services (chat, in-person, email, phone), please be advised that only a limited number of students will be able to do so – we don’t want to overwhelm them! There will be a sign-up sheet later in the semester so stay tuned....

**Rubric:**

**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 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

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 choose a topic and identify an audience for your presentation. For example: “information literacy for college freshmen” 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.” You can choose whatever topic and user group you would like; however, your proposal must be approved before you get started.

You may complete this assignment individually or as part of a team. I will be setting up a discussion board so that interested students can post their ideas for Assignment 5 and see if anyone wants to work with them. If you decide to work in a team, the requirements for each component will be adjusted accordingly.

I. Proposal (check-off) [Due October 2, 2016]

Prepare and submit via Canvas a short paragraph describing your proposed topic and audience. If you are working as part of a team, please indicate the names of all team members – only one team member, however, needs to submit the proposal.

II. Executive Summary (10%) [Due December 4, 2016]

Each student will write a 2-3 page executive summary (single-spaced, 12 point font) on the information seeking behaviors of the audience they chose for his/her user instruction presentation. The paper should include 1) an explanation of why you selected this particular audience, 2) a brief literature review (cite at least 3 empirical studies related to your selected audience's information behaviors), and 3) a discussion of how research findings related to your audience’s information behaviors informed the design and content of your pathfinder and presentation. Please note that Assignment 3 (the User Group Information Behavior Profile) is intended to serve as the backbone for your literature review.

For those working in a team, the literature review should include 3 empirical studies per student. The executive summary should be no longer than 5 pages.

III. Presentation (10%) [Due December 4, 2016]

Each student will present a 10-minute instruction session on the use of library and Internet resources on his/her topic. Please be sure to practice your presentation a few times and then video or audio tape your final version of the presentation. You may use VoiceThread (accessible through Canvas) or any other presentation tool you prefer. Next, upload your audio/video file to the relevant discussion board on our Canvas site. Your “audience” (classmates”) will watch/listen to your recording and post their questions for you by December 8th. You need to respond to these questions/comments by December 11th.

For those working in a team, the presentation should be approximately 15-20 minutes.

*Make sure that your presentation is built around the information needs/behaviors
of your chosen audience*

IV. Pathfinder (5%) [Due December 4, 2016]

Each student/team will create a one-page pathfinder consisting of at least 6-8 resources, including databases, books, journals, and Internet resources. You are encouraged to be creative with the layout and presentation of the pathfinder. Pathfinders can be in a static form (such as a PDF) or they can be in digital form (such as a website, LibGuide, or Pinterest board). Please post your completed pathfinder to the relevant discussion board on Canvas. Your “audience” (your classmates) will take a look at your pathfinder and post questions and comments by December 8th. You need to respond to these questions/comments by December 11th.

For those working in a team, the pathfinder should have at least 10 resources.

For the purpose of reviewing one another’s work, I will be creating three discussion groups. Each group will have its own discussion board where you will post your work and provide feedback to others. You are expected to watch the presentations and look over the pathfinders created by other members of your discussion group (not the whole class).

Rubrics:

II. Executive Summary (10%)
- Has the student/team described their selected audience/topic and explained why they chose to focus on this particular audience/topic? (15 points)
- Has the student/team provided a brief literature review that discusses empirical findings relating to the information behavior of their selected audience? (25 points)
- Has the student/team described the potential implications of these findings for the design of their user instruction presentation and pathfinder? (50 points)
- Is the summary clearly written and easy to follow and understand? (10 points)

III. Presentation (10%)
- 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 student/team present? (40 points)
- How well did the student/team make use of (and stick to) his/her time? (20 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)
- How clearly laid out and easy-to-use is the pathfinder? (20 points)
- What degree of creativity is exhibited in the look and/or functionality of the pathfinder? (10 points)