A. Catalog Description of Course

This course provides an opportunity for an investigation of quantitative and qualitative methods used to plan and evaluate the effectiveness of library and information services. Planning and evaluation methodologies will be analyzed and critiqued. Selected methods will be demonstrated and/or utilized.

B. Course Goals and Learning Objectives

The course will introduce students to a variety of evaluation frameworks, and what is necessary to engage in the evaluation of a range of information services. More specifically, the course will:

1) Provide a critical assessment of selected evaluation approaches and frameworks;
2) Offer both quantitative and qualitative methodological techniques for engaging in evaluation efforts;
3) Assist in the development of evaluation planning and implementation;
4) Help students assess the strengths, weaknesses, and trade-offs involved in evaluation activities;
5) Provide a context for evaluation activities and the interpretation of evaluation results; and
6) Provide an understanding of organizational, staffing, and a range of other requirements for effective evaluation efforts.

At the completion of the course, students should be able to:

- Understand the context in which evaluation and assessment takes place;
- Understand issues associated with planning and implementing evaluation strategies;
- Identify the organizational, personnel, and other requirements for effective evaluation efforts;
- Develop appropriate research questions for evaluative measures in the resolution of real world problems;
- Develop an evaluation plan that draws upon their understanding of different research methodologies and evaluation frameworks.
This course is designed as an evaluation primer. Thus, the course will expose students to a number of evaluation strategies, literature, and methods. Given the breadth and depth of a number of these evaluation approaches, it will not be possible to cover all aspects throughout the course. Evaluation has a long history in the field of information. The class will offer both an historical and current perspective on the assessment of information services, with an emphasis on current practice in libraries and information organizations. The course will also introduce students to the context in which evaluation of information services transpire, which can affect the types of evaluation strategies, data, and analysis information organizations need.

C. Course Approach and Expectations of Student Participation

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

D. Classroom Environment

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

E. Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who need academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Disability Support Services office, and (2) discuss any necessary academic accommodation with their teachers. This should be done at the beginning of the semester. Please do let me know how I can be of help.

F. Assignment Extensions

Timeliness is an essential component of graduate work, and extensions will only be available during personal emergencies. Students who need to request an extension should discuss the matter in advance with the professor. If an extension is granted, the work must be submitted within the extension period to avoid grade penalties. Late submissions will receive an automatic half-letter grade deduction for every day late, e.g., A- changed to B+

G. Academic Honesty

Work submitted in this course will be individual and original, in line with the University's Academic Honor Code and Honor Pledge. Engaging in any academic dishonesty will result in consequences in line with university policies. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to plagiarism, cheating, buying work, multiple submissions of the same paper, forging signatures, submitting fraudulent documents, and facilitating the academic dishonesty of others. When writing papers, be sure to carefully and thoroughly cite all materials you use in writing your paper and make sure all ideas and quotations are properly acknowledged.

H. Required Texts and Readings:

There is no required text for the course. Links have been provided in the syllabus to a number of journal articles; additional assigned readings are available through our class Canvas site (in Course Reserves or in the "Readings"
folder in Files, as indicated in the syllabus). All journal articles should be 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.

I. Assignments and Grading

- All assignments are due by the end of the due date (i.e., 11:59 pm) through our Canvas site.

Your grades will be based on seven (7) items, as detailed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>% of Final Grade</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Each module</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article Presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Varies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Article Presentation Responses</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Varies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Statement</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>February 17, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>March 10, 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methodology Review</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>April 14, 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluation Proposal</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>May 12, 2019</td>
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Grades are assigned as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Numeric Grade</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Numeric Grade</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>97.0 and above</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>74.0-76.9</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94.0-96.9</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>70.0-73.9</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90.0-93.9</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>67.0-69.9</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87.0-89.9</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>64.0-66.9</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84.0-86.9</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>60.0-63.9</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80.0-83.9</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>Below 60.0</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77.0-79.9</td>
<td>C+</td>
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**FORMATTING** - Guidelines for written materials for the course include:

- Word format for papers, PowerPoint for presentations
- Full name and paper title at the top of the paper
- Double-spaced
- 12-point Times Roman Font
- 1-inch margins
- In-text citations and references section in **APA style** (If you are unfamiliar with this citation style, see:
  - [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html)
- Pages should be numbered
- Consistent formatting
- Free of grammatical errors and typos
ASSIGNMENTS

1. Class Participation

1A. Online discussion posts (10% of final grade)
There will be 2-3 graded discussion threads per module. Sometimes questions will be posted at start of the module, while others may be posted throughout the module time period. These prompts will be a mixture of broad questions related to the theme of the module, questions focused on specific readings, hypothetical scenarios, and activities.

You should plan on posting at least twice to each discussion question: once as an initial response to the question, and a second time to respond/react to classmate postings. All posts are due at the end of the module (i.e., by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday of the 2nd/3rd week, as applicable).

There is no length requirement for your posts. They are evaluated on quality over quantity. A length of approximately 50-150 words is a good for initial posts. A few other discussion post guidelines:

- Add something new to the discussion. If you don’t post until later in the module, I understand that this can be difficult sometimes. But, you can still explain why something a classmate says resonated with you or ask a follow-up question!
- Whenever possible, incorporate weekly readings or other relevant sources (quoting small passages is acceptable - try to limit quotes to no more than a few lines)
- Where appropriate, recognize earlier contributions from other students

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

1B. Article Presentation & Discussion (10% of final grade for presentation; 10% of final grade for presentation comments)

- Presenting an article: At the beginning of the semester, you will select from a list of assigned readings from Modules 2-6 and give a short presentation (5-7 minutes) on the reading, using VoiceThread. Your presentation should include:
  - a brief overview of the article
  - an explanation of how the article relates to the module topic
  - a conclusion with a discussion question for your classmates to consider.

Your classmates will then respond to your question, using the comment feature available in VoiceThread presentations. You will be responsible for facilitating the discussion (e.g., asking follow-up questions, responding to questions/comments)

A sign-up sheet will be posted to ELMS during Week 1. It will indicate the presentation due date for each article. On that due date, you will provide a link to your presentation in the discussion thread that I have set up for article presentations. You will then be expected to check for and respond to your classmates’ comments on the presentation for the following week.
Responding to presentation discussion questions: You are expected to answer the discussion question posted at the end of each of your classmates’ presentations, using the “comment” feature available through VoiceThread. The manner in which you comment is up to you – you have the option of leaving text, audio, and video comments. You are expected to post your comments within a week of the presentation being uploaded.

2. Problem Statement (15% of grade) (800-1,000 words) DUE FEB 17

Identifying a problem to be solved or question to be answered is a critical first step in evaluation and in planning to evaluate. Your problem definition drives everything—what you want to know, how you might ascertain what you want to know, and how you might use data (once you have it) to then inform yourself, and others, about what you found and the implications of those findings (we often refer to this as “advocacy” when presenting to external audiences).

For this assignment, you will identify a problem worth addressing and one that can be addressed reasonably with the resources available (staffing, expertise, time, etc.). This is the first of a series of assignments designed to have you develop an evaluation plan.

For this assignment, you are to:

- Describe the general area of library and information services that you want to address (e.g., user instruction, summer reading, immigration services, digital content development);
- Identify and describe the specific problem that you will address (e.g., learning outcomes, effectiveness of instruction, information literacy improvement);
- Identify between one and five specific questions that can address your problem (e.g., Did reading skills improve? Did participants master the citizenship content?);
- Describe two evaluation articles that can inform your work;
- Indicate why this is an important area for evaluation, and why others would be interested in the outcomes of the evaluation; and
- Indicate the primary audiences for your results.

**Topic selection:** In order to develop your problem statement, you should select an area of interest to you. The project will be easiest if you identify a specific library or information service in which this evaluation would take place, and if that is the case, your problem should be one which would be relevant in that setting.

**Article selection:** At this stage, you should find two articles from the literature that are highly relevant to your intended area of exploration; this will give you a sense of what has been done, and is a precursor to a more detailed literature review in a later assignment.

**Assessment:** Your Problem Statement will be graded based on your appropriate selection of a problem; evidence of critical thinking; your adherence to the length requirement; adherence to the formatting and citation requirements; and, clarity and precision of thought in your writing.

3. Literature Review (15% of grade) (1,200-1,500 words) DUE MARCH 10

Having fleshed out your problem statement above, you will now carry out a more detailed literature review. This involves two key steps: 1) Finding the relevant literature, and 2) Developing a review of that literature.
**Searching:** The first critical step is conducting a comprehensive search for articles and other material relevant to your evaluation area. WorldCat, UMD and Research Port, and Google Scholar are all good places to begin.

**Selecting:** Next, select approximately 10 items from your various search results that can best inform your plan. You should look for articles that will help you to further describe your problem, identify measures and methods for your evaluation, and describe what results others have obtained.

You should analyze how the information in the articles relates to aspects of your evaluation question(s) and plans. Watch for differing questions and approaches in the articles and discuss these differences in your report.

**NOTE:** You will often find “how we did it at my library” type articles. These are well and good and can be useful in a range of contexts, but often lack a methodology, clear set of research questions, and empirical assessment. You may find these useful to contextualize your area of study (and thus may include them in your literature review), but be sure to seek out articles that are research-based.

Your literature review report should include:
- a description of how you conducted your search and selected the articles to review
- citations to and brief descriptions of the articles reviewed
- a list of relevant topics and issues addressed by the articles
- an analysis of how the selected articles will inform your evaluation plan.

**Assessment:** Your Literature Review will be graded based on your selection and discussion of relevant literature; evidence of critical thinking; adherence to the length requirement; adherence to the formatting and citation requirements; and, clarity and precision of thought in your writing.

**4. Methodology Review (15% of grade) (1250 – 1500 words) DUE APRIL 14**

The purpose of this assignment is to give you an opportunity to:
1) learn more about one particular data collection technique, data analysis technique, or sampling issue
2) help you formulate the methodology section of your evaluation proposal.

Note that your methodology (and related aspects) reside within the context of the evaluation framework you might choose, what you want to know, and what you intend to do with the results.

Increasingly, many studies employ a mixed methodology (e.g., survey and focus groups; log analysis and interviews). For this assignment, I recommend you select one method. Mixed methodologies can generate valuable data and a greater understanding of the problem of interest, but can also be complex in design and analysis.

Pick a method that you intend to use in your proposal. Find at least two resources that provide you with an overview of your chosen methodology, and then choose 2-4 evaluation articles in which this method was used. If appropriate, you may use one or more articles located while working on your literature review.

Your review document should include:
- a description of the technique
- information on its history and origins
- major uses of the technique
- strengths and limitations (including reliability and validity issues)
- a critique (both positive and negative) of the articles using the technique
Assessment: Your paper will be graded based on your inclusion of the elements specified above; evidence of critical thinking; adherence to the length requirement; adherence to the formatting and citation requirements; and, clarity and precision of thought in your writing.

5. Evaluation Proposal (25% of grade) (2,200 – 2,500 words) DUE MAY 12

Your evaluation proposal incorporates what you have learned through the Problem Statement, Literature Review, and Methodology Review work and combines it with a methods section in which you describe how the evaluation should be conducted.

The proposal should contain the following parts:

- A brief abstract
- A description of the question or problem you will address, and why it is important
- A short summary of your literature review
- A methodology section describing in detail how you suggest the evaluation be performed, including data collection and analysis techniques, as appropriate to your chosen methodology
- A time line for the evaluation
- Limitations of your design and how you intend to minimize the limitations
- References (APA style)
- Appendices as needed

Assessment: Your paper will be graded based on your inclusion of each of the elements specified above; your appropriate selection of a problem and evaluation methods; your use of research and professional resources to justify the elements of your plan; evidence of critical thinking; adherence to the length requirement; adherence to the formatting and citation requirements; and, clarity and precision of thought in your writing.
**MODULES:** This course is broken up into 6 modules. Each module spans two weeks, except Modules 5 & 6. During each module period, you are expected to read/review the materials set forth below, listen to my recorded lecture(s) and your classmates’ article presentations, and participate in discussion threads.

*Since due dates for article presentations and participation in article discussions will vary by student, those are not listed below. However, keep in mind that they are 10% of your grade.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Due</th>
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• Types of Evaluation. Available at: [https://www.cdc.gov/std/Program/pupestd/Types%20of%20Evaluation.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/std/Program/pupestd/Types%20of%20Evaluation.pdf). | Problem Statement due: February 17 |
• Hiller, S., Kyrillidou, M., and Self, J. (2008). When the evidence is not enough: organizational factors that influence effective and successful library assessment. *(on ELMS)*  
• NNLM (National Network of Libraries of Medicine), Outreach Evaluation Resource Center (2013). *Collecting and analyzing evaluation data* *(2nd ed.)* *(on ELMS)* | Literature Review due: March 10 |
| 2      | Feb 25 – Mar 10 | Assessing Needs                            | • Applegate, R. (2009). The library is for studying: Student preferences for study space. *(on ELMS)*  
• Royse, D. et al. (201). *Program Evaluation: An Introduction*. Chapter 3: Needs Assessment (to be posted soon on ELMS) | Literature Review due: March 10 |
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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mar 11 – Mar 31</th>
<th>Performance Measurement; Benchmarking &amp; Service Quality</th>
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<tr>
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<th>Apr 1 – Apr 21</th>
<th>Measuring Outcomes, Impact &amp; Value</th>
<th>Week of April 1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Rudd, P.D. Documenting the value of libraries through outcome measurement. In</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|   |   | Methodology Review due: April 14 |   |
**Perspectives on Outcome Based Evaluation for Libraries and Museums** *(on ELMS – SEE pp. 16-23)*


### Weeks of April 8 & April 15


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6</th>
<th>Apr 22 – May 12</th>
<th>Evaluating Library &amp; Information Services: Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Week of April 22 (Reference Services)

RUSA behavioral guidelines and IFLA digital reference guidelines (on ELMS)

**Week of April 29 (Coll Development & Space)**
- Holder, S., & Lange, J. (2014). Looking and listening: A mixed-methods study of space use and user satisfaction (on ELMS)

**Week of May 6 (Websites & Online Collections)**
- Fear, K. (2010). User Understanding of Metadata in Digital Image Collections; or What Exactly Do You Mean by 'Coverage'? (on ELMS)