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:

- Provide a critical assessment of selected evaluation approaches and frameworks;
- Offer both quantitative and qualitative methodological techniques for engaging in evaluation efforts;
- Assist in the development of evaluation planning and implementation;
- Help students assess the strengths, weaknesses, and trade-offs involved in evaluation activities;
- Provide a context for evaluation activities and the interpretation of evaluation results; and
- 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;
- Understand the implications and results based on the use of selected evaluation frameworks;
- Understand the organizational, personnel, and other requirements for effective evaluation efforts;
- Understand the relationship between evaluation frameworks, methodologies, and evaluation results; and
- Engage in evaluation efforts using multiple methodologies.
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 accessible via 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. It is essential that every student contribute to the 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. Your participation will take place via the discussion threads in Canvas. You should plan on posting at least twice to each posed discussion question: once as an initial response to the question, and a second time to respond/react to classmate postings. Contributions will be assessed based on substance, the incorporation of reading materials, and your insights/assessment. Failure to participate in the course will result in a letter grade of F for this component. In general, I post three (2 graded) discussion threads per week/topic. The third is simply for general observations and resources that you might like to share with the class on the week’s topic. Often in your own work you might come across a resource from which others would benefit (me included!) – please do share.

We will also use Present.me for student presentations. Accounts have been established for you, and you can access the site at http://ipac.present.me. Tutorials on using present.me are available at https://present.me/content/tutorials/. If you have problems accessing the site, let me know. You have all been assigned to the LBSC 713 group.

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. 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. Unexcused delays in submission of the paper will result in a deduction of a letter grade for each day the paper is late, while unexcused delays in presentations will result in a deduction of a letter grade for each class meeting the presentation is late.

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.

Syllabus Change Policy: This syllabus is a guide for the course. It may become necessary to make changes. However, we will discuss and agree upon those in advance as a class.

H. Required Texts and Readings:

There is a required text for the course:


The text serves as a good primer on evaluation. It is, however, not exhaustive or complete, particularly in the area of electronic services.

Additional readings will be available to students online or in another accessible format. Nearly all the required journal article readings are accessible through the University’s library e-journal/database holdings accessible at http://www.lib.umd.edu.
I. Assignments and Grading

Your grades will be based on four items, as detailed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Percentage of Grade</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Each week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Statement</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Saturday, September 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Saturday, October 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article Presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Monday, November 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology Review</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Saturday, November 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation Proposal</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Saturday, December 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation Proposal Presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Monday, December 15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Letter Grade Equivalents

- A+ 97-100
- A 93-96
- A- 90-92
- B+ 87-89
- B 83-86
- B- 80-82
- C+ 77-79
- C 73-76
- C- 70-72
- D+ 67-69
- D 63-66
- D- 60-62
- F 0-59

More detailed assignment information is on the course website and at the end of this syllabus.

J. Weekly Topics, Readings, and Review Material

Class begins September 2, 2014 and concludes December 12, 2014 (with finals week December 15-20, 2014) for a total of 15 weeks. As an online course we don’t have any given class dates “off” due to holidays. During any given week you will have readings, activities, and a recorded lecture (I use Camtasia, then export to an MP4 format for viewing) for you to view/listen.

The course is divided into four parts:

1. General overview of evaluation and evaluation planning. This section includes why evaluate services, the context for evaluation, and other “table setting” items.
2. Organizational, staffing, and other evaluation requirements. This includes presentation and discussion of what it takes to engage in evaluation – such as organizational capacity, expertise, culture.
3. Research methodologies. In this section we discuss what methods work best for which types of evaluation efforts and what tradeoffs exist regarding different methodological approaches.
4. Evaluation frameworks and strategies. There are a number of research frameworks (outcomes, service quality, performance measurement, e-metrics). This section covers what these frameworks capture and tell you about your information services, and their strengths and weaknesses?
**WEEK 1: INTRODUCTORY MATTERS; SETTING THE PLANNING AND EVALUATION STAGE**

*(SEPTEMBER 1)*

A. Introduction to course
B. The context of evaluation in information settings
C. Preliminary discussion of evaluation
D. The nature of evaluation

**Preparation/Readings:**

- Matthews, Chapter 1 and Chapter 2

**WEEK 2: THE NEW EVALUATION: RETHINKING WHAT WE DO** *(SEPTEMBER 8)*

A. The public sphere
B. The “new normal”
C. Clashes of old and new
D. Advocacy v. data-driven

**Preparation:**


**Activity:**

- Watch TED talks by Bill Gates on teacher assessment and Pavan Sukhdev on putting a value on nature. Both are accessible through our Canvas site at: [https://myelms.umd.edu/courses/1092700/pages/assessment-perspectives](https://myelms.umd.edu/courses/1092700/pages/assessment-perspectives) (It’s under the Pages area).

WEEK 3: BUILDING A CULTURE OF ASSESSMENT (SEPTEMBER 15)
A. Culture of assessment
B. Foundational issues in assessment
C. Assessment in a time of change

Preparation:
• Matthews, Chapter 3

WEEK 4: COLLECTING DATA (SEPTEMBER 22)
A. Data
B. Data collection
C. Organizational readiness for data collection
D. Collecting data in a larger community context
E. IRB/seeking permissions

Preparation:
• Matthews, Chapter 7
• Middle States Commission on Higher Education. (2011). Distance Education: Interregional Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education (Online Learning). Available at: https://www.msche.org/publications/Guidelines-for-the-Evaluation-of-Distance-Education-Programs.pdf.
• Take a look at http://www.umresearch.umd.edu/RCO/New/index.html, which is our Institutional Research Compliance office website. There is quite a bit there, but take a look at the IRB Process link (http://www.umresearch.umd.edu/RCO/New/IRBProcess.html).

**WEEK 5: QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION (SEPTEMBER 29)**

A. Quantitative data collection techniques  
B. Data collection considerations  
C. Data analysis approaches

**Preparation:**
- Matthews, Chapters 5 and 6
  - Digital Inclusion surveys – 2013 and 2014 (available on course website)  
    - This is a “print” version of what is an online survey using a customized survey tool.

**WEEK 6 – QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION (OCTOBER 6)**

A. Qualitative data collection techniques  
B. Data collection considerations  
C. Data analysis approaches

**Preparation:**
- Matthews, Chapter 4  

**WEEK 7 – OUTCOMES-BASED EVALUATION AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT (OCTOBER 13)**

A. Defining outcomes and outcomes-based assessment  
B. Defining impact and impact assessment  
C. What outcomes and impact tell you

**Preparation:**
- Matthews, Chapter 4  
- Review the Institute of Museum and Library Service’s Outcomes-Based evaluation “Shaping Outcomes” online tutorial available at http://www.shapingoutcomes.org/.

WEEK 8: OUTCOMES-BASED EVALUATION AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT CONT’D (OCTOBER 20)

Preparation:
• Tenopir, Carol. (2013). Building evidence of the value and impact of library and information services: Methods, metrics and ROI. Evidence Based Library and Information Practice (EBLIP), 8(2). Available at: http://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/EBLIP/article/download/19527/15263.

WEEK 9: VALUE DEMONSTRATION (OCTOBER 27)
A. Defining value
B. Using value measurement
C. What value measures tell you

Preparation:

WEEK 10: ARTICLE PRESENTATIONS (NOVEMBER 3)
A. Presentations and discussions around assessment/evaluation articles

Preparation:
• Create and load presentations in present.me.

WEEK 11: PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT (NOVEMBER 10)
A. Defining performance measurement
B. Using performance measurement
C. What performance measures tell you

Preparation:
• Matthews, Chapter 20

**WEEK 12: BENCHMARKING (NOVEMBER 17)**
A. Defining benchmarking
B. Using benchmarking
C. What benchmarks tell you

**Preparation:**
- Review the Library Edge initiative (libraryedge.org). In particular, review the benchmarks (http://www.libraryedge.org/benchmarks), and the case studies (http://www.libraryedge.org/toolkit/case_studies).

**WEEK 13: SERVICE QUALITY (NOVEMBER 24)**
A. Defining service quality
B. Using service quality measures and approaches
C. What service quality assessment tells you

**Preparation:**
- Matthews, Chapter 15
- Review the LibQUAL+ site, http://libqual.org
  - View Parasuraman video on LibQUAL+ (go to Pages section of course site, follow link to LibQUAL+ page)

**WEEK 14: EMERGING TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES (DECEMBER 1)**
A. Altmetrics
B. Interactive mapping tools

**Preparation:**
- Take a look at the interactive mapping tool at http://digitalinclusion.umd.edu/content/interactive-map.

**WEEK 15: INTEGRATIVE PERSPECTIVE – BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER (DECEMBER 8)**
A. Planning
B. Evaluation
C. Advocacy
D. Thinking strategically about evaluation and assessment

WEEK 16: FINAL PRESENTATIONS (DECEMBER 15)
A. Presentations and discussions around assessment/evaluation projects

Preparation:
• Create and load presentations in present.me.

ASSIGNMENTS

Problem Statement

The identification of a problem to be solved or question to be answered is a critical first step in evaluation – and 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 need to identify a problem worth addressing, and one that can be addressed reasonably within the resources available to address it (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 (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 one-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.

In order to develop your problem statement, you need to select an area of interest to you. The project will be easiest if you identify a specific library or information services 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. 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.

100 points total, 10% of grade.
**Literature Review**

Having fleshed out your problem statement, you will 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.

A bit more:

- A first critical step is conducting a comprehensive search for articles and other material relevant to your evaluation area. Certainly you can use WorldCat UMD and research port. I might also recommend Google Scholar.
- Next, select 10-15 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.
  - Note that in the library space, you will often find “how we did it at my library” type articles. These are well and good – and 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, but please seek out research-based articles.
- Analyze how the information in the articles relates to aspects of your evaluation question and plans. Watch for differing questions and approaches in different articles and include them in your report.

Your literature review report should include a description of how you conducted your search and selected the articles you reviewed, citations to the articles reviewed, a list of relevant topics and issues addressed by the articles, and your review.

100 points total, 15% of grade.

**Article Presentation**

Select one of the articles from your literature review and present it to the class. For this you will use Present.me (ipac.present.me).

Using present.me, develop a 10-minute presentation that details and discusses the article you selected. In particular, the presentation should address the overall topic about which the article is written; the specific problem that the article researches; the design of the study conducted; the methodology(ies) used; the data analysis conducted; key findings; conclusions; and your assessment of the research design.

100 points, 10% of grade.
Methodology Review

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; and 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; and more). 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 will be using in your proposal (I might suggest starting with our textbook and readings). Supplement this with at least one other methodological resource and an analytical review of two-four evaluation articles in which this method was used. Your review document should include a description of the technique, indication of its history and origins, major uses of the technique, strengths and limitations (including reliability and validity issues), and a critique (both positive and negative) of the articles using the technique.

100 points total, 15% of grade.

Evaluation Proposal

Your evaluation proposal combines what you have learned through the first three assignments with a description of a methods section indicating how the evaluation should be conducted.

The proposal should contain the following parts:

- An abstract of your proposal;
- 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 variable, sample selection, questionnaires, analysis methods, etc., 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; and
- Appendices as needed.

100 points total, 25% of grade.
**Evaluation Proposal Presentation**

For this you will use Present.me (ipac.present.me).

Using present.me, develop a 10-minute presentation based on your evaluation proposal. In particular, the presentation should address the overall topic of your study; the specific problem that the article researches; the design of your study (and tradeoffs you made); the methodology used; the data analysis you would conduct; how you would use the findings; and your assessment of the research design – where you see its strengths and weaknesses.

100 points, 10% of grade.