A. Catalog Description of Course
Organization, support, and service patterns of public libraries. The public library in national, state, and local contexts.

B. More Detailed Description
This course is intended for students interested in pursuing a career in public library service or who have an interest in the role and contribution of the public library to society. The course focuses on the history of the public library in the United States, the social contributions of public libraries, public library services and roles, the building of the public library profession/professionals, the ethics and values of public libraries, the policy and political context in which public libraries reside, and the ways in which public libraries transform communities.

C. Learning Objectives
At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

- Discuss the history and development of public libraries in the United States;
- Explain how public libraries’ service roles have changed over time;
- Engage in policy discussions that affect their local libraries;
- Analyze the needs of public libraries’ local communities;
- Understand the traditional and emerging services and roles of public libraries;
- Follow, establish, and debate the ethical requirements of public librarianship; and
- Plan, implement, and evaluate public library programs.

D. 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 in the LBSC724-SG01: Public Library Seminar 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.
E. Assignments and Grading
Your grade will be based on five items:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Grading</th>
<th>Due Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation and Discussions</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Throughout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Library Selections</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>September 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Library Community Assessment</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>October 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Library</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>November 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Proposal: Bridging Theory, Data, and Practice</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>December 13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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.

There is no established citation format for this course, but you are required to pick one of the three common formats (APA, Chicago, or MLA) and use it consistently in each paper.

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.

1. Participation and Discussion (25% of final grade). Since this course is a seminar, student discussions and ideas are an essential part of the learning process. We should all learn from each other.

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 twelve 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 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.

2. **Public Library Selection** (0%). Students will identify and select a primary and secondary public library to analyze throughout the course. We will refer to these two libraries through discussion board posts, and the primary selection will form the basis of your Public Library Community Assessment and Your Library assignments.

For the purpose of this assignment, a “library” is a branch level outlet, not a system. If you are currently employed at a public library, you are welcome to use your own branch for this assignment. You may not, however, select the same library branch as another student, although branches in the same system are acceptable. In instances in which two students wish to work on the same library, the student who posts to the appropriate discussion thread on ELMS first receives their preferred choice.

You will be providing in-depth analyses of your primary library. You are not required to choose a library that is in close proximity to you, but this can make your work in this class much simpler.

Your secondary library **cannot** be in Maryland, DC, or northern Virginia. You will only refer to this library for occasional discussion board assignments, largely for the purposes of comparing it to your primary selection. You will primarily analyze this library from a distance through the library’s website and other online presences. If these presences are weak, that is fine – this can lead to interesting discussions. You may pick a library that is close to your home town or family members, near a favorite vacation spot, or that is completely random.

3. **Public Library Community Assessment** (20%). Based on the primary library community selected in Assignment 2, students should ask the following questions about its community:

   1) Who/what is the library’s service population? Look at high school graduation rates, overall education levels, poverty, unemployment, and other indicators.
2) What is the library’s staffing and budget situation, circulation, operating budget, hours open, square footage, etc.? Does the library distinguish between MLIS and non-MLIS staff, and if so, is this at all levels or only at the supervisory level? How many full-time equivalent (FTE) staff does the library have?

3) What seem to be the community’s challenges, and how can the library meet these?

4) In what ways (preliminary assessment) do you consider that the library is meeting the community’s challenges?

5) How does this location compare to other public libraries in similar situations, such as similar sizes or locales?

At this point the report is primarily focused on the branch level rather than the system level. The fourth question, of how the library is currently meeting its community’s needs, should take up the smallest proportion of the paper. The primary goal of this assignment is to use data to determine what the library’s community needs and consider what branch-level resources are available to make this happen. You should present initial thoughts on how the branch-level resources are being leveraged to meet these community needs and consider how system and state-level resources may be leveraged for the same purpose, but this will be the primary purpose of this assignment.

A useful tool for this purpose is an interactive map that uses data from the IMLS Public Libraries Survey and the Digital Inclusion Survey to describe local library service communities. This is available at [http://digitalinclusion.umd.edu/content/interactive-map](http://digitalinclusion.umd.edu/content/interactive-map)

Other sources include annual reports for the library system, other state and local government reports, newspapers and other local publications, and data from the [U.S. Census](https://www.census.gov).

The paper should be approximately 8-10 double spaced pages, before citations and other end matter. Graphs, charts, and other visual aids are much appreciated and do count towards the page suggestions.

Alternati**Alternative format option**: If you would prefer to do this assignment as a recorded video or audio presentation, you may do so. You must speak for two rehearsed minutes for every required page, you must cite your sources verbally (i.e., “[Author] argued that…”), and you are still required to turn in a properly formatted bibliography.

4. **Your Library** (25% of final grade). This assignment is a continuation of the analysis you provided in your Public Library Community Assessment. Go in-depth on the public library you selected for the Public Library Community Assessment. Consider it within the context of its local system, as well as regional and state support. This assignment is about you getting to know the structure of your selected branch in its broad operational structure, how it runs, and the services provided. If you select a library that is not part of a system, does not have state support, or is otherwise lacking support mechanisms, note this and discuss the impact of this situation on operations.

Sources of information may include documents, interviews with staff, interviews with library users, personal observation local newspaper reports, the library’s website, blogs, etc. Please
identify your sources. Try and connect with a branch manager or professional library staff for this assignment so that you might ask questions and explore the library with an inside source. I am more than willing to speak to the branch manager or system director if s/he needs to know more about the course and the purpose of your research.

You are also required to analyze the library’s programming, including the following:

- Foreign language collections and services (including website).
- Citizenship/English as a foreign language classes.
- Youth programming.
- Early childhood programs.
- Employment assistance (resume writing, interview skills).
- Partnerships with community organizations (e.g., workforce agencies, health agencies).

Look at this both at the system and branch level. Are these programs available only at the central location for the system, or the branches as well?

The paper should be approximately 10-12 double spaced pages. Graphs, charts, and other visual aids are much appreciated and do count towards the page suggestions. You can copy text verbatim from your Public Library Community Assessment assignment, since this can lead to a more comprehensive overall report, but this does not count towards the suggested page length.

Alternative format option: If you would prefer to do this assignment as a recorded video or audio presentation, you may do so. You must speak for two rehearsed minutes for every required page, you must cite your sources verbally (i.e., “[Author] argued that…”), and you are still required to turn in a properly formatted bibliography.

5. Project Proposal: Bridging Theory, Data, and Practice (30% of your final grade). The purpose of the final assignment for the class is to create a proposal for a project that demonstrates your conceptual and practical knowledge of public libraries, as well as how to use both forms of understanding to mutually reinforce each other.

The proposal is for a project of your choosing, with possibilities including:

- An academic journal article;
- A presentation for a professional conference, such as PLA, ALA, or ARSL;
- An internal report assessing a library’s effectiveness in a particular area; or
- A presentation to your library’s board, your local government, or other stakeholders advocating for support to expand one of your library’s services.

Writing a journal article or fully forming a conference paper would be unreasonable within the timeframe of the class, but a proposal on how you would do this and what sources you will use will allow you to execute your ideas in a professional or future academic setting. The proposal should include:
• Introduction: Explain the nature of the project and the problem you hope to solve through your work.
• Targeted Venue and Format: Is this a plan for an academic article, a conference paper, another form of presentation?
• Overview of Relevant Data – Provide data ranging from broad, national level statistics to specific information about individual libraries that have taken actions that are pertinent to your project. You can reuse data from your previous assignments for this purpose.
• Brief Literature Review – Include at least five academic sources. Discuss whether there was adequate literature for your project and how you might strengthen this section moving forward.
• Project Plan – Explain how you will use the data and literature you found moving forward, along with your initial thoughts for your methodology for executing the actual project.
• Broader Relevancy – Discuss how your research may be relevant to audiences beyond your intended scope. If you are proposing a journal article as the ultimate deliverable, how could your ideas help librarians do their jobs better? If you are planning a project that will enhance a specific library’s service offerings, how could an understanding of your success or failure benefit the broader field?

A rubric for this assignment will be provided during the second half of the semester, following the basic guidelines above. You may sequence the various elements – with the exception of the introduction – in any order that feels natural. Section headings are not required, but strongly recommended for the purpose of clarity.

The final paper should be approximately 12 – 15 double spaced pages.

*Alternative format option*: If you would prefer to do this assignment as a recorded video or audio presentation, you may do so. You must speak for about one and a half *rehearsed* minutes for every required page, you must cite your sources verbally (i.e., “[Author] argued that…”), and you are still required to turn in a properly formatted bibliography.

**F. 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.

**G. 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.

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, I do expect for you 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.

**H. 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.

**I. 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.

**J. Weekly Topics, Readings, and Review Material**
The class begins on August 28, 2017 and ends December 13, 2017. 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.

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

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTORY MATTERS; OVERALL SERVICE CONTEXT; PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN THE US (AUGUST 28)
   A. Introduction to course and discussion of course expectations
   B. Overview of topics and concepts to be covered
   C. Setting the public library context

Preparation:

There are no official readings that must be completed before the course start date of August 28. However, the next two weeks will be fairly intense and lay much of the foundation for the course. Use this opportunity to get a head start on those materials.

There is an introductory lecture for the course as a whole, which must be viewed before the end of Sunday, September 3.

The discussion post for this week will be each student introducing her or himself. You do not need to respond to another student’s post this week, although you are welcome to do so.

WEEK 2: PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS, PLANNING, ROLE-SETTING, AND STATISTICS – PART 1 (SEPTEMBER 4)
   A. National level library trends
   B. Library users
   C. Public library statistics

Preparation:

  - Note: The FY 2014 dataset is out, but not the report at this time.
  - I am somewhat surprised that the annual report for the 2014 data is not yet out – IMLS usually runs with about a three year lag between data and reporting. Since I do not yet have an update, I have retained the older data in the course lectures.
  - Read the Extended Summary – pages ix to xxiii – and skim the rest.
WEEK 3: PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS, PLANNING, ROLE-SETTING, AND STATISTICS – PART 2 (SEPTEMBER 11)
A. State specific statistics
B. Planning and role setting
C. Regional trends

Skim the following, pulling out interesting points.

- Maryland Public Library Statistics FY2015
  (http://marylandpublicschools.org/about/Documents/DLDS/DLDS/FY15%20with%20ToC.pdf)
- Some sample state public library standards include:
  - Texas (https://www.tsl.texas.gov/plstandards/index.html)
  - Indiana (http://www.in.gov/library/standards.htm)
  - Wisconsin (http://pld.dpi.wi.gov/pld_standard)
  - Virginia (http://www.lva.virginia.gov/lib-edu/ldnd/standards/default.asp)

DUE September 16: Public Library Selection Assignment – See Message Board Post

WEEK 4: THE CONNECTED NATURE OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES (SEPTEMBER 18)
A. State libraries
B. Regional Libraries
C. Consortia

Preparation:
  - Read the executive summary and the introduction, skim the rest.

Review the following for their basic concepts and hierarchy:
- Maryland State Library Resource Center (http://slrc.info)
- Southern Maryland Regional Library Association (https://smrla.org/)
- Eastern Shore Regional Library (http://www.esrl.org/)
- Maryland AskUsNow! (http://www.askusnow.info/)
- Maryland Association of Public Library Administrators (http://www.maplaonline.org/)
- Tampa Bay Library Consortium (http://tblc.org/)
- Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (http://www.cosla.org/)
WEEK 5: RURAL PUBLIC LIBRARIES / PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS (SEPTEMBER 25)
A. Rural libraries
B. Resource allocation
C. Professional associations

Preparation:


Review the following for their purpose, constituency, advocacy activities, and annual conference:
- Maryland Library Association (www.mdlib.org/)
- American Library Association (www.ala.org)
- Public Library Association (www.ala.org/pla/)
- Association of Rural and Small Libraries (arsl.info/)
- Association of Book Mobile and Outreach Services (www.abos-outreach.com)

WEEK 6: HISTORY OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN THE US (OCTOBER 2)
A. Public library development in the US
B. Movements
C. Supporting public libraries

Preparation:

- ALA Library Bill of Rights: http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill.

DUE October 8: Public Library Community Assessment Assignment
WEEK 7: POLICIES AND POLITICS (OCTOBER 9)
A. Policies regarding public libraries
B. The policy context – and affecting/impact of policies
C. The politics of information access

Preparation:
- Maryland public library law
  (http://www.sailor.lib.md.us/uploadedFiles/sailor/links/MD_PUBLIC_LIBRARIES_2010.pdf)

WEEK 8 – PUBLIC LIBRARY PROGRAMMING AND TARGETED POPULATIONS (OCTOBER 16)
A. Adult services
B. Youth services
C. Special populations
D. Innovation in services

Preparation:

Skim the following for interesting points:
  o http://www.pewinternet.org/~/media//Files/Reports/2013/PIP_Offline%20adults_092513_PDF.pdf
- Pew Internet & American Life Project (2013). Innovative Library Services “In the Wild.”
  o http://libraries.pewinternet.org/2013/01/29/innovative-library-services-in-the-wild/
  o http://libraries.pewinternet.org/2013/01/22/library-services/
WEEK 9: LIBRARY INFRASTRUCTURE AND DESIGN (OCTOBER 23)

A. Technology
B. Broadband
C. Public access
D. The building – old and new
E. Libraries as community anchors
F. Library design in the 21st century

Preparation:
- Building Digitally Inclusive Communities.
- Space considerations: http://www.bdcnetwork.com/evolving-library
- Libraries as Infrastructure: https://placesjournal.org/article/library-as-infrastructure/
- Review (YouTube videos produced by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation)
  - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7cwsrgMOcLA
  - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ENTxYZfrWgg&list=PL6k8NZYKQmEb54y3hgEJ21z64gFPwj8my
  - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G4kyFhZe2so&list=PL6k8NZYKQmEb54v3hgEJ21z64gFPwj8my

WEEK 10: ALL ABOUT THE “E” – CONTENT, SERVICES, AND RESOURCES (OCTOBER 30)

D. The electronic library
E. Social media
F. E-books, e-content
G. Building a digital library

Preparation:
- Maryland Digital Cultural Heritage (http://www.digitalmaryland.org/)
WEEK 11: LIBRARIES AND LIBRARIANS OF THE FUTURE PART I (NOVEMBER 6)
A. Turbulent times
B. Where are public libraries headed?
C. Roles of the future

Preparation:
  - Read the Executive Summary and Introduction. Skim the rest for relevant points.
- Re-Envisioning the MLS White Paper.

WEEK 12: LIBRARIES AND LIBRARIANS OF THE FUTURE PART II (NOVEMBER 13)
A. Community issues and challenges
B. Library roles in meeting community challenges and opportunities
C. What is an MLIS moving forward?

Preparation:
- Watch: *Free the Librarians* by Dave Lankes (recorded November 6, 2014) as part of the University of Maryland’s Re-Envisioning the MLS initiative (details at mls.umd.edu, search on #HackMLS).
  - Details and link to recording at [http://mls.umd.edu/2014/11/re-envisioning-mls-free-librarians/](http://mls.umd.edu/2014/11/re-envisioning-mls-free-librarians/)

WEEK 13: WORK ON ASSIGNMENTS #2 AND #3 (NOVEMBER 20)

This will be a relatively light week, to allow you to enjoy the Thanksgiving holiday. There will be a mandatory discussion board post, asking for an update on your final project and for you to share your thoughts on at least one article you are using for your literature review. The lack of new readings for the course should give you time to work on the final project.
DUE November 22: Your Library Assignment

Note: I originally had this assignment due a week before the Thanksgiving holiday, but I chose to give the class a bit more time. If you will be travelling or have other plans for the break, please plan accordingly and work ahead. I will gladly accept early papers.

WEEK 14: INNOVATION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, AND STE(A)M (NOVEMBER 27)

A. Blowing up the library: Disruption, innovation, and entrepreneurship

Preparation:

• STEAM in public libraries (view ALA webinar archive: https://ala.adobeconnect.com/_a1087453682/p8tapxarpp/?launcher=false&fcsContent=true&pbMode=normal)
• Review Make It @ Your Library: http://makeitasyourlibrary.org/
• Howard County is Going Big with STEM for Teens: http://blog.gale.com/howard-county-going-big-with-stem-for-teens/

WEEK 15: CLASS WRAP-UP (DECEMBER 4)

A. Concluding comments

DUE: December 13 – Final Paper (Project Proposal)