A. Instructor, Office Hours, & Contact Information
Eric Hung, Ph.D., MLIS
Adjunct Lecturer, College of Information Studies
Office Hours are by appointment. Please email me via Canvas. If there is an emergency, please feel free to text or call me at 609-668-9073. Please allow 24 hours for email responses.

B. Catalog Description
Critical analysis of the roles of information professions and institutions in integrating theory, methods, practice, policies, and values of the field, and applying them to the design of future information systems and services.
Prerequisites: LBSC671, LBSC602, and LBSC631; and additional 9 credits of coursework applied to the MLIS degree. Or permission of instructor.

C. Learning Outcomes
This MLIS capstone course requires students to integrate all of the theoretical and practical knowledge they gained in their previous courses, and to apply it to improve information institutions, systems and services. Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify the ways information institutions and information professions are valuable in the past, present and future
- Identify and critique policies, practices and trends that limit the value of information institutions and professions, including problems in:
  - Applying principles of equity, inclusion, rights and justice
  - Applying appropriate professional ethics and values
  - Understanding suitable legal frameworks and political contexts/policies
  - Identifying and evaluating the challenges and opportunities of emerging technologies and innovations
  - Advocating for the value and needs of information institutions
- Apply appropriate theories and research methodologies to study how one can improve problematic policies, practices and trends you have identified
- Demonstrate skills in using methods of inquiry to obtain support for library programs through grant writing.

D. Course Approach and Expectations of Student Participation
This is an asynchronous online course, but I will do my best to simulate classroom engagement techniques via the discussion board. To make things as simple as possible, each class week begins on Monday, and concludes on Sunday. Please begin each class week by reading the week’s detailed notes and viewing the lecture (the first two items in each module). These materials will be released on the Friday or Saturday before the official beginning of the class week. (For example, the notes and lecture for Week 1 will be available by Saturday, January 26.) This lecture will introduce the week’s key questions, introduce the readings, discuss upcoming assignments, and complete the work that needs to be submitted.
E. Professionalism
As a graduate seminar, the class environment should be professional and respectful. Discussions should be based on course readings and critical thinking. Some of the issues discussed in this course can involve strongly held beliefs and current political controversies. Remember: your classmates may have different perspectives on issues than you, but they still deserve your respect.

F. Students with Disabilities
Students with disabilities needing 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.

G. 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 will receive an automatic 10% deduction for every day late.

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. Please visit http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/code.html for more information on the University’s Code of Academic Integrity.

I. Syllabus Change Policy
This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.

J. CourseEvalUM
Participation in the evaluation of courses through CourseEvalUM is a responsibility that students hold as members of our academic community. Student feedback is confidential and important to the improvement of teaching and learning at the University. Please use http://www.courseevalum.umd.edu to complete course evaluations at the end of the semester.

K. Course Materials
There is no required text for the course. All 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.

L. Assignments and Grading
Your grade in this course will be based on:
- Discussion Board Participation (30%)
- Elevator pitch (5%)
- Problem Statement (10%)
• White Paper (15%)
• Advocacy Brief (10%)
• Mini Grant Proposal (20%)
• Grant Proposal Presentation (10%)

All assignments must be submitted on ELMS by 11:59pm on the due date. Late submissions will receive an automatic 10% deduction for every day late.

1. Discussion Board participation (30% of final grade). This seminar is a discussion-based course. Students are expected to complete all readings, to think through the issues raised in the readings, and to articulate thoughts on the materials on the Discussion Board.
   a. There are ten discussion board exercises based on the week’s key questions (26% of final grade). Most of these are case studies where you are presented with a problem that you will try to solve. Please read the weekly notes carefully for your specific assignment on the discussion board. There will be several weeks where I will ask students to play specific roles on the discussion board. The discussion board is designed to be a low-stake space where you can test out-of-the-box ideas. Be creative, as solving tomorrow’s problems will require you to come up with fresh ideas. When you respond to your classmates on the discussion board, be encouraging and help your classmates refine their ideas by asking questions and proposing tweaks that might improve their proposals. Be constructive! Do not flame them under any circumstances! To encourage you to be creative, I will only count your top seven discussion board grades toward your final grade.
   b. There are four discussion boards (4% of final grade) that ask you to submit links to interesting articles (newspaper articles, blogs, vlogs, TED talks, etc.) about the new trends and innovations in GLAM (galleries, libraries, archives, museums) institutions, or about the future of information professions. In week 12, we will use the articles submitted to vote on what questions and topics we want to explore in greater depth in the final two weeks of the semester.

2. The remaining assignments for this class are designed to build upon one another. Near the beginning of the semester, each student will identify a problem faced by an information institution—both the problem and the information institution should be of particular interest to you! I encourage you to work on a “real” problem at a “real” institution, but I know this is not always possible. Through these assignments, you will have the opportunity to examine this problem from different angles—developing an in-depth understanding of the issues and stakeholders, identifying potential solutions, explaining the issues to different audiences, and laying out the details of your proposed project to potential funders.
   a. Elevator Pitch (5% of final grade, due February 21 with peer review due February 24). The ability to explain the importance of a program or an institution in clear and concise language can be extremely important when advocating for support or funding. Getting the attention of the audience is a key first step in getting support. An elevator pitch is a term that means you can state your case in a very short time: the duration of an elevator ride. For this assignment, you will create a 75-second video explaining the importance of the information institution you have selected. You must be very selective in the word chose and messages that you emphasize; you cannot cover every contribution, so you will need to focus on the most significant and unique impacts.
b. Problem Statement (10% of final grade, due March 7 with peer review due March 10). The Problem Statement (500 words) should select a specific information organization (e.g., public library, archive, school media center, academic library, business, government agency, etc.) and a problem it faces. This problem can relate to any aspect of funding, staffing, services, operations, management, or another aspect of the activities of the information organization. Although this is not a requirement, I encourage you to examine a problem that touches on issues we discussed between weeks 2 and 5: inclusion/equity, ethics/value, advocacy/marketing, and preparing institutions for tomorrow’s world. You are expected to 1) provide a concise statement of the problem and its significance, 2) suggest research methods that could be employed to examine the problem; and 3) identify the stakeholders impacted.

c. White Paper (15% of final grade, due March 31). The White Paper (1,500-2,000 words) provides you with the opportunity to offer solutions to an issue faced by information institution or information profession. Taking the problem you originally examined in your Problem Statement assignment, you will draft a White Paper that presents recommendations on how to address the problem to the directors of the organization. Building on your Problem Statement assignment, the readings for the first seven weeks of the class, and outside readings from the literature, the White Paper should: 1) demonstrate a problem; 2) list the options to solving the problem; and 3) propose a best solution to address the problem.

d. Advocacy Brief (10% of final grade, due April 21). When advocating for support of anything, including an information institution, one does not have much time to get and keep the attention of the audience. Using the key elements of your previous two assignments, the Advocacy Brief is a single side of one sheet of paper including whatever content you deem appropriate in any mix of text and graphics that you think best conveys your argument. It should be clear about the problem, the solution being sought, and the impacts of that solution. Imagine it like a flier or brochure. Some free tools are available online (e.g., Piktochart, Venngram, Canva) to help with design and layout. If you are particularly ambitious, I encourage you to learn InDesign.

e. Mini Grant Proposal (proposal: 20%; presentation: 10%, due May 5). Building on all of the previous assignments, you will write a grant proposal narrative and budget to fund a research, demonstration, or educational project to support your ideas outlined in your previous assignments. You should identify a realistic problem and a government agency or foundation appropriate for that problem. The exact requirements will depend on what grant you want to apply to. I will work with you individually to determine what you will need to do. Expect your written proposal to be 2,000-2,500 words long. Then, create a 3-5 minute PowerPoint/Keynote video that simulates an “opening statement” in a meeting with your potential funder.

M. Letter Grades
A+ 97-100  B+ 87-89
A 93-96  B 80-82
A- 90-92  C+ 77-79
B+ 87-89  C 73-76
B 83-86  D+ 67-69
C+ 77-79  D 63-66
C 73-76  D- 60-62
C- 70-72  F 0-59
D+ 67-69
N. Course Schedule and Readings

WEEK 1 (JANUARY 28–FEBRUARY 3): INFORMATION INSTITUTIONS IN SOCIETY

Key questions:

• How have the roles of libraries and archives changed over time? How have these institutions been valuable to society?
• What roles do information institutions currently serve? To put it another way, how are information institutions valuable today?
• What roles should information institutions serve now and in the future?

Readings:


To Submit:

• Discussion Board: Introduction, Value of Your Chosen Information Institution, and Article Critique
• Some time in week 1 or 2, each student should initiate a conversation with me about the institution and problem you want to examine for your term project

WEEK 2 (FEBRUARY 4-10): INCLUSION, EQUITY AND INFORMATION

Key questions:

• How do information institutions find out what their communities need?
• How do information institutions know whether their services are inclusive and equitable?
• How do information institutions make the services they provide more inclusive and equitable?
• Do the information professions need to be more inclusive? Why/why not? If needed, how can greater inclusion be accomplished?

Readings and Viewing:


To Submit:
• Discussion Board: Case Study—propose/discuss potential solutions to two institutions who are working to make their institutions more inclusive and equitable.

**Week 3 (February 11-17): Ethics, Values and Information Professions**

Key topics:
• How have the ethics and values of information professions shifted over the years?
• On what beliefs are the current ethics and values of information professions based?
• What happens when professional practices, personal ethics, cultural beliefs and professional ethics and values clash?

Readings:

To Surf:
• Please spend at least 15 minutes on the Plateau Peoples’ Web Portal: https://plateauportal.libraries.wsu.edu/. I want you to get a sense of how the website works (or does not work). Please look for digital files with multiple records. I will discuss how to do this in my lecture.

To Submit:
• Discussion Board: Case Study—propose/discuss what you would do in the Anglican mission case study.

**Week 4 (February 18-24): Advocacy and Marketing**

Key topics:
• How can information institutions reach decision makers who can help you achieve your objectives?
• How can you market your services to potential patrons?
• What methods can you use to engage stakeholders and funders?

Readings:


To Submit:
- Elevator Pitch
- Discussion Board: Go back to the Agosto article we read in Week 2. Devise an advocacy and/or marketing plans that will increase the use of public libraries by teens.

Week 5 (February 25 - March 3): Transforming the Workplace

Key topics:
- What social, technological, legal, and political changes will affect the future of the information professions?
- How can we prepare for the future?

Readings:

To Submit:
- Discussion Board: Case Study—discuss an attempt to change workplace culture in an academic library.

Week 6 (March 4-10): Approaches to Inquiry

Key topics:
- What theories and methodologies are useful for studying information institutions and professions?
- How do we know what the stakeholders are?
- How are theories, methods, and practices related to each other in the information professions?

Readings:

To submit:
• Problem Statement and Three Peer Reviews

**Week 7 (March 11-17): Acting on Inquiry**

Key topics:
• How do information institutions go about designing inquiry and action?
• How do information institutions incorporate inquiry into organizational operations?
• How do information institutions disseminate findings and action plans?

Readings:
• Selected annual reports

To submit:
• Discussion Board: Compare and contrast three of the annual reports on ELMS. Which was the most effective and why? Which was the least effective and why?

**Week 8 (March 18-24): Spring Break**

**Week 9 (March 25-31): Policy & Political Contexts of Information Professions**

Key topics:
• How are information policies made and enacted?
• How are information policies inspired by information ethics, values, and technology?
• How do information ethics and professional norms challenge laws and policy?

Readings:

To submit:
• White Paper

**WEEK 10 (APRIL 1-7): GRANT WRITING AND ADMINISTRATION**

Key topics:
• How do information professionals find grants for which they can apply?
• What are the key principles of grant writing? What information do you need to have to write a successful grant?
• Once you receive a grant, how do you administer the grant?

Readings and Viewings:
• Review the websites of IMLS, NSF, NIH, and the Department of Education for grants information
• Selected Videos from the Foundation Center

To submit:
• Discussion Board: Find two appropriate grants for each of two classmates’ grant projects. For each grant, provide a link to the grant information and 2-3 sentences explaining why you chose this grant.

**WEEK 11 (APRIL 8-14): LEGAL CONTEXTS OF INFORMATION PROFESSIONS**

Key topics:
• Laws and legal frameworks for the information professions
• Sources of laws related to the information professions
• Professional practice within legal contexts

Readings:

To submit:
• Discussion Board: Case Study TBA

**WEEK 12 (APRIL 15-21): CAREER STRATEGIES, CVs, COVER LETTERS**

Key topics:
• Laws and legal frameworks for the information professions
• Sources of laws related to the information professions
• Professional practice within legal contexts

Readings:
• Selected Sections of SJSU Career Development webpage (https://slisweb.sjsu.edu/career-development)
• Various Job Listings

To submit:
• Advocacy Brief

**Week 13 (April 22-28): Beyond the Traditional Careers**

Key topics:
• Laws and legal frameworks for the information professions
• Sources of laws related to the information professions
• Professional practice within legal contexts

Readings and Viewings:
• Interviews with MLS/MLIS graduates who do information-related work outside public/academic/government libraries and archives.

To submit:
• Discussion Board: CV and Cover Letter for a Specific Vacancy; then Peer Review

**Week 14 (April 29-May 5): Future Trends, Changing Service Models I**

• The question(s)/topic(s) for this week will be determined by student vote in Week 12.

Readings:
• Other readings TBA

To submit:
• Mini Grant Proposal and Presentation
• Discussion Board: TBA

**Week 15 (May 6-14): Future Trends, Changing Service Models II**

• The question(s)/topic(s) for this week will be determined by student vote in Week 12.

Readings:
• To be announced

To submit:
• Discussion Board: TBA