UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, COLLEGE PARK

Public Library Seminar (LBSC 724)
3 credit hours
Spring 2015 Syllabus
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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. Goals of Course
The primary goals of this course are to prepare students to:

- Understand the historical development of public libraries in the U.S.;
- Understand how the public library has evolved over time;
- Understand the policy and political context of public libraries;
- Understand the community and social context in which public libraries reside;
- Understand the traditional and emerging services and roles of public libraries;
- Be familiar with the ethics and values of public librarianship; and
- Develop skills to plan, implement, and evaluate public library programs.

D. Copyright
Copyright 2015 John Carlo Bertot as to this syllabus and all lectures.

E. 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 to which all registered students have access once logged into the new ELMS (Canvas). The course

material will consist of readings, recorded lectures, and other forms of making content available and interaction possible.

There is no required text for the class, however I do recommend: McCook, Kathleen de la Peña. (2011). *Introduction to Public Librarianship* (2nd Edition). Neil-Schuman Publishers: New York, NY. ISBN 978-1555706975. We do use some chapters from this book and overall, it is a good resource to have regarding public libraries.

It is essential that each student participates in the discussions of course materials. Participation means active involvement in class discussions. Students read the assigned readings for each week PRIOR TO THAT WEEK. The students are expected to question, challenge, argue, and discuss issues and topics related to that session's readings. Failure to participate in the course will result in a letter grade of F for this component. In general, I post 1-2 questions per week in the discussion area of Canvas for you to react to, respond, and engage. More details regarding participation are below.

F. Assignments and Grading
Your grade will be based on five items:

Assignment	Grading	Due Dates
Participation	15%	Throughout
Public Library Selection	0%	February 21
Public Library Community Assessment	30%	March 7
Your Library	25%	April 11
Transforming Communities Presentations and Paper	30% (10% presentation; 20% Paper)	Presentations: May 4 Papers: May 16

Letter Grade Equivalents

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

Written materials for this course should be double-spaced, using 12-point Times New Roman font. The margins should be 1 inch on each side. Citations—both in the text and in the references section—should conform to the most recent style manual of your choice (e.g., APA, Chicago). Pages should be numbered and the format consistent. Papers are to be submitted via ELMS on their specified due dates in Word or a Word compatible format (i.e., RTF format). I insert my comments directly in your papers and this makes it easier to do so.

1. **Participation (**15% of final grade**)**. You are expected to read all of the assignments, to think through the issues they raise, and to articulate your thoughts on the materials. In this course, each week's assignments include both reading assigned articles and examining assigned websites. Our discussions will occur via discussion boards in Canvas (asynchronous). Students should post to the discussion boards at least twice during the week – once to initially answer or comment on posted questions and again to comment on/expand on posted comments by other students.

Reminder: this is the "floor" – I hope that you will engage in discussions on our topic throughout the week. Students should feel free to introduce their own questions and observations based on the readings to engage in further discussion. Many of you are familiar with online instruction, but I find it useful to set a time each day to go to the site, read comments, and respond.

If you run into participation issues due to illness, religious observances, and other reasons in line with university policies, just let me know. We all run into issues periodically.

2. **Public Library Selection** (0%). Students should identify and select a public library in the US (the choice is yours), along with the community it serves (e.g., a particular county, city, township, neighborhood, etc.). I will work with you to identify a library, if you don't already have one in mind. I would like to avoid overlap in the libraries students select to the extent possible.

US public libraries are often parsed into systems and branches. A vast majority of public libraries (over 80%) are one-building systems with no branches and have a range of structures. For libraries with branches, you will often see that one is considered the "main" branch, holding the largest collection and offering the most services. In Maryland, for example, there are 24 public library systems (23 counties + Baltimore). The Prince George's County Library is a system with 19 branches (http://www.pgcmls.info/LibraryBranches). As you further develop your public library assignment throughout the semester, you may want to focus on a particular branch.

As a courtesy, it would be appropriate to ask the librarian at the library you wish to select if he/she is willing to let you use the library as the focus of your assignments. This serves two purposes: 1) it explains why you are so interested in the library and are asking questions, and 2) it provides the librarian an opportunity to explore aspects of the library with you.

For the assignment, please identify the library you have selected, how many branches it has (if any), the jurisdiction it serves (e.g., county, city, etc.), and provide a brief explanation of the reason for selection. The assignment should be one-two page range, double-spaced.

3. **Public Library Community Assessment** (30%). Based on the library and community selected in Assignment 2, students should ask:

1) Who/what is the library's service population?
2) What are the library's demographics (e.g., Professional and overall FTEs, circulation, operating budget, collection, etc.)?
3) What seem to be the community's challenges? To the extent possible, look at high school graduation rates, overall education levels, poverty, unemployment, and other indicators. You may find a tool we've developed useful for this assignment: http://digitalinclusion.umd.edu/content/interactive-map. It's an interactive map that combines libraries, Census and other community data, and data from our (Information Policy & Access Center) digital inclusion survey project funded by the US Institute of Museum and Library Services.
4) In what ways (preliminary assessment) do you consider that the library is meeting the community's challenges?

Students should include demographic information about the community and institutional metrics about the library and agency selected, especially relying on the discussions and points raised in the assigned readings that discuss library and e-government management practice. Institutional metrics might include Professional and overall FTEs, Operating Budget, Collections, Public Access Computers, Circulation. Service population demographics might include income levels, high school/college education rate, unemployment, Internet access in the home, percentage of population in poverty, unemployment rate, immigrant populations. Your preliminary look at how the library is meeting community needs might include looking at Jobs/employment programs, Information Literacy and Technology Training courses offered, health information programs.

In other words, examine the statistical resources offered by federal and state agencies (Census, economic data, transportation data, social information about education levels and schooling, public library data, etc.) and develop a profile of the library and its community. You may want to highlight any notable trends you can identify (e.g., population growth, shifts in demographics since last census). We will build on this assignment during the semester.

The paper should be in the 15-page double-spaced range, and I would anticipate use of graphs and tables to facilitate the presentation.

4. **Your Library** (25% of final grade). For this assignment, go in-depth on the public library you selected for the Public Library Community Assessment. Look at its organizational structure, service hours, number of branches, size/space for each branch, programs offered, etc. In short, this assignment is about you getting to know the structure of the library, how it runs, and the services provided. You may want to focus on a particular branch (i.e., the main branch) for this assignment and do a more thorough analysis on that branch, but you should still provide at least an overview of the entire library system. Not all libraries have branches – that is, they are one building library systems (you encounter this more in the rural and town areas).

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. I do encourage you to 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 would be happy to write a letter that describes the course and intent of the assignment, or to make introductions if I happen to know the library.

Examples of what to look for:

- 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).

The paper should be in the 10-15-page double-spaced range.

5. **Transforming Communities: Final Paper and Presentation (**30% of your final grade; 20% for the paper, 10% for the presentation**).** Looking across the community attributes, challenges, and needs (Public Library Community Assessment assignment), in combination with your assessment of the library (Your Library assignment), develop a paper that reviews how the library is—or could be – transforming its community. Things to consider:

- How is the library developing its services and making its resource selections?
  - o Are community needs considered? If so, how?
- Is the library working with any community organizations to provide services/meet community needs?
- What challenges in particular is the library attempting to address?
  - o How does the library determine it is successful?
- What trends are facing the community (e.g., diversity, population growth, more youth, more seniors, Internet access) that the library should be/is considering in its services/resources?
- Are there community goals (e.g., a strategic plan/vision)?
  - o How are library services/resources helping to realize these strategies/vision?

For the presentation you will use Present.me (ipac.present.me). This is a presentation platform that resides outside of Canvas. More general information on Present.me is available at https://present.me/content/tutorials/. I will create accounts for you and send out account information. We will have a separate "class" for LBSC 724 on our site, and I will offer a tutorial a bit further into the semester.

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.

Students will view each other's presentations on the ipac.present.me site and then discuss/comment in the course Discussion area that I will set up for this.

Papers should be approximately 15 double-spaced pages.
Presentations should be in the 10-minute range.

G. Classroom Environment
As a graduate seminar, the classroom environment should be professional and respectful. Discussions should be based on course readings and critical thinking. Remember--your classmates may have different perspectives on issues than you, but they still deserve your respect. As another aspect of respect in the classroom environment, turn off or mute all phones and other communication devices during our in-person class sessions. If you use your laptop in the classroom, limit the usage of the computer to course-related reasons (i.e., taking notes).

H. 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.

I. Extensions

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

J. 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.

K. Emergency Preparedness

Information about the status of the campus is available at www.umd.edu. If the campus is closed, please make sure to stay safe. Information about possible rescheduling of course activities will be provided via e-mail once the campus has reopened.

L. Office Hours & Contact Information

I am always available to you by appointment. Send me an e-mail (jbertot@umd.edu) and we will set up a time to meet – by phone, skype, or chat, or in person. I will work around your schedule to the extent possible.

M. Weekly Topics, Readings, and Review Material

The class begins on January 26, 2015 and ends May 12, 2015. Each week (lecture + discussion) runs Monday-Sunday, but in general, I post lectures on Sundays. I encourage you to bring in outside readings and observations to enhance our discussions.

N. Syllabus Change Policy

This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice and discussion with students.

O. Weekly Topics and Assignments

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTORY MATTERS; OVERALL SERVICE CONTEXT; PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN THE US (JANUARY 26)
  A. Introduction to course and discussion of course expectations
  B. Overview of topics and concepts to be covered
  C. Setting the public library context
  D. Public libraries in the US: definitions, data, and more

Preparation:

- McCook: Chapters 1 & 4 (pages 76-77)
- Public Libraries in the US (Public Libraries in the US: Fiscal Year 2011. Available at: http://www.imls.gov/assets/1/workflow_staging/AssetManager/4487.PDF). Note: The FY 2012 dataset is out, but not the report at this time.

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

Preparation:
- McCook: Chapters 2 & 3

WEEK 3: PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS, PLANNING, ROLE-SETTING, AND STATISTICS (FEBRUARY 9)
  A. Public library standards
  B. Planning and role setting
  C. Public library statistics

Preparation:
- McCook: Chapter 4
- Maryland Public Library Statistics FY2013 (http://www.sailor.lib.md.us/links/?id=56870)
- Some sample state public library standards
    o Texas (https://www.tsl.texas.gov/plstandards/index.html)
    o Indiana (http://www.in.gov/library/standards.htm)
    o Wisconsin (http://pld.dpi.wi.gov/pld_standard)
    o Virginia (http://www.lva.virginia.gov/lib-edu/ldnd/standards/default.asp)
    o Kansas (this one is particularly interesting as it tries to establish guidelines for broadband connectivity -- http://systems.mykansaslibrary.org/wp-content/uploads/2012-Public-Library-Standards-Approved-October-12-2012.pdf).

WEEK 4: POLICIES AND POLITICS (FEBRUARY 16)
  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_201
    0.pdf)
  - Jaeger, P.T., Bertot, J.C., Gorham, U. (2013). Wake Up the Nation: Public Libraries,
    Policy Making, and Political Discourse. *Library Quarterly, 83*(1): 61-72. Stable URL:
    http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/668582.
  - The Tea Party vs. The Public Library. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-morris/the-
    tea-party-vs-the-publ_b_3768714.html
  - Clemons, R. S., McBeth, M. K. and Kusko, E. (2012), Understanding the Role of Policy
    Narratives and the Public Policy Arena: Obesity as a Lesson in Public Policy
    Development. *World Medical & Health Policy, 4*: 1-26. doi: 10.1515/1948-4682.1220

DUE February 21: Public Library Selection Assignment

WEEK 5: ADMINISTRATION, STAFFING, AND MANAGEMENT (FEBRUARY 23)

  A. Library organization
  B. Library boards
  C. Library staff
  D. Unions
  E. Rural and small public libraries
  F. Some emerging trends

Preparation:
  - Check out: http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/charter/
    o This page presents a number of resources about establishing a public library,
       governance, and other issues.
  - For some humor, see the section on "you know you are a rural librarian if…." At
    http://arsl.info/category/resources/ ; but while there you will find useful resources
    describing the nature of "rural" and "small."

WEEK 6 – LIBRARY STRUCTURE AND DESIGN (MARCH 2)
  A. The building – old and new
  B. Libraries as community anchors
  C. Library design in the 21st century

Preparation:
  - Space considerations: http://www.bdcnetwork.com/evolving-library

- Library Design Showcase 2014: http://www.americanlibrariesmagazine.org/article/2014-library-design-showcase
- 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=PL6k8NZYKQmEb54y3hgEJ21z64gFPwj8mv
  - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G4kyFhZe2so&list=PL6k8NZYKQmEb54y3hgEJ21z64gFPwj8mv

DUE March 7: Public Library Community Assessment Assignment

WEEK 7 – PUBLIC LIBRARY PROGRAMMING (MARCH 9)
A. Adult services
B. Youth services
C. Special populations
D. Innovation in services

Preparation:
- Innovative library services "in the wild" – Pew Internet & American Life Project (2013)
  - http://libraries.pewinternet.org/2013/01/29/innovative-library-services-in-the-wild/
  - http://libraries.pewinternet.org/2013/01/22/library-services/
  - Full report: http://libraries.pewinternet.org/files/legacy-pdf/PIP_Library%20services_Report.pdf

WEEK 8 – SPRING BREAK (MARCH 16)

WEEK 9: LIBRARY INFRASTRUCTURE (MARCH 23)
A. Technology
B. Broadband
C. Public access

Preparation:
- Building Digitally Inclusive Communities.
  - Institute of Museum and Library Services, University of Washington, International City/ County Management Association. (2012). *Building Digital Communities: A framework for action.* Washington, DC: Institute of Museum and Library Services. Available at: http://www.imls.gov/assets/1/workflow_staging/AssetManager/2140.PDF.
- Review the 2013 Digital Inclusion Survey results
  - http://digitalinclusion.umd.edu/content/reports
- Explore the issue briefs Explore the issue briefs/issue areas in broadband, digital literacy, digital inclusion, community access, e-government, and employment
  - http://digitalinclusion.umd.edu/issue-briefs

WEEK 10: THE CONNECTED NATURE OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES (MARCH 30)
  A. State libraries
  B. Consortia
  C. Professional associations

Preparation:
  • Sailor (www.lib.md.us)
  • Maryland Library Association (http://www.mdlib.org/)
  • American Library Association (www.ala.org)
  • Tampa Bay Library Consortium (http://tblc.org/)
  • Maryland AskUsNow! (http://www.askusnow.info/)
  • Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (http://www.cosla.org/)
  • DRAFT Report:
    ○ *State Library Agency Organizations: Roles, Structures, and Services* (Bertot& White, 2014). Available in ELMS.

WEEK 11: ALL ABOUT THE "E" – CONTENT, SERVICES, AND RESOURCES (APRIL 6)
  D. The electronic library
  E. Social media
  F. E-books, e-content
  G. Building a digital library

Preparation:
  • *American Libraries* "Digital Content: What's Next" digital supplement. Available at http://www.americanlibrariesmagazine.org/issue/e-content-digital-supplement-june-2013
  • Maryland Digital Cultural Heritage (http://www.mdch.org/)

DUE April 11: Your Library Assignment

WEEK 12: LIBRARIES AND LIBRARIANS OF THE FUTURE PART I (APRIL 13)
  A. Turbulent times
  B. Where are public libraries headed?
  C. Roles of the future

Preparation:
  • Snapshots of a Turbulent World. American Library Association, Office for Information Technology Policy (OITP), 2014.
    ○ http://www.districtdispatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/ALA_Trends_Report_Policy_Revolution_Aug19_2014.pdf
  • Aspen Institute. (2014). Rising to the Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries.
    ○ http://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/rising-challenge-re-envisioning-public-libraries

WEEK 13: LIBRARIES AND LIBRARIANS OF THE FUTURE PART II (APRIL 20)
    A. Community issues and challenges
    B. Library roles in meeting community challenges and opportunities
    C. What is an MLS moving forward?

Preparation:
- The Seattle Foundation. (2006). A Healthy Community: What You Need to Know to give Strategically. Seattle, WA: The Seattle Foundation. Available at: http://www.seattlefoundation.org/aboutus/Documents/10029170_HCReport_web.pdf.
- Re-Envisioning the MLS White Paper. Available at http://mls.umd.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/WhitePaper_9.30.14.pdf.
- Hancks, Jeffrey W. (2012). Rural Public Libraries' Role in Community Economic Development. *Public Library Quarterly, 31*(2): 220-236. **DOI:** 10.1080/01616846.2012.707108.
- Watch: *Free the Librarians* by Dave Lankes (recorded November 6, 2014) as part of our 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/

WEEK 14: INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP (APRIL 29)
    A. Blowing up the library: Disruption, innovation, and entrepreneurship

Preparation:
- Lepore, Jill (2014). The Disruption Machine: What the Gospel of Innovation Gets Wrong. *New Yorker*, June 23.
- STEAM in public libraries (view ALA webinar archive: https://ala.adobeconnect.com/_a1087453682/p8tapgxarpp/?launcher=false&fcsContent=true&pbMode=normal)
- Review Make It @ Your Library: http://makeitatyourlibrary.org/
- Phills, J.A., Deiglmeier, K., & Miller, D.T. (2008). Rediscovering Social Innovation. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/rediscovering_social_innovation/.

WEEK 15: PRESENTATIONS (MAY 4)

- Presentations via Present.me (ipac.present.me, LBSC724); discussions in ELMS.

WEEK 16: CLASS WRAP-UP (MAY 11)
    A. Concluding comments

DUE: May 16 – Final Paper