INST 728K-0101 Consumer Health Informatics  
College of Information Studies, University of Maryland  
Spring 2014  
Thursdays 6:00 to 8:45 PM  
Hornbake Building, Room 4113

Beth St. Jean, Assistant Professor  
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Office Hours: Mondays, 4:00 to 5:30 PM or by appointment

“The doctor of the future will give no medication, but will interest his patients in the care of the human frame, in diet, and in the cause and prevention of disease.” (Thomas A. Edison, 1902)

COURSE DESCRIPTION: What types of information do people facing a health-related concern need and how do they go about looking for and making use of this information? How do their information-related behaviors (e.g., searching for information) relate to their health-related behaviors (e.g., dieting) and how do these both influence their ultimate health outcomes? This course will provide students with an introduction to the field of consumer health informatics, with a particular emphasis on the interrelationships between consumer health information behavior and health behavior. We will explore information behavior models, health behavior models, and the connections between them. We will also discuss social support, social networks, and Medicine 2.0. The course will wrap-up with a discussion of the outcomes found to be associated with health-related information seeking.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a familiarity with consumer health informatics and with the related fields of information behavior and health behavior.
2. Identify and describe the major types of factors found to influence people’s health-related information behaviors and their health behaviors.
3. Understand the important interrelationships between a person’s health-related information behavior and his/her health behaviors and recognize the importance of taking a holistic, integrated approach to investigating both of these types of behaviors.
4. Demonstrate a familiarity with many of the major models of information behavior and several of the major models of health behavior and understand the interrelationships between these two types of models.
5. Identify the information behavior models and health behavior models that are likely to be the most relevant, applicable, and fruitful in relation to a particular patient population.
6. Apply information behavior models and health behavior models, alone and in concert, in designing research investigations and in designing and evaluating interventions to assist particular patient populations with their needs for information and with their endeavors to enact this information within the context of their day-to-day lives.
TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS: This course will be taught in a seminar fashion. The primary methods of instruction for this course will be lecture, course readings, and presentations and in-class discussion relevant to course readings. You will be expected to have read the assigned readings in preparation for each class meeting. Additionally, you will be expected to actively participate in class discussions.

READING MATERIALS: There are two required textbooks for this course:


These two texts and the following additional books you will need are all being placed on reserve for your use:


Many of the journal articles that are required readings for this course are available through our class Canvas site (see the “Files” section).

Although it is not required for this course, you may wish to browse through some of the following relevant journals/magazines and/or sign up to receive automatic alerts as new issues come out:

**General Information Behavior:**

- *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology (JASIS&T)*
- *Library & Information Science Research (LISR)*
- *Journal of Information Science*
- *Information Society*
- *Information Processing & Management (IP&M)*
- *Journal of Documentation (JDOC)*
- *Library Quarterly*
- *Information Research* ([http://informationr.net/ir/](http://informationr.net/ir/))
Specifically Health-Related:

- *Journal of Medical Internet Research (JMIR)* ([http://www.jmir.org/](http://www.jmir.org/))
- *Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association (JAMIA)* ([http://jamia.bmj.com/](http://jamia.bmj.com/))
- Social Science & Medicine
- *Qualitative Health Research (QHR)*
- *Sociology of Health & Illness*
- *Journal of Health Communication*
- *Journal of the Medical Library Association (JMLA)*
- *Health Psychology*
- *Health Education and Behavior*

**COURSE POLICIES:**

**Attendance:** Students are expected to attend every class and to be present on time. If you will be unable to make a class, please e-mail me beforehand and please be sure to check in with a fellow student following class so that you can catch up on anything you missed. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class session. Absences will only be excused in accordance with University policy (illness, religious observances, participation in University activities at the request of University authorities, and compelling circumstances beyond your control). Any planned absences due to religious observances must be communicated to me in writing during the first two weeks of class. Students may miss one class session with no penalty; thereafter, each unexcused absence will result in your grade being lowered by one step (for example, an A- will become a B+). Repeated tardiness may be considered an unexcused absence.

**Class Participation:** Students are expected to actively participate in every class. This will require that you finish all assigned readings prior to each class session. Participation forms an integral part of your own learning experience, as well as that of your classmates. Your participation in classroom discussions will count for 10% of your final grade. Class participation grades will take into account both the quantity and quality of your contributions to class discussions; however, the quality of your contributions (whether questions, viewpoints, responses to others’ questions, etc.) to a meaningful, ongoing discussion will be much more heavily weighted. Classroom discussions should remain professional and respectful at all times. Please be sure to silence your cell phones before entering class. Laptop use is permitted during class, but only for class-related activities.

**Written Work:** Please be sure to include your name and the course number on all of your assignments. All written work should be proofread and revised as necessary before you submit it. Use Times New Roman 12-point font and one-inch margins. All documents should be single-spaced. Be sure to organize your papers, using section and subsection headings to identify portions of your work. Use APA Style for in-text citations and reference lists. There are many resources about APA style available on the Internet. See, for example, [http://www.lib.umd.edu/ues/guides/citing-apa](http://www.lib.umd.edu/ues/guides/citing-apa); [http://www.apastyle.org/learn/faqs/index.aspx](http://www.apastyle.org/learn/faqs/index.aspx).

**Submitting Assignments:** Each assignment must be submitted before the beginning of class on the indicated due date through our Canvas site. Please submit only one file per assignment (Word or pdf format for papers; PowerPoint for presentations).
Late Work: Unless you are facing an emergency situation AND you request an extension from me at least 48 hours in advance of the due date, late work will automatically be graded down by one step for each day that it is late. Assignments more than seven days late will not be accepted.

Academic Integrity: The University of Maryland, College Park has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity administered by the Student Honor Council. This Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit www.shc.umd.edu. To further exhibit your commitment to academic integrity, remember to type and sign the Honor Pledge on all examinations and assignments: “I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this examination (assignment).” When submitting an assignment electronically, there is no need to sign the pledge – your submission of the assignment with this sentence included implies your signature.

All assignments in this class must reflect your own original work. You must cite and properly attribute any material quoted or paraphrased from some other source. Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism, cheating, buying assignments, submitting the same paper more than once, forging signatures, submitting fraudulent documents, facilitating the academic dishonesty of others, etc. Infractions may result in a penalty, such as a failing grade on a specific assignment or for the entire course or even expulsion from the University. Please read and adhere to the University of Maryland Code of Academic Integrity (http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/docs/III-100A.pdf). You may also find this Office of Student Conduct definition of academic dishonesty to be helpful: http://osc.umd.edu/OSC/AcademicDishonesty.aspx.

Emergency Preparedness: Please see the University’s Emergency Preparedness Website (http://www.umd.edu/emergencypreparedness/) for information about the current status of the campus. If a class session needs to be rescheduled, I will e-mail you as soon as possible.

Syllabus Change Policy: This syllabus is subject to change with advance notice. If a change becomes necessary, I will announce the change in class and e-mail all of you.

Student Course Evaluations (CourseEvalUM): Toward the end of the semester (Tuesday, April 29th through Friday, May 14th), you will have an opportunity to evaluate this course. Your participation in these evaluations is integral to the success of our school. Your feedback will remain completely confidential and will be immensely valuable in improving our school’s teaching effectiveness and learning environments. Beginning April 29th, please go to https://www.courseevalum.umd.edu/ to complete your evaluation of this course. If over 70% of the students in the class complete their evaluation, you will be able to access the aggregate results through Testudo.

Special Accommodations: If you need any accommodations due to a disability, please first register with the Disability Support Service (DSS) office (http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS/) and file any required documentation, and then see me as early as possible in the semester to let me know. We can then work with DSS to determine how to best accommodate your needs.

Academic Assistance: Learning Assistance Service (College Park): If you are experiencing difficulties in keeping up with the academic demands of this course, please consider contacting the Learning Assistance Service, 2202 Shoemaker Building, 301-314-7693,
http://www.counseling.umd.edu/LAS/. Their educational counselors can help with time management, reading, math learning skills, note-taking and exam preparation skills. All of their services are free to UMD students.

EVALUATION:

Your final grade will be calculated based on the weighting of course assignments shown in the following table. All assignments must be submitted through our class Canvas site prior to the start of class on the due date indicated. Please note that your slides or any other electronic materials you’ve prepared for your final presentation need to be uploaded to Canvas no later than noon on Thursday, May 8th. Also, your final paper needs to be submitted to the Assignments section of our Canvas site by noon on Friday, May 16th.

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<th>Assignment Description</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>Every class meeting</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Model/Theory Presentation</td>
<td>Variable</td>
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<td>3-P</td>
<td>Final Project: Proposal</td>
<td>February 27, 2014</td>
<td>Check-off</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Health Information Seeking Account</td>
<td>March 13, 2014</td>
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<td>3-AB</td>
<td>Final Project: Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>April 17, 2014</td>
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<td>3-Pr</td>
<td>Final Project: Presentation</td>
<td>May 8, 2014 (noon)</td>
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<td>3-Pa</td>
<td>Final Project: Paper</td>
<td>May 16, 2014 (noon)</td>
<td>25%</td>
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**Recommended:**  
| 13   | 4/24   | Social Networks and Social Support; Medicine 2.0                      | **Required:**  
**Recommended:**  
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<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
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| 14   | 5/1  | Outcomes of Health-Related Information Seeking | **Required:**  
**Recommended:**  

*** IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS OF FINAL PROJECTS ***

3-Pa Final Project Paper: Post by noon on Friday, May 16th
Assignment 1: Model/Theory Presentation

Due Dates:
   a) Model/Theory Selection: Discuss in class on February 6, 2014
   b) Model/Theory Presentation: Variable dates (20%)

For this assignment, identify either a health behavior or information behavior model or theory that is particularly interesting to you. This can be a model/theory that we will cover in class or it can be one that is not included on the syllabus. For a list of information behavior theories/models, see the table of contents of Fisher et al.’s (1995) book, *Theories of Information Behavior*: [http://ibec.ischool.washington.edu/static/pubs/ibtheorybooktoc.pdf](http://ibec.ischool.washington.edu/static/pubs/ibtheorybooktoc.pdf). For a list of health behavior theories/models, see the table of contents of Glanz et al.’s (2008) book, *Health Behavior and Health Education: Theory, Research, and Practice*: [http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0787996149.html](http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0787996149.html). Please come to class on February 6th prepared to talk approximately 5 minutes about which model or theory you would like to present in class at a later date.

Based on our discussion on February 6th, each of you will have a unique model or theory that you will present to the class and then lead a class discussion. Once I know which models/theories all of you have selected, I will slot each of them into the week that I feel is the best fit. Please feel free to suggest a particular week during your brief presentation on February 6th.

Once you have selected a model or theory to cover, identify at least 3 (additional) readings that are relevant to your selected model or theory and prepare to give a presentation and lead a class discussion. For planning purposes, your entire session (including Q & A) should be approximately 30 minutes. Please be sure to include a slide (or provide a hand-out) that lists the readings that formed the basis for your presentation. You may also wish to provide a list of ideas for further reading just in case I and/or other students wish to learn more about your selected model or theory.
Assignment 2: Health Information Seeking Account

Due Date: March 13, 2014 (20%)

For this assignment, either recall a recent time when you went looking for health-related information or interview someone else about a recent time when he/she went looking for health-related information. Prepare a 3- to 5-page (single-spaced) paper in which you first describe the information need and the context in which it occurred, the information-seeking actions which you/your interviewee did or did not undertake (including the specific sources that you/your interviewee consulted and why), and the ways in which you/your interviewee did (or did not) use the information that you/your interviewee had found. Next, discuss and explain whether there is anything that you/your interviewee would change about your/her information seeking and/or information use if you/your interviewee were to encounter a similar type of information need in the future. In the final section of your paper, select one information behavior model from our readings and discuss its applicability to your/your interviewee’s information behaviors. Does this model or theory adequately/accurately describe and/or explain your/your interviewee’s information behaviors? Why or why not? If applicable, discuss whether any particular health behavior model or theory is relevant to your account.
Assignment 3: Final Project

Due Dates:
   a) Proposal (3-P): Due February 27, 2014 (check-off)
   b) Annotated Bibliography (3-AB): Due April 17, 2014 (10%)
   c) Presentation (3-Pr): Due by noon on May 8, 2014 (15%)
   d) Paper (3-Pa): Due by noon on Friday, May 16, 2014 (25%)

Your final project for this course will be a research paper discussing the potential usefulness of at least one specific information behavior model and at least one specific health behavior model for investigating and effectively addressing the information needs and information use practices of people dealing with a particular illness.

First, select a group of people to focus on – this should be a group of people who are facing a particular illness. Identify at least five papers that report empirical results related to the information behavior of your selected population. Next, identify at least one information behavior model and at least one health behavior model that you feel are particularly well-suited to your selected population. Read at least one article that focuses on your selected information behavior model and at least one article that focuses on your selected health behavior model. Consider the fit of these models, alone and in concert, for your selected population. Discuss how these models might be used, individually and in combination, to help this population with their information needs and with enacting information within the context of their everyday lives. In conclusion, discuss the potential significance of using these models, alone and in concert, for helping this population to be able to find and to make use of health-related information.

By February 27th, submit a very brief proposal (approximately 1 page) in which you indicate and briefly describe the population (and illness) that you have chosen to focus on. Your proposal also needs to include citations for at least five articles that report empirical results regarding the information behavior of your selected population. These articles should be ones that you are planning to read and use for your final project.

By April 17th, submit an annotated bibliography. For each article you will be using for your final project, provide a citation in APA style, a brief summary, and a critical appraisal. Be sure to also explain how each paper is relevant to your final project. This paper should be approximately 4 pages long (approximately one-half page for each article you discuss). Be sure to include annotations not only for the five information behavior articles you have identified, but also for the articles pertaining to the information behavior model and the health behavior model you have selected.

Both your presentation and your paper need to include the following sections:

1. Introduction: Which population did you decide to focus on? What is the nature of the illness these individuals are dealing with? Why did you feel it would be interesting to investigate the information behavior of people with this particular illness?

2. Literature Review:
   a. What do we know about the information behavior of this particular population? Your discussion should draw on at least five articles reporting results from empirical studies of this population’s information behavior.
   b. Which information behavior model(s) have you selected? What does this model have to say about people’s information behavior?
c. Which health behavior model(s) did you select? What does this model have to say about people’s health behavior?

3. Discussion:
   a. Why do you feel that the information behavior model(s) you have selected is (are) particularly relevant for this population?
   b. Why do you feel that the health behavior model(s) you have selected is (are) particularly relevant for this population?
   c. What are the interrelationships between these models?
   d. What are the strengths of this particular combination of models for investigating and addressing the information needs and information use practices of your selected population? What are the weaknesses?

4. Conclusion: What is the significance and potential impact of using this combination of models to investigate and address the information needs and information use practices of your selected population? How might using this combination of models get us further than using any of the models alone in understanding the information behavior of this population, in designing future research investigations, and in designing and evaluating information-related interventions for this population?

5. References (APA style)

You will have 20 minutes for your presentation. Please plan to talk for approximately 15 minutes and to field questions from the audience for the remaining 5 minutes.

Your final paper should be between six and eight pages single-spaced. As you will have some time to work on your paper following your presentation, please be sure to consider incorporating any feedback you receive from me and/or from your fellow students during your presentation.