COLLEGE OF INFORMATION STUDIES
Spring 2012

**LBSC 622**  Information and Universal Usability  
Mondays, 2:00-4:45 p.m.  
Hornbake Building, South Wing, 2119

**INSTRUCTOR**  Dr. Mega M Subramaniam  
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**OFFICE HOURS**  Can be arranged by appointment

**COURSE SPACE**  http://elms.umd.edu

**CLASS TWITTER**  @LBSC622

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course follows Diverse Populations, Inclusion and Information (LBSC 620) and builds on the concepts of that course. This course focuses on the use and challenges of information services and technologies to provide equal experiences and outcomes to all users. Laws, standards, approaches, component concepts, access needs, and technologies in relation to physical and online information environments.

**COURSE GOALS**

Goals of this course are to increase students’ knowledge of:  
- The limitations that many diverse populations experience in their desire to gain information for education and for pleasure  
- The need for libraries to improve the technology available to the special needs of their patrons  
- The types of materials that should be part of every collection  
- The variety of programming options that should be available, at minimal cost  
- The ways in which libraries can take on a leadership role in assuring Universal Usability to all of their patrons both within their buildings and within the community  
- Organizations with which libraries may wish to partnership to increase services to diverse populations
TEXT


READINGS

As assigned (See list at the end of this syllabus).

COURSE METHOD

The course will be conducted as a seminar. It is essential that every student participate 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’S MEETING.

Based on critical examination of course readings, each student should develop an analytical stance concerning the issues in the course. The students are expected to question, challenge, argue, and discuss issues and topics related to that session’s readings. For certain weeks, the class will be joined in the discussion by guest facilitators with specific expertise on the week’s topic.

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

As a graduate seminar, the classroom environment should be professional and respectful. Discussions should be based on course readings and critical thinking. Issues of universal usability can involve strongly held beliefs and current political controversies. Remember—others 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 each class session. If you use your laptop or mobile device in the classroom, limit the usage to course-related reasons (i.e., taking notes, Blackboard, tweeting to share content/knowledge obtained during class).

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Regular attendance and participation in this class is the best way to grasp the concepts and principles being discussed. However, in the event that a class must be missed due to an illness, the policy in this class is as follows:

1. For every medically necessary absence from class, a reasonable effort should be made to notify the instructor in advance of the class. The notification (can be in the form of an email or phone call) must identify the date of class that you will be missing and the reason for the absence, and acknowledging that the information provided is accurate.
2. If a student is absent more than TWO times consecutively, the instructor may require documentation signed by a health care professional.

3. If a student is absent on days when exam/ reflection/assignments are due, he or she is required to notify the instructor in advance (via email or phone), and upon returning to class, bring documentation of the illness, signed by a health care professional.

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 instructor. 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.

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 the instructor. This should be done by the second week of class.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Please check the University’s inclement weather number (301-405-SNOW [7669]), which is used for inclement weather and other emergency situations. The University announces late openings and closings for snow early each day, not the night before. While local television and radio stations report on University closings, the information is not always correct.

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

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Work submitted in this course will be individual (unless indicated as group work) 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.

**GRADING**

Students grade will be determined through performance on four components: (1) class discussion; (2) individual presentation and write-up of technology/program for underserved/disadvantaged group; (3) group final project and presentation; and (4) a final exam.

Class discussion 300 points
Write/Present “tech/program” 200 points
Final project and presentation 300 points
Final exam 200 points

Each component is expected to reflect the highest professional standards, and both substantive and technical quality will be considered in determining student’s grade for each. Thoroughness, accuracy, salience, and effective organization are required; correct English grammar, spelling, punctuation, and usage are expected. Adherence to University policies on matters of intellectual integrity is also imperative. Attendance at each class is required unless prior arrangements have been made.

Grade range that will be used to determine the final grade for this class is 95+ percentage will be an A; 90-94.9 percentage will be an A-; 85-89.9 percentage will be a B+; 80-84.9 percentage will be a B; and below 80 will be a B-.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week/Date</th>
<th>Topic(s)</th>
<th>Readings &amp; Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Jan 30</td>
<td>Introductions Course Overview</td>
<td>Jaeger (2012) – Chapter 1</td>
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<td>(2) Feb 6</td>
<td>Final Projects Overview – MLK DCPL presentation Concept of Universal Usability</td>
<td>Jaeger (2012) – Chapter 2 &amp; Chapter 3 (only until page 105)</td>
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<td>(3) Feb 13</td>
<td>Accessibility law and standards Concept of Universal Design and Universal Design for Learning</td>
<td>Hochheiser &amp; Lazar (2010)</td>
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<td>(4) Feb 20</td>
<td>Accessibility and Visually Impairment – Jonathan Lazar</td>
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<td>Week/Date</td>
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| (5) Feb 27 | Accessibility and Hearing Impairment - Janice Rosen | Wentz & Lazar (2011)  
Borodin, Dausch, Bigham & Ramakrishnan (2010)  
WebAIM (2011) |
Ellis-Cole & Smith (2011) |
| (7) Mar 12 | Accessibility and other Cognitive Disabilities (Dyslexia etc.) | Interim report for final project due |
| (8) Mar 19 | NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK | Green (2009)  
Mulliken & Atkins (2009)  
Nielsen & Irvall (2001) |
| (9) Mar 26 | Accessibility and Socio-Economically Challenged Community – Susan Wilson | Jaeger (2012) – Chapter 3 (page 105-119)  
Atasoy (2010)  
Becker et al. (2010)  
Eyrich-Garg (2011)  
Fraser (1994)  
Mossberger (2009)  
Pilling (2010) |
| (10) Apr 2 | Accessibility and Immigration/ELL learners | Ashton & Milam (2008)  
Burke (2007)  
National Public Radio (2011) |
| (11) Apr 9 | Accessibility and Older Adults | Blaschke, Freddolino & Mullen (2009)  
RUSA (2008)  
Williamson & Asla (2009) |
| (12) Apr 16 | Library/Cultural institutions Web Accessibility – Lesley Langa | Jaeger (2012) – Chapter 4  
Chisholm, Vanderheiden & Jacobs (1999)  
Langa et. al (in press)  
McHale (2011)  
Quesenbery (2009)  
W3C (2011) |
Preece (2007) |
| (14) Apr 30 | Final Project presentations | Final project presentations & final projects due |
| (15) May 7 | Final Project Presentations | Final project presentations due |
| (16) May 14 | NO CLASS | Final Exam Due |
ASSIGNMENTS/EVALUATION

Classroom participation (30% of your final grade)

As mentioned earlier, this is a discussion-based course and is conducted in a seminar format. You are expected to read all of the readings, to think through the issues raised in the readings, and to articulate your thoughts on the materials. Clearly, you need to attend class to participate in the discussions. The syllabus is built upon 11 weeks of active discussion, while other weeks are dedicated for course introduction, and final project presentations (which you must also attend). Your participation grade will be based on best 10 out of the 11 weeks of active discussion. Attendance will be taken every week, with absences being excused in cases of illness, religious observances, and other reasons in line with university policies, or if the university is closed due to inclement weather. In order to receive an excused absence, the instructor should be notified in advance of the class meeting (see attendance policy above).

Present/Write about Tech or a Program (20% of your final grade)

Technology (even adaptive) evolves rapidly, and programs and services in the library and other cultural institutions will need to adapt to the rapid evolvement. By participating in this course, you are exposed to the variety of programming options and technology (including adaptive) that should and are available, at minimal cost to the underserved and disadvantaged populations. To enrich this experience even further, each of you will SHARE with the entire class in writing and presentation, ONE example of programming options or technology (including adaptive) that are available, at minimal cost to the underserved and disadvantaged populations. You will do the following:

(1) Identify ONE program or technology (including adaptive) that are available, at minimal cost to the underserved and disadvantaged populations. Via the wiki that is available through the course website, indicate the choice of program or technology (including adaptive) that you have chosen, the community that it serves (such as immigrants, visually impaired community etc) and the date that you intend to make the presentation. Please note that to ensure richness in sharing, students are not allowed to choose the same program or technology. Each student must bring a unique contribution. Indicating your choice on the wiki site on a first come first served basis (you can post after the wiki appears on Jan 31 2012), will avoid any duplication in the sharing process. You must indicate components indicated above in the wiki by Feb 6 2012.

(2) You will prepare a presentation (no more than 15 minutes – 10 minutes presentation and 5 minutes of Q & A) and no more than four pages of write-up (double-spaced pages in 12-point type, with standard one-inch margins) that will be posted on the Blackboard discussion board “Share a Tech or a Program” right after your presentation, that details the following:
a) Briefly describe the technology or the program – include the name of the tech/program, the community it serves, its features, the cost associated with participating in the program or purchasing the technology (if any) and any other important/interesting facts;
b) Describe its use – how it is used, and the benefits of using or participating;
c) Describe how the program/tech enhances physical and intellectual accessibility; and
d) Describe how cultural institutions can adopt the program or technology in their setting or encourage personal use for information management.

Presentations will begin on **Feb 20th 2012** and will end on **April 30th 2012** – with three presentations in each class session.

**Final Project (30% of your final grade)**

Working with librarians and technologists at the MLK Branch of DC Public Library, you will work in a team of 6 students, to complete a project that provides hands-on experiences to you in designing, developing or evaluating library programs that are customized for underserved and disadvantaged patrons.

The descriptions of the projects are in a separate document (under course documents in Blackboard), and will be posted prior to the DCPL project information meeting scheduled to be in class on February 6th 2012. You must select your preference of a project via the wiki by **February 10th 2012**.

The deliverables for the project will be:

1. An interim report of 2 pages (single-spaced pages in 12-point type, with standard one-inch margins) indicating the activities and progress that you have made so far. Indicate challenges that you have encountered in this project (if there is any).
2. A 5-8 pages report (double-spaced pages in 12-point type, with standard one-inch margins) that details the description of the project, the goals of the project, the approach to universal usability that you have adopted (including policy, UDL etc.), the process that you have followed to complete the project, the activities that you have completed, and a description of how DCPL will be using your product/deliverables. As an addendum, include the instruments that you have developed/used, the product that you have developed/used, and any other documentation that you would like to provide.
3. An executive summary of 2 pages (single-spaced pages in 12-point type, with standard one-inch margins) as indicated for each project (see documentation that describes each project).
4. A 40-minute group presentation in class (30 minutes presentation and 10 minutes that summarizes (2) above. Prepare an engaging and creative presentation that will allow optimal sharing of your knowledge gained during the project with your peers. The representatives from DCPL may attend these presentations.
(1) is due on **March 5th 2012**, (2) and (3) above are due on **April 30th 2012**, and presentation slides or visuals are due on **May 7th 2012**. You must submit (3) to your DCPL contact person by **May 7th 2012**. Presentations are scheduled on **April 30th 2012** and **May 7th 2012**, and order of presentations will be determined after Spring Break.

**Take Home Final Exam (20% of your final grade)**

This is a take home final exam. The questions will be handed off to you in paper on **May 7th 2012**, and you must make submission of the answers via Blackboard by **May 14th 2012** at 5.00 pm. There will be four essay type questions. It is expected that your completed answers will consist of **no fewer than eight (8) and no more than twelve (12) typed, double-spaced** pages in **12-point type in total, with standard one-inch margins**. A cover page and/or pages of references are not included in the page count. Your answers should be drawn from the readings, class discussions, guest speakers and completion of assignments in the course. Citations from the readings will be considered a strength.
READINGS


*Article location: Blackboard – Course Reserves*


*Please review all sub-menus under Technology: Hearing Aids, Cochlear Implants, Implantable Devices, Hearing Assistive Tech, Captioning, Telephones, Get in the Hearing Loop.*


*Article location: Blackboard - Course Documents – readings in press*


*Article location: Blackboard – Course Reserves*

*Article location: Blackboard – Course Reserves*

*Article location: Blackboard – Course Reserves*


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*Article location: Blackboard – Course Reserves*


