School of Library and Information Science  
University of Kentucky  

LIS 601 Information Seeking  
Fall 2014  

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Course Syllabus  

Course description: LIS601 is one of four core, or required, courses in the School of Library and Information Science master’s-degree program. The course description reads: 

This course provides an overview of the theory and practices of human information seeking behavior, including both basic models to understand user behavior, and techniques to effectively select, locate, evaluate, and use information to meet diverse information needs and facilitate human-computer interaction.

Student learning outcomes: After successful completion of this course, you will be able to:  

- Identify and apply core ethical principles relevant to information seeking behavior and the provision of information services.  
- Identify, evaluate, and select a variety of information sources to match users’ information needs.  
- Effectively disseminate appropriate information to match users’ needs.  
- Select information sources with consideration for user diversity, giving special attention to underserved groups.  
- Select appropriate information technologies for identifying information relevant to users’ needs.  
- Create effective search strategies for relevant indexes and databases.  
- Identify a variety of tools and methods for assessing users’ information needs and describe how they are implemented.  
- Describe how information organizations might reach user populations and provide high quality services.  
- Communicate effectively with your chosen user population and provide high quality information services.  
- Apply effective instructional strategies to teach users to identify, select, acquire and evaluate information.  
- Describe how to assess information service delivery.  
- Interpret, evaluate and apply research on user information seeking behavior and information services and analyze its impact on the knowledge base and practice of the profession.  
- Communicate what you have learned effectively both verbally and in writing.  
- Apply critical thinking to meet users’ information needs.  

(See page 9 & 10 for a complete list of course learning outcomes matched to their corresponding program learning outcomes).
Course expectations: To complete this course successfully, you should do the following:

- Attend class regularly. Unexcused absences of more than 15% of class meetings will result in a maximum grade of a C.
- Do not use electronic devices in class other than for note taking. Please silence your cell phones at the beginning of class.
- Read all required texts prior to class and be prepared to contribute to discussions.
- Prepare and submit all assignments on time. A 10% penalty will be exacted every day the assignment is late.

Required textbook:


Additional readings: Additional readings are principally journal articles available online and reference-related web content.

Diversity Statement

The course content and the course environment are dedicated to an understanding of and acceptance of all people. Disparaging remarks in relation to others’ ethnic or racial background, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, socioeconomic background, etc., will not be tolerated.

ADA Services

If you have a documented disability that requires academic accommodations in this course, please make your request to the University Disability Center. The Center will require current disability documentation. When accommodations are approved, the Center will provide me with a Letter of Accommodation which details the recommended accommodations. Contact the Disability Resource Center, Jake Karnes, Director at 859-257-2754 or jkarnes@email.uky.edu. The Center is located in the Alumni Gym, Room 2, at the corner of Avenue of Champions and South Limestone Street (next to the Student Center and across South Limestone Street from Kennedy Bookstore). See the campus map.

Other course requirements

You will need access to an appropriate computer with a broadband Internet connection. NOTE that it is YOUR responsibility to ensure you have a reliable computer for use during the course. Ongoing “computer problems” will not be considered a legitimate excuse for missing course activities. If you have a computer that is known to be unreliable, you should rectify that situation. Note that all UK students are eligible for a one time free download of Office from the UK download site (https://download.uky.edu); you can get help with this process from the UK helpdesk (859.257.1300; http://www.uky.edu/IT/CustomerService/).

Blackboard

We will use the Blackboard course management system to facilitate the class during online weeks and enhance at other times. Please visit http://www.uky.edu/Blackboard/ to learn about this system and the login requirements. You should be automatically added to the Blackboard roll; if this goes as expected, you will not have to sign up manually for the course. Blackboard help is available online through the Blackboard
wiki website (http://wiki.uky.edu/Blackboard/Wiki%20Pages/Home.aspx), and from the UK helpdesk (859.257.1300; http://www.uky.edu/IT/CustomerService/). The helpdesk is also able to assist with all general computing issues (file download, browser updates, etc.).

**Course grade:**

- Analyzing Your Own Information Behavior 20%
- Annotated Bibliographies (2 X 10%) 20%
- *Community Resource Audit 45%
- Participation 15%

*core course artifact

**Analyzing Your Own Information Behavior (20%):**

1. Pick and describe an information behavior from your life.
2. Discuss what this behavior demonstrates about your information needs, how and where you look for and use information, and the information problems you face in your life. Your discussion should make clear that you have thought about and understand the concepts of information, information needs, information seeking, and information behavior as discussed in course readings.
3. Select two of the models, paradigms, or theories we have read about and/or discussed and analyze your information behavior using each of these two models, paradigms, or theories to interpret your behavior in two different ways.
4. Compare and contrast the results of your two analyses. How did these models, paradigms, or theories affect your interpretation of your information behavior? How useful were these models, paradigms, or theories for explaining your information behavior?

To synthesize your content, please produce up to 3,000 words of content, excluding references.

**Annotated Bibliographies (2 at 10% each)**

In preparation for the Community Resource Audit, you will prepare two annotated bibliographies, one on the information seeking literature related to your community and one on needs assessment literature. Additional information will be disseminated on this assignment in class closer to their due dates.

**Community Resource Audit = Report and Presentation (40%) and Peer Review (5%)**

**Part I: Background and Needs Assessment (20%)**

1. Introduction: Select and describe a community for which you would like to know more about their information needs, uses, and behaviors. What is the typical demographic makeup of this population? What are the salient traits of the community?
2. Literature Review: Find research articles (six or more of them) on the information behavior of this community (or a closely related user group), and use your interpretation and evaluation of the research on user information seeking behavior and services and describe the important aspects of information seeking behavior in the provision of professional practice; DO NOT simply summarize what has been researched, but relate the research articles to each other and synthesize a theme out of the articles you find.
3. Needs Assessment: Identify methods for assessing your community's information needs and discuss how you would conduct a needs assessment (or other research) to learn more about the community. What methods/tools would you use (1 – 2 should be sufficient)? What questions would you ask? How would you analyze the data you gather? How might the results of your analysis improve your understanding of this population's information behavior? Optional: if the members of your community of interest are easily reachable, you are encouraged to conduct simple interview or survey to facilitate your source selection. If you choose to do so, you MUST speak with your instructor first so that he or she may ensure you conform to all human subjects review requirements.

4. Ethical Considerations: Draw connections between core ethical principles and the ethical issues related to your community. Examine the ethical issues related and provide examples from practice that relate to your responsibilities as information professional serving that community.

**Part II: Information Dissemination (20%)**

5. Search Strategy: Describe the database(s) you have selected and the search strategies you have employed for locating information appropriate for your users’ needs. Discuss criteria you employed in evaluating and selecting resources from the myriad of sources available.

6. Resource Guide: Prepare an information guide tailored to your user group with at least 20 resources that will be useful for your community. These resources should include a variety of tools to meet the user needs you have identified. Your guide should also contain content designed to instruct your users on how to obtain, evaluate and use information to meet their needs.

7. Communication & Dissemination Plan: Construct a plan for how you will communicate with your user population and provide them with the information and services they need.

8. Assessment Plan: How will you determine if your communication plan works and your resource guide is useful to your population?

9. Finally, you will prepare a 10 minute presentation of your community resource audit to instruct members of your assigned group. (A portion of your grade will come from the comments of this peer review. The peer review will be confidential and based on a scale of one to five of the quality of your presentation. Your peer review grade will result from the mean of the scores given to you by the peers in your group.)

To synthesize your content, please produce up to 4,500 words of content, excluding references and resource list.

**Participation (15%)**

It is important to note that class participation is fifteen percent of your grade because participation is an important component of facilitating learning in this class. Participation points come from both quantity and quality contributions to class. Acceptable reasons for non-participation (attendance) include illness, bereavement, and religious holidays.

**SLIS grading scheme**

At the end of the course, I will convert the points earned into a percentage:

- 90% and above  =  A
- 80% to 90%     =  B
- 70% to 80%     =  C
below 70%    = E

Withdrawal policy
It is your responsibility to drop a course or withdraw from the college. Failure to do so will result in receiving an "F". It is the school’s policy NOT to grant incompletes (I) for reasons other than serious or disruptive illness or bereavement.
## Course schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Read</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Aug 28</td>
<td>Introduction to Course</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sep 4</td>
<td>Information Behavior: An Introduction (Ch 1: 3-17) Common Examples of Information Behavior (Ch 2: 19-42)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sep 11</td>
<td>The Concept of Information (Ch 3: 45-75) Related Concepts (Ch 5: 95-130)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sep 18</td>
<td>Information Needs and Information Seeking (Ch 4: 77-93)</td>
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<td>(Please attend the Kentucky Library Association Annual Conference if you can!)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Oct 9</td>
<td>Metatheories, Paradigms, and Theories (Ch 7: 163-198)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Oct 16</td>
<td>Fundamentals of the Information Search Process</td>
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*ANALYZING YOUR OWN INFORMATION BEHAVIOR PAPER DUE*

*SUBMIT COMMUNITY RESOURCE AUDIT TOPIC FOR APPROVAL*

9  Oct 23  Communicating Effectively with Users / Creating Persuasive Messages that Impact behavior


10  Oct 30  ONLINE WEEK: Information Literacy

ACRL Information Literacy


*ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY I DUE*

11  Nov 6  The Research Process (Ch 8: 200-219)

12  Nov 13  Methods: Examples by Type (Ch 9: 221-267)


Select your own article: Select an information seeking study that employs a specific methodology in which you are interested. (See Case Ch. 9 for a list of methods).

*ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY II DUE*

13  Nov 20  Reviewing the Research: Its History, Size and Topics (Ch 10: 271-283)
Research by Occupation (Ch 11: 285-323)
November 26 – 29th – Happy Thanksgiving!!

14  Dec 4  Research by Social Role and Demographic Group (Ch 12: 325-364)

RUSA Guidelines for the Development and Promotion of Multilingual Collections and Services
http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/rusa/resources/guidelines/guidemultilingual.cfm
RUSA Guidelines for Library Services to Older Adults
http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/rusa/resources/guidelines/libraryservices.cfm
RUSA Guidelines for Library Services to Spanish-Speaking Library Users
http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/rusa/resources/guidelines/guidespanish.cfm
RUSA Guidelines for Library Services to Teens
http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/rusa/resources/guidelines/guidelinesteens.cfm

*COMMUNITY RESOURCE AUDIT PAPER DUE *
COMMUNITY AUDIT PRESENTATIONS

15  Dec 11  Reviewing, Critiquing, Concluding (Ch 13:365-380)
COMMUNITY AUDIT PRESENTATIONS
### LIS 601 Course Learning Outcomes
Matched to UK-SLIS Program Learning Outcomes

| 1.3 | Students will define core ethical principles and describe how they should apply them to the practice of library and information science both as individuals and as part of the collective.  
1.3.1 Students will identify core ethical principles relevant to information seeking behavior and the provision of information services.  
1.3.2 Student will apply relevant ethical principles to information seeking behavior and the provision of information services to their chosen population. |
| 2.1 | Students will employ appropriate methods to match information to users’ needs through the identification, selection, evaluation and dissemination of information.  
2.1.1 Students will identify a variety of potential information sources to match their users’ information needs.  
2.2.2 Students will evaluate and select appropriate information to match their users’ information needs.  
2.2.3 Students will design a product to effectively disseminate appropriate information to match their users’ needs. |
| 2.2 | Students will give special consideration to how information resources support diverse and under-served populations.  
2.2.1 Students will select information sources with a consideration for the diversity of their users, giving special attention to underserved groups within their chosen population. |
| 4.1 | Students will examine and assess various information technologies and describe how they can be used to meet system and user needs.  
4.1.1 Students will select appropriate information technologies for identifying information relevant to their users’ needs. |
| 4.2 | Students will experiment with appropriate technologies and tools to be prepared to implement them in a variety of information environments.  
4.2.1 Students will create effective search strategies for selected information technologies. |
| 5.1 | Students will identify methods for assessing the needs of the constituencies served by an information organization.  
5.1.1 Students will identify a variety of tools and methods for assessing the information needs of their chosen user group.  
5.1.2 Students will describe how they would implement needs assessment for their chosen population. |
| 5.2 | Students will describe the attributes of high quality, user-centered information services.  
5.2.1 Students will describe how an information organization might reach out to their chosen population to provide high quality services. |
| 5.3 | Students will describe the professional behaviors that contribute to high quality information services. |
5.3.1 Students will describe how they will communicate with their chosen user population to contribute to high quality information services.

5.4 Students will apply instructional strategies in the provision of information services.
   5.4.1 Students will apply effective instructional strategies to teach users to identify, select, acquire and evaluate information.

5.5 Students will evaluate information services, particularly in light of the need to reach diverse and underserved populations.
   5.1.2 Students will describe how they would implement an assessment of information service delivery for their chosen population.

6.1 Students will interpret and evaluate research.
   - Students will interpret and evaluate research on user information seeking behavior and information services.
   - Students will apply research on information seeking behavior to the provision of information services to their chosen population.

6.3 Students will describe how empirical research advances the knowledge base and practice of library and information science.
   6.3.1 Students will analyze how empirical research advances the knowledge base and practice of user information services.

9.1 Students will communicate effectively in writing.

9.2 Students will communicate effectively verbally.

9.3 Students will apply critical thinking to solve professional problems.