

IS554: Public Library Management and Services (Combined)

Spring 2009, Tuesday 6:30-9:10 p.m.

On campus class site: Communications 321B

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Public libraries (PLs) as information agencies can be enigmatic organizations. From the time the value of preserving and organizing the record of human existence was realized, the essential purpose of these public libraries has remained relatively constant. The form and uses of that record, however, are subject to the contradictory nature of human needs and desires, as well as to the changing socio-cultural, socio-political, economic, and technological developments. Such conditions have required extreme adaptability from those who manage PLs. In addition, PLs have to continue focusing on the changing needs/wants of their patrons/users/clients/customers (as variously defined) and developing ongoing user-centered service assessment and evaluation. This is to ensure that the PL as an institution is able to meet the changing needs and expectations of their local constituencies. User-centered assessment and evaluation of PL services is extremely important since often the community's tax-base and tax investment help to support PLs around the country.

In the context of depleting resources and limited funding, and in the face of changing expectations of PLs and a need to further user-centered assessment of the PL's services, how can public librarians extend their collections, services, programs, and other activities in digitized and non-digitized environments?

In this course, we will explore answers to the above question based on collaborating experiences with PLs while working on community-based projects in our local settings (including the Knox County Public Library System). We will analyze case-studies and real-life PL environments to study the development, roles, political environment, governance, organization, fiscal management, services, marketing, and performance evaluations of PLs in the context of user-centered assessment and evaluation of its services in a changing socio-technical environment. We will explore both the human resource management dimensions and the technological dimensions to how public libraries may respond to contemporary conditions. We will briefly look at the history of PLs and how their resources and services have responded to user-centered assessment in the context of traditional concerns of user needs and information access. In addition, students will learn how to present all their assignments on individual web pages that will be compiled as a collective web resource on PL management representing student work for the class. See example of students' projects in IS 554 during Spring 2008 at URL:

<http://athena.cci.utk.edu/bmehra/IS554/IS554Sp08/IS554ProjectDescription.html> and IS 554 (Spring 2006) at URL: <http://www.sis.utk.edu/~bmehra/IS554/PMPtemplate.html>.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

There is an increasing possibility that recent graduates will be expected to assume responsibility for conducting user-centered assessment and evaluation of library services (across library settings) to elicit feedback from their patrons early in their careers. For that reason, ALA accredited programs offer courses like this one. One cannot learn to understand patrons' needs/wants and manage PLs, however, by taking a single course. Some argue that management cannot be taught at all. A career in PL management demands a commitment to continuing education. The purpose of this course is to introduce students to what they will have to learn about management and user-centered services in libraries. Each subject addressed deserves an entire course.

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

- Understand PLs in a local context and in relation to user-centered services;
- Explore current management issues in PLs and discuss PLs as information agencies;
- Describe the role and authority of PLs in implementing and managing digital collections;
- Experience and critique various library settings and identify PL management issues in user assessment and evaluation;
- Describe methods of gauging PL effectiveness in different environments via case-study analysis;
- Describe and interpret user-centered services, collection development, policies and planning, library automation, and library governance in small libraries.
- Build individual web modules as a part of a collection of your PL projects.

PREREQUISITES

IS 550 (Management of Information Organizations) or consent of instructor.

TEACHING AND LEARNING CONSIDERATIONS

Interactive teaching, active learning, and critical and creative thinking are significant ingredients to the success of this course. Communication, participation, and sharing are key to maximizing how much all of us gain from each other's contributions in this course. It is therefore up to individual students how much you get from class interactions and make the experience interesting and meaningful to you in the process.

The design of the course helps nurture individual passion, interests, and strengths towards making the entire course worthwhile for us all. The sessions of the course consist of lectures, demonstrations, discussions, guest speeches, and the production of a collaborative website with individually-produced class projects. It is but expected that students will have to show commitment and involvement in our discussions and class projects during class and beyond. I am always available to help and assist in any manner that works for you. Feel free to ask questions or share ideas, drop by during my office hours, or make an appointment at another time that is more convenient for you. E-mail is always a reliable way to contact me and I check mine most regularly. In order to make the entire process efficient, I have set my mail to sort incoming messages; so to assure a quicker response from me always start your message subject line with SIS554 and I will usually get back to you within 48 hours, often even faster!

DISABILITIES

Please contact the Office of Disability Services at 2227 Dunsford Hall at 865-974-6087 (e-mail: ods@utk.edu) if you need course adaptations or accommodations. They will work with you to arrive at the appropriate program and register you for services. Also contact me so we can talk about solutions.

READINGS

Texts

- (Required) Matthews, J. R. (2007). *The Evaluation and Measurement of Library Services*. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited. ISBN 1-59158-532-5
- (Recommended) Weingand, D. E. (2001). *Administration of the Small Public Library* (Fourth Edition). Chicago, IL: American Library Association.

Online readings

There are some required readings that are available through online reserves at the UT libraries or from web sites that are identified on the syllabus.

Required Readings

- Core Missions: American Library Association. Libraries: An American Value. <http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/statementspols/americanvalue/librariesamerican.htm>

- American Library Association. Core Values Task Force II Report. <http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/statementspols/corevaluesstatement/corevalues.htm>
- Diversity, Culture, and its Impacts: American Library Association, Office for Public Programs. Helps libraries excel as community cultural centers by providing librarians with leadership, resources, training, and networking opportunities. URL: <http://www.ala.org/publicprograms/>
- American Library Association, Policy Manual. "Article 19 of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights. 58.4. <http://www.ala.org/ala/ourassociation/governingdocs/policymanual/international.htm>

GRADES

Overview of Assignments

1. The PL Context	=	10% of the total grade
2. Identification of the PL Users	=	10% of the total grade
3. Service to Assess/Evaluate	=	10% of the total grade
4. Case-Study Analysis	=	10% of the total grade
5. Developing an Evaluation Action Plan	=	20% of the total grade
6. Collecting and Analyzing Data	=	15% of the total grade
7. User-Centered Assessment/Evaluation in PL Services	=	15% of the total grade
8. Final Exam	=	10% of the total grade
TOTAL	=	100%

All your project assignments may be completed by an individual or a team of no more than two students. If the assignment is completed by a team, each assignment should also include a brief statement about what each student contributed to the assignment.

All your assignments will be deposited via the assigned space on the class Blackboard site. I will grade and give comments on your assignment via that space. You will also have to submit your assignments in web module format by 3 May (5.00pm) using the web template that we will discuss in class. 2% of each grade assignment will be deducted if its web module component is not deposited by the deadline via the process we will discuss in class. (For example, if you were to deposit the "Identification of PL Context" assignment (Assignment 1 as listed below) the following is the name of the file to deposit: [Your net-ID][Assignment number].html

For example, bmehra1.html

Your assignments will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- The presentation of the paper.
- The quality of the writing.
- The quality of the organization of the paper.
- The quality and amount of critical thought exhibited in the paper including reflection, analysis and interpretation.
- The use of appropriate literature and source material.

Assignments cannot be re-written for improved grades. Late submission is subject to 2 point deduction per day and will not be credited if the graded assignments have been distributed. Mark your calendars for due dates.

ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

Project Title: User-Centered Assessment/Evaluation of PL Services

This course will provide students' opportunities to work on a project that applies PL management issues in the context of user-centered assessment and evaluation of selected PL services. Students will participate in individual or two-student teams to work on their project and build a collective electronic portfolio.

The purpose of this assignment is for you to gain experience developing user-centered assessment and evaluation of specific PL services in your local communities (contact me if you want to work in a library/information setting other than a PL). PL services selected for your project may include specific PL services, programs, collections, facilities, and other activities. Any PL service is suitable. You will select a local PL that needs to evaluate its services by members from its user community. On-campus and DE students may choose to work with the Knox County Public Library System. Please be sensitive to how much time you demand from your local contacts. The interaction with the PL contact is an important part of this assignment since it simulates working with people in the PL information environment and it allows you to develop organizational and management skills that are necessary for your professional life.

Participating in the class project guides you through the process of developing user-centered assessment and evaluation of PL services by organizing your work into 7 different activities. These activities will help you assess the PL (and its users) you are working with, describe the scope and details of the project you are evaluating (or proposing), conduct a case-study analysis of other PL with similar services under study, develop research methods for user-centered assessment/evaluation based on an analytical rationale, conduct community analysis, share findings from community analysis and help improve select PL services, and examine user-centered issues in relation to PL management topics.

In order to assure that your work is evaluated properly, please be sure that the numbers used to identify your responses match the numbers in the assignment. Since each student is working with a unique project, some variables in the assignments may not exactly match the situation. Be sure to identify as many relevant variables as possible, and relate them to your project. The variables chosen for this assignment typically are relevant in most situations. However you may need to modify these specifications or you may find some variables are not applicable. If you have any questions, feel free to ask me!

Key points: Any PL is suitable. In certain instances, a non-PL may also be selected although you must first discuss your choice with me. Any kind of library service may be selected to assess/evaluate.

All parts of the project assignment will be graded using the guidelines noted in the syllabus. The User-Centered Assessment/Evaluation of PL Services project accounts for 90% of your total grade in the class. Each part will be graded separately. Parts 1, 2, 3, and 4 are each worth 10% of your total grade, part 5 is worth 20% of your total grade, and parts 6 and 7 are each worth 15% of your grade.

1. The PL Context (10% of the total grade)

You will be assessing/evaluating a select service for a PL. This first activity asks you to assess the PL agency and its setting and discuss its mission, vision, and strategic activities in the context of potential service(s) to assess and evaluate. Provide answers to the following questions and identify issues about the context pertinent to user-centered assessment/evaluation.

Address these questions:

- 1.1 Identify your PL agency. Characterize the nature of the agency, its setting (size, system/branch, location, library governance, etc.), and the people who are employed in it. What kind of organization is it? What are its members like? What are its strengths and weaknesses?
- 1.2 Summarize the PL organization's mission, goals, and objectives.
- 1.3 Provide an analysis of the PL in terms of its rationale, vision, market, offerings, and capabilities (see Ch. 3, Matthews 2004, p. 29).

- 1.4 Describe the vision statement of the PL. What are the various roles that it performs? What are the PL's various service responses (see ASPL, p. 8-9).
- 1.5 Develop a sample PL Values Statement (see Ch. 3. Matthews 2004, p. 34-35).
- 1.6 List various strategic aims of the PL and at least three specific library strategies in relation to potential services to improve.
- 1.7 If you could develop/extend one PL service to help this organization to be more helpful, what would it be? Why?

2. Identification of the PL Users (10%of the total grade)

- 2.1 Being specific, identify **three** segments of the user community interacting or likely to be interacting with the PL and its services. Rank and label these segments as primary, secondary, and tertiary according to the intensity of use as well as the number of actual and potential users. If possible, do this separately for various services that the PL offers. To do this you must **estimate** the number of likely users in each segment for each service.
- 2.2 Identify at least one contact person (more is better) in the PL who is knowledgeable about **both** your library setting and those people likely to be interested in the PL. Identify at least two (more is better) contact persons who represent users or potential users of the PL.
- 2.3 Provide a demographic analysis of the PL users and community in terms of: educational level, household income, racial/ethnic make-up, occupation, age levels and groups, gender, community habits, cultural opportunities, civic interests and problems, religious institutions, clubs and organizations, etc. How does each of these variables impact the PL and its services?
- 2.4 Provide a "SWOT" analysis of the community/users in terms of how they shape the nature of services in the PL?
- 2.5 How does the PL measure success? How successful is the PL in its mission and in providing services to its user community? What works (and does not work) in providing services to various users? Please be specific.
- 2.6 How might user-centered assessment/evaluation from its users help the PL organization be more successful in regard to specific services?

3. Service to Assess/Evaluate (10%of the total grade)

- 3.1 Identify a specific service(s), program(s), collection(s), facilities, and/or other activities to assess/evaluate in your PL.
- 3.2 Describe the selected PL service. Analyze the selected PL service in relation to user-centered issues (who and how many users use the service, how often is the service used, strengths/weaknesses of the PL service, etc.).
- 3.3 Discuss the relative importance of this PL service. How much difference does it make in the success of your PL organization or in the quality of life in the community served by the agency?
- 3.4 Define the selected PL service you are assessing/evaluating by listing keywords that are associated with it. Which word(s) would you use in searching for information about this service? Tag the most productive subject term.
- 3.5 What are the existing ways that the PL provides information about the selected PL service? (in the physical library environment and on the web). Is there effective advertising/marketing of the PL service? Rank the ways that users find information about the selected PL service?

- 3.6 Discuss the interest users of the PL or other members of the community might have in this PL service. How much actual and potential demand exists for it? What events or sources are likely to stimulate interest in this PL service? What is the likely life of this interest?
- 3.7 Identify, evaluate, and come to a conclusion on alternative resources/agencies that provide such services. Where might potential users go for this service *IF* your PL did not exist and did not provide this service? To what degree do alternative sources minimize the need for such a service? Using appropriate alternative resources (both offline and online), indicate the degree to which affordable, useful, and recent resources provide similar services.
- 3.8 Reviewing the variables mentioned above, does it seem reasonable to gather user-centered feedback to assess/evaluate the selected PL service? Provide a strong justification statement.

4. Case-Study Analysis (10% of the total grade)

Identify one other PL that provides similar services to the one you propose to assess/evaluate at your PL. Describe, analyze, and provide feedback about the efforts being made at the case-study PL with regard to the selected service and user-centered assessment/evaluation strategies.

For the PL under case-study, describe how the library represents, manages, and provides services related to your selected service/program.

Discuss how your case-study PL represents elements about the service being studied in relation to its scope and objectives, activities, and resources. Also, examine the role of the users in assessing/evaluating the service.

Analyze the effectiveness of the case-study PL in providing the services under study.

Provide similarities and differences between the PL example in your case-study and your collaborating PL. You should find information about the available services at the case-study PL on the web and also contact (email, phone, visit) people working at the PL to gather information.

What did you learn about user-centered assessment/evaluation and services being studied at the case-study PL in the context of your collaborating PL?

5. Developing an Evaluation Action Plan (20% of the total grade)

This assignment will help you prepare an evaluation by discussing various discrete activities in your proposed plan. For this assignment especially study Ch. 1 and Ch. 3-6 EMLS. Develop a rationale to propose user-centered assessment/evaluation of the selected PL service. Assess the selected PL service carefully and explain your proposal in relation to participation of primary, secondary, and tertiary users identified in the earlier assignment.

Identify the problem (related to your selected service) in terms of: production bottlenecks; tasks that are performed frequently; activities that require frequent movement; and declining budgets.

Determine the scope of analysis in terms of what specific information/aspects about the selected PL service do you hope to gain by eliciting feedback from the PL users. In other words, what is the purpose for doing the evaluation? Is the library attempting to improve its operational efficiencies (internal focus), or is the study being done to better understand the effectiveness of a library service? Explain in detail.

Determine the kinds of data that you hope to gather (be specific). What evaluation methodology and design will be used (quantitative and/or qualitative methods: be very specific in the types of tools that will be employed)? How will data be collected?

Describe the user-centered assessment/evaluation strategies that you are proposing to conduct community analysis and gather feedback from users about the selected service at your PL. Identify and analyze what methods you will use to gather feedback from various kinds of users as a part of your efforts. How do you propose getting access/permissions to select users? Provide a timeline for implementing your proposed methods.

Share the data collecting instrument that you propose to use. Identify the qualitative and/or quantitative measures you propose to use (what aspects are you trying to measure). Provide strategies to gather consent (consent forms, assent forms as appropriate) and your data-collecting tool(s) with listed questions/prompts, etc. You can explore multiple research methods to gather user-centered assessment/evaluation of the selected service.

Provide strategies to maintain anonymity and confidentiality of users participating in your study (if appropriate).

Create a budget in terms of investment of resources (e.g., money, time, efforts, human input, etc.) to orchestrate user-centered assessment/evaluation of various kinds. Identify stages for orchestrating a plan for the PL (e.g., previous efforts made, current efforts, future efforts) and describe what will be feasible as part of your efforts in this course during this semester.

Determine the kinds of analysis you will do with the data collected. How do you plan to report the findings based on the data collected?

NOTE: The research protocols may not actually be submitted to the Office of Research since the assignments are for class activities and participant feedback will not be individually reported. Yet the process for completing the research protocols will create awareness of expectations and requirements that need to be completed for conducting research involving human subjects.

6. Collecting and Analyzing Data (15% of the total grade)

Conduct community analysis and implement your evaluation action plan to gather feedback from users about your selected PL service under study. Report in terms of the following: Summarize and report findings (question-by-question) based on data gathered while conducting user-centered assessment/evaluation about your selected PL service. If applicable, provide transcription of data collected as an appendix. (Provide other forms of data collected).

Critique and analyze data collected: Discuss and report user feedback about the PL service in terms of their needs and information experiences, availability and access, barriers/challenges faced in using the select service, kinds of benefits in using the service, suggestions for improving the service, etc.

Improvement strategies: Present a plan for improvement strategies to implement in relation to the selected service for the PL to follow based on the data that you collected during this study. Develop a categorization scheme for the improvement strategies under different headings as appropriate (e.g., web representation, training, marketing to users, etc.).

Report findings to your PL and provide feedback about their response to your findings.

Critique your process: Discuss and report your process while conducting user-centered assessment in your evaluation action plan and include your observations, what worked and did not work, obstacles and challenges, etc. Provide a discussion of the most interesting facts that emerged during the process.

7. User-Centered Assessment/Evaluation in PL Services (15% of the total grade)

Based on your interactions and analysis of the collaboration with your PL throughout the semester, examine user-centered issues as they impact and were impacted by the following (at least 1500 words) (broadly in the context of your PL and in relation to the select service that you assessed/evaluated):

- Library governance
- Library identity (mission, vision, strategic aims, etc.)
- Community analysis and needs assessment
- Marketplace dynamics/advertising
- Evaluation action plan
- Assessment and evaluation methods
- Personnel management
- Finances
- Policy development
- Collections and collection management
- Electronic resources and technology assessment
- Technical services and reference services
- Library systems and library networks
- User instruction and customer services
- Adult and/or youth services

Final Exam: The purpose of the test is for you to demonstrate your knowledge about PL management and services and to help you prepare for the School's comprehensive exam. The test question will be similar to the comprehensive examination questions available via the School's website. You will answer one question.

Class Participation: In-class and online communication develop skills that are an essential part of the professional and academic environment. There is no separate grade for class participation/attendance though both are highly encouraged. Here are some ideas to help encourage online conversation:

- You can post questions to the list based on what we have read, or on related topics that you observe at work or in your community.
- You can continue conversation that we have had during class sessions.
- You can outline controversies surrounding theories or media clips and encourage others to assess the different perspectives.

The power point slides will be available on Black board and the class sessions are archived and replayed via Centra. However, the instructor appreciates those who attend class and participate.

CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

When you do work for this class, remember that any sources you use should be credited and that materials on the web should be cited too. Use Chicago style for your citations, and be sure to include any resources from the web. If you use someone's words or ideas without attribution - that's plagiarism. Remember cheating and plagiarism are violations of scholarly and professional ethics and University policy; don't do it! **If you cheat or plagiarize, you will fail the course** (E grade); and could face further actions. Further information is available in *Hill Topics*, the UTK student handbook.

HOW TO COMPUTE YOUR GRADE

All assignments will receive a letter grade ranging from A+ to E-. The number of points you can earn on a particular assignment can be calculated by multiplying the number of points for a particular grade (see table below) by the weighting for the assignment.

<u>Letter</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Letter</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Points</u>
A +		140	C-		60
A		130	D+		50
A -		120	D		40
B+		110	D-		30

B	100	E+	20
B-	90	E	10
C+	80	E-	0
C	70		

For example, if you receive a "B" on assignment 1 (The PL Context), you have earned 10 points (100 X .10 = 10). Here's how it works for the course grade: to earn an "A" you must earn at least 120 points; for a "B" you need at least 90 points; for a "C" you need at least 60 points, and for a "D" you must have at least 30 points. You will receive an "E" if you have less than 30 points.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS

*** Please Note for Reading Assignments: Example EMLS Ch. 3 means textbook *The Evaluation and Measurement of Library Services* Chapter 3. Similarly, ASPL refers to *Administration of the Small Public Library*.

Week	Class dates	Topics	Reading	Assignment due
1	1/13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to the course, instructor and requirements. 	Course Syllabus Blackboard Class Website Presentation: Cindy Lancaster (SIS Technology Coordinator) "How to Upload Assignments as Web Modules for the Class Website"	
2	1/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PL History 	Book Review: <u>Enrichment: A History of the Public Library in the United States in the Twentieth Century</u> . By Lowell Arthur Martin. Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 1998. URL: http://www.gslis.utexas.edu/~ssoy/researchwriting/l391d6c.htm Ch. 3, Kathleen de la Pena McCook. (2004). <i>Introduction to Public Librarianship</i> . [online reserves] Ch. 7, Lowell A. Martin, <i>Enrichment: A History of the Public Library in the United States in the Twentieth Century</i> . [online reserves]	Identify your PL and possible service you plan to assess/evaluate
3	1/27	Conceptualization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PL and small librarianship. Library identity: Studying a community & developing a strategic plan 	ASPL Ch. 1 & 3 [online reserves]	
4	2/3	Conceptualization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation process/models. The right tools for the job. 	EMLS Ch. 1-3 Ch. 3, Matthews, J. R. (2004). <i>Measuring for Results: The Dimensions of Public Library Effectiveness</i> . [online reserves]	DUE Assignment 1
5	2/10	Advertising & Marketing: PL users,	EMLS Ch. 7 Ch. 5-6. Matthews, J. R. (2004).	

		uses, & measures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library users. • Library products. • Library measures. 	<i>Measuring for Results: The Dimensions of Public Library Effectiveness.</i> [online reserves]	
6	2/17	Assessment & evaluation concerns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative and qualitative tools. • Data analysis. 	EMLS Ch. 3-6	DUE Assignment 2
7	2/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy. • Finance. • Personnel administration. 	ASPL Ch. 5-6-7 [online reserves]	DUE Assignment 3
8	3/3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collections. • Collection management. 	EMLS Ch. 8	DUE Assignment 4
9	3/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic resources. • Technology assessment. 	EMLS Ch. 9 and Ch. 13 Guest Speaker: K. C. Williams, System Director, Sevier County Public Library System	DUE Assignment 5
10	3/17	SPRING BREAK	No class	
11	3/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical services. • Reference services. 	EMLS Ch. 10-11 Guest Speaker: Kathryn E. Pagles, Director, Blount County Public Library	
12	3/31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library systems. • Library networks. 	ASPL Ch. 9 [online reserves] EMLS Ch. 12 Guest Speaker: Susan Simmons, Director Clinch-Powell Regional Library	
13	4/7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User instruction. • Evaluation of customer service. 	EMLS Ch. 14-15 Guest Speaker: Kathy E. McNeilly, Director, Oak Ridge Public Library Debriefing: Students can share key developments in their class projects (if they want) and discuss progress they have made so far.	
14	4/14	Evaluating the library <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult services. • Youth services. 	EMLS Ch. 16-18 Ch. 8-9, Kathleen de la Pena McCook. (2004). <i>Introduction to Public Librarianship.</i> [online reserves]	DUE Assignment 6
15	4/21	Evaluating the library cont' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library trends in the 21st century. 	EMLS Ch. 19-20 Ch. 12, Kathleen de la Pena McCook. (2004). <i>Introduction to Public Librarianship.</i> [online reserves]	DUE Assignment 7
16	4/28	• EXAM PERIOD	Final Exam (8am, 30 April – 11.59pm 2 May): will be available via the class website on the Black Board server	Final hand-in of web modules due 3 May by 5pm