Professor: Dr. Dania Bilal  
Meeting time: Tuesday, 2:10p.m.– 4:55p.m.  
Meeting Place: COM 317.  
Campus Office Location: COM 446.  
Office Hours: Tuesdays: 11:30a.m.-1:00p.m.  
Voice mail: (865) 974-3689.  
Email: dania@utk.edu  
http://web.utk.edu/~dania  
Graduate Teaching Assistant: Ms. Sarah Webb. Email: swebb22@utk.edu

Catalog Description  
Information access, retrieval, and use. Information seeking, user interfaces, information services and tools. Database structure, search engines, query logic, and evaluation of retrieval system performance.

Required Text  

In addition to the Text, I will assign readings from outside sources. These will be noted in BL (Blackboard Learn).

Course Objectives  
This course is part of the required curriculum that is determined by SIS faculty to contain basic knowledge that every SIS student must acquire. It is intended to prepare students for specialized electives offered in the SIS program.

Upon completion of the course, students should:

- become familiar with various types of information services and tools,  
- apply and discuss the RUSA’s (Reference and User Services Association) guidelines for providing effective reference/information services to users,  
- develop skills in conducting a reference interview and communicating with users,  
- develop awareness of diversity and cultural differences in communicating with users,  
- gain knowledge of the print and virtual sources used for meeting user information needs,  
- evaluate and compare interface options and search logic of selected information retrieval systems such as web search engines and online databases,
• become familiar with the theories underlying information seeking and information search process models and discuss their implications on providing effective service to users including teaching information literacy,
• Evaluate the retrieval performance of selected IRs and develop knowledge of how to use classic measures for assessing relevance of information retrieved from selected IRs,
• discuss user criteria for judging relevance based on published research and address issues and challenges in judging relevance of retrieved results by selected IRs, and
• evaluate and compare selected virtual reference services and sources,

Seeking and Achieving Success in this Course
Success begins with you! Like the other two required courses (IS 510 and IS 520), this course is demanding in that it requires that you spend much time outside of the classroom to fulfill the requirements.

Instructional Delivery
This course includes lectures, discussions, field experiences, and demonstrations of selected IRs. The course delivery is augmented with in-class individual and collaborative learning activities and questions and answers for solving information problems.

Expectations and Challenges
The amount of knowledge and skills you will gain from this course will depend on the amount of time and work you invest in it.

Much of the content of the course is problem-based. You, as a user of information, are and will always be faced with information problems that you need to solve. Patrons or clients also have their own information problems, but many times they need "expert" assistance to solve them. This is because Google and other search engines don’t have answers to all information problems. In addition, they retrieve a large amount of information with nearly 50% or less precision to the information need.

What you will gain in this course should equip you with the basic knowledge of the reference sources (print and virtual), selected IRs, and reference services available in many libraries and information environments. You will gain skills in formulating effective strategies for successful information seeking and retrieval, using criteria for judging relevance of information retrieval, and in sharpening your communication skills to interact with users and negotiate their queries to identify and meet their information needs.

This course is characterized by stimulating a collaborative learning atmosphere. You will be challenged, intrigued, motivated at times, as well as confused, frustrated, and "lost" in information spaces. The information environment is full of chaos. However, learning the fundamentals of how information is collected, organized, indexed, and abstracted (back-end), and how information is presented in search and retrieval interfaces in IRs, virtual sources, and print sources (front-end) should help you learn how to cope with stressful learning situations to solve certain information problems or even communicating with problem patrons. Devotion, patience, and resilience should trigger your motivation and perseverance in meeting the many challenges of this course.
On the positive side, this course is structured to be a "rewarding" learning experience as it is designed to provide meaning for you as you take advanced classes that require knowledge and skills in using what you learn in this class, and as you become an information professional who will be interacting with information and users in real-word situations on a regular basis.

Computing Requirements
Students admitted to the SIS program are expected to possess certain computing skills. These include but are not limited to effective use of word processing applications, Web browsers, e-mail clients, and listservs, as well as skills in how to use Blackboard Learn (BL) for accessing learning materials and uploading class activities (assignments, projects, etc.).

You must have a UTK email account to subscribe to the SIS student listserv. In addition, you must have the PowerPoint Reader, regular PowerPoint software, or Prizi to download lecture notes from BL.

Contacting the Instructor
Maintaining a good communication with me is essential to ensure that you are on the right track and that concerns or issues you may experience in this course are addressed and that your needs are attended to. I urge you to contact me for sharing concerns, issues, and to share your ideas about the content and progress of the course. You may come to my office during office hours or make an appointment to meet with me, or email me anytime you experience difficulties or other course-related problems.

To ensure quick responses to your email, start your message subject line with IS530. I will reply to your messages as soon as I can. My reply over the weekend may not be as immediate as during weekdays. Please CC Ms. Sarah Webb, my Graduate Teaching Assistant, who will help with matters related to this course. Her email swebb22@utk.edu

Submission of Class Activities
All class activities (assignments, tests, projects, etc.) should be submitted in BL page. Please do not send any activity as an attachment to my email address, unless you are instructed to do so.

Word process each assignment, save the document, scan it for virus, and open it on your computer before you submit it in BL. If the document opens fine on your side, submit it in BL; otherwise, detect and solve the problems in opening the document and submit in BL. Use MS Word or equivalent to process each document. Please refrain from submitting documents in the PDF format.

Naming individual work activity

Please name each document you submit as follows:

YourlastnameFirstinitial-530-Assignmentnumber

Example: BilalD-530-Assignment1
**Naming team projects**

Please name each team or group project as follows:

**Team-1--530-lastnameofeachstudentintheTeam**

Example: Team-1-530-Bilal-Smith-Johnson-Baer

**Late Submission of Class Activities**

All class activities are due for submission in BL by midnight, Eastern time, on the scheduled due date. Activities submitted past midnight will receive a reduced credit of 3 points every day it is late. However, in the case of sudden sickness, family emergency, etc., the reduced credit will be restored upon providing evidence.

**Lecture Notes**

Faculty members are not obligated to develop lecture notes or share their notes with students. Since sharing notes is part of my instructional strategy, I will post the notes on BL in advance of most class sessions.

**Disabilities and/or Special Needs**

Please contact the Office of Disability Services at 191 Hoskins Library (865.974.6087) if you need course adaptations or any other accommodations. The office staff will work with you to arrive at the appropriate program and will register you for the services needed. Please contact me about this matter if you need to discuss appropriate solutions.

**CCI Diversity Statement** (College of Communication and Information Bylaws, Section II-C)

The College of Communication and Information recognizes that a college diverse in its people, curricula, scholarship, research, and creative activities expands opportunities for intellectual inquiry and engagement, helps students develop critical thinking skills, and prepares students for social and civic responsibilities. All members of the College benefit from diversity and the quality of learning, research, scholarship and creative activities is enhanced by a climate of inclusion, understanding and appreciation of differences and the full range of human experience. As a result, the College is committed to diversity and equal opportunity and it recognizes that it must represent the diversity inherent in American society. The College is acutely aware that diversity and fairness are foundations that unite the College’s faculty, staff, students, and the larger communication and information community (see [http://www.cci.utk.edu/diversity-statement](http://www.cci.utk.edu/diversity-statement) for CCI’s full Diversity Statement).

**Class Participation**

You are highly encouraged to participate in class by sharing ideas and related experiences, engaging in class discussion, and collaborating with peers to solve certain problems or simulate situations. Please make sure that when you participate in class, you don’t take up time from other classmates so that they can also contribute their ideas.
**Laptops and Mobile Devices**
Since the class is not scheduled in a Lab environment, there will be no computers in COM 317. You may bring your laptop to class to use for class-related matters only. Please turn off the sound of your mobile device during class and refrain from texting.

**Attendance**
Class attendance is required for mastering the content of the course. In case you have to miss a class, make sure you check with classmates about notes, discussions, announcements, and other activities they have captured in class as you are responsible for catching up with the course. Please arrive to class on time so that you do not miss out on topics or class activities or be late for the tests or other class-related matters.

**Cheating and Plagiarism**
Cheating and plagiarism are violations of scholarly and professional ethics as well as UT policy. Make sure you provide attribution to the sources you use for assignments/projects. If you fail to do so, you will be plagiarizing. Remember that if you cheat or plagiarize, you will fail the course and could face further actions such as suspension from the academic program and UT. Further information is available in the 2012-2013 Hilltopics, the UTK Student Handbook.

**Readings**
Readings from outside of the Textbook are noted in the course schedule. As new articles of related to the course content appear, they will be added to the readings list. Some readings are (will be) available in full text and can be downloaded from BL. You will need to find the full text for specific readings using Hodges Library appropriate databases. This will give you experience in using SFX to locate journal articles as applicable.

**Citing and Formatting Sources**
Use any standard style manual for citing and formatting sources used in assignments. You may use EndNotes or Sotero or any other application for importing and formatting citations based on your chosen style manual. These and other applications are accessed free of charge to you through Hodges Library.

**Grading**
Graded class activities will be returned within two to a maximum of three weeks. You will receive email notifying you about my submission of graded activities to BL. You have one week from the time of my submission of a graded activity to request a review of your grade. I will review the activity and the grade to determine any oversight on my part. I will reply to your request within one week of the request, unless I am travelling or have an unforeseen circumstances or urgent matters to attend to.
Grades will be assigned using this scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Points/percentage</th>
<th>Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100 points</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>86-92.99</td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80-85.99</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>75-79.99</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-74%</td>
<td>Below graduate level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Performance Evaluation

Student performance will be evaluated on these activities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 1</td>
<td>Field observation</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 2</td>
<td>Information tools &amp; user queries</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercises</td>
<td>Searching IRs</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test 1</td>
<td>Take home, open notes/book</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test 2</td>
<td>In-class</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class presentations</td>
<td>Team project presentations</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team project</td>
<td>evaluation of reference services</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Updated on 8/19/2012.