

**VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**MASTER OF LIBRARY & INFORMATION SCIENCE**  
**MLIS 7370 Information Architecture**  
**Syllabus--Spring Semester 2010**  
Three Credit Hours

**Instructor:**

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**Course Description:**

**Prerequisite or corequisite: MLIS 7000 or consent of the instructor.** Theory and techniques of designing Web sites for effective information delivery. Study of organization, labeling, navigation, and indexing systems is included.

**Learning Outcomes:**

Students will:

- Articulate basic principles of information architecture
- Assess the usability of an online information service
- Identify appropriate changes to organization, labeling, navigation, and search systems in a website that enhance design and usability
- Effectively manage website development process from a user-centered view
- Analyze users' information needs and information seeking behaviors

**Class Activities:**

Class activities include a set of readings, assignments, online discussions, and a term project. Assignments will provide students with conceptual and practical understanding of different aspects of information design, usability analysis, and graphic and navigational layout. Students should participate in online meetings to discuss and share their opinions of the week's topics, assignments, and readings. The purpose of the individual assignments is to allow students to demonstrate and apply their understanding of information architecture principles to real-world problems. Term project involves creation of a large scale website using a content management system and a report. Term project report should include a list of applied information architecture principles, how such enhancements improve website's usability, and a discussion about plugins and theme applied to site.

**Textbooks and Required Readings:**

There is one required text for the course,

- Morville, P., & Rosenfeld, L. (2006). *Information Architecture for the World Wide Web* (3rd ed). Cambridge: O'Reilly. ISBN: 0-596-52734-9

(Available online through VSU Library @ <http://library.valdosta.edu:2048/login?url=http://proquestcombo.safaribooksonline.com/?uiCode=valstuniv&xmlId=0596527349> Blazenet account may be required to login)

**Suggested Reading:**

- Sklar, J. (2008). *Principles of Web Design* (4<sup>th</sup> ed). Course Technology ISBN: 978-1423901945
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- Morville, P. (2005). *Ambient Findability*. Sebastopol: O'Reilly. ISBN: 0-596-00765-5

(Available online through VSU Library @ <http://library.valdosta.edu:2048/login?url=http://proquestcombo.safaribooksonline.com/?uiCode=valstuniv&xmlId=0596007655> Blazenet account may be required to login)

- Koyani, S. J., Bailey, R. W., & Nall, J. R. (2004). *Research-Based Web Design & Usability Guidelines*. Computer Psychology. ISBN: 978-0974996905

Available online at [http://www.usability.gov/guidelines/guidelines\\_book.pdf](http://www.usability.gov/guidelines/guidelines_book.pdf)

This is not a course in HTML scripting per se, nor is it expected that the student will have any prior knowledge of web development activities but it is the responsibility of the student to have a basic understanding of the Internet and general computing literacy. This course will enable the student to obtain the web development skills from a user-centered view. **Students will have the option of selecting their tool of choice when completing their assignments. Notify the instructor about your choice of HTML editor.** There are also required, supplemental readings for each of the course's topical units. These readings are made available to students through the web, as citations, URLs, or PDF files. It is expected that each student will have the ability to download and open up both PDF files and MS Word files.

**Grading:**

A set of readings, assignments, online discussions, and a term project will be assigned.

Grades will be calculated as follows:

- Participation: 5 pts
- Readings: 5 pts
- Assignments: 40 pts
  - Basic website design (6 x 4pts = 24 pts)
  - Templates and CSS (8 pts)
  - Individual Project (8 pts)
- Group Assignments: 50 pts
  - Term Project (25 pts)
  - Website evaluation: (25 pts)

Final grades will be assigned as follows:

- A 90 - 100
- B 80 - 89
- C 70 - 79
- D 60 - 69
- F 0 - 59

Assignment Submission:

- Deadlines for each graded activity are clearly stated on the MLIS 7370 Course Calendar posted on the course home page on BlazeView.
- There is a one (1) day grace period for each graded activity after its original due date.
- Missing a deadline for any graded activity may result in a reduction in grade (i.e., 5% deduction from the original mark for each day after 1-day grace period) unless a mutually acceptable alternative is arranged with the instructor.
- All assignments must be submitted via assignment drop box on BlazeView.

**Course Requirements:****Participation (5 pts)**

- The course is designed for online delivery.
- Students should participate in online meetings and class discussions on BlazeView to share their opinions of the week's topics, assignments, and readings and respond to questions posted by the instructor or other students.
- Date and time information for online meetings will be made available on BlazeView.

- All questions regarding content, assignments, and readings should be posted on class discussion board on BlazeView.
- Students are expected to answer questions posted by other students.

**Readings (5 pts)**

- The articles cover broad areas of navigation and labeling systems, metadata, design and documentation, and ethics in information architecture. Readings will be made available to students as PDF files or links to original material through BlazeView.
- Students should post their views about each article at designated areas on class discussion board.

**Website Design Assignments (32 pts)**

- Students will complete weekly assignments that provide an opportunity to demonstrate familiarity with the course content.
- Students must use VSU server to host their Web pages and submit URLs to these pages must be submitted through assignment drop box as assignment deliverable.
- Collaboration on homework assignments is encouraged (keep in mind that collaborative work on assignments doesn't mean that one can plagiarize another person's work).
- You may consult outside reference materials, other students, or the instructor. However, all of your solutions should reflect your understanding of the subject matter at the time of writing.
- Assignments will provide students with conceptual and practical understanding of information architecture principles and usability.

**Individual Project (8 pts)**

- The purpose of the individual project is to allow students to demonstrate their understanding of basic information architecture principles covered in class by designing and implementing a simple static website from scratch or by using web-based services (e.g., <http://sites.google.com>).
- Each student is expected to design his/her own MLIS portfolio website.
- A report must be submitted documenting the design process and a usability analysis of the website.

**Website Evaluation Assignment (25 pts)**

[Group Assignment] Students are expected to conduct and document a heuristic evaluation of a website.

**Term Project (25 pts)**

[Group Assignment] Students are expected to design an academic or public library website using a content management system (e.g., Drupal, Wordpress, or Joomla) and develop a report documenting the website design process:

- Content management system will be provided by the Instructor
- Instructor will provide technical support if needed.

**VSU Web Server**

Every student registered for the class must have a web space on a VSU server to turn class assignments and term project in. VSU provides its students with a personal web space that can be used for class assignments. Information about VSU personal web space is available at <http://www.valdosta.edu/it/eis/systems/webservices/stepbystep/> .

Instructions on how to use this space are available at

<http://www.valdosta.edu/it/eis/systems/webservices/stepbystep/account.shtml>

**Technological Requirements:**

All class materials will be placed on a password-protected Web site using the BlazeVIEW course management program. If you are a new to BlazeVIEW, go to the BlazeVIEW for Students page at <http://www.valdosta.edu/vista/students.shtml> . Then return to the BlazeVIEW page and login using your BlazeNet email ID and password.

To meet all class requirements, you should also be prepared to: (1) check the BlazeVIEW course homepage several times a week, sometimes daily, if a course discussion is in progress; (2) locate additional course readings using the GALILEO databases and download or print these out (this may require a PDF reader application on your computer); and (3) keep electronic backup copies of each assignment and project you submit.

All assignments must be submitted using a program compatible with VSU supported products. MS Office 2007 compatible formats including Open Office, Rich Text Format, ASCII Text (.txt), and PDF are preferred file formats for assignments. Use MS Power Point (.ppt) format for Wimba Classroom presentations. At this time MS PowerPoint 2007 format (.pptx) is not compatible with Wimba Classroom.

Online meetings will be held in Wimba Classroom, a web-conferencing tool available in BlazeView. Broadband connection is preferred (min. 56K dial-up connection is required) and all students must have a headset (w/ microphone) to participate in discussions and make presentations. See MLIS Technology Requirements page for more information.

As this is an online course that also focuses its attention on online information services, students must have almost daily access to the Internet. That access will use email and the web (through the student's browser) for class-related communication.

Course communications will use . . .

1. BlazeView email system and discussion board are official means of communication in this class. In addition, VSU email system may be used alternatively in case BlazeView is inaccessible.
2. A BlazeView website, used by the instructor to make links available for each unit of the topical units

### **Distance Learning Support:**

To help address concerns of off-campus and online students, the library maintains the Library Services and Resources for Distance Education Student webpage at <http://www.valdosta.edu/library/services/distancestudents.shtml> .

If at any time you have general questions about the library or specific questions about library resources, please call the Odum Library Reference Desk at (229) 333-7149 or email at <http://www.valdosta.edu/library/forms/disted.php> . Chat reference is available at <http://www.valdosta.edu/library/ask.shtml> .

### **VSU Policies:**

Please become aware of and be guided by these VSU policies.

- Access Office for Students with Disabilities: <http://www.valdosta.edu/access/>
- Academic Dishonesty, p. 269 of Graduate Catalog, 2008/09: <http://www.valdosta.edu/catalog/0809/grad/documents/grad266-296.pdf>
- Student Code of Conduct, p. 56: <http://www.valdosta.edu/studentaffairs/StudentHandbook.shtml>
- Equal Opportunity Statement: <http://www.valdosta.edu/eopma/aboutus/eos.shtml>
- Sexual Harassment: <http://www.valdosta.edu/legal/shp.shtml>

### **Student Agreement:**

Enrollment in this class signifies that the student has agreed to abide by and adhere to the policies and regulations specified above. It is understood that the instructor may adapt or change this syllabus and the assignments contained within it according to circumstances that may arise during the course of the semester.