**INF180J Introduction to Information Studies**

*Spring 2011*

*Thursdays 3:30-6:30*

*UTC Bldg Rm 4.134*

**Professor Diane E. Bailey**
debailey@ischool.utexas.edu, UTA 5.438, Office Hours by appt
(email is the best way to reach me; best in-person times are Thursdays or Fridays at noon if arranged in advance; voicemail a no-go, but we can talk by phone if arranged in advance)

**TA Anjali Bhasin**
anjalibhasin2@gmail.com

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**OVERVIEW**

This course is intended to introduce you, new students in our program, to information studies. We accomplish that goal in several ways. We begin by getting you to know fellow members of your cohort a bit better; these students will likely be your classmates and project team mates many times over in the next two years. In addition, we talk about the school, the program, and the faculty to help ground you in your new environment. We also introduce you to some people here who can help you, including student services staff, career services staff, and upper-level students. To help you understand why this a great time to be in information studies, we will do some readings that give concrete form and shape to how information is transforming the world as we know it. We pay particular attention to how information is a source of power in an effort to reinforce your understanding of the important role that information professionals play in this new and emerging world. Finally, to help you start off with the broadest view possible of what you might do within the field of information studies, we have asked a number of working professionals from a wide range of occupations to talk to you about their careers.

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**COURSE POLICIES**

**Attendance and Participation**
You are expected to attend each week’s class session and to have completed the reading and any assignments so that you can actively engage in discussions. You are also expected to work diligently and cooperatively on in-class exercises and your group project. Participation may improve your grade; lack of it may decrease it.

**Grading**
See end of syllabus for assignment descriptions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage of Grade</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. One-Page Resume</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2/10</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Group Presentation</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>2/17</td>
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<td>3. Attendance</td>
<td>50 (10% per session)</td>
<td>weekly</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
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Late Work, Missed Classes
Your group presentation cannot be late. You will lose 10% of your grade for your one-page resume each day it is late. If you miss any class, you can make it up by writing a 3000-word essay on a topic of my choice, due one week after the missed class, no extensions.

University of Texas Honor Code
The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community. Source: http://www.utexas.edu/welcome/mission.html

Documented Disability Statement
Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at (512) 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (video phone). Faculty are not required to provide accommodations without an official accommodation letter from SSD. Please notify me as quickly as possible if the material being presented in class is not accessible (e.g., instructional videos need captioning, course packets are not readable for proper alternative text conversion, etc.).

- Please notify me as early in the semester as possible if disability-related accommodations for field trips are required. Advanced notice will permit the arrangement of accommodations on the given day (e.g., transportation, site accessibility, etc.).
- Contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (video phone) or reference SSD’s website for more disability-related information: http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/for_cstudents.php

CLASS SCHEDULE

(1/20) First Class: Who Are You, Who Are We, Why Are We All Here

Reading. (To be done PRIOR to class, available on Blackboard or online via UT library search. To organize, track, and document your reading, consider checking out bibliographic tools such as EndNote, Mendeley, or NoodleBib – now is the time to experiment!)

ALL Students:

Students with Last Names Starting A-H also read:

Students with Last Names Starting I-Z also read:
Come prepared to answer the following questions for each of the three articles you read:

- What was the article about?
- What was the author’s perspective and point? How was the author’s perspective situated relative to other scholars in this area (did the author help you discern that)?
- What did you learn new from the article? What surprised you?
- Did you find the article well written, conceptualized, and researched? What were your clues?
- Was the article fun to read? Did it get you thinking about this or related topics? Did it inspire you?
- Did you use a bibliographic tool like Endnotes, Mendeley, or NoodleBib? How did that work out for you? What keywords would be helpful in tagging this article?

**Activities.** Icebreaker exercise; discussion of school and field; group discussion of readings; formation of groups for presentation assignment.

(1/27) **Second Class: Getting Grounded, Gearing Up.**

**Reading.** None.

**Activities.** Intro to the IT lab. Intro to student services. Intro to Career Services. Student panel.

(2/3) **Third Class: Careers, Careers, Careers**

**Reading.** (to be done PRIOR to class, available on Blackboard or online via UT library search)

**Activities.** Visiting professionals’ histories, Q&A. A slate of information professionals will share their career histories and trajectories, advice for managing your education and your career, and their perspectives on what is fun and fascinating in the field today. The idea is to help you envision the wide variety of careers upon which you might embark. Think about the readings as you listen to the speakers.

(2/10) **Fourth Class: More Careers!**

**Reading.** (to be done PRIOR to class, available on Blackboard or online via UT library search)

**Activities.** Visiting professionals’ histories, Q&A, same as last week, but with a second slate of information professionals. Resume due.

(2/17) **Fifth Class: Information as Power**

**Reading.** (to be done PRIOR to class, available on Blackboard or online via UT library search)
Activities. Six presentations. Class discussion of presentations and readings.

ASSIGNMENTS

One-Page Resume
Exactly what it says. See Tara Iagulli in Career Services to help you prepare your resume if you have any questions. Although some fields may have a norm of longer resumes, even for new graduates, you will do well to pare your resume down now to the bare basics and to think critically about how you want to improve it over the next two years. Additionally, many fields have a norm of a one-page resume.

Group Presentations on Information as Power
Form groups of 4 people. Each group will be charged with ONE of the following topics. In investigating your topic, you should go broad and deep, ferreting out all the relevant information that you can. You should then analyze this information and synthesize it into a coherent story that informs our understanding of how information is power in this particular context. You have four weeks to collect, organize, analyze, and synthesize your information and to prepare your group presentation. Each team will have up to 16 minutes to present, using slides, video, web presentations, skits, or whatever most effectively conveys your material. Each person in the group should present. If appropriate, create a relevant slide deck to accompany your talk. All groups should prepare a single page handout to distribute to your classmates that summarizes the information you will convey, including citations for sources you used or sources for more info.

(a) Wikileaks December 2010 events. Who is Julian Assange, what does he believe, what is his goal? What is Wikileaks, how does it operate, what is its history? Describe the cable fiasco and criminal charges against Assange. Who sided for/against Assange and why?
(b) Web monitoring. What is history sniffing, how does it work, and why is it technically possible? How is this any different than cookies? What are cookies, anyway, who uses them, and why? At a larger level, what are web analytics? Who is monitoring our individual and collective web activity via any means and why? Who is against it and why does anyone care? What is the legal and industry status?
(c) Cellphone and PDA Monitoring. Which countries monitor phone and PDA data and why? Why is RIM the company most often in the news for data monitoring? What agreements has RIM reached with countries? Who has access to our telecommunications content and what do they do with it? How are GPS technologies providing greater info about us from our phones? Who is using this locative data and why? Does anyone care?
(d) Google and China. What is the history between Google and China and why are there so many problems with this relationship? What are China’s issues? What are Google’s? Why don’t we hear about other search engines in China (which ones are there)? Do other countries have similar problems – why or why not? What are the larger issues involved?
(e) Web journalism. What technologies have transformed who is reporting the news and how they do it? What are the implications for citizenship and government both here and abroad? Who is entering journalism and what new forms of journalism are appearing? What do the established media have to say? Who is concerned and why?
(f) Office tracking and employee monitoring. What technologies can firms use to track employees’ communications, movements, and actions? And why do they call one tool, “productivity” software? What companies engage in this surveillance and why? Who, if anyone, has protested and why? What might firms do with these data and what are the issues at stake?