DISCIPLINARY FOUNDATIONS FOR INFORMATION STUDIES

INF 391D.12

#28890

Dr. Philip Doty
School of Information
University of Texas at Austin
Spring 2014

Class time: Tuesday, 9:00 AM – 12:00 N
Place: UTA 5.428
Office: UTA 5.328
Office hours: Monday 1:00 – 2:00 PM
By appointment other times
Telephone: 512.471.3746 – direct line
512.471.2742 and 512.471.3821 – iSchool receptionist (will go to voicemail if called before or after regular business hours)
Internet: pdoty@ischool.utexas.edu
Skype: philip.doty
Class URL: http://courses.ischool.utexas.edu/Doty_Philip/2014/spring/INF_391D12/
TA: Kristin Bongiovanni
kbongiovanni@utexas.edu
Office hours: Wednesday 3:00 – 4:00 PM
By appointment other times
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to the course</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectations of students’ performance</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards for written work</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some editing conventions for students’ papers</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grading</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texts</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of assignments</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment descriptions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance at research colloquia</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion questions</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentations and leading in-class discussion</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book reviews</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper on two journals “outside” information studies</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readings from the class schedule and assignments</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selected additional readings</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

INF 391D.12, Disciplinary Foundations for Information Studies, is one of three core courses required in the PhD program at the UT-Austin School of Information. The UT Graduate Catalog describes the course as “[a]n overview of concepts, results, and perspectives from philosophical, social science, humanistic, design, and technological disciplines that provide important underpinnings for Information Studies.” As such, we might think of the course informally as a review of selected works, concepts, schools of thought, and disciplines that lie outside the admittedly ill-defined boundaries of information studies but are important to the work that we do within the discipline.

Naturally, no one course in any one semester can even begin to identify much less engage all such works, disciplines, and the like. Thus, we must choose where to shine the course spotlight, and here are particular categories of works that we will engage this semester:

- “Classic” works that have influenced one or more generations of important information studies scholars
- More recent works that have begun to be similarly influential
- Fields and works of particular interest to the students in the seminar as indicated by their prior communication with the instructor
- Works of particular interest to the instructor
- Writing as a mode of thinking; this last category is important to PhD students not only as students but also as potential teachers of others.

Generally, the instructor will begin each class with a brief review of logistics, e.g., readings for next class, assignments, and academic housekeeping. Then the student team making that week’s presentation will speak for about 60 minutes, followed by a brief break. The second part of class will consist of the presenting team, the other students, and the instructor discussing the day’s readings, guided in part by students’ previously submitted discussion questions. Thus, active reading, active participation, and academic initiative are key to our mutual success this semester.

Throughout the semester, we will also try to remain acutely aware of our “cognitive insecurity and our vulnerability to good lies” (Jansen, 1991, p. 191), learning to exercise engaged skepticism – not dismissive cynicism – about the points of view and disagreements we will examine. It is important to remember that reasonable people can disagree and that the classroom is a place where such disagreement is welcome. Not only do humility and academic courtesy demand respect for others, but recall that disagreement is one of our major resources for learning.

Along with writing as thinking and/or as a form of inquiry, one of the implicit themes of the course will be the role of research in the university, the history of the research university in America, the status of the university in American life, and the purpose of graduate (especially doctoral) education. While readings about these latter topics will not be required, they will be useful supplements to the class readings and useful over the course of students’ academic and professional careers. See, e.g., Ehrlich (1995), Graham & Diamond (1997a, b, and c), Kennedy (1997a, b, c, and d), and Shils (1997a and b).

On a final note, the course is a way to integrate students more fully into the field, to help them become more active readers and writers, to help them develop as more fully realized researchers, and to enhance their understanding, use, and development of theory, research methods, and forms of inquiry important to the field. The course encourages students to consider what our field recognizes as convincing evidence, strong modes of argumentation, and appropriate and productive rhetorics. At the same time, students must further develop their own goals, methods, and standards for their scholarly work and that of others.
EXPECTATIONS OF PHD STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE

Students are expected to be involved, creative, and vigorous participants in class discussions and in the overall conduct of the class. In addition, students are expected to:

• Attend all class sessions. If a student misses a class, it is her responsibility to arrange with another student to obtain all notes, handouts, and assignment sheets.

• Read all material prior to class. Students are expected to use the course readings to inform their classroom presentations, participation, and writing. Students must integrate what they read with what they say and write. This imperative is essential to the development of professional expertise and to the development of a collegial professional persona, especially for doctoral students.

• Educate themselves and their peers. Successful completion of graduate programs and participation in professional life depend upon a willingness to demonstrate initiative and creativity. Participation in the professional and personal growth of colleagues is essential to one’s own success as well as theirs. Such collegiality is at the heart of scholarship, so most assignments in the course encourage collaboration.

• Spend at least five to six (5-6) hours in preparation for each hour in the classroom of a PhD seminar. A three (3)-credit graduate hour course meeting once a week requires a minimum of 15 hours per week of work outside the classroom. That time will increase for the classes in which students present the day’s readings.

• Participate in all class discussions.

• Complete all assignments on time. Late assignments will not be accepted except in the limited circumstances noted below. Failure to complete any assignment on time will result in a failing grade for the course.

• Be responsible with collective property, especially books and other material on reserve.

• Ask for help from the instructor or the teaching assistant, either in class, during office hours, on the telephone, through email, or in any other appropriate way. Email is especially useful for information questions, but the instructor deliberately limits his access to email outside the office. Unless there are compelling privacy concerns, it is always wise to send a copy of any email intended for the instructor to the TA.

Academic dishonesty, such as plagiarism, cheating, or academic fraud, is intolerable and will incur severe penalties, including failure for the course. If there is concern about behavior that may be academically dishonest, consult the instructor. Students should refer to the Office of the Dean of Students Web site on academic integrity (http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php).

The instructor is happy to provide all appropriate accommodations for students with documented disabilities. The University’s Office of the Dean of Students (http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/) at 471.6259, 471.4641 TTY, can provide further information and referrals as necessary.

Class will begin promptly at 9:00 AM and ordinarily end by 11:45 AM.
STANDARDS FOR WRITTEN WORK

You will meet professional standards of clarity, grammar, spelling, and organization in writing for this class. Review these standards before and after writing; I use them to evaluate your work.

Every writer is faced with the problem of not knowing what her audience knows; therefore, effective communication depends upon maximizing clarity. Wolcott in *Writing Up Qualitative Research* (1990, p. 47) reminds us: "Address . . . the many who do not know, not the few who do." Remember that clarity of ideas, of language, and of syntax are mutually reinforcing.

Good writing makes for good thinking and vice versa. Recall that writing is a form of inquiry, a way to think, not a reflection of some supposed static thought “in” the mind. The topic of writing as a form of inquiry, in fact, will be one of the foci of this semester’s work together. Theodore Dreiser’s *Sister Carrie* shows how the interplay of composition and thought can work (1994, p. 144):

Hurstwood surprised himself with his fluency. By the natural law which governs all effort, what he wrote reacted upon him. He began to feel those subtleties which he could find words to express. With every word came increased conception. Those inmost breathings which thus found words took hold upon him.

We need not adopt the breathless metaphysics or literary naturalism to understand Dreiser’s point.

All written work for the class must be done on a word-processor and double-spaced, with 1” margins all the way around and in either 10 or 12 pt. font, in one of four font styles: Times, Times New Roman, Cambria, or Palatino. Please print on both sides of your paper.

All writing assignments will demand the use of references, and some may require notes. It is particularly important in schools such as the School of Information that notes and references are impeccably done. Please use APA (American Psychological Association) standards. There are other standard bibliographic and note formats, for example, in engineering and law, but social scientists and a growing number of humanists and natural scientists use APA. Familiarity with standard formats is essential for understanding others’ work and for preparing submissions to journals, funding agencies, professional conferences, and the like. You may also want to consult the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (2010, 6th ed.; http://apastyle.org/).

Do not use a general dictionary or encyclopedia for defining terms in graduate school or in professional writing. If you want to use a reference source to define a term, use a specialized dictionary such as *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* or subject-specific encyclopedia, e.g., the *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*. The best alternative, however, is having an understanding of the literature(s) related to the term sufficient to provide a definition in the context of the literature(s).

Use a standard spell checker, but be aware that spell checking dictionaries have systematic weaknesses: they exclude most proper nouns, e.g., personal and place names; they omit most technical terms; they omit most foreign words and phrases; and they cannot identify the error in using homophones, e.g., writing "there" instead of "their," or in writing "the" instead of "them."

It is imperative that you proofread your work thoroughly and be precise in editing it. It is often helpful to have someone else read your writing, to eliminate errors and to increase clarity.
Finally, every written assignment must include a title page with:

- The title of the assignment
- Your name
- The date
- The class number – INF 391D.12.

If you have any questions about these standards, I will be pleased to discuss them with you at any time.

Since the production of professional-level written work is one of the aims of the class and of the iSchool, I will read and edit your work as the editor of a professional journal or the moderator of a technical session at a professional conference would. The reminders below will help you prepare professional written work appropriate to any situation. Note the asterisked errors in #’s 3, 4, 9, 11, 12, 15, 16, 19, 21, and 25 (some have more than one error):

1. Staple all papers for this class in the upper left-hand corner. Do not use covers, binders, or other means of keeping the pages together.

2. Number all pages after the title page. Notes and references do not count against page limits.

3. Use formal, academic prose. Avoid colloquial language, "you know?" It is essential in graduate work and in professional communication to avoid failures in diction. Be serious and academic when called for, be informal and relaxed when called for, and be everything in between as necessary. For this course, avoid words and phrases such as "agenda," "problem with," "deal with," "handle," "window of," "goes into," "broken down into," "viable," and "option." They are tired clichés as well as colloquial.

4. Avoid all clichés. They are vague, "fail to "push the envelope," and do not provide "relevant input.""

5. Avoid computer technospeak such as "input," "feedback," or "processing information" except when using such terms in specific technical ways or when quoting others.

6. **Avoid using “content” as a noun.** We will discuss this point in class.

7. Do not use the term "relevant" except in its information retrieval sense. Ordinarily, it is a colloquial cliché, but it also has a strict technical meaning in information studies and computer science.

8. Do not use "quality" as an adjective; it is vague, cliché, and colloquial. Instead use "high-quality," "excellent," "superior," or whatever more formal phrase you deem appropriate.

9. Study the APA style convention for the proper use of ellipsis*. . . *.

10. Unless quoting others, avoid using the terms "objective" and "subjective" in their evidentiary senses; these terms entail major philosophical, epistemological controversy. Avoid terms such as "facts," "factual," "proven," and related constructions for similar reasons.

11. Avoid contractions. "Don’t" use them in formal writing.
12. Be circumspect in using the term “this,” especially in the beginning of a sentence. *THIS* is often a problem because the referent is unclear. Pay strict attention to providing clear referents for all pronouns. Especially ensure that pronouns and their referents agree in number; e.g., “each person went to their home” is a poor construction because “each” is singular, as is the noun “person,” while “their” is a plural form. Therefore, either the referent or the pronoun must change in number.

13. "If" ordinarily takes the subjunctive mood, e.g., "If he were [not "was"] only taller."

14. Put "only" in its appropriate place, near the word it modifies. For example, one might say in spoken English that "he only goes to Antone's” when one means that “the only place he frequents is Antone’s.” Better-written English, however, would read "he goes only to Antone’s."

15. Do not confuse possessive, plural, or contracted forms, especially of pronouns. *Its* bad.

16. Do not confuse affect/effect, compliment/complementary, or principle/principal. Readers will not *complement* your work or *it's* *principle* *affect* on them.

17. Avoid misplaced modifiers; e.g.: As someone interested in the history of Mesoamerica, it was important for me to attend the lecture. The modifier is misplaced because the phrase "As someone interested in the history of Mesoamerica" is meant to modify the next immediate word, which should then, obviously, be both a person and the subject of the sentence. In this case, it should modify the word "I" by preceding it immediately. One good alternative for the sentence is: As someone interested in the history of Mesoamerica, I was especially eager to attend the lecture.

18. Avoid use of "valid," "parameter," "bias," "reliability," and "paradigm," except in limited technical ways. These are important research terms and should be used with precision.

19. Remember that the words "data," "media," "criteria," "strata," and "phenomena" are all PLURAL forms. They *TAKES* plural verbs. If you use any of these plural forms in a singular construction, e.g., "the data is," you will make the instructor very unhappy :-(.

20. "Number," "many," and "fewer" are used with plural nouns (a number of horses, many horses, and fewer horses). "Amount," "much," and "less" are used with singular nouns (an amount of hydrogen, much hydrogen, and less hydrogen). Another useful way to make this distinction is to recall that "many" is used for countable nouns, while "much" is used for uncountable nouns.

21. *The passive voice should generally not be used.*

22. "Between" indicates two alternatives, while "among" signals three or more.

23. Generally avoid the use of honorifics such as Mister, Doctor, and Ms., and so on when referring to persons in writing, especially when citing their written work. Use the APA convention of last names and dates.

24. There is no generally accepted standard for citing electronic resources. If you cite them, give an indication, as specifically as possible, of:

- responsibility (who?)
- title (what?)
- date of creation (when?)
- date viewed (when?)
- place to find the source (where? how?).
CONTINUED


25. *PROFREAD! PROOFREED! PROOOFREAD!* 

26. Citation, quotation, and reference are nouns; cite, quote, and refer to are verbs.

27. Use double quotation marks (“abc.”), not single quotation marks (‘xyz.’), as a matter of course. In American English, single quotation marks indicate quotations within quotations.

28. Provide a specific page number for all direct quotations. If the quotation is from a Web page or other digital source, provide at least the paragraph number and/or other directional cues, e.g., “(Davis, 1993, section II, ¶ 4).”

29. Avoid using “as” as a synonym for “because” because such usage is often confusing.

30. Use “about” instead of the tortured locution “as to.”

31. In much of social science and humanistic study, the term “issue” is used in a technical way to identify sources of public controversy or dissensus. Please use the term to refer to topics about which there is substantial public disagreement, NOT synonymously with general terms such as “area,” “topic,” or the like.

32. On a related note, avoid the locution of “public debate.” Such a locution makes a series of faulty assumptions:

- It presumes that a public policy issue has only two “sides.” There are usually three or four or more perspectives on any topic of public dissensus that merit consideration. “Debate” hides this complexity.
- “Debate” implies that one “side” and only one “side” can be correct; that presumption ignores the fact that the many perspectives on a public policy issue have contributions to make to its resolution or to our understanding.
- “Debate” implies that there can be and will be one and only one “winner.” This presumption naively ignores the fact that some public policy issues are intractable, that these issues are often emergent as are their resolutions, and that compromise is oftentimes a mark of success rather than of failure or “surrender.”

33. Please do not start a sentence or any independent clause with “however.”

34. Avoid the use of “etc.” – it is awkward, colloquial, and vague.

35. Do not use the term “subjects” to describe research participants. “Respondents,” “participants,” and “informants” are preferred terms and have been for decades.

36. Do not use notes unless absolutely necessary, but, if you must use them, use endnotes not footnotes.

37. Please adhere to these orthographic (spelling) conventions:

- Web with a capital “W.”
- Web site, two words, with a capital “W.”
- Internet with a capital “I” to indicate the TCP/IP-compliant computer network with a shared address convention. Otherwise, internet with a lower-case “i” simply means any of the many millions of networks of networks.
### SOME EDITING CONVENTIONS FOR STUDENTS’ PAPERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>number OR insert a space; the context will help you decipher its meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AWK</td>
<td>awkward and usually compromises clarity as well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLOCK</td>
<td>make into a block quotation without external quotation marks; do so with quotations ≥ 4 lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>caps</td>
<td>capitalize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLLOQ</td>
<td>colloquial and to be avoided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dB</td>
<td>database</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRAG</td>
<td>sentence fragment; often means that the verb or subject of the sentence is missing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITAL</td>
<td>italicize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j</td>
<td>journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lc</td>
<td>make into lower case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lib’ship</td>
<td>librarianship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>org, org’l</td>
<td>organization, organizational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td>plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q</td>
<td>question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q’naire</td>
<td>questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REF?</td>
<td>what is the referent of this pronoun? to what or whom does it refer?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ</td>
<td>research question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sp</td>
<td>spelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SING</td>
<td>singular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w/</td>
<td>with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w.c.?</td>
<td>word choice?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The instructor also uses **check marks** to indicate that the writer has made an especially good point. **Wavy lines** indicate that usage or reasoning is suspect.
## GRADING

The faculty of the School of Information uses the following guidelines in grading:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>Superior achievement. An exceptionally high degree of mastery of the course material. Not recognized by the University.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>Excellent. High degree of mastery of the course material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>Very good.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>More than satisfactory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>Satisfactory. Work consistent with academic expectations of graduate students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>Less than satisfactory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory. May indicate the instructor’s reservations about the student’s ability to meet the School’s academic requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>Ununsatisfactory. Indicates the instructor’s reservations about the student’s ability to meet the School’s academic requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>Ununsatisfactory. Indicates the instructor’s strong reservations about the student’s ability to meet the School’s academic requirements. Any course with a grade lower than C cannot be counted toward a student’s degree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>Unacceptable. Indicates the instructor’s very strong reservations about the student’s ability to meet the School’s academic requirements and to earn a graduate degree. Any course with a grade lower than C cannot be counted toward a student’s degree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>Failing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See the memorandum from Associate Dean Philip Doty dated August 14, 2012, in the School of Information student orientation packet. Students may also wish to consult these UT Web sites for more information on standards of work:

- The Registrar – http://registrar.utexas.edu/students/grades
- The Graduate School Catalog – http://catalog.utexas.edu/graduate/
- The School – https://www.ischool.utexas.edu/content/general-information

As noted above, the University does not accept the grade of A+, but the instructor may assign the grade to students whose work is extraordinary.

The grade of B signals acceptable, satisfactory performance in graduate school. The instructor reserves the grade of A for students who demonstrate not only a command of the concepts and techniques discussed but also an ability to synthesize and integrate them in a professional manner and communicate them effectively, successfully informing the work of other students. The grade of incomplete (X) is reserved for students in extraordinary circumstances and must be negotiated with the instructor before the end of the semester.

The instructor uses points to evaluate assignments, not letter grades. He uses an arithmetic – not a proportional – algorithm to determine points on any assignment. For example, 14/20 points on an assignment does NOT translate to 70% of the credit, or a D. Instead 14/20 points is roughly equivalent to a B. If any student’s semester point total ≥ 90 (is equal to or greater than 90), then s/he will have earned an A of some kind. If the semester point total ≥ 80, then s/he will have earned at least a B of some kind. Whether these are A+, A, A-, B+, B, or B- depends upon the comparison of point totals for all students. For example, if a student earns a total of 90 points and the highest point total in the class is 98, the student would earn an A-. If, on the other hand, a student earns 90 points and the highest point total in the class is 91, then the student would earn an A. The instructor will explain this system throughout the semester.
TEXTS

There are 23 required texts (14 books and 9 papers) and 55 texts recommended; students will use two of the recommended texts for their book reviews. The 14 required books should be available at the Co-op (http://www.universitycoop.com/).

The REQUIRED books are these:


In addition to the books above, the class will also read and present on these “classic” papers:

The **RECOMMENDED** texts are those listed below. * indicates that the instructor almost selected that text as one of those required for the course.


Some of the readings will be on two-hour reserve at PCL, and students should be aware of their classmates’ needs to see the reserve material. They should also remember that many of the terms, definitions, procedures, and epistemological and other assumptions discussed in class, in the texts, and elsewhere are contentious. There are important differences among scholars about these topics. Learning to navigate this sea of uncertainty, but still adhere to rigorous standards for reading, evaluating, and doing work in information studies, should be one of students' aims in the course and in the iSchool PhD program.
ASSIGNMENTS

The instructor will provide additional information about each assignment in class and encourages students to see the assignment descriptions later in this syllabus.

Students must complete all assignments in order to pass the course. Students will complete the written assignments individually except for making class presentations and leading the in-class discussion designated as a group activity (GRP). All assignments must be consistent with the UT Honor Code (http://www.utexas.edu/about-ut/mission-core-purpose-honor-code) and with standards for first-rate professional-level work. All written assignments are to be double-spaced, printed on both sides of the paper, and submitted in class unless otherwise indicated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Date Due</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation and participation</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion questions (DQ’s)</td>
<td>MON (12:00 noon)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance at all TUE research colloquia (1:15 PM)</td>
<td>MAR 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice of two journals for final paper</td>
<td>JAN 21</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentations and leading in-class discussions</td>
<td>JAN 28, FEB 4, 11, 18, 25</td>
<td>60 (6 x 10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(six times) GRP</td>
<td>MAR 18 and 25, APR 1, 8, 15, 22, 29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice of TWO (2) books to review</td>
<td>MON, FEB 3, 12:00 N (noon)</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book reviews (5 pp. each)</td>
<td>MAR 4 and APR 15</td>
<td>10 + 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper on two journals “outside” information studies</td>
<td>FRI, MAY 2, 12:00 N (noon)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All assignments must be completed on time, especially since many of the assignments involve teams of students. The instructor reserves the right to issue a course grade of F if ANY assignment is not completed and will not accept late assignments unless three criteria are met:

1. At least 24 hours before the date due, the instructor gives explicit permission to the student to complete the assignment late. This criterion can be met only in the most serious of health, family, or personal situations.

2. At the same time, a specific date and time are agreed upon for the late completion.

3. The assignment is completed on or before the agreed-upon date and time.
## SCHEDULE

This schedule may be adjusted as the class progresses. C indicates a source in Canvas, online a document on the Web usually through the UT journal subscriptions, and AS additional sources. The additional sources are only suggested.

### DATE | TOPICS, ASSIGNMENTS, AND REQUIRED READINGS
---|---
**JAN 14** | Introduction to the course – Review of the syllabus
Examining two “classic” papers:

> “How We May Think” (1945)
> “The Mathematics of Communication” (1949)

**READ:** Bush (1945) online
Weaver (1949) C
Zinsser (1989), Preface and Part I (chapters 1-5, pp. 3-76 and 237-240)

**JAN 21** | Four more “classic” papers:

> “Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture” (1973)
> “Situated Knowledge: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective” (1999)

**READ:** Geertz (1973) online
Haraway (1990) C
Haraway (1999) C
Star & Griesemer (1989) online
Zinsser (1989), Part II (chapters 6-12, pp. 79-233 and 240-247)

**JAN 28** | *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959)

**Presentations and student-led discussion GRP (10%)**

**READ:** Goffman (1959)

**AS:** Graham & Diamond (1997a, b, and c) C

**FEB 4** | *How Users Matter: The Co-construction of Users and Technology* (2005)


**Presentations and student-led discussion GRP (10%)**

**READ:** Oudshoorn & Pinch (2005)
Heidegger (2008) online
FEB 11  
**Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity** (1998)  

**Presentations and student-led discussion GRP (10%)**  
READ: Wenger (1998)  
Delamont & Atkinson (2001) [online]

FEB 18  
**The Digital Sublime: Myth, Power, and Cyberspace** (2005)  

**Presentations and student-led discussion GRP (10%)**  
READ: Mosco (2005)

FEB 25  
**Sensemaking in Organizations** (1995)  

**Presentations and student-led discussion GRP (10%)**  
READ: Weick (1995)  
Weick & Roberts (1993) [online]

AS: Schön (1983) C

MAR 4  
**iConference**  
Class led by Dr. William Aspray  
READ: Campbell-Kelly, Aspray, Ensmenger, & Yost (2014)  
AS: Kennedy (1997a, b, c, and d) C

• DUE: First book review (10%; 6 pp.)

MAR 11  
**NO CLASS — SPRING BREAK!**

MAR 18  
**Human-machine Reconfigurations: Plans and Situated Actions** (2007)  

**Presentations and student-led discussion GRP (10%)**  
READ: Suchman (2007)

MAR 25  
**The Future of the Book** (1996)  

**Presentations and student-led discussion GRP (10%)**  
READ: Nunberg (1996)
APR 1  

Presentations and student-led discussion GRP (10%)


APR 8  

Presentations and student-led discussion GRP (10%)

READ: Turkle (1995)

APR 15  

Presentations and student-led discussion GRP (10%)

READ: Bruner (1990)

•  DUE: Second book review (10%; 6 pp.)

APR 22  
*The Googlization of Everything (and Why We Should Worry)* (2011)

Presentations and student-led discussion GRP (10%)

READ: Vaidhyanathan (2011)

AS:  Shils (1997a and b) C

APR 29  
*Beautiful Evidence* (2006)

Course evaluation
Conclusions and summary

Presentations and student-led discussion GRP (10%)

READ: Tufte (2006)


MAY 2  
Friday, 12:00 N (noon)

•  DUE: Paper on two journals “outside” information studies (10%; 5 pp.)
ASSIGNMENTS – Class will begin promptly at 9:00 AM and ordinarily end by 11:45 AM.

• Attendance at Research Colloquia – throughout the semester

It is important that doctoral students continue their integration into the discipline and into the research life of the iSchool by regularly attending the (nearly) weekly research colloquia regularly scheduled on Tuesday afternoons from 1:15 – 2:45 PM in 5.522, the large conference room. These research presentations are excellent ways to explore topics of interest and to learn about the many disciplines and schools of thought that contribute to the vibrant field of information studies. The colloquium will also likely be of benefit in reading, writing, and (especially) presenting in this course.

• Discussion Questions – due 12:00 N (noon) MONDAY January 13, 20, and 27; February 3, 10, 17, 24; March 17, 23, and 31; and April 7, 14, 21, and 28

In preparation for each class meeting, all students, including those making presentations and leading discussion in that class, will submit at least two discussion questions related to the week’s readings to the instructor the day before the class meeting. Students should review each other’s questions before the class meeting, and the instructor will distribute copies of them in the second part of class. The exception to this requirement to prepare discussion questions for each class meeting is the class on March 4 when Dr. William Aspray will lead class in discussing his co-authored book, Computer.

Students must submit their discussions questions no later than 12:00 N (noon) on the Monday before the class meeting. e.g., the discussion questions for the class meeting on Tuesday, January 28, must be submitted by 12:00 N (noon) on Monday, January 27. While our discussions will be guided by each week’s presenters, the vagaries of circumstance, and the like, the discussion questions will be an important means of structuring and focusing our consideration of the week’s readings and more. As such, these questions are an important part of students’ participation in the course.

Students will submit these questions to the appropriate Discussion in Canvas.

• Presentations and Leading in-class Discussion (60%, six classes x 10%) – January 28; February 4, 11, 18, 25; March 18 and 25; and April 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29

As a member of a two-person team, each student will make six 60-minute presentations of the day’s text(s) in the first part of class, then act as one of two discussion leaders in the second part of class for those same six classes. In order to do so, every student will team with each of the other three members of the class twice. CP indicates that the class will also read and discuss a “classic paper” that day in class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>AG</th>
<th>JM</th>
<th>RS</th>
<th>CS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/28/2013</td>
<td>Goffman (1959)</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/4</td>
<td>Oudshoorn &amp; Pinch (2005) + CP</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/11</td>
<td>Wenger (1998) + CP</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/18</td>
<td>Mosco (2005)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/25</td>
<td>Weick (1995) + CP</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/18</td>
<td>Suchman (2007)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/25</td>
<td>Nunberg</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/1</td>
<td>Yates (1989)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/8</td>
<td>Turkle (1997)</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/15</td>
<td>Bruner (1990)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/22</td>
<td>Vaidhyanathan (2011)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Presentations

There are two fundamental goals of the presentations that will demand significant preparation, including additional reading. The first of these goals is the more important and should take the majority of the time in the presentation, c. 45 - 50 minutes:

1. To provide some context for the text being discussed; see below.
2. To help the other students and the instructor understand the influence of the work in information studies and other disciplines; see below.

On those three days when we discuss “classic papers” as well as full texts (February 4, 11, and 25), a third goal of the presentation will be:

3. To help the other students in the course and the instructor understand some of the most important connections between the paper and the text being discussed that day.

To fulfill the first goal of providing context for the text in hand, students making the presentation might consider a number of questions, e.g., what is the genesis of the work? Why and when was it written? How does it fit into the research trajectory of its author(s)? Which discipline(s) was the work written for? For an edited work, what disciplines are represented among the chapters’ authors? How does the introduction to the work, whether edited or otherwise, establish the work’s aims and place in the overall research landscape? How are the various parts of the book related to each other? What school(s) of thought, research programs, and the like does the work address, respond to, or belong to? How do we know? What relations, if any, does the text have with topics discussed in class and/or explored in other texts read for the course? These questions are only illustrative of the kinds of topics that might help provide context for the work.

To fulfill the second goal of describing the work’s influence and any potential or documented contribution to information studies research, the team making the presentation might do several things, e.g.:

1. Do a citation analysis of authors in citation trackers available online such as the Web of Science, Google Scholar, and others; see, for example, http://www.lib.utexas.edu/chem/info/citations.html
2. Investigate important scholarly blogs and other significant online fora (especially aggregators) that address the text, its author(s), or editor(s)
3. Examine bibliographies of important works in information studies and beyond, including “reference” works, whether in print or digital form online.

It is important to remember that all citation tools, however, including the digital, have serious limitations beyond the question of what citations might mean, for example, such tools’ coverage of books and many professional conferences is extremely limited if not non-existent.

Preparation of the class presentation should take about 8-10 hours beyond reading the text, counting research, planning, discussion with the other member of the team, and preparation of the presentation itself, including any slides, bibliographies, glossaries of terms, or the like. It is imperative that the student teams give themselves adequate time to prepare for the presentations.

Each presentation will last 60 minutes, from the end of the instructor’s introductory and logistical remarks at the beginning of class to the class break at approximately 10:15 AM. Students should be aware of the passage of time and ensure that the presentation has sufficient time to develop and be complete in the 60 minutes assigned.

The two-student team making the presentation should use slides, handouts (such as glossaries of terms, bibliographies, and descriptions of scholarly influence), and the like as appropriate for the text being discussed and in response to the team’s own interests.
Discussions

In the second part of class (from approximately 10:30 – 11:30 AM), the presenting team will take the discussion lead with the active participation of the other members of the class and the instructor. All members of the class will have submitted their minimum of two discussion questions (DQ’s) the previous day to the appropriate Discussion in Canvas, and all students and the instructor will have read them in preparation for the discussion of the day’s readings. The instructor will prepare a handout for each student with the DQ’s.

The presenting team will briefly introduce the discussion questions and determine how the discussion will start, perhaps soliciting the preferences of the other members of the class. The presenting team should feel free to help catalyze the discussion in whatever fashion they choose, but not dominate it. This discussion will last approximately an hour, with the instructor reserving the final 10 or 15 minutes of the class for some summary remarks on the day’s readings and looking ahead to the next class.

- Book reviews (5 double-spaced pp. each, 20%, two reviews x 10% each) – February 4 (choice of books to review), March 3 (first review due), and April 15 (second review due)

Students will write thoughtful and specific reviews of two of the recommended books in the list of texts on pp. 12-13 of this syllabus. Each review will be five (5) double-spaced pages long, c. 1,250 words, not counting references and title page. Only one student may choose any of the books on the list, with the instructor assigning texts generally on a first come, first served basis.

Students should hand in TWO copies of their reviews, one the instructor will keep and the other to be returned to the student. As outlined in the section of the syllabus on Standards for written work (pp. 5-8), students should use 10 or 12 pt. font and one of Times, Times New Roman, Cambria, or Palatino fonts. All written assignments should be printed on both sides of the paper.

There are three deadlines associated with this assignment:

1. **MONDAY February 4, 2013 or before**: students will send email to the instructor identifying their top five choices from the Recommended texts list, from most preferred to least. The instructor will respond quickly to the request.
2. **March 3**: first book review due in class.
3. **April 15**: second book review due in class.

As they write, students should keep in mind the models of the best formal and long book reviews in journals important in our field and beyond. One must write the review for scholars in information studies and cognate fields. Naturally, students should feel free to consult with each other as they write these reviews but ensure that all work is their own.

As book review editors commonly say to potential reviewers, students should review the book that was written, not the book that was not; one must be both evaluative and skeptical but neither cynical nor dismissive.

The review should have two parts:

1. Three to four (3-4) pp. that identify the particular strengths and weaknesses of the book and why the reviewer identifies them as such. What is original or not original about the book? What contribution, if any, does it make to our understanding of the topic(s) it discusses?
2. One to two (1-2) pp. that engage questions such as – should information studies scholars be interested in reading the book? Why or why not? How does the
book engage or ignore themes, methods, and other elements important to
information studies, especially those discussed in class and/or in other readings?
Students should be clear, specific, and succinct in their responses to these and other
questions they regard as important.

As is always true for reviews, simple summaries are not sufficient. The reviews must be analytic, holistic, evaluative, and, as appropriate, comparative. The instructor will not accept late assignments except by prior arrangement.

- Paper on two journals “outside” information studies (5 double-spaced pp., 10%) – choice of journals, TUE, January 21; paper due FRIDAY, May 2, 12:00 N (noon)

Every student will choose two (2) journals from the list below to read throughout the semester and will write a short paper about the journals and their potential or real contribution to information studies. It is in the student’s best interest to choose two journals with which she is unfamiliar:

American Anthropologist  Law and Contemporary Problems
Communication Research  Men and Masculinities
Communications of the ACM Organization Science
Critical Survey  Policy Studies
Cultural Studies  Rhetoric and Public Affairs
Gender & Society  Science, Technology, & Human Values
Information, Communication, & Society Social Studies of Science
Journal of Computer-Supported Cooperative Work Sociology

Students must notify the instructor of their two journal choices by email no later than TUE, January 21, 2014.

The goal of the paper is to document the student’s reactions to the journals, especially to use the review of the journal’s papers, editorials, identities of contributors, and the like to enhance the student’s understanding of scholars and sources of potential interest to the field and the development of a research persona. A particular goal of the paper is to explore why scholars in information studies may or may not profit from regular reading of the journals.

Students should, at a minimum, read the full 2013 volume of the journals, or the latest year’s worth of the journals available online. Students should feel free, however, to discuss material from anywhere in the journals’ runs.

Other questions that students might consider in writing the paper are many. How does the journal reflect the questions we engage in class? Does it engage them at all? How does the journal help expand and deepen our understanding of questions, methods, controversies, and other topics of interest to information studies? What other questions and concerns does the journal consider? What singular questions or continuing themes does it engage that may be of special import to information studies researchers and teachers? Who are the major actors in the community that the journal serves, both individually and institutionally? Who edits the journal? Who publishes it? What does the journal consider good research? These are only indicative of the kinds of questions the paper might discuss, but the paper must explicitly engage the question of whether the journal is a useful source for regular reading for information studies researchers.

The paper must be five (5) double-spaced pages long, printed on both sides of the paper, in either 10 or 12 pt. font, and using one of four fonts: Times, Times New Roman, Cambria, or Palatino. Students should send the completed paper to the instructor as an email attachment in
Word (either .doc or .docx format) no later than **12:00 N (noon) on Friday, May 2**. The instructor will not accept late assignments except by prior arrangement.

**REFERENCES**

C indicates documents in the Modules section of Canvas, where they appear in the chronological order in which they appear in the syllabus. There are both required readings and Additional Sources in the Modules section of Canvas.

**I. Readings from the class schedule and assignments**


**II. Selected additional readings, including texts for book reviews**


Ehrlich, Thomas. (1995). Research is not a dirty word. In The courage to inquire: Ideals and realities in higher education (pp. 45-70). Bloomington, IN: Indiana University.


