Information in Social and Cultural Context
INF 380C
28320

Spring 2013
UTA 1.208
Mondays, 3-6 pm

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I. Course Description

Examines the role of information in human activities, particularly in relation to particular social and cultural contexts. Examines how individuals, groups, organizations, institutions, and society at large create, find, use, understand, share, transform, and curate information.

II. Specific Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, you will:

- Learn a common language and conceptual framework that can connect the diverse areas of specialization within the information field, and express your ideas in class discussions, debates, and projects in ways that can be understood by other information professionals.

- Understand the role of information in human activities and the role of social and cultural contexts, and demonstrate your understanding through completing course readings, submitting discussion questions via Blackboard, and successful participation in small group and class discussions.

- Examine how groups, organizations, and institutions create, find, use, understand, share, transform, and curate information, and connect them to individuals on the micro side and society at large on the macro side, through completing your course readings and projects.

- Demonstrate your ability to work with others and independently effectively and professionally by successfully completing the group and individual components of the project as well as by successfully participating in small group and class discussions and working with teammates in debates, as well as maintaining professional courtesy with opponents.

III. Format and Procedures

This is a seminar-style course, so your attendance and participation in class are critical to your success in this course and to the success of the course as a whole. Make sure to complete all required readings prior to class, and to submit your discussion questions via Blackboard each week by Sunday at 3 pm. You should come to class prepared to participate in small group and class discussions, as well as debates (as proponents, opponents, or jury members/ questioners). You will also work independently and in teams to complete a course project that studies the information social and cultural context of a group, organization, or institution. The project will combine individual accountability with collaboration, as is common in most positions that you will hold as an information professional. You may use any combination of literature review and/or empirical study to complete your projects. The success of this course will depend on everyone's preparation and willingness to share their ideas and opinions, which requires mutual understanding and respect. You are welcome to express ideas that are different from your peers or the instructor, but this should be done politely and professionally, and in a constructive manner. I look forward to interacting with all of you throughout the semester, and I hope you will learn a lot from me and from your peers.

IV. Tentative Course Schedule **This syllabus represents my current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance the class learning opportunity. Such changes, communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected.*

Date	Topic/Debate	Work to do at home Readings – to be completed <u>before</u> class	Evaluation
Week 1 1/14	**Introduction**	N/A (no readings before first class)	Class Attendance and Participation (CAP)
Unit I: Values and Epistemology			
Week 2 1/28	**Information and Personal Identity** *Debate: Does social media promote or discourage individuality?*	• Floridi, L. (2011). The informational nature of personal identity. *Minds and Machines, 21*(4), 549-566. • Haraway, D. (1988). Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. *Feminist Studies, 14*(3), 575-599. • Hayles, N. K. (2009). RFID: Human agency and meaning in information-intensive environments. *Theory, Culture, and Society, 26*(2-3), 47-72. • Turkle, S. (2011). The tethered self: Technology reinvents intimacy and solitude. *Continuing Higher Education Review, 75*, 28-31.	Discussion Questions (DQs) CAP Debate
Week 3 2/4	**Information and Collective Identity** *Debate: Do physical or online communities facilitate better communication?*	• Ackland, R., & O'Neil, M. (2011). Online collective identity: The case of the environmental movement. *Social Networks, 33*, 177-190. • Bardzell, S., & Bardzell, J. (2011). Towards a feminist HCI methodology: Social science, feminism, and HCI. In *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, pp. 675-684. • Oudshoorn, N., Rommes, E., and Stienstra, M. (2004) Configuring the user as everybody: Gender and design cultures in information and communication technologies. *Science, Technology & Human Values, 29*(1), 30–63. • Veinot, T. C., & Williams, K. (2012). Following the "community" thread from sociology to information behavior and informatics: Uncovering theoretical continuities and research opportunities. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology, 63*(5), 847-864.	DQs CAP Debate

Week 4 2/11	**Information in International Context** *Debate: Do mobile devices challenge or promote global and local hegemonies?*	• Castells, M. (2010). Globalisation and Identity. *Quaderns de la Mediterrània*, *14*, 254-262. • James, J. (2011). Are changes in the digital divide consistent with global equality or inequality? *The Information Society, 27*, 121-128. • Kolko, B. & Putnam, C. (2009). Computer games in the developing world: The value of non-instrumental engagement with ICTs, or taking play seriously. In *Proceedings of the International Conference on Information and Communication Technologies and Development* (pp. 46-55). Piscataway, NJ: IEEE. • Warschauer, M. & Ames, M. (2010). Can One Laptop Per Child save the world's poor? *Journal of International Affairs, 64*, 33-51.	DQs CAP Debate
**Unit II: Information Policy**		
Week 5 2/18	**Standardization** *Debate: Do standards promote or inhibit innovation?*	• Feinberg, M. (2010). Two kinds of evidence: How information systems form rhetorical arguments. *Journal of Documentation, 66*(4), 491-512. • Olson, H. A. (2007). How we construct subjects: A feminist analysis. *Library Trends, 56*, 509-541. • Renear, A. H., & Palmer, C. L. (2009). Strategic reading, ontologies, and the future of scientific publishing. *Science, 325*, 828-832. • Star, S.L. & Lampland, M. (2009). Reckoning with standards. In M. Lampland & S.L. Star (Eds.), *Standards and Their Stories: How Quantifying, Classifying, and Formalizing Practices Shape Everyday Life* (pp. 3-34). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.	DQs CAP Debate **Project Proposal**
Week 6 2/25	**Intellectual Property** *Debate: Does copyright facilitate or inhibit creative expression?*	• Dryden, J. (2012). Guidelines to support professional copyright practice. *Journal of Archival Organization, 10*, 150-154. • Jenkins, H. (2006). Searching for the origami unicorn: The Matrix and transmedia storytelling. In *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York: NYU Press. • Lessig, L. (2010). Getting our values around copyright right. *EDUCAUSE Review, 45*(2), 26-42. • Moore, A. (2011). Intellectual property. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.	DQs CAP Debate

Week 7 3/4	**Privacy and Surveillance** *Debate: Which comes first? Protecting individuals' privacy or protecting public safety?*	• American Library Association. (2003). Resolution on the USA Patriot Act and related measures that infringe on the rights of library users. • Goodman, A. & Goodman, D. (2008). America's most dangerous librarians: Meet the radical bookworms who fought the Patriot Act – and won. *Mother Jones*. • Monahan, T. (2011). Surveillance as cultural practice. *The Sociological Quarterly, 52*(4), 495-508. • Patton, J.W. (2000). Protecting privacy in public? Surveillance technologies and the value of public places. *Ethics and Information Technology, 2*, 181-187.	DQs CAP Debate
**Unit III: Information Work and Workers**		
Week 8 3/18	**Professional Ethics** *When they conflict, should information professionals follow the code of ethics of their professional association or of their employing organization?*	• ACM Code of Ethics • ALA Code of Ethics • ALA Core Values of Librarianship • Kuhn, M. (2007). Interactivity and prioritizing the human: A code of blogging ethics. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics, 22*, 18–36. • Wise, S. (2012). Working to think otherwise: Tracing ethos in information professionals' reflections on learning and practice. *Australian Academic & Research Libraries, 43*(3), 169-188.	DQs CAP Debate
Week 9 3/25	**Roles for Information Professionals** *Debate: Has online search increased or decreased the importance of information professionals?*	• Bailey, D.E., Leonardi, P.M., & Chong, J. (2010). Minding the gaps: Understanding technology interdependence and coordination in knowledge work. *Organization Science, 21*, 713-730. • Flanders, J. (2012). Time, labor, and 'alternate careers' in digital humanities knowledge work. In M. K. Gold (Ed.), *Debates in the Digital Humanities* (pp. 292-308). Minneapolis: U. of Minnesota Press. • Kraus, K., & Donahue, R. (2012). "Do you want to save your progress?": The role of professional and player communities in preserving virtual worlds. *Digital Humanities Quarterly, 6*(2). • Liu, A. (2004). Historicizing cool: Humanities in the information age. In The Laws of Cool: Knowledge Work and the Culture of Information (pp. 301-316). Chicago: U. of Chicago Press.	DQs CAP Debate **Individual Projects**

Week 10 4/1	**Invisible Work** *Debate: What is more responsible for Apple's success: the creativity of Steve Jobs or global differences in labor laws?*	• Bates, M. J. (1999). The invisible substrate of information science. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science, 50*, 1043-1050. • Shapin, S. (1989). The invisible technician. *American Scientist, 7*, 554–563. • Star, S. L., & Strauss, A. (1999). Layers of silence, arenas of voice: The ecology of visible and invisible work. *Computer Supported Cooperative Work, 8*(1-2), 9-30. • Suchman, L. (2002). Located accountabilities in technology production. Scandinavian Journal of Information Systems, 14(2), 91-105.	DQs CAP Debate
Unit IV: Information Institutions			
Week 11 4/8	**Libraries** *Debate: Are libraries more or less important in the information age?*	• Causer, T., & Wallace, V. (2012). Building a volunteer community: Results and findings from Transcribe Bentham. *Digital Humanities Quarterly, 6*(2). • Kinney, B. (2010). The Internet, public libraries, and the digital divide. *Public Library Quarterly, 29*, 104-161 • Maack, M. N. (2001), Books and libraries as instruments of cultural diplomacy in Francophone Africa during the Cold War. *Libraries & Culture, 36*, 58-86. • Pegrum, M., & Kiel, R. (2011). "Changing the way we talk": Developing librarians' competence in emerging technologies through a structured program. *College and Research Libraries, 72*, 583-598.	DQs CAP Debate
Week 12 4/15	**Archives** *Debate: Is digital or analog communication better for preservation and curation?*	• Carter, R. G. S. (2006). Of things said and unsaid: Power, archival silences, and power in silence. *Archivaria, 61*, 215-233. • Manoff, M. (2004). Theories of the archive from across the disciplines. *Libraries and the Academy, 4*(1), 9-25. • O'Meara, E., & Tuomala, M. (2012). Finding balance between archival principles and real-life practices in an institutional repository. *Archivaria, 73*, 81-103. • Trace, C. (2011). Beyond the magic to the mechanism: Computers, materiality, and what it means for records to be "born digital." *Archivaria, 72*, 5-27.	DQs CAP Debate

| Week 13 4/22 | **Museums** *Debate: Should professional curators or community members play a larger role in the creation of digital collections?* | • Bennett, T. (1998). Speaking to the eyes: Museums, legibility and the social order. In S. Macdonald (Ed.), *The Politics of Display: Museums, Science, Culture* (pp. 25-35). New York: Routledge.
• Kidd, J. (2011). Enacting engagement online: Framing social media use for *the* museum. *Information Technology & People, 24*(1), 64–77.
• Marty, P. F. (2011). My lost museum: User expectations and motivations for creating personal digital collections on museum websites. *Library & Information Science Research, 33*(3), 211-219.
• Neufeld, D. (2008). Parks Canada, the commemoration of Canada, and Northern Aboriginal oral history. In P. Hamilton & L. Shopes (Eds.), *Oral History and Public Memories* (pp. 7-30). Philadelphia: Temple U. Press. | |
| Week 14 4/29 | Group Project Presentations | No Readings – Project Presentations | **Group Project Slides for Presentations** |

V. Course Requirements

1. Class attendance and participation policy

   (a) Because the vast majority of the learning in this class will occur within the classroom, you are required to attend class regularly. Attendance will be taken during each class period. Absences will only be excused in situations following university policy (illness, religious holy days, participation in University activities at the request of university authorities, and compelling absences beyond your control) with proper documentation and timely notification (prior to class for non-emergencies). Excessive tardiness may be considered as an unexcused absence.

   (b) Class participation is a critical element of this course. The effectiveness of the course will be significantly impacted by the quality of your participation. Class participation is not merely attendance, but rather factors in your overall contributions to the collaborative learning environment, based on both the quantity and quality of your interactions in all aspects of the course. Discussion of class participation with the instructor is encouraged in order to ensure that you are making the most of the classroom experience and the accompanying opportunities for learning. You are expected to participate in all aspects of class discussion. You should come to class prepared to discuss the required readings, as well as your perspectives on these readings. You should strive for balance in your contributions, and your participation will not be based on who speaks the loudest or the longest, but on consistent participation of significant quantity and, most importantly, quality.

   (c) Your attendance and class participation grade will be calculated by multiplying the numerical assessment of your class participation by the percentage of classes that you attend (with exceptions made for documented, university-recognized absences as noted above). Please note that

regular attendance and active participation in each class session are critical for receiving a good grade in this course. For example, by actively participating in each class, you will receive a full letter grade higher than if you were to skip half of the classes or to be half-awake for all of the classes.

(d) Religious Holy Days
By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

2. Course Readings/Materials

(a) All course readings are available on the course Blackboard site at http://courses.utexas.edu

(b) Please make sure to complete all readings before coming to class

(c) You will need to do additional reading to prepare for debates and projects. A sample list of additional publications that may be useful for these activities is available on the Blackboard site, although you are also encouraged to seek out additional relevant readings

3. Use of *Blackboard* in class

To supplement our in-class discussions we will use Blackboard to distribute course materials, to communicate and collaborate online, to post grades, and to submit assignments. You can find Blackboard support at the ITS Help Desk at 475-9400, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., so please plan accordingly.

4. Discussion Questions

(a) Except for weeks 1 and 14, there will be required readings each week. The required readings will be posted on Blackboard, so there are no books to buy or papers to acquire for the class. Each week, you are expected to read the material carefully and post one discussion question that addresses the class readings (synthesis and synergy across readings are keys to successful questions) to the week's thread on Blackboard, at least 24 hours before the start of your class. These questions should stimulate thoughtful class discussion and will be graded accordingly. Before class, examine your colleagues' questions and be prepared to discuss them in class.

5. Projects

(a) Projects combine teamwork with individual accountability, and include a project proposal, individual report, final report, and final presentation.

(b) On the first day of class, we will form teams with 4-5 students per team. You will work with your team throughout the semester on your project proposal, final report, and final presentation.

(c) Please use APA format: http://www2.liu.edu/CWIS/CWP/library/workshop/citapa.htm

(d) The project proposal involves deciding on a group, organization, or institution to study, and articulating the social and cultural context for information in that group, organization, or institution. Focusing on the different aspects of the information lifecycle (how they create, find, use, understand, share, transform, and curate information), you will submit a two-page proposal addressing:
       i) What group, organization, or institution have you decided to study?
       ii) Why have you selected this group, organization, or institution?
       iii) What do you expect are the social and cultural context for this organization?
       iv) What is their mission or goal?
       v) On which 4-5 aspects of the information cycle will your team focus?

vi) Who will focus on which component (each student picks a different component)?

vii) What approach will you use across components and for each particular component?

Each person will submit a project proposal (including all team member names) via Blackboard by 3 pm on Monday, February 18, 2013.

(e) The individual report involves writing your own report on how the cultural and social context of your study group, organization, or institution impacts the aspect of the information lifecycle you have proposed to study. Your report should be 5-10 pages in length and can be based on any kind of research, including literature review, interviews, surveys, or any other appropriate research methods. Please note that experience with research methods is not necessary, as you may elect to write a literature review. You should make sure to answer the following questions in your report:

i) How did you study your selected aspect? Please be as detailed as possible.

ii) What did you find? What were the findings of the lit review, interviews, survey, etc.?

iii) What does it mean? What would you conclude based on your findings?

iv) What can we learn from? What best practices used here can apply elsewhere?

v) What can be improved? e.g., Based on what you have articulated as the organization's social and cultural context, how could the information they produce or use better serve them?

Individual reports must be submitted via Blackboard by 3 pm on Monday, March 25, 2013.

(f) The final report should provide a comprehensive overview of the information lifecycle within the context of your selected group, organization, or institution's social and cultural context, including providing answers for all questions from the individual report. However, unlike the individual reports, you will need to work together to synthesize your answers into a coherent report that must begin with an executive summary and end with takeaways. Your final report should be 20-30 pages in length, and must be collaboratively written by all team members based on each team member's individual reports. Final reports must be submitted via Blackboard by 3 pm on Monday, April 29, 2013.

(g) The final presentation will be on the last day of class. Each presentation will be 15 minutes in length, with an additional five minutes for questions and discussion. All team members must participate in both preparing and presenting the final presentation. Each team must submit PowerPoint slides via Blackboard by 3 pm on Monday, April 29, 2013.

6. Debates

(a) Debates will be held during the second half of each class period. During Units I and II, debates will be in small groups; during Units III and IV, we will have formal debates for the whole class.

(b) During each debate, students will work in teams of three covering both sides of the debate. Each student will participate in two formal debates. You will be asked to indicate your preferred debate topics and sides, which will be used in the assignment of debate teams.

(c) Prior to each formal debate, you will need to identify at least 2 different outside readings per team member that you used to prepare for the debate, and each team member needs to prepare an informal one-page summary listing the readings as well as your planned contributions in terms of the different components of the debate. Basically, these help to ensure that you are prepared for the debate and help you to document the preparation that you did before each debate. You will need to coordinate with your team members prior to the debate to ensure that you select different readings and have assigned roles for the different components of the debate.

(d) Formal debates will begin with a coin toss to determine order, followed by opening statements by each side (5 minutes each), cross-examination between the sides (5 minutes each), questioning by the jury (8 minutes total), and closing arguments (1 minute each). Please make sure to coordinate your roles within your team prior to the debate, so you'll be ready for all components.

(e) Formal debates will also include three additional roles, which will be randomly selected: moderator, time-keeper, and parliamentarian. The moderator's role will be to introduce the debate

question as well as the members of each team, as well as to transition from one part of the debate to the next. The timekeeper's role will be to ensure that each segment of the debate is completed on schedule. The parliamentarian's role is to ensure that the debate is civil, professional, and constructive, and to intervene if the debate gets off topic or if debaters violate the spirit of the debate or the course. Please note that the instructor may also intervene in any of these capacities on an as-needed basis.

(f) Any student not playing one of these roles will be a member of the jury. As a jury member, please come prepared with questions to ask both sides, and please note that performance as a juror as well as other roles will be evaluated as part of class participation.

(g) Your grade for each debate will be based on your preparation as documented in your one-page summary as well as your performance in the debate as evaluated by the instructor and the jury.

7. Late Assignment Policy

All assignments are due by the start of class for that week, except as noted in the course schedule. All assignments must be submitted via Blackboard. Late assignments will only be excused in situations following university policy (illness, religious holy days, etc.) with proper documentation and timely notification (prior to the deadline for non-emergencies). In all other cases, assignments received after the deadline will be penalized 10% per 24-hour period. If you turn in an assignment (without prior authorization or extreme emergency circumstances) even one minute late, you will have an automatic deduction of 10% prior to grading of the assignment; if you are five days late, even an otherwise perfect assignment will only receive half-credit; and if you are ten days late, your assignment will not be graded and will not receive any credit.

VI. Grading Procedures

Grades will be based on:

(a) Attendance and Participation (20%)
(b) Weekly Questions (10%)
(c) Formal Debates (20%)
      i) Preparation: 3% per debate
      ii) Jury Vote: 2% per debate
      iii) Instructor evaluation: 5% per debate
(d) Projects (50%)
      i) Project Proposal: 10%
      ii) Individual Report: 15%
      iii) Group Report: 15%
      iv) Group Presentation: 10%

Grading Scale:

		B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69		
A	93-100	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	63-66	F	0-59
A-	90-92	B-	80-82	C-	70-72	D-	60-62		

VII. Academic Integrity

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.

Each student in this course is expected to abide by the University of Texas Honor Code. **[See the UT Honor Code above.]** Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work, although collaboration is allowed and required in the project proposal, group report, group presentation, and some aspects of the debate preparation. However, each student is ultimately responsible for preparing their own one-page summary including their own unique outside readings.

The projects combine teamwork with individual accountability. For the project proposal, you will need to work with your team members. For the individual report, you will need to complete your own report without help from other students. For the final project and presentation, you will need to share your individual project results with your team members (after first submitting them to the instructor).

VIII. Other University Notices and Policies

Use of E-mail for Official Correspondence

- All students should become familiar with the University's official e-mail student notification policy. It is the student's responsibility to keep the University informed as to changes in his or her e-mail address. Students are expected to check e-mail on a frequent and regular basis in order to stay current with University-related communications, recognizing that certain communications may be time-critical. It is recommended that e-mail be checked daily, but at a minimum, twice per week. The complete text of this policy and instructions for updating your e-mail address are available at **http://www.utexas.edu/its/help/utmail/1564** .

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

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)

If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal.

Emergency Evacuation Policy

Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation:
- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building.
- If you require assistance to evacuate, inform me in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow my instructions or those of class instructors.
Do not re-enter a building unless you're given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.