INFO 380E Perspectives on Information

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Formal Course Description: A multi-disciplinary and historical examination of information as a primary and foundational concept. Contrasts key literature from information studies with perspectives from other fields.

Implementation This Semester: The course will have three interleaved lines of inquiry:

- The basic concepts of information science and technology – this will be accomplished through the reading and discussion of Davis and Shaw's book
- The historical development of information concepts and use – this will be accomplished through the book presentations by individual students
- The use of the information concept in various modern-day practices and in various sub-disciplines of information studies – this will be accomplished through presentations by pairs of students

Only book to Buy: Charles H. Davis and Debora Shaw, Introduction to Information Science and Technology (Information Today, 2011, second printing 2013) – available at the University Bookstore

Grading: Grades will be assigned by giving consideration holistically to all aspects of the student’s performance in the class, including discussion questions written for class, thoughtful and respectful participation is class discussion, leading presentation discussions, and the two presentations made to the class.

Academy Integrity: I take academic integrity seriously and enforce it in my classes. I follow the University of Texas policies, which can be found at http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php and on webpages that are linked to from this page. If you have any questions about academic integrity, please ask me in advance of any questionable action.
Discussion Questions: For every class meeting for which there is assigned reading, each student is responsible for writing one discussion question for each chapter assigned that day. These questions should be emailed to bill@ischool.utexas.edu no later than 6 am on class day. No late questions will be accepted. The questions are a way of sharpening the class discussion and customizing the course to your interests. The questions should address an issue stimulated by the reading that you are interested in and that is likely to generate productive discussion among your classmates. We will discuss many of the questions in class, but there probably will not be time to discuss them all. Regular use of your questions by the instructor in class discussions can be taken as positive feedback that you are asking good questions.

Presentations: Each of the presentations that you make in class should take the equivalent time in preparation that you would take in writing a 10-page research paper. When presenting your book review, you should do some background research on the book to find out the academic biography of the researcher and what reviewers have said about the book; and you should incorporate that information into your presentation. When preparing for your practice/academic sub-discipline presentation, you should pull material from and cite in your bibliography a minimum of eight sources. The presentations should last between 30 and 40 minutes. Talks that fall outside these time boundaries will have credit taken off; talks that go 45 minutes will be abruptly cut off. You are expected to understand the material well and add your own value to the material in some way; and present the material effectively to the other students while demonstrating both good oral skills and appropriate use of supplementary materials that you have found or prepared (e.g. slides or handouts). You are strongly advised to practice the presentation in advance. For the practice/academic sub-discipline presentation, which you present with another student, both students will receive the same grade. Both the TA and the instructor will be ready to help you to shape your preparation for these presentations.

Presentation Discussions: For each of the practice/academic sub-discipline presentations, we will break up into three groups for discussion. Each of these groups will have a discussion leader. The presenters are required, no less than three days in advance, to send an electronic copy of an article to the TA to place on Blackboard. The paper should be one of the items in the presenters’ bibliography, should be article length, and should cover many of the main issues that will be addressed in the presentation. The three discussion leaders are required to read the paper in advance; other students have the option of reading the article. For the book reviews, we will have a plenary discussion immediately following the presentation.

Schedule:

[E=book available from UT Libraries as an eBook; R=book on reserve at PCL]

- Thursday, June 5
  - Introduction to the course (Aspray)
• Friday, June 6
  o Selection of presentation topics
  o iSchools (Aspray)
  o Information History (Aspray)

• Monday, June 9
  o DS Ch. 4-6, 13 Discussion
  o How to Prepare and Present and Effective Presentation (Ocepek)
  o Information Policy (Aspray)

• Tuesday, June 10
  o DS Ch. 7-9, 12 Discussion
  o Information behavior (Ocepek)
  o Time for students to meet with their co-presenters, consult with TA and instructor

• Thursday, June 12
  o Student book presentations
    ▪ Michael Clanchy, From Memory to Written Record: England 1066 – 1307 E
    ▪ Ann Blair, Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information Before the Modern Age R
    ▪ Daniel Headrick, When Information Came of Age: Technologies of Knowledge in the Age of Reason and Revolution, 1700-1850 E and R

• Friday, June 13
  o Student book presentations
    ▪ Alfred Chandler and James Cortada, eds. A Nation Transformed by Information: How Information Has Shaped the United States from Colonial Times to the Present R
    ▪ Wayne Wiegand, Main Street Public Library E
    ▪ Dee Garrison, Apostles of Culture: The Public Librarian and American Society (2nd ed.) (1st ed. Requested for R, better but not essential to use 2nd ed., which UT does not own)
    ▪ Martin Campbell-Kelly et al., Computer: A History of the Information Machine (3rd ed.) E

• Monday, June 16
  o Student book presentations 8-10
    ▪ Frank Webster, Theories of the Information Society (3rd ed.) E
James Cortada, *The Digital Flood: The Diffusion of Information Technology Across the U.S., Europe, and Asia* (requested for R)

- **Tuesday, June 17**
  - Student book presentations

- **Thursday, June 19**
  - Student Information subfield presentations
    - Digital libraries
    - Archival studies
    - Information work and Computer-Supported Cooperative Work (Aspray)

- **Friday, June 20**
  - DS Ch. 10-11, 14 Discussion
  - Student Information subfield presentations
    - Information retrieval
    - Information architecture
  - Privacy and security (Aspray)

- **Monday, June 23**
  - Student Information subfield presentations
    - Knowledge representation and reasoning
    - Knowledge management and competitive intelligence
  - Health informatics (Aspray)

- **Tuesday, June 24**
  - Student Information subfield presentations
    - Information ethics
    - User studies, usability, and human-computer interaction
  - Wrap-up (Aspray)

In case the course enrollment swells:

Additional practice/academic sub-disciplines: visualization, privacy and security, health informatics, information work/CSCW