

Fall 2008
IS 350
Information Consumer
Syllabus and Course Content

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 1 pm to 2 pm, and by appointment

Class Meeting Time and Location

Tuesdays & Thursdays 2:10-3:25, CC & I Room 251

Course Catalog Description

Information in society; information seeking; knowledge/learning society; publishing and information providers; information overload/anxiety; science fraud; gate-keeping concepts; information consumption techniques

Objectives

Information is central to everything we do in life. The goal of this course is to give you a foundational understanding of the information environment and its issues.

By end of this course, you should be able to:

- Understand and explain the various types and definitions of “information”
- Gauge the power and weaknesses of information
- Be aware of and familiar with the range of issues which information professionals face in their work (e.g., information ethics, information policy)
- Gain a basic understanding of information technology and its historical impact
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Required Text:

Lester, J. & Koehler, W. C. *Fundamentals of information studies: Understanding information and its environment*. 2nd ed. New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, Inc., 2007.

Cellular Phone Policy

Due to University safety policy, you may turn on your cell phones in class in the event you would need to be notified of a university-wide emergency situation. However, answering a casual,

work-related, or other non-emergency call in the classroom is unacceptable. If you are awaiting important news, such as a birth or a surgical outcome, please inform me of the situation prior to class, and take your call outside of the classroom should the need to do so arise.

Laptop Computer Policy

Laptops may be brought to class; use them at your own discretion. You might not be able to multi-task as well as you think you can, and you will risk missing important information. I strongly suggest that if you bring a laptop to class that it be used only for note-taking and consulting sources as they pertain to the class discussion.

Student Responsibilities

1. You must complete assigned readings before class. Always be prepared for classroom discussions. Everyone is expected to participate in the class.
2. Attendance is not required. However, even one absence will cause you to miss key information. Contact a classmate for notes if you must miss class; consult with the instructor for assignment clarification, handouts, updates, and announcements, even if you happen to miss a small portion of a class. You are responsible for any information given in class, whether you attend or not. Excessive absences can result in a reduced grade, since some information will be derived from class discussions, i.e. not all class-related information appears in the textbook.

***Note: Attendance is required** for project presentations, whether or not you present on a given day (see syllabus for presentation dates). Consequences for undocumented absences incurred during the presentations will result in a 25-point deduction from your presentation grade.
3. Check your e-mail and the Blackboard site regularly. I will periodically communicate with you and your classmates via e-mail, as well as post relevant material to Blackboard.

Student Evaluation

Evaluation is based on performance for each of the responsibilities listed above. The final grade is based on the following assignments, as well as the new undergraduate grading scale:

		<u>Scale</u>	
1.	Mid-term Exam	20%	A = 96-100
2.	Final Exam	25%	A- = 91-95
			B+ = 86-90
3.	Individual Project	30%	B = 81-85
4.	Assignments	15%	B- = 76-80
			C+ = 71-75
5.	Participation & Attendance	10%	C = 66-70
			D = 61-65
			F = 60-below

Assignment Due Dates and Format

All assignments are due by 12 pm on their respective due dates in the Digital Dropbox. Your work will be returned to you in the same mode, with comments. **However, your mid-term exam must be turned in as a hard copy, i.e. you must bring your exam to class on the due date as scheduled in the syllabus.** Additionally, your final exam will be an in-class exam.

Even if you are absent on the day an assignment, exam, or other work is due, you are still responsible for turning in your work on time. Late assignments will be accepted only with prior permission of the instructor. **Do not expect the instructor to grant permission without just cause.**

Written assignments must be double-spaced and formatted using **12-font**, Times New Roman typeface, with appropriate margins, and **submitted as a Word document**. Any assignment not written in **12-font** and not submitted in Word format will automatically be returned to you for correction, with points lost.

Bad Weather

The University, because of its residential nature, rarely closes even when it is snowing. The University does not have a dangerous weather policy but leaves these decisions to individual teaching staff. If the University is open, but road conditions are dangerous where you live, or if you are concerned about future road conditions, stay at home. You will not be penalized for missing class or turning in late assignments on days when the weather and/or roads are bad.

Incompletes

Since the instructor works part-time for the university, incompletes will not be issued unless a substantial portion of the required course work has already been satisfactorily completed. **The decision to grant an incomplete is at the discretion of the instructor.**

Policy on Academic Integrity

All work submitted by the student must be the student's. The University of Tennessee operates within a strict student code of honor regarding academic integrity. An observed act of academic cheating or plagiarism will result in penalty/ies at the instructor's discretion, up to and including failure for the course. Other penalties may be levied in accordance with university regulations, as stated in *Hilltopics*.

Disabilities

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a documented disability, or if you have emergency information to share, please contact the Office of Disability Services at 191 Hoskins Library at 865-974-6087. This will ensure that you are properly registered for services. It is also important to meet with the instructor to discuss your situation.

Course Schedule

Week 1

- Thurs., 8/21
 - Review syllabus and course outline
 - Class survey

Week 2

- Tues., 8/26
 - Text Chapter 1: The Impact of Information on Society
 - Read Fox. "Digital Divisions"
- Thurs., 8/28
 - Text Chapter 1, cont.
 - Recommended reading:
 - Rogers, E. M. *Diffusion of innovations*, 4th ed. New York: The Free Press, 1995.

Week 3

- Tues., 9/2
 - Text Chapter 2: Fundamental Concepts of Information
 - Discuss Fox article from 8/26
 - Due: Assignment 1 (Ch. 1, p. 12, # 5)
- Thurs., 9/4
 - Text Chapter 2, cont.
 - Read Buckland "What is a document?"
 - Read Pratt "The image"

Week 4

- Tues., 9/9
 - Text Chapter 3: Information Needs and Information-Seeking Behavior
 - Discuss Buckland and Pratt articles from 9/4
- Thurs., 9/11
 - Text Chapter 3, cont.

Week 5

- Tues., 9/16 (yellow highlight here unintended)
 - Text Chapter 4: History of Information Technology (yellow highlight here unintended)
 - Read Bush "As we may think"
- Thurs., 9/18
 - Text Chapter 4, cont.
 - Begin discussion of Bush article from 9/16

Week 6

- Tues., 9/23
 - Text Chapter 6: Societal Institutions for Creation, Distribution, and Management of Information
 - Conclude discussion of Bush article
- **Thurs., 9/25**
 - Text Chapter 6, cont.
 - **Due: Assignment 2**
 - View Library of Congress (LOC) Digital Collection

Week 7

- Tues., 9/30
 - Review and recap for mid-term
 - Distribute mid-term
- Thurs., 10/2
 - No class (to be used for mid-term work)

Week 8

- **Tues., 10/7**
 - Class meetings resume
 - **Due: Mid-term exam (paper-based only—This means that you must bring a hard copy of your exam to class on this day)**
 - Discuss individual projects
- Thurs., 10/9
 - No class (Fall Break)

Week 9

- Tues., 10/14
 - guest speakers (TBA)
 - Read Foote et al. “Managing the Knowledge Manager”
 - Read Koehler “Information science as ‘little science’: The implications of a bibliometric analysis of the *Journal of the American Society for Information Science*”
- Thurs., 10/16
 - Text Chapter 7: The Information Professions

Week 10

- Tues., 10/21
 - Text Ch. 7, cont.
 - Read Holderness, M. “Who are the world’s information poor?”
- Thurs., 10/23
 - Discuss Foote and Koehler articles from 10/14
 - Text Chapter 8: The Impact of Information on Cultures and Societies
 - Read Strickland, L. “Information and the war against terrorism”

Week 11

- Tues., 10/28
 - Text Chapter 10: Information, Power, and Society
 - Discuss Holderness article from 10/21
 - Discuss Strickland article from 10/23
- Thurs., 10/30
 - Text Chapter 10, cont.
 - Read Wallace & Mangan *Sex, lies, and cyberspace* (Chapters 2, 7, 8)

Week 12

- Tues., 11/4
 - Text Chapter 11: The Regulation and Politics of Information
 - Continue discussion of Wallace & Mangan chapters from 10/30
- Thurs., 11/6
 - Text Chapter 11, cont.
 - **Due: Assignment 3**

Week 13

- Tues., 11/11
 - Text Chapter 13: Information Ethics
- Thurs., 11/13
 - Text Chap. 13, cont.

Week 14:

- Tues., 11/18
 - Individual project presentations
- Thurs., 11/20
 - Individual project presentations

Week 15

- Tues., 11/25
 - Text Chapter 14: Information Futures
- Thurs., 11/27
 - No class (Thanksgiving holiday)

Week 16

- Tues., 12/2
 - Wrap-up; review for final exam

Week 17

- Thurs., 12/11
 - **In-class final exam 12:30 pm-2:30 pm, CC & I Room 251**

Assignment Descriptions

- **Assignment 1:** Chapter 1, p. 12, Question 5 (2-3 pages)

- **Assignment 2:** Write a 3- to 5-page summary on **one** of the following topics:
 - The Impact of the Ballpoint Pen (or Pencil)
 - The Impact on Business of the Bar Code
 - The Contributions to Society of Microfilm as a Storage Medium
 - The Social Significance of the Juke Box for Teens and Young Adults
 - Societal impact of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID)

Note You may select your own relevant topic for Assignment 2; if you choose to do so, please see the instructor before beginning the assignment.

- **Assignment 3:** Write a 3- to 5-page summary report on **one** of the following non-traditional information professional careers:
 - Taxonomist/Ontologist
 - Competitive intelligence specialist
 - Information architect
 - Usability Engineer/Specialist

- Information Broker
- Archivist
- Records Manager

Include the following details in your report:

- Job Title and Description
- Responsibilities/Duties
- Education/training
- Working Conditions
- Career Paths
- Salaries and Job Prospects

OR (i.e., Assignment 3 second option)

Interview an information professional in your field of study/career path. In your report, include the same details as in the bulleted list above. Please **DO NOT** identify the interviewee by name in your report unless you have his or her permission.