

Fall 2009
IS 510-003
The Information Environment
The School of Information Sciences
The University of Tennessee

Class Meetings: Mondays, 6:30 – 9:10 p.m., [LiveOnline@UT](#)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Generation, production, management, dissemination, and use of information. Roles of information in society, information-seeking and user behavior, information industry, economics of information products and services, technological and organizational change, information professions, and issues.
(Required Course)

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By end of this course, the student will:

- Understand and be able to explain the various types and definitions of “information”
- Be able to explain the power and weaknesses of information
- Understand the history and evolution of the field of Library & Information Science, and the evolution of the Information Professional
- Be familiar with various information fields and careers open to those with the MS (Information Sciences).
- Understand and be familiar with the range of issues facing information professionals
- Be familiar with the vocabulary of the profession
- Be familiar with the professional associations that support these careers and help them find content, support, and “lift” they need from their discipline.
- Move on to more advanced levels of study in the information sciences.¹

¹ Of the nine objectives stated in the *SIS's Masters Program Objectives*, IS 510 speaks to seven.

REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED TEXTS

REQUIRED:

June Lester and Wallace C. Koehler, Jr., *Fundamentals of Information Studies: Understanding Information and Its Environment*. 2nd ed. New York: Neal-Schuman, 2007. Hereafter: **L&K**.

*Assigned readings – unless indicated otherwise – are on our class **Blackboard** (hereafter **Bb**) space.*

RECOMMENDED:

Richard E. Rubin, *Foundations of Library and Information Science*. 2nd ed. New York: Neal-Schuman, 2004.

Jane E. Aaron, *The Little, Brown Essential Handbook*. 6th ed. New York: Longman, 2007. (n.b.: if you are using MLA Style, there is a 2009 *LBEH* that includes recent MLA updates).

POLICIES

COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY

I am required to communicate with you through your UTK email address. If you prefer to use another address, consult the [OIT Helpdesk](#) to obtain directions for forwarding your UTK mail to your preferred address if you don't wish to check both accounts.

Email is the most expedient way to get in touch with me. If I will be unable to check my email for a significant period of time (less than once/24-hour period) I will provide you with an alternative method of contacting me.

I will use Office 2007 to create word processing documents and PowerPoints, and will only post documents in "x" format to our Bb space. I have this policy for two reasons: it makes it easier for me to insure that there is one, definitive version of the documents I create, and Office 2007 creates documents with much smaller file size than earlier versions. The space allotted in Bb for our class is limited, and there are file size limits for posting and emailing attachments in Bb.

If you do not have Office 2007, you can download and install the [COMPATABILITY PACK](#) which will enable you open and read 2007 files with earlier versions of Office (there's [one for OFFICE for Mac](#), too). If you don't have Office 2007, don't worry about converting your written work before submitting it. I can open and edit earlier versions without a problem.

CLASS ATTENDANCE POLICY

It is assumed that each student will miss no more than one session and will speak in class -- the equivalent of a "B" grade for "participation." Missing more classes or failing to participate will lower your grade; frequent participation will raise the grade.

Regular attendance is required and necessary. A substantial portion of your grade will be based on in-class work and participation. Unexplained absences will affect your grade. Contact me as soon as possible if you cannot attend class. If you must be absent from class, you must:

- Inform me in advance or as soon after class as possible
- Submit any work due at missed class period
- Watch/listen to the archive of the class you missed
- Obtain notes, handouts, etc. from classmates or me at next class meeting or from Bb.

Acceptable reasons for absence from class include:

- Illness
- Serious family emergencies,
- Special curricular or job requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences),
- Military obligation,
- Severe weather conditions
- Religious holidays and
- Participation in official university activities such as music performances, athletic competition or debate
- Obligations for court imposed legal obligations (i.e., jury duty, subpoena)

Other reasons may also be approved.

Missing more than one class meeting for reasons other than those listed above will have a negative impact on your course participation grade.

CLASS CANCELLATIONS

Should it be necessary to cancel a class meeting, every effort will be taken to do so in advance. Look for e-mail announcements via **Bb**.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students who may need course adaptations because of a disability are welcome to make an appointment to speak with me. Students with disabilities must be registered with the Office of Disability Services, 2227 Dunford Hall, Knoxville, TN 37996-4020, before accommodations can be made. If you have a disability, but have not contacted the Office of Disability Services, please call (865) 974-6087 or email ods@utk.edu to inquire about the registration procedure. If you are registered with the Office of Disability Services, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss any course accommodations that may be necessary. See also, "Student Support," below.

CLASSROOM DIVERSITY

An essential component of your learning experience will come from the contributions of your fellow students. In order for everyone to feel comfortable sharing their opinions and thoughts, we must show each other respect and courtesy. We will not judge each other based on gender, race, ethnicity, religion (or lack thereof), age, sexuality, physical ability, political and ideological beliefs, or any other difference in our classroom.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Plagiarism in any of its several forms is intolerable, and attention to matters of documentation in all written work is expected and required. Inadvertence (i.e., "carelessness"), alleged lack of understanding, or avowed ignorance of the various types of plagiarism (including lack of proper attribution of sources and use of quoted material and mechanics for same) are not acceptable excuses.

Specific examples of plagiarism are:

1. Copying without proper documentation (quotation marks and a citation) written or spoken words, phrases, or sentences from any source;
2. Summarizing without proper documentation (usually a citation) ideas from another source (unless such information is recognized as common knowledge);
3. Borrowing facts, statistics, graphs, pictorial representations, or phrases without acknowledging the source (unless such information is recognized as common knowledge);
4. Collaborating on a graded assignment without the instructor's approval;
5. Submitting work, either in whole or in part, created by a professional service and used without attribution (e.g., paper, speech, bibliography, or photograph).

Students who may be unsure of the nature of plagiarism should consult the instructor or a source on writing research reports, such as "Section 34," *Harborage College Handbook* (Hodges Library, Reference: PE 1112 .H6 [latest edition]). Infractions of academic integrity are penalized according to the severity of the infraction but **may include a course grade of "F" and the instructor's recommendation to the UTK Dean for Graduate Studies that the student be dismissed from the University.**

Each student's work is to be the product of his/her own study and/or research, not a joint effort of any sort unless previously approved. The UTK Honor Statement, adopted in 1987, and subscribed to, *de facto* by all entering students reads in part: "As a student of the University, I pledge that I will neither knowingly give nor receive any inappropriate assistance in academic work, thus affirming my own personal commitment to honor and integrity." (See [Student Judicial Affairs](#) for more information).

INCOMPLETES

Based on adopted University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and SIS policy, an "Incomplete" is granted only under "the most unusual of circumstances." Power to grant an Incomplete resides wholly in the instructor. A grade of I (Incomplete) is reserved for emergencies that preclude the student from completing the course on time. Plan your semester's course of study carefully to insure sufficient time to complete the required work. For students who simply "disappear" without contacting the instructor and without completing the required form, an "F" is submitted.

EVALUATION²

Grades in graduate study have the following meanings:

A	90≤	(4 quality points per semester hour) superior performance.
B+	87.5-89	(3.5 quality points per semester hour) better than satisfactory performance.
B	80-87	(3 quality points per semester hour) satisfactory performance.
C+	77.5-79	(2.5 quality points per semester hour) less than satisfactory performance.
C	70-77	(2 quality points per semester hour) performance well below the standard expected of graduate students.
D	60-69	(1 quality point per semester hour) clearly unsatisfactory performance and cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements.
F	60≥	(no quality points) extremely unsatisfactory performance and cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements.
I		(no quality points) a temporary grade indicating that the student has performed satisfactorily in the course but, due to unforeseen circumstances, has been unable to finish all requirements. An I is not given to enable a student to do additional work to raise a deficient grade. The instructor, in consultation with the student, decides the terms for the removal of the I, including the time limit for removal. If the I is not removed within one calendar year, the grade will be changed to an F. The course will not be counted in the cumulative grade point average until a final grade is assigned. No student may graduate with an I on the record.
S/NC		(carries credit hours, but no quality points) S is equivalent to a grade of B or better, and NC means no credit earned. A grade of Satisfactory/No Credit is allowed only where indicated in the course description in the <i>Graduate Catalog</i> . The number of Satisfactory/No Credit courses in a student's program is limited to one-fourth of the total credit hours required.
P/NP		(carries credit hours, but no quality points) P indicates progress toward completion of a thesis or dissertation. NP indicates no progress or inadequate progress.
W		(carries no credit hours or quality points) indicates that the student officially withdrew from the course.

² This is the UTK grading scale for graduate students.

PAPERS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Papers are assigned grades on the basis of quality of thought and writing style, thoroughness of research and of references, length and originality. Only exceptional work will receive an "A" grade. Papers that are received after the due date will be assigned a lower grade than would otherwise be received. All sources must be cited, quotations must be in quotation marks and attributed correctly. Not doing so constitutes plagiarism.

DUE DATES AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments are due at 11:59 p.m. on the due date listed on the syllabus. If an assignment is not turned in by the deadline, one point will be deducted for each 24-hour hour period the assignment is not turned in. Assignments that have not been turned in by the next class meeting (i.e., one week later) will not be accepted and will receive a zero.

Please submit your assignments to the digital drop box unless instructed otherwise.

PREPARATION OF WRITTEN WORK

The standard SIS resource for matters of documentation is Kate L. Turabian, a Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, 5th edition [or later] (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, [latest edition]). (Paperbound copies abound in local bookstores.) Turabian is derived from the Chicago Manual of Style. For matters not covered in Turabian or where there is ambiguity, the latest edition of the Chicago Manual of Style is ultimately authoritative. It is also permissible to use either the APA or MLA style of documentation.

- All sources must be cited, quotations must be formatted and attributed correctly. Not doing so constitutes plagiarism.
- Grades for assignment submissions that include incomplete in-text citations or reference lists will be lowered by one-half grade level (e.g., an assignment that would have received 17/20, or an 85/100: B, will be lowered to 16/20, 80/100: B-).
- All assignments must be word-processed and include your name, the date, class number (i.e., IS 510) and the title of the assignment from the syllabus.
- Please follow the document naming scheme provided on your assignment descriptions.
- Please adjust the font size for the "comments" function in your word processing program to 12 pt.

ASSIGNMENTS: DESCRIPTION

Please note that I do not assign letter grades for individual assignments, but will mark your paper with my comments and provide a point score based on the possible points earned for that assignment. If you'd like to compute a letter grade based on the score provided, divide your score by the total points possible for the assignment and refer to the scale on p. 5 of the syllabus for the corresponding letter grade. For example, if you earned 24/25 points on the Communication within the Information Professions assignment, your percentage grade would be $92/100=A$. Your final grade will be based on total points earned/100 possible points over the course of the semester.

This table provides a brief summary of assignment names, due dates, and grade distribution. A fuller description of each assignment follows the table.

Assignment	Document Name (for submission)	Group/ Individual	Due Date	%
Response Journals (3)	lastname_rjx_510	Individual	9/21, 10/26, 11/30	10
Discussion Group	Lastname_discussionx_510	Group	Varies, see course schedule.	20
Communication within the Information Professions	lastname_comm_510	Individual	10/19	25
Issue Paper	lastname_issue_510	Individual	Topic by 10/12; Paper by 11/30	20
Presentation	Lastname_presentation_510	Individual	11/9, 11/16, 11/23	15
Participation		Individual	Ongoing	10
TOTAL				100

Response Journals (3) (10%)

Response journals are informal, brief essays on any topic of interest to you—as long as it relates in some way to the course content or discipline of LIS. Did a statement in one of the readings strike a particularly strong chord for you? Tell me about it. Did you have a bad experience with a librarian as a child? Hate the Dewey Decimal system? This is your chance to vent.

Though response journals do not receive a letter grade, in order to receive full credit, your journal must exhibit evidence of considered thought on your part and should be at least 250 words.

Discussion Groups (15%)

You will be assigned to a discussion group for the course of the semester. Within your discussion group, you will be responsible for leading discussion on two separate weeks. This entails:

- a. Creating at least two discussion questions based on the readings. These should be posted by 5 p.m. ED/ST on the Tuesday prior to the class meeting for which you are leader. This means you'll have to complete the reading ahead of time.

- b. Selecting and posting a supplementary related article, book chapter, conference paper, web page, etc., to your group's discussion space and creating a discussion question for that supplementary reading
- c. Monitoring discussion among your group members (I'll be watching it as well).
- d. Writing a brief (250-500 word) summary of the discussion as well as commenting on your experience of the process. What worked and what didn't? How well received were your discussion questions and supplementary reading? Submit this paper with your questions and the supplementary readings you selected, within 10 days of the completion of your group leadership period.

During weeks that you are not the discussion leader, your participation is expected. This means:

- a. Posting at least one substantive response to each discussion question posted by that week's leader. Your posts should total at least 250 words and include your unique thoughts (i.e., posting "I agree!" is not sufficient!)
- b. Reading the supplementary material identified by the group leader.

Group members will have the chance to evaluate one another's performance at the end of the semester. Evaluations will be considered in the determination of the assignment grade.

Communication within the Information Professions (30%)

This is a three-part assignment. You need not focus on the same aspect of LIS for all three segments, but your paper will probably be more cohesive if you do.

- 1) Organizational Description: Select and research a professional organization related to some aspect of LIS (there's a great list [here](#)). Write a brief (500 word) profile of the organization's activities, membership, history, and procedures for communication. Do members hold annual meetings? Does the organization publish a journal or newsletter?

The organization's web site will be the primary source of information about the organization, but you must utilize at least two additional sources, such as journal articles, interviews with members, information from conference proceedings, etc. If you can't find an additional source of information about your organization, choose another organization.

- 2) Listserv Evaluation: [Select a listserv](#) that addresses a field of LIS that is of interest to you. Subscribe to the list or review the archives on a regular basis for at least two weeks. Assess the following:
 - a. How often do members seem to post to the list?
 - b. What types of things are posted to the list? Do subscribers seem to debate, ask for advice, or post items of interest most often?
 - c. Who subscribes to the list? (Note: most posts will include the poster's signature; this often includes a job title.)
 - d. What conclusions can you draw about the area of LIS represented on the list from monitoring the list as you have?

- 3) Professional Journal Literature evaluation: Select three [LIS-related journal publications](#) to review. Read several articles in each journal, consult the information provided for prospective authors, read the publication's description in Ulrich's International Periodicals Directory. Consider the following:
- a. What writing styles are represented in the journal? Formal, informal, mixed?
 - b. What types of articles are included in the journal? Are most based on research projects? Are they "think pieces"? "How we done it good"?
 - c. Who does the intended readership of the journal appear to be? Practitioners? (if so, what kinds?) Researchers?
 - d. What citation style is required of authors? Does it seem to fit the material presented in the journal?
 - e. What conclusions can you draw about the diversity of LIS journal publishing from the journals you've reviewed?

"Issue" Paper (20%) and Presentation (15%)

Identify an issue of significance to some aspect of LIS and write a 10-15 page paper. We cover a lot of ground in this survey course, so the paper is designed to give you the opportunity to engage more fully with a topic from the course that interests you or that we have not had a chance to cover in a formal paper with footnotes or endnotes and a bibliography. Please submit paper topics for approval by **10/12**.

You will make a presentation on this topic during one of the last three class meetings. You may be required to present before you've completed your paper. Consider yourself warned!

Class Participation (10%)

Much of the course material will be presented in the readings and discussions. You are expected to do the reading assigned for class and come to class prepared to offer your opinions about it. To participate in class you must be in attendance, so being present (physically and mentally) is pretty important. If you are not the type of student who feels comfortable speaking in class, it's possible to participate online by posting comments and questions to our discussion board, sharing supplementary readings and web pages of interest with classmates, etc. Missing class will have a negative impact on your participation grade.