INF 335C – Information in Cyberspace

Unique Number: 28150
Fall 2017

Contact

Instructor:	Jeremy Selvidge
Office Hours:	Mondays from 10 a.m. to noon, or by appointment
Email:	selvidge@utexas.edu
	(please contact me through Canvas when possible)
Office:	UTA 5.414
TA:	TA Pool
	Email: ta_pool@ischool.utexas.edu

Overview

Information in Cyberspace (INF335) is a course designed for undergraduate students that provides an overview of the history and social impact of Internet and Web technology. INF335 emphasizes technology self-sufficiency and information literacy.

The purpose of this course is to prepare students to think about information technology in a critical, thoughtful manner. The goal of this course is to pull back the curtain on some of the inner workings of information technology and empower students to navigate confidently through information spaces in networked environments. While it may be safe to assume the Internet will continue to exist for the foreseeable future, we can count on our description of cyberspace changing over time. This course aims to give students the tools to think critically about networked information communication technologies and their role as information consumers, producers, and leaders in the evolution of cyberspace.

Objectives

In this course students will learn:
- about technical applications that make the Internet possible;
- about political, financial, and social implications of creating content on the Internet;
- how to find, evaluate, and cite Information resources on the Internet;
- how to protect content and resources from malicious attacks;

Students will enact the following learning techniques:
- reading about history and current news related to information technology;
- discussing history and current news related to information technology;
- completing hands-on projects to practice presenting and assessing information in a variety of contexts.

Prerequisites

While there are no prerequisite classes for INF335, you should know the following before taking this course:
1. You need to contact your instructors and TAs to ask questions or get help at the first sign of trouble.
2. You need to pay very close attention to the course home page to keep up with what's going on.
3. You need to organize your time effectively so you can spend, on average, 6 hours a week working on this class.
4. Students who are unable to motivate and organize themselves, and especially those who don't communicate with their instructors or TAs, tend to be unsuccessful in a virtual classroom environment.
5. Although it is not necessary to be a computer expert to complete this course successfully, you do need to know the basics of operating a personal computer and navigating the Internet. You are expected to know how to...

a. create folders and view the contents of a disk;
b. open an application or program;
c. send and receive e-mail;
d. search the Internet.
6. submit work that meets college-level writing standards.

If you don't know how to do these things, let your instructor or TA know during the first week of class. We will be happy to sit down and show you how to do it.

Schedule

This course consists of 14 instructional modules. Students will learn one module every week. The first module serves as an orientation to this course; and the last module is reserved for students to complete their final project. Modules 2 to 13 cover twelve unique topics about information in cyberspace. Below is a list of all the modules and their schedules.

Module	Week
Week 1 – Introduction to the course	8/30 – 9/5
Week 2 – Cyberspace, Internet and World Wide Web	9/6 – 9/12
Week 3 – Information Control in Cyberspace	9/13 – 9/19
Week 4 – HTML Basics	9/20 – 9/26
Week 5 – Information Search on the Internet	9/27 – 10/3
Week 6 – Online Health Information	10/4 – 10/10
Week 7 – Copyright	10/11 – 10/17
Week 8 – Open Source	10/18 – 10/24
Week 9 – Usability and User Experience	10/25 – 10/31
Week 10 – Accessibility	11/1 – 11/7
Week 11 – The World of "Social Media"	11/8 – 11/14
Week 12 – Security and Privacy	11/15 – 11/21
Week 13 – Video Games	11/22 – 11/28
Week 14 – Final Project and Wrap up	11/29 – 12/5

Assignments and Grading

This course has three types of assignments: weekly discussions, weekly quizzes and final project.

Points by assignments

Assignments	Due date	Total Points
Weekly discussions	Every Sunday 11:59pm for posting your discussion; following Tuesday 11:59pm for responding to others' posts	28
Weekly quizzes	Every Tuesday 11:59pm	26
Final projects	Various due dates, see below	46
Total		100

- **Weekly discussions**

Every week, you will contribute to the online discussion forum as part of the class participation assignment. Think of these online discussions as your chance to share what you know, ask questions, and challenge the readings just as you would in small group discussions in class. In addition to submit your discussion post, you are also required to respond to two of your classmates' discussion posts with your thoughts, reactions, or contributions to the discussion.

Original discussion submissions should be at least 150 words long (unless the discussion topic specifically states a different length) and should make it clear to the instructor or TA that you have read the assigned reading for that week.

Your responses to others should be at least 2 sentences long and should move the conversation forward. Responses of "I agree. This happened to me once." or similar short responses will not receive credit.

Please note: to make sure everyone has enough time to respond to each other's posts, you are encouraged to submit your discussion post as early as you could. Weekly discussion is due on every Sunday 11:59pm, and you will need to submit your responses to others on the following Tuesday at 11:59pm.

Grading: 1 point for initial post; 0.5 points for each response; total of 2 points for each discussion.

- **Weekly quizzes**

To test your comprehension of the weekly modules, there will be a short quiz each week. All quizzes are open book; the aim is not to test what you have memorized, but how you apply what you learned. For some questions, answers are in the module readings. If you learn the readings carefully, you will know the answers. For other questions, you may need to consult external resources to answer. Weekly quizzes must be completed Tuesdays by 11:59 p.m.

Grading: total of 3 points for each quiz (5 questions).

- **Final project**

For the final project, you will choose to study a subject of your interest. The final project (FP) is broken down into 6 separate assignments (FP0 - FP5) that you will need to complete at different times throughout the semester. All final project assignments are due at 11:59 p.m. on assigned due dates.

Please note that you have to complete all six final project assignments in order to pass this course. If you fail to submit any of the assignment, you will get an "Incomplete".

Here is a breakdown of the final project.

	Assignment	Due Date	Points
FP0	Project preparation	September 10	4
FP1	Content development for topic 1	September 24	8
FP2	Content development for topic 2	October 15	8
FP3	Content development for topic 3	November 5	8
FP4	Content development for topic 4	November 26	8
FP5	Final submission	December 5	10

You can read the details about the final project in project document available on the "Syllabus" tab of Canvas.

Late Assignment

It is important to complete your work on time, both so you can stay on track and so you can collaborate and interact with your fellow students. Late assignments will not be accepted. You will receive a zero if you do not submit your assignment on time. I use the Canvas upload time as the official time of the submission..

Please make sure you submit your assignments well in advance; computer problems, network outages, and other "technical" issues will not be considered a valid excuse for submitting an assignment late, so make sure you begin your work early and submit on time.

Plan ahead. This is an online course and you have a full week to ensure you complete everything on time. As there is no scheduled class time, you must be responsible for getting work done in a timely manner. The course allows for a lot of flexibility for you to schedule your work, so I will be very strict about excused late work.

Required Readings

All required readings for this course are available through the course modules in Canvas. Reading materials include articles and online videos.

University Policies

- **Academic Integrity**

Please abide by the University's policy on academic integrity. All work you submit must be your own. "Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating and plagiarism... Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. University policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced." From: The University of Texas: General Information, Appendix C.

If I find blatant plagiarism (copy and paste from Wikipedia, for example) you will be referred to Student Judicial Services and you will fail the class.

- **Special Needs**

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. To determine if you qualify, please contact the Dean of Students at 471-6259; 471-4641 TTY. If they certify your needs, we will work with you to make appropriate arrangements.

- **Religious or Holy Day Observance**

"A student who misses classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day should inform the instructor as far in advance of the absence as possible, so that arrangements can be made to complete an assignment within a reasonable time after the absence."
(http://www.utexas.edu/student/registrar/catalogs/gi04-05/ch4/ch4g.html)

- **Email**

"Electronic mail (e-mail), like postal mail, is a mechanism for official University communication to students. The University will exercise the right to send e-mail communications to all students, and the University will expect that e-mail communications will be received and read in a timely manner."
(http://www.utexas.edu/student/registrar/catalogs/gi04-05/app/appn.html). Both the instructor and the TA will reply to student emails within 24 hours on weekdays and 48 hours on weekends barring a rare and extenuating circumstance.

I look forward to working with you all this semester. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, do not hesitate to email me or the TA pool.