**Information Literacy – INF 315E**

**27539**

**Fall 2018 Benedict Hall 1.106 MW 12:30 – 2:00**

**Instructor: James (Red) Wassenich**

**Rationale:** The power and complexity of information in society, the economy, and our personal lives grows constantly, primarily due to the digital world. This course will explore information from multiple angles, with an emphasis on increasing info skills and critical thinking related to education but also the world at large. This is **not** a how-to-use-the-library or computer science course, although both of those areas will be addressed. Efficient research, evaluation of information, and critical analysis are the primary goals.

**Learning Objectives:** The student will be able to identify the need for information and efficiently find and evaluate a variety of sources. Students will gain a deeper understanding of the ways information affects almost all aspects of their lives. Class discussion of topics and readings will be stressed.

**Course Materials:** There is no textbook. Readings, videos, podcasts will all come from either UT Library databases or public online sources. These will be listed and linked to in the online Canvas course management system.

**Course Schedule:** (Note: schedule is subject to change as topics develop and as field trips and guest lectures may have availability changes.)

**Wed., Aug. 29 - Course Introduction and Explanation of Goals and Major Projects**

To be completed for next class:

- Fill out Digital Diary

- Read “Finding It Hard to Focus?” (see Canvas for link)

- View assigned video "Death of Expertise" and prepare reactions to questions (see Canvas)

**Wed., Sept. 5 - The Role of Expertise. History of Information Technologies.**

Discuss video and reactions

Discuss diary

To be completed for next class:

* Read “Evaluating Information: The Cornerstone of Civic Online Reasoning” (see Canvas)
* View YouTube video “Why No One Trusts the Mainstream Media” (See Canvas)

**Mon., Sept. 10 - Who Produces Information. Media Ownership. Role of Government. Alternate Sources**

Discuss reading and video

To be completed for next class:

- Review syllabuses for all classes to i.d. research projects

- Read “Bursting the Bubble of Online ‘Filter Bubbles’” (see Canvas) and try to locate one of the other research studies cited (not the *NY Times)*.

**Wed., Sept. 12 - Effective Use of Libraries. The Variety of Sources. Developing Research Topics**

Discuss research projects needed for other classes.

Discuss assigned reading

To be completed for next class:

- Visit the PCL. Find one good book for the topic you are considering for project. Write down your process. Bring it and the book to class.

- Read

**Mon., Sept. 17- Effective Use of Libraries. Understanding and Using Sources. Documenting Sources**

To be completed for next class:   
- Develop list of at least 3 possible topics for annotated bibliography

- Find Noodle Tools on UT web and create account

**Wed., Sept. 19 - Advanced Search Techniques. Evaluating Sources**

Review topics among classmates and decide on one for project.

To be completed for next class:  
- Bring at least 3 sources to class for evaluation  
- Read "The Spreading of Misinformation Online" (see Canvas)

**Mon., Sept. 24 - Logic and Argument I. "Classic" Elements of Rhetoric and Argument.**

Discuss process of finding articles and any refinement of topic

To be completed for next class:  
- Read "Bursting the Bubble of Online 'Filter Bubbles'"

- Read Wikipedia entry "Visual Literacy"

**Wed., Sept. 26 - Logic and Argument II. Visual and Math Aspects. Psychology of Information I**

**Mon., Oct. 1 - Psychology of Information II. Role of Bias and Unreliability of Perception**

**Wed., Oct. 3 - Work session on Annotated Bibliography**

Annotated Bibliography is due Oct. 8.

**Mon., Oct. 8 - Government Role in Information Production and Access I. Free Speech, Censorship, Regulation, Net Neutrality**

**Wed., Oct. 10 - Government Role in Information Production and Access II. Surveillance, Patriot Act, WikiLeaks, Edward Snowden**

**Mon., Oct. 15 - Politics and Information. Voter Targeting. Use of Social Media (Black Lives Matter, #MeToo, Arab Spring, ISIS, etc.). Hacktivism, Slacktivism**

**Wed., Oct. 17 - History and Techniques of Propaganda**

**Mon., Oct. 22 - Data Mining and Tracking**

**Wed., Oct. 24 - Cybercrime and Digital Security. The Dark Web. Hacking. Ways to be More Secure**

To be completed for next class:   
- Purchase and read the Thursday *Austin American-Statesman* thoroughly. Bring to class for discussion.

**Mon., Oct. 29 - Discussion of *AAS*. Journalism and Fake News**

Assignment for next class: Listen to at least one episode of the Texas Standard radio news program. Broadcast KUT 90.5 FM 10am (live), rerun 8pm. Archived at https://kutpodcasts.org/category/texas-standard

Think of questions for field trip.

**Wed., Oct. 31 - Field Trip to KUT radio station**

- Read “Reddit and the Struggle to Detoxify the Internet” (see Canvas)

**Mon., Nov. 5 - Discussion of field trip. Sources of Quality Journalism. Future of Journalism**

To be completed for next class:   
- Automated grading of student essays https://www.npr.org/2018/06/30/624373367/more-states-opting-to-robo-grade-student-essays-by-computer  
- Read "2025: Imaging the Future of Mobile Apps in Higher Ed" (see Canvas)

**Wed., Nov. 7 - Education and Information. Distance Ed., MOOCs, Digital Divide, Print vs. Digital**

To be completed for next class:  
- Read "Using Story to Change Systems" (see Canvas)

- Read "Elsevier Are Corrupting Open Science in Europe" (see Canvas)

- Read " Electronic Medical Records Increase Medical Error" an "Electronic Medical Records Reduce Medical Error" (see Canvas)

**Mon., Nov. 12 - Information in the Social Sciences, Sciences, Technology, and Medicine**

**Wed., Nov. 14 - Information in the Humanities. Field Trip to Humanities Research Center**

**Mon., Nov. 19 - Discussion of Field Trip. Information in Business**

**Wed., Nov. 21 - No Class. Thanksgiving**

- Read for next class: “’I Was Devastated’…” (see Canvas)

- Read “He Predicted the 2016 Fake News Crisis…” (see Canvas)

**Mon., Nov. 26 - Information in Personal Life and Leisure. Future Developments**

**Wed., Nov. 28 - Information in the Law. Guest Lecturer**

**Mon., Dec. 3 - Work Session on Final Project**

Project due one of next two classes

**Wed., Dec. 5 - Presentations of Projects**

**Mon., Dec. 10 - Presentations of Projects**

**Wed., Dec. 12 - Semester Review and Prep for Final**

**Class Processes:** Attendance is required. Up to two absences are permitted. Above that will mean a reduction of 1-5 points unless an official justification is presented. Let the instructor know if you know you will miss a class. However there will be pop quizzes and in-class writing assignments. Students without an excused absence will not receive credit for these. Students are responsible for getting any material or notes from missed classes.

Class discussion is a primary mode of learning. I realize that may be difficult for some, but I will make every effort to promote a welcoming environment that promotes critical thinking without contentiousness. Verbal communication is a fundamental aspect of education and almost all careers, so developing these skills will make your future sunny and bright.

Laptops and tablet computers are allowed, but not smart phones. Students may **only** use permissible devices for class-related activities. Use for personal activities such as email, social media, games may result in prohibition of device.

**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.

**Use of *Canvas* for class:** In this class I use Canvas—a Web-based course management system with password-protected access at http://canvas.utexas.edu —to distribute course materials, to communicate and collaborate online, to post grades, to submit assignments, etc. You can find support in using Canvas at the ITS Help Desk at 512 475-9400, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., so plan accordingly.

**Grading Scale:**

A 100 to 94

A- 93 to 90

B+ 89 to 87

B 86 to 84

B- 83 to 80

C+ 79 to 77

C 76 to 74

C- 73 to 70

D 69 to 60

**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. Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work. For this course, collaboration is allowed in the following instances: You are encouraged to study together and to discuss information and concepts covered in lecture and the sections with other students. You can give "consulting" help to or receive "consulting" help from such students. However, this permissible cooperation should never involve one student having possession of a copy of all or part of work done by someone else, in the form of an e-mail, an e-mail attachment file, a USB drive. Should copying occur, both the student who copied work from another student and the student who gave material to be copied will both automatically receive a zero for the assignment. Penalty for violation of this Code can also be extended to include failure of the course and University disciplinary action.

During examinations, you must do your own work. Talking or discussion is not permitted during

the examinations, nor may you compare papers, copy from others, or collaborate in any way.

Any collaborative behavior during the examinations will result in failure of the exam, and may

lead to failure of the course and University disciplinary action.

**Other University Notices and Policies**

**Use of E-mail for Official Correspondence to Students:** 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

[**https://it.utexas.edu/services/email-calendar-collaboration**](https://it.utexas.edu/services/email-calendar-collaboration)

**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. *All such information will be strictly confidential.*

▪ 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 512 471-6259 (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

**Q drop Policy**

The State of Texas has enacted a law that limits the number of course drops for academic reasons

to six (6). As stated in Senate Bill 1231:

“Beginning with the fall 2007 academic term, an institution of higher education may not

permit an undergraduate student a total of more than six dropped courses, including any course

a transfer student has dropped at another institution of higher education, unless the student

shows good cause for dropping more than that number.”

**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.

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