

# Introduction to Information Studies

Unique #27625

Fall 2015

## Syllabus

The syllabus for i304W includes goals for the course, the grading policy, details of assignments, and a list of writing tips and resources you may find helpful. If, at any time throughout the semester, you have questions about the syllabus, please contact your instructor for clarification.

### *Contact*

**Instructor:** Craig Blaha

**Office Hours:** by appointment

**Email:** craig.blaha at utexas.edu

**TA:** TBA

### *Course Goal*

This course will introduce students to the field of information studies. Students will explore the foundations of the field, professions in the field, and issues within those professions. Only one of the following may be counted: INF 304D, 304W, 318D.

**Prerequisite:** lower-division standing.

### *Course Objectives*

Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of predominant topics in information studies, identifying key issues and important terms
- Examine numerous perspectives related to professions and issues in information studies and formulate independent arguments based on these perspectives
- Relate perspectives and issues in information science to their lives, both personally and professionally
- Fulfill the requirements of a substantial writing component course by writing between 16 and 20 pages in at least four essays

## ***Course Materials***

INF 304W does not have a textbook or course packet. Instead, all readings will be available through the course Web site, Canvas, UT's Library, or through the World Wide Web.

This course is a web-based course, so students will need regular access to the following materials:

- **Internet** – If you do not have access to a personal computer, you may use the iSchool lab ([UTA 1.210](#)) while enrolled in this course. You do not need to sign up for an iSchool account. The iSchool lab has both Macs and PCs, as well as lots of great software. I encourage you to check out the lab!
- **Email** – You can open an email account through UT, Gmail, Hotmail, Yahoo, etc. if you do not already have one. Make sure you register your official email account with the university. All correspondence for this course will use your official UT email, and "I didn't get the email" is not accepted as an excuse for missing an assignment!
- **Microsoft Word** – You will submit essays as Microsoft Word documents. The Campus Computer Store sells software, including Microsoft Office, to UT students and faculty at a discount. Since your written work will receive considerable feedback, only Microsoft Word documents will be accepted.
- **Adobe Acrobat Reader** – Several articles we will read are in .pdf format. You can download Adobe Acrobat Reader (plus lots of other great software) through Bevoware.
- **UT Box** – UT offers you 25GB of space to store your files and make them available to you anywhere. All you need is an Internet connection and a Web browser. Upload your in-progress (and completed) assignments to UTBox and stop worrying about losing your files to local computer crashes! As a student, you have already paid for this service. Use it! Set up an account with your UTEID.

## ***Course Format***

This course is Web-based, so there will be no class meetings. The course is self-paced. You do the work whenever you want throughout the week as long as you submit everything no later than the designated date and time.

The course is divided into three sections:

1. The foundation of information studies

2. Information studies professions
3. Issues in information studies

Each week the professor will release a new module that will focus on one topic within these sections. Each module will be composed of the following activities:

- **Online lecture** - Each module begins with an online “lecture.” Read each lecture before proceeding to the assigned readings. While reading, take notes on questions, interesting points, concerns, etc.
- **Readings** – There are citations provided at the end of each module, and all readings are available through the course Web site, Canvas, UT Library Online, or through the World Wide Web. See the “Course Materials” section for more information.
- **Discussion** – Students will engage in virtual discussions about the lecture, readings, and/or related topics each week using the discussion board section set up by the instructor. The first discussion will take place in the “Discussion Board” section of Canvas. You will find more information on discussions in the “Assignments” section of this syllabus.

### ***Grading Policy***

I304W uses a 200-point grading scale.

1. 70 total points will come from class participation throughout the semester
2. 95 total points for three essays
3. 20 points for the peer review assignment
4. 15 points for the Buckland review

Each discussion post and essay will accumulate points; the total number of points will determine the final course grade.

<b>A</b>	190 - 200 points
<b>A -</b>	180 - 189
<b>B +</b>	173 - 179
<b>B</b>	166 - 172
<b>B -</b>	160 - 165
<b>C +</b>	153 - 159
<b>C</b>	146 - 152 points
<b>C -</b>	140 - 145
<b>D</b>	120 - 139 points (passing for Credit/No Credit)
<b>F</b>	Below 119 points

Students must complete all assignments to pass the class. Grades for essays, outlines, and weekly discussions will be posted in Canvas. You will need your UT EID and password to log in. For more information on specific assignments, see the next section.

### **Late Grading:**

Discussions are due by midnight on Wednesdays. Late discussions will not be graded. No exceptions.

Essays and outlines are due by midnight on the designated due dates. Essays and/or outlines submitted between 12:01 AM and 4:59 AM will be accepted but will receive a 5-point deduction (in case of a "technical difficulty," you have almost 5 hours to find a different computer or Internet connection). As outlines are only worth 5 points apiece, it is highly recommended that they be turned in prior to the deadline.

Canvas records the exact time you upload, so make sure you give yourself plenty of time for the document to upload before midnight. I will use Canvas' recorded time as the official submission time. If the Canvas lists 12:01 AM as the time you uploaded your assignment, then yes, you will receive a 5-point deduction.

No essays or outlines will be accepted after 4:59 AM except in the case of a verifiable medical emergency. A computer virus, a computer crash, athletic events, and thunderstorms are not verifiable medical emergencies.

There is no final exam for this class.

## ***Assignments***

### **Introduction**

Please introduce yourself in the Canvas discussion forum titled "Introduction." Please share with us a little bit about yourself: Who are you? Where are you from? What is your major? What are your interests and/or hobbies? Why are you taking the course? What do you hope to get out of this course?

### **Discussions**

Discussion topics are posted at the end of each module. After reading the online lectures and the readings each week, students will respond

to the discussion question(s) in a weekly forum in Canvas. Students should respond to at least one question/topic, although this instructor will not complain if students address multiple topics. Contributions should be at least 150 of your BEST words (as opposed to your FIRST words) and should address the readings and question(s) assigned for that week. In your posts, please make it clear that you have read the assigned material and demonstrate an engagement with their main ideas. Discussions are due no later than midnight each Wednesday to receive credit. Late postings will not be graded.

Discussions will be graded as follows:

- 1 point for clarity of expression (proper grammar, spelling, etc.)
- 2 points for engagement with the topic and assigned readings. Please demonstrate you have read the articles/chapters for the week - you must show interaction with the article, the topic, and your classmates. Also, please cite the articles/chapters to which you are referring. If you refer to an outside source, please cite it also.
- 2 points for replying to at least two fellow students' postings. Please note: Replies should be insightful; engage with your classmates' postings. Go beyond comments like "I agree/disagree" or "Well said!" or "He knows what he is talking about." This is a chance to engage in constructive academic discussions. Superficial comments receive no credit.

**5 possible points** for each discussion

**Total Points for Discussion Postings: 70**

## **Buckland Review**

You will write a 3-5 page review of Michael Buckland's "Information as Thing" article. What is your opinion about Buckland's argument? Think about your own everyday information-seeking habits (such as reading entries on Wikipedia, asking a friend a question, looking for resources at the library). Your short essay should evaluate Buckland's argument about information by comparing and contrasting his perspectives with your own information-seeking experiences.

Remember to cite Buckland's article and any other sources you may use in your bibliography.

**Total points for Buckland review: 15**

## **Essays**

Each essay includes two parts; an outline and resource list, and a final draft. The second essay will require an additional draft; one that you turn in to your peer editor, and one that you turn in to me that includes responses to your editor's comments.

## **Outlines and Resource List**

You must submit an outline for essays one and two. The outline should include your thesis statement, your main ideas/points, articles and examples supporting each main idea and your concluding statement.

**Each entry in your outline should be the topic sentence of each paragraph of your essay.** The point of asking you to create an outline is to ensure each paragraph in the main body of your essay starts with a topic sentence.

Outlines are due by midnight on the designated due date. See the "Grading Policy" section for information on late essays.

**5 possible points** for each outline and 5 points for each resource list  
**Total outline points: 20**

## **Final Draft**

A total of three essays, between 5 and 6 typewritten pages for each essay, are due over the course of the semester. An essay shorter than 5 complete pages will have points deducted. If you write only 4 pages (80% of the required page length), then the most points you can receive is 80% of the maximum score.

Each essay is worth 25 points. Due dates are posted on the schedule. See the "Late Work Policy" section above for information on late essays.

Remember to include a title page and bibliography for each essay. Title pages should include your name, the date, the number and title of your essay, and the class number (INF 304W). Without this title page, your essay may not be graded!

You must cite **all** sources within the essay and provide complete citation information in a bibliography page, including any module readings or the online lecture. Students caught plagiarizing will suffer strict academic consequences. All citations should use APA format. For more information on APA, please see the Purdue University OWL guide: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

Each essay will be graded according to the following rubric, unless stated otherwise:

<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Points</b>
APA Format	5
5 Pages	5
Addresses the prompt	5
Clarity of expression	5
Grammar and spelling	5

The essay requirements are described in more detail on the course web site.

## **Word Settings**

Each writing assignment should be saved using your last name as the first word in the document title. For example, my Buckland review would be blahaBucklandReview.docx.

Submit all assignments using Canvas. Assignments submitted via email may not be counted.

A tutorial for submitting documents is located here: <http://edutech.ctl.utexas.edu/submitting-assignments/>

Click on each essay title for information specific to that essay:

[Essay #1: Information in Your Life](#) - 25 points

[Essay #2: LIS Professions](#) - 25 points (+ 10 points for turning in your draft to your editor on time)

[Essay #3: Student Choice](#) - 25 points

**Total essay points: 85**

## **Peer Review**

You will be editing another student's rough drafts for essay #2. The instructor will use Canvas to pair you with another student. It is expected that you will provide your classmate with thorough corrections and suggestions using the peer review feature of Canvas. In addition to these changes within your classmate's essay, you will also provide a 1 -2 page review that addresses the following:

1. Briefly summarize the essay.
2. Do you think the main argument (thesis) is clear? Why or why not?
3. Look at the author's sources and how s/he uses them. Do you think the thesis is well-supported? Why or why not?
4. Does the essay flow well? Are there any grammatical or spelling issues the author should be made aware of?

Remember to provide constructive criticism in your peer review. Mention aspects of the essay you liked, as well as areas you think need to be improved. By the due date, submit your comments using Canvas' peer-review feature and submit your 1 - 2 page peer-review as an attachment to those comments.

You will receive 10 points for submitting your essay to Canvas on time and 10 points for submitting a complete review to Canvas by the peer-review deadline. This assignment will be explained in more detail as the deadlines approach.

**Total peer review points: 20**

## **Rewrites**

Each student will be allowed to rewrite the essay/outline combos (except for essay #3) for the possibility of improving his/her grade on that particular assignment. In addition to making changes, students will need to include a one-page cover letter identifying changes and explaining the reasons for making such changes. Due to grade submission deadlines, the rewrite option is not available for the final essay/outline (#3).

Please note - The rewrite option cannot be used as an extension. You must submit a complete essay by its due date to be eligible for submitting a rewrite.

## ***Resources***

### **Style Manuals**

Students will need to cite all sources for both their discussions and their essays in APA format. Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL) offers a great overview on how to do this. <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl> Style manuals are located under Research and Citation.

## **U.T. Writing Resources**

You are fortunate to attend the University of Texas, where you have access to one of the largest research libraries in the world! Take advantage of all the wonderful resources available through the U.T. system.

- Undergraduate Writing Center – located in FAC 211
- UT Library Online's (UT LOL) homepage – You can find library information, resources, and receive virtual assistance from a reference librarian!
- Full text articles and essays – Databases offering a plethora of articles and essays, available in both in HTML and .pdf format and from many disciplines
- Social Sciences Citation Index – An outstanding resource for finding articles and information on citation rates for many articles
- Databases arranged by subject – You can locate articles within specific disciplines.

## **Other Writing Resources**

- The Citation Machine – A free Web site that can translate citation information into proper format for both APA and MLA style. A helpful and time-saving resource.
- Online Writing Lab – Purdue University provides an excellent online writing lab, including information about avoiding plagiarism, citing resources, and avoiding grammatical errors.

## ***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.

### **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 (the instructor)!