Introduction to Information Studies

Unique Numbers 276385 & 27387
Spring 2016

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 four sections:
1. Basic writing skills
2. The foundation of information studies
3. Information studies professions
4. 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, and sometimes lead, 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. 40 total points will come from class participation throughout the semester
2. 30 points for the quiz
3. 120 points total, or 30 points for each of four essays
4. 30 points for the peer review assignment

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

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>180 - 189</td>
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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 the due date. 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**

The semester will be divided into two six week sessions for discussion purposes. Canvas will divide the class into a number of randomly assigned six person discussion groups. Each discussion group will have a leader chosen by Canvas from within that discussion group. A different leader will be chosen each week. The leader of the discussion group is responsible for initiating the discussion; coming up with a topic related to weeks readings that you think your group members will be interested in.

Discussions will be graded as follows; discussion leaders can earn up to ten points each time they lead a discussion for a maximum of twenty points. Discussion participants can earn up to two points for participating in a discussion for a maximum of twenty points:

**Discussion Leaders:**

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<tr>
<td>B +</td>
<td>173 - 179</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>166 - 172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B -</td>
<td>160 - 165</td>
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<tr>
<td>C +</td>
<td>153 - 159</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>146 - 152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C -</td>
<td>140 - 145</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>120 - 139 (passing for Credit/No Credit)</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 119</td>
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</table>
• 4 points for quality of discussion topic
• 4 points for relevance of topic to reading
• 2 points for effort (getting your fellow students interested and keeping the conversation going)

Discussion participants
• 2 points for quality participation in your group’s conversation.

20 possible points for discussion leadership
20 possible points for discussion participation

Total Points for Discussion Postings: 40

Quiz

The first module will discuss the writing conventions and process I expect from you in this course. Not all of the information in this section will be new to everyone, but I hope that each of you will get something out of this section.

Quiz: 30 Points

Buckland Review

You will write a 3-5 page review of Michael Buckland’s “Information as Thing” article, a foundational article in the development of information theory. This article can be difficult and confusing (one assertion he makes is that an antelope is information), so I have divided the essay into two parts; you will create an outline and summary of Buckland’s argument for the first part. The second part will require you to write the essay using the information you created in the first part. Your grade will be based on your ability to appropriately cite, paraphrase, and summarize, and you will be expected to write an essay without breaking any of the rules from Module 1.

Total points for Buckland review: 30

Essays

Essays one and two include two parts; a preparation step (which will vary with each essay), and a final draft. The third essay will require two final drafts; 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.

Preparation Steps for Essays One and Two

For essay one you will be asked to summarize three articles on literacy and interview two individuals from different generations. This step will prepare you to successfully discuss literacy acquisition as it relates to your two interview subjects.

For essay two, you will be asked to summarize 3 academic journal articles and 3 popular media sources related to a current topic in information studies. This preparation step will help you describe a particular career path in Library and Information Studies and how that path is relevant to current events.

The third essay will be your choice, but it must relate to something we discussed in class. The preparation step for the third essay is for you to submit your idea to me for approval, and to submit a final draft to your assigned peer-reviewer.

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 30 points for a total of 120 essay related points. This total includes both the preparation and the final submission steps. 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 and section. Your essay must be submitted to Canvas as a word doc, and the file name needs to start with your last name. For example, my Buckland review would be BlahabucklandReview.doc. Without this title page and naming convention, your essay will 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/

All essays will be submitted to Canvas and will be passed through the Turnitin plagiarism check software. The results of this software analysis are not the only method I will use to determine whether something is plagiarized.

The essay requirements are described in more detail as we progress through the course.

**Essays 1 – 3: 90 Points**

**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/

**Peer Review**

You will be editing another student’s rough drafts for essay #3. 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 20 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.
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, and you must include a cover page discussing your changes or your revision will not be graded.

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!