

Welcome to  
**INFORMATION IN SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT!**

a 3-credit face-to-face graduate class for those of you seeking careers in the information professions

Note: Effective, Fall 2014: To count this course towards your MSIS degree, students must receive a final grade of "B" or higher. If you receive a final grade of "B-" or lower, you are required to repeat the course. If you receive a grade of "B-" or lower, you will also not be able to count the course as an elective; in other words, those three credits will not count toward your MSIS degree.

Note: This course is required for students graduating under the old catalog. See this note that Dr. Doty shared with students in fall 2018: "For continuing students, by long-standing graduate school rule, they may choose which catalog should apply to their degree. After fall 2019, students may elect to graduate under the old (2017-2019) catalog and its requirements OR may elect to graduate under the new catalog (2019-2021). They are free to choose one or the other, but must satisfy the requirements of at least one catalog."

Spring 2019

Wednesdays, 12:00 noon-3 p.m., UTA 1.208

Unique Number: 27390

Instructor: Dr. Lorie Roy, Professor

Homepage Image: I took this photo of the public library in Chester, England in July 2015.

## **Syllabus**

### **Course Meeting Times and Classroom Location**

Wednesdays, 12:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. in UTA 1.208 (the room with the column), starting on Wednesday, 23 January 2019. Our last day of class is Wednesday, 8 May 2019.

**Course Description:** Examines the role of information in human activities, particularly in relation to social and cultural contexts. Examines how individuals, groups, organizations, institutions, and society at large create, find, use, understand, share, transform, and curate information.

**Prerequisite:** Graduate standing in the School of Information or admission to the Bachelor's in Computer Science/MSIS program. Students in other departments may be able to enroll in the class if there is room after iSchool students have been given an opportunity to register.

**General Objectives:** In this class we will examine the role of information in human activities, particularly how it shapes and is shaped by its social and cultural context. Students will consider how creating, finding, using, understanding, sharing, transforming, and curating information impacts and is affected by the contexts of individuals, groups, organizations, institutions, and society at large. The goal of this course is to ensure that students have a general understanding of the ways in which information scholars study information and information technologies in social and cultural context. While you might feel that some content is similar to that presented in INF 380E (Perspectives on Information), the readings and assignments are unique.

**Specific Learning Objectives:** By the end of this course, you will:

- Critically examine the role of information in human activities and the role of social and cultural contexts.
- Examine how groups, organizations, and institutions create, find, use, understand, share, transform, and curate information, and connect them to individuals on the micro side and society at large on the macro side.
- Demonstrate your ability to work effectively and professionally independently and with others.
- Formulate and clearly communicate creative ideas in writing and orally.

**Readings:** See the assigned readings noted for each week.

**Grading** Grades will be based on:

**Individual activities during our daily meetings:**

- Participation: 130 points
- Story + Discussion Question: 120 points

**Group activities that involve you once:**

- Interactive Activity: 100 points

**Individual work that spans the entire semester:**

- Reflective Paper: 150 points

No letter grades are assigned to individual assignments. Instead, each assignment will be worth a certain number of points, as designated above. Points will be totaled at the end of the semester.

**Grade Calculations**

430-500+ points = A; 400-429 = A-; 370-399 = B+; 330-369 = B; 300-329 = B-; 270-299 = C+; 230-269 = C; 200-229 = C-

I will award partial credit when possible. Totals are not rounded up: for example, cumulative scores of 899.5 points receive a grade of "B+." I neither grade on a curve nor use a "quota system." It is a rough rule of thumb that in elective graduate courses in this department there will be one "A" awarded for every three "B's." Remember that you can check the points you receive for individual assignments on Canvas and your final grade online.

### **Tentative Course Schedule**

\*\*This syllabus represents my current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance the class learning opportunity. Such changes, communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected.

### **Outline of Course Content:**

Module I: Values

- A. Information and Personal Identity
- B. Information and Collective Identity
- C. Information in International Context

Module II: Information Policy

- A. Standardization
- B. Intellectual Property
- C. Privacy and Surveillance

Module III: Information Work and Workers

- A. Professional Ethics
- B. Roles for Information Professionals

Module IV: Information Institutions

- A. Libraries
- B. Archives
- C. Museums and Parks
- D. Invisible Work

**Meeting 1 (January 23):** Welcome to the class!

Overview of the class: assignments, requirements, and an orientation to key concepts.

Sign up for your Interactive Activity week and topic!

Let me know:

- Consider: your site visit locations. Where would you like to visit as a group?
- What do you want to learn in this class?

**Meeting 2 (January 30): Module I: Values**

We move into more concentrated work on key concepts. The first concepts (identified as A, B, and C) are grouped under Module I and refer to values.

**A. Information and Personal Identity**

Your responsibilities are: Class Attendance and Participation; Complete required readings before class. Submit a Story + Discussion Question for: Information and Personal Identity.

**Meeting 3 (February 6):** Dr. Roy will be at the International Indigenous Librarians Forum on this day. Plan one of your site visits on this day! Please do not select the Texas State Library and Archives or the Austin Public Library Central Library. We will visit those two sites together.

**Meeting 4 (February 13): Module I: Values**

We move into more concentrated work on key concepts. The first concepts (identified as A, B, and C) are grouped under Module I and refer to values.

**B. Information and Collective Identity**

Your responsibilities are: Class Attendance and Participation; Complete required readings before class. Submit a Story + Discussion Question for: Information and Collective Identity. Feb 13: Mod 1: Values: Info & Collective Identity: Story + Discussion Question

**Module I: Values: C. Information in International Context**

Your responsibilities are: Class Attendance and Participation; Complete required readings before class. Submit a Story + Discussion Question for: Information in International Context. Feb 13: Mod 1: Values: Info in International Context: Story + Discussion Question

### **Meeting 5 (February 20): Module II: Information Policy: A. Standardization**

Your responsibilities are: Class Attendance and Participation; Complete required readings before class. Submit a Summary or Story + Discussion Question for: Standardization. Feb 20: Mod 2: Info Policy: Standardization: Story + Discussion Question

### **Module II: Information Policy: B. Intellectual Property**

Your responsibilities are: Class Attendance and Participation; Complete required readings before class. Submit a Story + Discussion Question for: Intellectual Property. Feb 26: Mod 2: Info Policy: Intellectual Property: Story + Discussion Question

**Meeting 6 (February 27):** Dr. Roy will be returning from an ALA Committee on Accreditation Site Visit. Plan one of your site visits on this day! Please do not select the Texas State Library and Archives or the Austin Public Library Central Library. We will visit those two sites together.

### **Meeting 7 (March 6): Module II: Information Policy**

#### **C. Privacy and Surveillance**

Your responsibilities are: Class Attendance and Participation; Complete required readings before class. Submit a Story + Discussion Question for: Privacy and Surveillance. Mar 5: Mod 2: Info Policy: Privacy and Surveillance: Story + Discussion Question

### **Meeting 8 (March 13): Model III: Information Work and Workers**

#### **A. Professional Ethics**

Your responsibilities are: Class Attendance and Participation; Complete required readings before class. Submit a Story + Discussion Question for: Professional Ethics. Mar 13: Mod 3: Info Work & Workers: Professional Ethics: Story + Discussion Question

### **Module III: Information Work and Workers**

#### **B. Roles for Information Professionals**

Your responsibilities are: Class Attendance and Participation; Complete required readings before class. Submit a Story + Discussion Question for: Roles for Information Professionals. Mar 13: Mod 3: Info Work & Workers: Roles for Info Professionals: Story + Discussion Question

### **Friday, March 15, 12:00 noon: Participation: Midsemester Assessment**

Note: Dr. Roy will send you a note by this date and time about your participation up to this point in the semester. You will not submit any information.

### **Meeting 9 (March 20): Spring Break! Do not come to class!**

**Meeting 10 (March 27):** Group Site Visit: Texas State Library and Archives Commission or the Austin Public Library Central Library.

You may take notes on this draft site visit form. You will not submit the form to me but use it as reference when you discuss your site visit in class. Site Report Form Draft 7January2019.docx

**Meeting 11 (April 3): Module IV: Information Institutions**

**A. Libraries**

Your responsibilities are: Class Attendance and Participation; Complete required readings before class. Submit a Story + Discussion Question for: Libraries. Apr 3: Mod 4: Info Institutions: Libraries: Story + Discussion Question

**Interactive Activity: Libraries**

Self-evaluation due: within 24 hours. SelfEvalFormSpring2019.docx

**Module IV: Information Institutions**

**B. Archives**

Your responsibilities are: Class Attendance and Participation; Complete required readings before class. Submit a Story + Discussion for: Archives. Apr 3: Mod 4: Info Institutions: Archives: Story + Discussion Question

**Interactive Activity: Archives**

Self-evaluation due: within 24 hours. SelfEvalFormSpring2019.docx

**Meeting 12 (April 10): Module IV: Information Institutions**

**C. Museums and Parks**

Your responsibilities are: Class Attendance and Participation; Complete required readings before class. Submit a Story + Discussion Question for: Museums and Parks. Apr 10: Mod 4: Info Institutions: Museums & Parks; Invisible Work: Story + Discussion Question

**Interactive Activity: Museums and Parks**

Self-evaluation due: within 24 hours. SelfEvalFormSpring2019.docx

**D. Invisible Work**

Your responsibilities are: Class Attendance and Participation; Complete required readings before class. Submit a Story + Discussion Question for: Invisible Work. Apr 10: Mod 4: Info Institutions: Invisible Work: Story + Discussion Question; SampleStoryAndQuestionSp2019.docx

**Interactive Activity: Invisible Work**

Self-evaluations due: within 24 hours. SelfEvalFormSpring2019.docx

**Meeting 13 (April 17):** In-Class Work Session on Reflective Paper or Group Attending Texas Library Association Annual Conference Exhibits

**Meeting 14 (April 24):** Group Site Visit: Texas State Library and Archives Commission or the Austin Public Library Central Library.

You may take notes on this draft site visit form. You will not submit the form to me but use it as reference when you discuss your site visit in class. Site Report Form Draft 7January2019.docx

**Meeting 15 (May 1):** Review and In-Class Work Session on Reflective Paper

**Meeting 16 (May 8):** Our Future

### **Assignments**

#### **A. Class Participation (130 points) [individual work]**

Class participation accounts for a total of 130 points or 60 points during the first half of the semester and 70 points during the second half of the semester. Participation is based on 10 points per class meeting, excluding the two days when you conduct site visits on your own and spring break.

#### **Midsemester Assessment: for the first 8 weeks of the semester**

Please introduce yourself by name as you contribute, especially early in the semester.

#### **Final Assessment: for the second half of the semester**

Students will receive an assessment of their participation contributions during the second half of the semester following the approach used to conduct the Midsemester Assessment. Students do not submit additional information.

#### **B. Story + Discussion Question (120 points total) [individual work]**

#### **C. Interactive Activity (100 points)**

Each student will develop and deliver an interactive activity for the entire class.

#### **D. Reflective Paper (100 points)**

Summary of the assignment: Your semester-long work involves writing an individual paper in which you articulate the road you followed that brought you to the iSchool, what you have learned so far along, and thoughts about your future. This essay will be different from the statement of purpose you prepared as part of your admission to the iSchool, although you might want to read that essay over to refresh your memory about your initial plans. Do not draw (copy text) from that essay. Note that I am able to read that essay online.