**Course Syllabus – Organizing Information INF384C**

Professor: Christine "Tine" Walczyk

Office Hours

By request. (I work remotely but try to meet with students on the phone or through a web session at any time that's convenient with 24 hours notice.)

Course Meeting Times

Spring 2020: Online. Modules are released and assignments are due on Tuesdays.

Contact Information

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Course Description

The course catalog description of this class is as follows:

Introduction to general principles and features of organizing and providing access to information, including varieties and numbers of information-bearing objects, different traditions of practice, user concerns, metadata and metadata formats, document representation and description, subject access, and information system features and evaluation.

This course provides a general introduction to the organization of information, concentrating on the core operations of describing, grouping, arranging, and relating objects. While the course will focus most heavily on the organization of documents, or bibliographic information, the objects most commonly organized in libraries and archives, we will not be unduly concerned with particular implementations for any specific institution. In other words, you will not learn traditional library cataloging or archival description in this class. You will, however, learn the principles that form the basis for all such systems. Accordingly, the assignments for the course emphasize the application of organization principles in designing mechanisms for organizing information.

Note, however, that the course concentrates on conceptual aspects of design, not technical ones; you will not learn implementation encodings (such as MARC for cataloging or RDF/XML for the Semantic Web) in this class.

Books

*Required – None. However, a list of required readings/articles are found within the course.*

Assignments / Grading

**There are three primary assignments, in addition to regular attendance and participation in class activities and discussions:**

**• Designing a metadata schema.**

**• Designing a subject classification.**

**• Generating and analyzing a set of aggregated metadata records.**

Grading Scale

* 96 or above (A: superior)
* 90-95 (A-: distinguished)
* 87-89 (B+: good)
* 84-86 (B: satisfactory)
* 80-83 (B-: barely satisfactory)
* 77-79 (C+), 74-76 (C), 70-73 (C-) - unsatisfactory

HOMEWORK

All assignments and project deliverable due dates are on the course schedule and in Canvas (under Assignments and Calendar). Even if the instructor doesn't announce each due date in class, it’s your job to know when you should be working on one and when they are due. Please ask when in doubt.

Submitting written homework and assignments

You must prepare your assignments using a word processor and submit it by uploading to Canvas by the due date/time. Please always use appropriate three- or four-letter file extensions in submitted filename (e.g., .docx for Word files, .pdf for Adobe portable document format. Please avoid submitting zip files). Assignments usually may not be submitted via email to the professor.

**Important**: All documents that you are submitting should include on the front page of your submission your name, course number/name, instructor's name, semester and the date of submission. For group work, if applicable, please also always include on the front page all group member names, your project group number, and your project short name (or title). **Warning**: If you do not follow these requirement, your submission may be returned without a grade and without a possibility to re-submit it.

CLASS PARTICIPATION

Class participation includes active participation in discussion forums and online lectures.

CLASS POLICIES

**Due dates and times for handing in homework and project assignments**

Unless otherwise indicated, all homework and project assignments must be turned in at the beginning of class on the due date. You should think of all due dates for assignments, especially project assignments, as firm. The tight schedule of deliverables throughout the whole semester makes it nearly impossible to slip or extend due dates. Any assignment that you do not hand in on time may be penalized in grading. If you are not able to complete an assignment by the due date, it would be best for you to hand in as much of it as you have done. You must prepare your assignments using a word processor and submit it by uploading to Canvas by the due date/time. Please do **not** submit links to Google Docs. Assignments usually may not be submitted via email to the professor.

Attendance

Although, you will not be graded directly on attendance, you are expected to check the course shell regularly throughout the week. The Announcements area will be used to communicate any changes to the syllabus. Students are responsible for keeping up-to-date with all schedule changes posted in this manner.

Computer use in the classroom

You may use your laptops and other computing devices (e.g., tablets, smartphones) in the classroom. However, their use during class time is **restricted** to **class related activities**. Students who use their devices for non-class related activities will be excused from the class and will have points deducted for their final grade.

Plagiarism & Academic Honor Code

Plagiarism, as defined in the 1995 Random House Compact Unabridged Dictionary, is the "use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work.” (as cited in Plagiarism (2017). Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plagiarism). If you use words or ideas that are not your own you must cite your sources. Otherwise you will be guilty of plagiarism. Here’s a resource designed to help you avoid plagiarism: [www.lib.utexas.edu/plagiarism](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/plagiarism)

You are encouraged to discuss assignments with classmates, but anything submitted must reflect your own, original work. If in doubt, ask the instructor. Plagiarism (as described above) and similar conduct represents a serious violation of UT's Honor Code and standards of conduct:

* <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/scholdis_plagiarism.php>
* <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/conduct.php>
* <http://bit.ly/UT_plagiarism_Matt> – resource from Dr. Matt Lease (4pgs)

**It is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY as a student to avoid honor code violations**. Neither ignorance nor accidents excuse violations. If in doubt, ask the instructor and/or err on the side of caution by quoting borrowed text and citing sources of borrowed ideas and text.

**Students who violate University rules on academic dishonesty are subject to severe disciplinary penalties, such as automatically failing the course and potentially being dismissed from the University. \*\*PLEASE\*\* do not take the risk**. We are REQUIRED to automatically report any suspected case to central administration for investigation and disciplinary hearings. Honor code violations ultimately harm yourself as well as other students, and the integrity of the University, academic honesty is strictly enforced. For more information, see the Student Judicial Services site: [http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs.](http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs)

Notice about students with disabilities

The University of Texas at Austin provides appropriate accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. To determine if you qualify, please contact the Dean of Students at 512-471-6529 or UT Services for Students with Disabilities. If they certify your needs, we will work with you to make appropriate arrangements. UT SSD Website: <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd>

Coping with stress and personal hardships

The Counseling and Mental Health Center offers a variety of services for students, including both individual counselling and groups and classes, to provide support and assistance for anyone coping with difficult issues in their personal lives. As mentioned above, life brings unexpected surprises to all of us. If you are facing any personal difficulties in coping with challenges facing you, definitely consider the various services offered and do not be shy to take advantage of them if they might help. These services exist to be used.

Notice about missed work due to religious holy days

A student who misses an examination, work assignment, or other project due to the observance of a religious holy day will be given an opportunity to complete the work missed within a reasonable time after the absence, provided that he or she has properly notified the instructor. It is the policy of the University of Texas at Austin that the student must notify the instructor at least fourteen days prior to the classes scheduled on dates he or she will be absent to observe a religious holy day. For religious holy days that fall within the first two weeks of the semester, the notice should be given on the first day of the semester. The student will not be penalized for these excused absences, but the instructor may appropriately respond if the student fails to complete satisfactorily the missed assignment or examination within a reasonable time after the excused absence.

Electronic-mail Notification Policy

In this course e-mail will be used as a means of communication with students. You will be responsible for **checking your e-mail regularly** for class work and announcements. If you are an employee of the University, your e-mail address in Canvas is your employee address.

I will make every effort to answer your email in a timely fashion. However, you should not necessarily always expect to get an immediate reply. In particular, don’t expect to get answers to questions about a homework or project assignment within the last few hours before that assignment is due. Please put **INF384C** as part of the subject line of your email; that will help us identify your emails more quickly.

The University has an 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. Read the policy: [http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.html.](http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.html) You can find and change your official email address of record at https://utdirect.utexas.edu/apps/utd/all\_my\_addresses

Tentative Schedule

(Canvas holds the assignment dates. Please see Canvas for instructions and assignment deadlines.)

\* Professor traveling

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| **Date** | **Readings and Topic for Discussion** | **Assignment Due** |
| Jan 21, 2020 | Course Introduction; Online Meeting scheduled for Orientation |  |
| Jan 28, 2020 | Week 1 - What is information organization and what systems are used? | Discussion Post 1 |
| Feb 4, 2020 | Week 2 - Entities (objects and resources) | Descriptive Schema Proposal |
| Feb 11, 2020 | Week 3 – Attributes and values | Metadata Generation  Discussion Post 2 |
| Feb 18, 2020 | Week 4 – Controlled vocabulary and authority control | Descriptive Schema |
| Feb 25, 2020 | Week 5 – Interoperability and standards | Subject Classification Proposal |
| Mar 3, 2020 | Week 6 – Subjects and subject analysis | Subject Analysis Exercise |
| \*Mar 10, 2020 | Week 7 – Subject languages | Discussion Post 3 |
| Mar 17, 2020 | SPRING BREAK |  |
| \*Mar 24, 2020 | Week 8 – Subject languages |  |
| Mar 31, 2020 | Week 9 – Faceted classification | Metadata Records for Aggregation |
| Apr 7, 2020 | Week 10 – Metadata in practice |  |
| Apr 14, 2020 | Week 11 – Metadata in practice | Subject Classification |
| Apr 21, 2020 | Week 12 – Metadata in practice |  |
| Apr 28, 2020 | Week 13 – Metadata in the wild | Metadata Generation and Aggregation |
| May 5, 2020 | Week 14 – Metadata in the wild | Discussion Post 4 |