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Office Hour: Mon 3:10-5:00, Wed 9:30-12:30 or by appointment  
Class meets in Husted 204 and 004

Course Description
The course is an introduction to fundamental concepts, theoretical principles, and practices of knowledge and information organization. This course covers essential techniques and applications that are used to facilitate access to information resources.

The key themes include:
Concepts and Principles of Information Organization,  
Subject Analysis and Aboutness,  
Indexing and Abstracting,  
Vocabulary Control and Thesauri,  
Systematic Classification,  
Information Representation and Document Surrogates,  
Authority Control,  
Metadata,  
Visual and Non-textual Information,  
Organization of Web-based Information and Social Classification, and  
User Perspective in Organizing Information.

Course Objectives
• To introduce the principles, theories, standards, and methods for information and knowledge organization;
• To examine the fundamental concepts of information, its nature, uses and its organization in information retrieval systems;
• To introduce approaches for understanding users and organizing information to meet their information needs and;
• To promote critical thinking and problem solving abilities for addressing challenges of information organization in the digital age.

Course Requirements and Grade Guidelines
Your final grade will be based on class work, a course portfolio, two assignments, a midterm exam, and a final paper. They will be weighted as follows:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class attendance and discussion, In-class exercises</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course portfolio</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignments</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final paper</td>
<td>35%</td>
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Class attendance and discussion participation
Class attendance is required. Student will be expected to be able to discuss the reading assignments and to participate in class discussions. Attendance, itself, is not graded. Missing class means the student earns an automatic “0” credit for the activities or assignments missed. No make-up opportunities for in-class activities will be available.

In-class activities
In-class activities will be given to students during the class to exercise critical concepts and practices in the topics of that week. Students exercise in-class activities and turn them in before leaving the class. These activities will be used to evaluate whether students understand correctly what have been taught and discussed in the class.

Assignments
Assignment 1: Organization Practices
This assignment involves organizing (or re-organizing) information/ products/ data/ etc within a certain domain. Activities for organization happen everywhere, not just within the library domain, and systematic organization needs logics, rules, criteria, and consideration of various factors, such as how the information (or products) will be searched and retrieved. The purpose of the assignment is to examine these factors and criteria for organization. This assignment is due week 5 (2/20).

Assignment 2: Controlled Vocabularies and Natural Language
Students will compare subject headings from LCSH and tags (or collective index terms) from various social networking sites for Internet resources. The purpose of this assignment is to directly compare controlled vocabularies and user search terms or user assigned tags in order to explore the differences between the two types of indexing. This assignment is due week 11 (4/2).

Midterm examination
There will be a take-home examination (with 3-hour time constraint) for short essays and definitions of terms. The exam will be administered through the Blackboard Learning System on week 9 (3/19).

Course portfolio
Students will create a course portfolio that shows the whole course activities. This will consist of a brief summary of readings, a learning log (self-assessment from discussions, lectures, class activities, etc) and all class materials for projects and papers. Students are encouraged to create reading summaries in a way to prepare class discussions. The course portfolio is due the fifteenth week (4/30).
Final literature review paper
Students will be required to write a literature review paper. In this paper, students will examine some problems of the knowledge and information organization systems based on theories and concepts learned in class. Papers should be in a form of a research paper. A Literature review paper is not a collection of summaries of related materials. The paper has to be written based on critical review of existing literature for author’s position (or arguments). Having a focused and narrow topic is the key to write a good literature review paper.

Students should turn in a brief description of what they intend to look at and write about in this paper with preliminary bibliography by the seventh class (3/5). Papers are to be submitted in the BLS as an attachment by 11:59 pm on May 7th. Attachment files must be labeled clearly in a fashion of “Surname_final” (e.g. Sinn_final.doc). The papers should adhere to either the APA format or the Chicago manual for the citation style.

Course Exit Competencies
At the end of this course, students will understand generally:
• Fundamental concepts of basic terms being used in the field of information studies and information organization
• How basic concepts and principles for organizing information are applied in the design of information systems
• The major theories and issues in classification, categorization, indexing, and abstracting
• Fundamentals of major classificatory structures and systems
• The purposes and functions of surrogates of information
• The roles and different types of metadata for representing digital resources
• The importance of users in the information providing organizations and systems
• Different methods and approaches to organize information in archives, museums, and other types of information providing institutions
• Collective organization and information architecture for internet resources

Text

Articles and book chapters on ERes: Assigned readings are available on E-res. Our course password is “organization.”

Course design and teaching methodologies
The class sessions will consist of lectures by the instructor, class discussions, in-class exercises, and student presentations. Students are required to come to class having read the assigned readings for the week. Supplemental readings may be added.

Course communication and Blackboard Learning System
The course syllabus and many other course materials are available in the Blackboard Learning System (BLS) which can be accessible from MyUAlbany. Discussion questions will be posted before class each week to prepare class discussions, so students need to keep these questions in mind while reading required reading materials. Also, all communications with the instructor and among students will be made using this tool, including submitting assignments. It is recommended for students to check the BLS mailbox a few times a week.

**Late assignments and incompletes:**
Late assignment will be marked down (10% per day), unless prior permission has been given by the instructor, in instances of medial or family emergencies. _Please notify the instructor in writing of any circumstance (such as severe illness or family emergencies) accompanying with appropriate documents that will result in a late assignment._ No incomplete grades will be given.

**Laptop use in class**
Laptops and handheld devices (iPad, etc) can be used during the class session for note-taking and class related activities. Any other usages, such as texting, email checking, Facebook, Twitter, etc. that may cause distractions of students from class will not be permitted.

**Department of Information Studies Statement on Academic Dishonesty:**
The Department of Information Studies takes academic dishonesty very seriously. Before taking classes within the Department of Information Studies, you should familiarize yourself with the department’s Academic Dishonesty Policy, available in both the department’s Graduate Handbook and online at [http://www.albany.edu/cci/informationstudies/forms/admin_forms/Academic_Dishonesty.pdf](http://www.albany.edu/cci/informationstudies/forms/admin_forms/Academic_Dishonesty.pdf). Plagiarism will result in a zero for the assignment in which the plagiarism occurred.

**Course Schedule**

**Week 1 (1/23).** _Introduction to the Course; Overview of Organizing Information:_ why and how
Information in Different Contexts
Student Survey
# In-class exercise 1: Understanding basic concepts of information organization (student introduction and extracting keywords)

Required Reading:
Taylor and Joudrey, Chapter 1

**Week 2 (1/30).** _Information Representation and Retrieval; Background Concepts_
Concepts of Data, Information, Knowledge
History of the Organization of Information
General Principles of the Organization of Information
# In-class exercise 2: Understanding the concepts of data, information, knowledge and wisdom

Required Readings:
Taylor and Joudrey, Chapter 3 (67-85).

Week 3 (2/6). Development of the Organization of Information, Searching and Access
Organization in Various Domains
Tools and Systems for Organizing and Retrieving Information

Required Readings:
Taylor and Joudrey, Chapter 2 (39-66).

Recommended Reading:

Week 4 (2/13). Information Systems, Online Catalogs
Information Systems and System Design
Next Generation of Catalogs
Federated Searching and Meta Searching
# In-class exercise 3: Understanding primary information systems

Required Readings:
Taylor and Joudrey, Chapter 6 (159-199).
Week 5 (2/20). Subject Analysis
Subject Analysis, Aboutness, Indexing, Abstracting
# In-class exercise 4: Subject analysis exercise (Interpreting index and abstract)
Assignment 1 (Organization Practice) Due

Required Readings:
Taylor and Joudrey, Chapter 9 (303-332).

Week 6 (2/27). Systems for Vocabulary Control
Controlled Vocabulary and Natural Language, Subject Headings, Thesauri, Ontologies,
# In-class exercise 5: Searching & interpreting controlled vocabulary

Required Readings:
Taylor and Joudrey, Chapter 10 (333-374).

Week 7 (3/5). Systems for Categorization
Classificatory Structures, Taxonomies, Information Architecture
Final Paper Topic and Preliminary Bibliography Due
# In-class exercise 6: Case studies for library classification

Required Readings:
Taylor and Joudrey, Chapter 11 (375-415).

Week 8 (3/12). No Class (Spring Break)
Week 9 (3/19). Midterm: Take-home exam

Week 10 (3/26). Information Representation, Bibliographic Description, Encoding Standards
Surrogates of Information, Access to Surrogates: Cataloging, Bibliographic Description, Authority Control, FRBR.

Required Readings:
Taylor and Joudrey, Chapter 5 (129-142) & 8 (245-301).

Week 11 (4/2). Metadata
# In-class exercise 7: Creating metadata for a web site
Assignment 2 (Controlled Vocabulary and Natural Language) Due

Required Readings:
Taylor and Joudrey, Chapters 4 (89-127) & 7 (199-243).

Recommended Readings:

Week 12 (4/9). No Class (Easter Monday)

Week 13 (4/16). Organization in Archives, Museum, and Other Types of Information Providing Institutions
# In-class exercise 8: Creating a finding aid

Required Readings:
Week 14 (4/23). Organization of Images and information in multi-media formats; Uses’ aspects in information representation and retrieval

Required Readings:


Week 15 (4/30). Organization of Internet Resources, Social Classification; Student Presentations

Social Tagging, Social classification, Folksonomy, Findability.

Course Portfolio Due


Recommended Readings:


Week 16 (5/7). Student Presentations and Wrap-up

Final Paper Due