INF 499W: Senior Seminar: Topics in Information Science
Spring 2013
Tuesday, 2:45 pm to 5:35 pm, LC 0003C

Laura Gervais, Instructor
Office Hours: Tuesday, 1:30-2:30 in LI-85 and by appointment
Contact information: lgervais@albany.edu

Course Description
Development of Professional Skills in Information Science
This course includes the development of student presentation skills including interviewing, web development, the resume, and oral presentation skills. IIST 499 meets the University at Albany's Oral Discourse Requirement and upper level Writing Intensive Requirement.
Prerequisite: Information Science Major, Senior.

Goals
At the end of this course, students will be able to:
• Identify, question, and assess different perspectives on topics related to information science
• Define, support, and defend opinions on these topics
• Track themes through diverse topics
• Present and support those opinions verbally, in writing, and with visuals
• Evaluate the writing and presentations of others and suggest methods for improvement
• Cooperate and interact effectively and appropriately with a team

Readings
The Facebook Effect by David Kirkpatrick
Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard or the class WIKI*

*There will be additional readings throughout the semester as new pieces are published. When possible, links will be added to Web Links in Blackboard or the class WIKI.

Teams
This course will be using a Team-Based-Learning (TBL) format (www.teambasedlearning.org). This instructional method aims to help develop your workplace learning skills and will be done in a way that will hold teams accountable for using course content to make decisions that will be reported publically and subject to cross-team discussion/critique. You will be assigned to a team with approximately 6 members. Teams will be announced during the first week of the term. You will sit with your team during all classroom sessions.

Individual grades will be influenced by team performance on team-based assignments. While in many courses, group work can be structured unfairly, such that some students end up doing all the work while everyone shares in the credit, two factors will prevent that from happening in this class. First, nearly all graded team work will be preceded by one or more preparatory assignments, for which each individual
will be accountable, thus ensuring that individual team members are each prepared to contribute to the team effort. Second, each individual’s contribution to team work will be assessed by his or her teammates during the semester.

**Phase 1 – Preparation:** You will complete specified readings for each module.

**Phase 2 – Readiness Assurance Test:** At the first class meeting of each module, you will be given a Readiness Assurance Test (RAT). The RAT test (10 multiple-choice questions) measures your comprehension of the assigned readings, and helps you learn the material needed to begin problem solving in phase 3. Once the test period is over, the instructor may give a short mini-lecture to clarify concepts that are not well understood as evidenced by the individual test scores. The purpose of phase 2 is to ensure that you and your teammates have sufficient foundational knowledge to begin learning how to apply and use the course concepts in phase 3. RATs are closed book and based on the assigned readings.

- **Individual RAT (iRAT)** – You individually complete a 10 question multiple-choice test based on the readings.

- **Team RAT (tRAT)** - Following the iRAT, the same multiple-choice test is re-taken with your team. These tests use a “scratch and type answer cards known as an IF-AT. You negotiate with your teammates, and then scratch off the opaque coating hoping to reveal a star that indicates a correct answer. Your team is awarded 10 points if you uncover the correct answer on the first scratch, 7 points for second scratch, 5 points for the third scratch, 3 points for the fourth scratch and 0 points for the fifth scratch.

- **Appeals Process** - Once your team has completed the team test, your team has the opportunity to complete an appeal. The purpose of the appeal process is to allow your team to identify questions where you disagree with the question key or question wording or ambiguous information in the readings. Instructors will review the appeals outside of class time and report the outcome of your team appeal at the next class meeting. Only teams are allowed to appeal questions (no individual appeals).

- **Feedback and Mini-lecture** - Following the RATs and Appeal Process, the instructor may provide a short clarifying lecture on any difficult or troublesome concepts.

**Phase 3 - In-Class Activities:** You and your team use the foundational knowledge, acquired in the first two phases to make decisions that will be reported publically and subject to cross-team discussion/critique. We will use a variety of methods to have you report your team’s decision at the end of each activity. The presentation of your team responses are critical to the team grade. You should expect each team member to present individually and for the entire team to present with smooth transitions.

**Grading**
There will be an individual set of grades, a team set of grades, and a peer review grade.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Assignment Type</th>
<th>Weight Within Category</th>
<th>Category Weight in the Course</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual Grades</td>
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<td>50%</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>iRAT Tests</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Assignments</td>
<td>60%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Team Grades</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>gRAT Tests</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit Projects</td>
<td>60%</td>
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<td><strong>Peer Evaluation</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
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**Policies**

**Attendance:** Your in-class performance is key to your success in this course. Attendance, itself, is not graded. Instead, graded in-class activities and assignments constitute an important part of the course grade. Keeping a passing average on these is not possible without consistent attendance. Missing class means the student earns an automatic zero for the activities or assignments missed. No make-up opportunities will be available.

**Tardiness:** Missing an assignment or activity that happened before a student arrives or after a student leaves also earns a zero. No make-up opportunities will be available.

If you know that it will be difficult for you to consistently get to class on time and stay for the entire period, you should take this course at a time that better fits your schedule. Missing or being late frequently will guarantee a low grade for the course.

**Make-up Policy:** There are generally no make-up opportunities for missed assignments except in extenuating circumstances. Instead of asking to make up missed work, please use the course ‘safety valves’ described below.

Since there will be occasions in your life when missing a class meeting is simply unavoidable, this course has 2 no-fault safety valves.

**Safety valve 1:** You may miss ONE class and it’s associated in-class assignment grade(s). So, if you must miss class for any reason, it will be possible to drop the zero you would automatically receive for missing the assignment. Be careful not to waste your drop on frivolous things early in the semester, since you may need it if you catch a cold or need to leave town for a day later in the semester. If you do not use your safety valve for missed classes, you will be able to use your safety valve to improve your grade, by dropping your lowest score.

Plan carefully for classes that you know you will need to miss. Work, religious practice, sports team travel, military duty, club activities, fraternity/sorority obligations, family responsibilities, assignments for other courses, and even brief illnesses, etc—these are your responsibility to manage by using your safety valve. If you need to be out of class for any of these, make sure you have conserved your droppable grade to cover the class you need to miss.

**Safety valve 2:** If you become seriously ill during the semester, or become derailed by unforeseeable life problems, and have to miss so many assignments that it will ruin your grade, schedule a meeting.
with me in order to make arrangements for you to drop the course to save your grade point average. Don't wait until it's too late to see me when you get in trouble.

**Late papers**: Papers are due on the due date, in class. Late individual papers will be accepted, but at the cost of a full letter grade for missing the first, in-class deadline, and an additional letter grade for each additional 24 hours late. For the 2 term research papers, the mid-term (3-5 pages) and the final paper (10-12 pages), you are required to submit them in the following stages: a) Outline; b) Rough Draft; c) Final Version. Final papers *will not* be accepted if these requirements are not met on the dates they are due. In-class writings may be written only on the days they are scheduled.

**Cell phones & laptops**: Please make sure your cell phones and laptops are turned off before entering the classroom. This will be strictly enforced.

**Special needs policy**: The Disability Resource Center on campus can provide any services or accommodations needed for students with disabilities. Please let me know and then contact the Disability Resource Center in Campus Center 137, or at 442-5490, if needed.

**Policies from Undergraduate Bulletin**:  
[http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html](http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html)

**Note**: a student found plagiarizing in this class will receive a zero for the assignment and the Violation of Academic Honesty Report will be filed with the Vice Provost of Undergraduate Studies and the Department.

**Timeline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Homework (due at start of class)</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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| 1     | January 29 | Team Formation, Introductions, Class Wiki, Rat 0: Syllabus, Individual Blog |                                                                                                  | *Global Game Jam* - 1/25-1/27  
*Campus Center 375*                                                 |
| 2     | February 5 | RAT 1: *The Facebook Effect*, Ch 1-3                                 | 1. Read *The Facebook Effect*, Prologue, Ch 1-3  
2. Create personal Blog page for INF 499  
3. Sign up for INF 499 Class Wiki  
4. Blog “What do I need to work on” (mandatory) | *Resume Critique* 2/7, 1-5pm, Career Services Office, 1st floor Science Library, Bring your resume |
2. On your Blog, post the 2 articles you read and write a short reflection of each article. (At least 1 paragraph for each article) (Mandatory)  
3. Be prepared to present an overview of these posts in class |                                                                                                   |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>February 19</td>
<td>Speaker: Jennifer Goodall, Social Robotics: 2:45-4pm 1. Blog about the 4 themes (TSN) in the form of a reflection on your personal blog (Mandatory)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>February 26</td>
<td>RAT 2: The Facebook Effect, Ch 4-6 1. Read Ch 4-6, The Facebook Effect</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>March 5</td>
<td>Paper #1 assignment, TSN 1. Create LinkedIn profile 2. Get your resumes ready to bring to class on 3/12</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>March 12</td>
<td>Women in Technology, Gender Diversity, Speaker: Catherine Parker 1. Bring a copy of your resume to class 2. Midterm Peer-Evaluations 3. Draft of Paper #1 due (bring 2 copy to class)</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>March 19</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>March 26</td>
<td>RAT 3: Ch 7-9, The Facebook Effect 1. Read Ch 7-9, The Facebook Effect 2. Paper #1 due</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>April 2</td>
<td>Final paper assignment 1. Final Paper Topic Due</td>
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<td>Week</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Location</td>
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| 11   | April 9    | RAT 4: Ch 10-13, *The Facebook Effect* | 1. Read Ch 10-13, *The Facebook Effect*  
2. Outline of final paper due |
|      |            |                        | 4/12 - New Trends in Informatics Research, Downtown Campus                  |
| 12   | April 16   |                        | 1. Bring your resumes  
2. Draft of final paper due (Bring in 2 copies) |
|      |            |                        | 4/19 – New Trends in Computer Science, Uptown Campus                         |
| 13   | April 23   | RAT 5: Ch 14-17, *The Facebook Effect*  
Speaker: Luis Ibanez - Open Source | 1. Read Ch 14-17, *The Facebook Effect*  
2. Presentation of final paper research – Round 1  
3. Final Peer Evaluations |
|      |            |                        | Remember to complete online SIRF evaluation                                  |
| 14   | April 30   | OSF 2013                | 1. Resume/LinkedIn profile due to me for grading. Link to me at  
http://www.linkedin.com/pub/laura-gervais/43/23/866 |
|      |            |                        | UAAlbany ASIST Open Source Festival 2013, 4/25 -11:00am-8:00pm, Assembly Hall, Campus Center |
| 15   | May 7      | Presentations Peer evaluation | 1. Final paper due  
2. Presentation of final paper research – Round 2  
3. Reflection on personal Blog |

***Throughout the semester, you will be asked to post to the class WIKI and to your personal Blog on a regular basis. These fall under "individual assignments" and will be graded. Group posts on the class WIKI fall under "unit projects" and will be graded.***