College of Computing & Information, University at Albany, SUNY

Department of Information Studies

**IIST 601-0001 (7204) Information Environment (3 Credits)**

Spring 2010 Syllabus (12 Pages), Revised 1/21/2010

Instructor: Frank D’Andraia Class Meets: Thursdays, 4:10PM – 7:05PM

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**Office Hours:** Tuesdays, 2:00PM-5:00PM; Wednesdays, 4:00PM-5:00PM, Thursdays, 10:00AM-NOON; and By Appointment

**For Whom Planned:** This is a required course (no pre-requisites) for students enrolled in the master’s degree program in Information Studies.

**Course Description:** This course provides a theoretical background for students entering the information science professions. Through guest speakers, field trips, a variety of readings, class discussion, lectures, and writing (and team presentation) assignments, students gain knowledge of the critical themes in the field, such as information seeking, users, environments, policies, and ethics.

**Learning Outcomes/Objectives:**

By the end of this survey course students should be able to accomplish the following:

* Identify the relationships and roles that information centers and professionals fulfill in society throughout history and into the future;
* Assess the various dimensions of the profession, including an understanding of the scope and dimensions of your area of interest/specialization and the requisite needs and requirements;
* Identify, assess, and use the major sources of information and literature pertaining to information science in class discussions, oral reports, and written assignments;
* Formulate personal judgments regarding the profession and develop some facility in expressing these judgments clearly and succinctly in class discussions and oral and written assignments;
* Discern current issues facing information professionals and express points of view on these challenges in class discussions, oral presentations, and written assignments;
* Develop capacities for research and critical thinking and gain experience in working in teams and in making informative presentations to peers;

**Teaching Strategies:** The course will be conducted in a lecture/discussion format which will require active class participation. Students make two (2) team presentations, write four (4) short essays, and prepare eight (8) executive summaries. Class sessions will involve discussion of the assigned readings and current issues in information studies. You owe it to your colleagues to come to class prepared to discuss assigned readings and to provide feedback on class reports.

**Attendance Policy/Obligations/Expectations:** Students are expected to come to class on time and remain for the entire class session. Students are expected to advise the instructor if there are any accommodations necessary due to disabilities. Absences of two (2) or more without prior permission or reasonable excuse will be considered excessive and will reduce your final grade by three (3) points. Students are to advise the instructor in advance when it is necessary to be absent from class. Class participation does not mean monopolizing class discussion, but being prepared as well as actively contributing to discussion in a reflective way.

Students are expected to adhere to the **Community Rights and Responsibilities** and to give proper credit in the presentation of ideas (**Graduate Bulletin:** [**http://www.albany.edu/grad/requirements\_general\_admissions.html#grading\_graduate**](http://www.albany.edu/grad/requirements_general_admissions.html#grading_graduate)**).**

**Examinations and Note Taking**: There are no examinations.

You should take good notes of lectures and discussions. I do not make copies of my lecture notes available. My experience indicates that note taking dramatically increases your recall and keeps you more involved in class deliberations.

**Cell phones:** Please turn off your cell phone and pagers during class.

**Late Submission:** Assignments submitted late will be marked down one letter grade.

**Email Communications:** The instructor will reply to student e-mail within 72 hours.

**Required Text:** Lester, June and Koehler, Jr., Wallace C. (2007) *Fundamentals of Information Studies; Understanding Information and Its Environment.* 2d ed. New York, Neal-Schuman Publishers, Inc. (A copy of Lester is on reserve in the Dewey Graduate Library)

You may purchase the required textbook at Mary Jane Books (corner of Quail and Western), or through Amazon.com. The required text will be supplemented by additional readings.

Readings may be placed on reserve in Dewey and/or on E-Res. Reserve readings are designed to get you into the literature. You are expected to delve further into the literature for various topics. The pass word for class E-Res materials is provided on January 21 and you will be notified when items are placed on reserve.

#### Grading and Due Dates Summary: There is no final examination in this course. You are graded on weekly class participation and the completion of oral and written assignments (see outline) that have specific due dates and they are as follows:

**Activity/Assignment Weighting - Due Dates**

* **Class Participation**  15% - Weekly

(Your active participation in class discussions and sharing of information is essential.)

* **Essay Assignments**

Professional/Scholarly Publications Review/Analysis - Assignment 1 - 10% - January 28

Career Goals - Assignment 2 - 10% - February 4

Biographical - Assignment 4 - 10% - February 18

Issue Paper - Assignment 6 - 15% - April 8

* **Team Presentations**

Societal Perceptions - Assignment 3 - 10% - February 11

Information Ethics - Assignment 5 - 20% - March 4 - 25

* **Executive Summaries -** 10% - March -April

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| **Letter Grade** | A | A- | B+ | B | B- | C+ | C | C- | D | E |
| **Scale** | 95-100 | 90-94 | 86-89 | 83-85 | 79-82 | 75-78 | 71-74 | 68-70 | 60-67 | 0-59 |

Course Outline

**January 21**

* **Introductions**
* **Course Overview**
  + Format, Expectations, and Communications
  + Assignments & Due Dates
  + Grading
  + Other
* **Lecture** Library and information Science Abstracts and other resources

J**anuary 28**

* **Due:** Assignment 1 - Paper on Professional and Scholarly Publications Review/Analysis
* **Due:** Reading/Executive Summary - Lester, June and Koehler, Jr., Wallace C. (2007) *Fundamentals of Information Studies; Understanding Information and Its Environment.* 2d ed. New York, Neal-Schuman Publishers, Inc., Chapters 1-4, pp 1-84
* **Discussion:** Professional and Scholarly Publications Review/Analysis paper
* **Lecture:** Professional Associations

**February 4**

* **Due:** Assignment 2 -Paper on Career Goals
* **Due:** Reading/Executive Summary – Lester and Koehler, Chapters 5-7, pp 85-186
* **Video**: “The Librarian”
* **Discussion:** Paper on Career Goals
* **Lecture:** History of Libraries

**February 11**

* **Due:** Assignment 3 -Team Presentations on Professional Perceptions
* **Presentations:** Professional Perceptions
* **Video:** "The Man Who Wanted to Classify the World" by Francoise Levie

**February 18**

* **Due:** Assignment 4 - Biographical Paper
* **Discussion:** Biographical papers
* **Discussion:** Preparation for Guest Speakers/Field Trip

**February 25:**

* **Due:** Reading/Executive Summary – Lester and Koehler, Chapters 12, pp 301-332
* **Guest Speaker:** Sara Kelly Johns, Candidate for ALA President, Associate Editor for AASL Community, Knowledge Quest Library Media Specialist, Lake Placid Middle/Senior HS LMC. Her focus will be on the role of the school librarian. **(Date subject to change)**
* **Recommended Reserve Reading: Gorman, Michael, “Professional Ethics and Value in a Changing World.”**

**March 4:**

* **Due:** Assignment 5 -Team Presentations, Information Ethics, Teams #1 and #2
* **Due:** Johns Executive Summary
* **Due:** Reading/Executive Summary – Lester and Koehler, Chapters 13, pp 333-377

**March 11:**

* **Due:** Assignment 5– Team Presentation, Information Ethics, Team #3
* **Guest Speaker:** Christian Filstrup, former Director and Dean, Stony Brook University Libraries, State University of New York. His focus will be on the evolving nature of research libraries and academic library employment. **(Date subject to change)**

**March 18:**

* **Due:** Filstrup Executive Summary
* **Due:** Assignment 5 - Team Presentations, Information Ethics, Teams #4 and #5

**March 25:**

* **Due:** Assignment 5 -Team Presentations, Information Ethics, Teams #6 and #7
* **Discussion of transportation arrangements for the field trip scheduled for April 22nd**

**April 1: NO Class - Spring Recess - CLASSES SUSPENDED**

**April 8**

* **Due:** Assignment 6, Issue Paper, on use of the term “library.”
* **Guest Speaker:** Jason Kramer,Executive Director of the New York State Higher Education Initiative or NYSHEI. His focus will be on NYSHEI legislative activities **(Date subject to change).**

**April 15**

* **Due:** Kramer Executive Summary
* **Guest Speaker:** Bernie Margolis, State Librarian of New York.His focus will be on the role of state libraries **(Speaker Date subject to change)**.
* **Due:** OCLC is a “nonprofit, membership, computer library service and research organization” headquartered in Dublin, Ohio. During the last decade OCLC has taken the initiative to publish a series of in-depth Membership Reports (studies and topical surveys) that assist professionals to “understand issues and trends that affect the profession and plan for the future.” For this assignment you are to examine one of the nine (9) Membership Reports that may be found online: <http://www.oclc.org/us/en/reports/default.htm>

Look the report over and make note of the findings made and the methodology used. Be prepared to discuss what you have learned from reading one of the reports.

**April 22**

* **Due:** Margolis Executive Summary
* **Field Trip:** William K. Sanford Library, 629 Albany Shaker Road, Loudonville, New York 12211 (518)458-9274, Richard J. Naylor, **Director.** His focus will be on public libraries. **The class meets at the Sanford Library at 4:30PM. (Date subject to change).**
* **Lecture:** “Earning the Degree Is Just the First Step: Professional Practice and Advancement”

**April 29:**

* **Due:** Naylor Executive Summary
* **Wrap-up**

***Assignments***

**Assignment 1:** **Professional and Scholarly Publications Review/Analysis paper, due January 28th**

The purpose of this assignment is to become familiar with professional and scholarly publications and encourage you to identify resources in an area of interest and/or specialization.

Prepare a three (3) page paper that is summary and analysis of your research. Choose a periodical listed in *Library Literature and Information Science* (Ref.Z666C211). Review several recent issues of the periodical you select that were published during 2008 or 2009. (NOTE: The UA Libraries do not subscribe to all the periodicals indexed in Library Literature and Information Science.) As you look through these recent issues observe the following: audience and focus; frequency of publication; make-up of the editorial board; publisher affiliation; and regarding articles, what types of articles appear; do you consider the periodical a scholarly journal and why; lastly, what is the relevance of this publication to information professionals.

Papers should be double-spaced (12 point font), paged in the upper right hand corner, stapled in the upper left. A cover page should include your name, the title of the assignment, the course number and date. No binders, etc. please.

**Evaluation:** Formal written work must be word processed or typed and reflect use of a style manual.

There are APA citation style guides available in Dewey and on the University Library webpage.

Papers will be evaluated on the basis of content (clarity, organization, originality, ideas developed); composition (use of appropriate sources, grammar, spelling, punctuation, and attribution); and the level of analysis.

Papers are due at the start of class. Papers submitted late will be marked down one letter grade.

**Assignment 2:** **Career Goals paper, due February 4th**

The purpose of this assignment is to understand the potential scope and dimensions of the career for which you are preparing, and to do research on key employment trends.

Your Career goals paper is not to exceed three (3) pages in length. Select an IIST specialization that you are interested in pursuing. Examine six (6) recent vacancy announcements in your area of interest that are/were advertised in the last 24 months. If you are interested in working in a New York library media center, you also need to research certification requirements. In your paper discuss qualifications required and/or preferred by prospective employers (as in degrees, languages, level of experience, skills and abilities, and other specified qualifications); discuss how these preferences relate to your own credentials, experience, and skill sets (as in strengths and weaknesses); discuss the application process (references, resume or vita, and “statement of concern”); and how you plan to strengthen your credentials via current and future IIST classes, including your practicum and other opportunities or educational plans. Attach to your paper a list of the six vacancies you analyzed that includes the following information: position title; institution/agency/affiliation name and location; and the source of vacancy announcement.

Papers should be double-spaced (12 point font), paged in the upper right hand corner, stapled in the upper left. A cover page should include your name, the title of the assignment, the course number and date. No binders, etc. please.

**Evaluation:** Formal written work must be word processed or typed and reflect use of a style manual. There are APA citation style guides available in Dewey and on the University Library webpage.

You are not graded on your goals. Papers are evaluated on the basis of content (clarity, organization, originality, ideas developed); composition (use and variety of appropriate sources, grammar, spelling, punctuation, and attribution); and the level of analysis.

Papers are due at the start of class. Papers submitted late will be marked down one letter grade

**Assignment 3: Team Presentation on Societal Perceptions, due February 11th**

The purpose of this assignment is to understand the changing perceptions about the information profession; to develop capacities for research and critical thinking; and to gain experience in working in teams and in making informative presentations to peers. Many professions rely greatly on work conducted by committees and other cooperative efforts and group members can learn from each other while working towards a mutual objective.

Is there a prominent image of the information professional? Depending on the size of the class the presentations are given by a team of two to four individuals. Each team provides a 20 minute oral presentation on the public image of information professionals (remember to set aside time for responding to questions and/or providing clarification). In addressing this assignment consider the following: what are some of the common perceptions about the profession; are the images positive or negative; if it is the latter, how would you address the issue; if it is the former, what is the ideal; how have some of the authors in the field framed and addressed this question.

Teams are to create a one page handout that summarizes the team observations and includes an annotated bibliography of six works the group found most helpful in preparing the oral presentation. Distribute the summary/annotated bibliography to the class and instructor on the day of the presentation. The handout should include the names of team members, the title of the assignment, the course number and date.

**Evaluation:** Every member of the team receives the same grade for the presentation. Team presentations are evaluated by peers (50%) and by the instructor (50%). Peers and the instructor use the same criteria in evaluating team presentations. The team delivery (clarity, creativity, originality, and organization of ideas); content (sufficiently information rich); and analysis of the issues (persuasive and variety of various perspectives presented).

The instructor evaluates’ the summary. An evaluation of the written summary is factored in to the instructor’s grade.The summary is evaluated on the diversity and use of a variety of appropriate sources; content (clarity and organization); composition (grammar, spelling, punctuation, and attribution).

**Assignment 4: Biographical Paper, due February 18th**

The purpose of this assignment is to become acquainted with individuals who had a profound impact upon the development of the profession and to develop capacities for research and critical thinking

Identify an important information professional and write a three (3) page essay (double spaced/12 point font) that addresses the following: individual’s background; and lasting contribution(s) to the profession. Be prepared to give a five minute executive summary of your paper in class with emphasis on the significance of the individual’s contributions to the profession, including why you selected the individual. You need to use at least one book or one thesis/dissertation and three (3) journal articles to complete this assignment.

Papers should be double-spaced (12 point font), paged in the upper right hand corner, stapled in the upper left. A cover page should include your name, the title of the assignment, the course number and date. No binders, etc. please

**Evaluation:** Formal written work must be word processed or typed and reflect use of a style manual.

There are APA citation style guides available in Dewey and on the University Library webpage.

Papers are evaluated on the basis of content (clarity, organization, originality, ideas developed); composition (use of appropriate sources, grammar, spelling, punctuation, and attribution); and the level of analysis.

Papers are due at the start of class. Papers submitted late will be marked down one letter grade

**Assignment 5: Team Presentation, Information Ethics, due March 4 through 25th**

The purpose of this assignment is an opportunity to collaborate with others to explore and develop your professional philosophy on various information ethics.

Members of the class are to prepare and deliver a team presentation that explores a current i*s*sue related to information ethics. Depending on the size of the class the reports are given by a team of two to four individuals. Topics and timelines are assigned by the instructor. Approximately fort-five minutes should be allotted to each report (remember to set aside time for asking or responding to questions and/or providing clarification). The reports should be an integrated whole, not just a series of short topics assigned to each team member. You must work and consult with your class colleagues. Possible formats include; debate, individual speeches or lectures, skit, original video or power point presentation, etc. You are strongly encouraged to be creative on this project.

Address the following elements as they relate to the assigned topic: description of the issue(s), including pros and cons (if relevant) and other appropriate/related dimensions; history of the issue(s); relevance of the issue to the profession; specific ways the issue(s) may be addressed or managed by information professionals. On the day of your presentation provide the instructor with one copy of the integrated presentation please provider them and a section of each members contribution to the project and a bibliography of the sources used to research the topics.

Remember that a key aspect of a successful presentation is knowing when to exclude (unimportant) and when to include (essential) material to understanding the issues. Try to think of ways to make the presentation interesting as well as informative. Use your time wisely and focus on content, message, and synthesis.

**Topics:** Censorship and Intellectual Freedom; Intellectual Property and Copyright; Access, Literacy and Digital Divide; Privacy and the First Amendment; and Libraries and Digital Libraries.

**Evaluation:** Every member of the team receives the same grade for the presentation. Team presentations are evaluated by peers (50%) and by the instructor (50%). Peers and the instructor use the same criteria in evaluating team presentations. The team report is graded on the diversity and use of sources and professional literature; quality of the team’s thorough grasp and analysis of the issues; delivery (including clarity), creativity, originality, and organization of ideas; and the level of thoughtful evaluation and reflection used in addressing the assignment and answering questions from peers.

The instructor evaluates’ the summary. An evaluation of the written summary is factored in to the instructor’s grade.The summary is evaluated on content (clarity, organization, originality, ideas developed); composition (use and variety of appropriate sources, grammar, spelling, punctuation, and attribution).

**Assignment 6: Issue Paper, due April 8th**

The purposes of this assignment is formulating personal judgments regarding the profession and developing some facility in expressing these judgments clearly, succinctly, persuasively, and developing capacities for research and critical thinking. Your assignment is writing a paper that addresses the following: Has the term “library” become obsolete? What are the advantages/disadvantages to using the word?”

Your review/analysis is not to exceed five (5) pages in length. Please do not concentrate on relating what your sources said. Instead, concentrate on developing your reactions to the topic. Analysis, synthesis, and interpretation should be stressed.

Papers should be double-spaced (12 point font), paged in the upper right hand corner, stapled in the upper left. A cover page should include your name, the title of the assignment, the course number and date. No binders, etc. please.

**Evaluation:** Formal written work must be word processed or typed and reflect use of a style manual. There are APA citation style guides available in Dewey and on the University Library webpage.

Papers will be evaluated on the basis of content (clarity, organization, originality, ideas developed); composition (use of appropriate sources, grammar, spelling, punctuation and attribution), persuasive argument, and the level of analysis.

Papers are due at the start of class. Papers submitted late will be marked down one letter grade.

**Executive Summaries, due throughout the term, see course outline for specific due dates**

The purpose of this assignment is a practical exercise to hone your critical reading, synthesis and thinking skills while enhancing your writing abilities.

You are to hand in for grading an Executive Summary for required reading assignments and guest lecturers. In preparing your summary use the following structure: List the main points the summary covers in the same order they appear in the required readings or are presented by guest speakers; write a simple declarative sentence for each of the main points; add supporting or explanatory sentences as needed, avoiding unnecessary technical material and jargon. You want readers to be able to skim the summary without missing the main points. The job of the executive summary is to present the facts and entice your reader to read the full document. Executive summaries are limited to 2 pages. Resist the temptation to pad. Executive summaries for reading assignments are due on the date of the reading assignment. Executive summaries on guest speaker comments are due the week following the presentation. For each class with reading assignments several students will be called upon to present and discuss their summaries.

Summaries should be double-spaced (12 point font), paged in the upper right hand corner, stapled in the upper left. A cover page should include your name, the title of the assignment, the course number and date. No binders, etc. please

**Evaluation:** Formal written work must be word processed or typed and reflect use of a style manual.

There are APA citation style guides available in Dewey and on the University Library webpage.

Summaries are evaluated on the basis of content (clarity, brevity, organization); composition (grammar, spelling, punctuation, and attribution); and the level of analysis

Summaries submitted late will be marked down one letter grade.