# COURSE: INLS520 Organization of Information

Session: Summer II 2017 (June 26 – July 27)

Instructor: Samantha Kaplan, [sjkaplan@live.unc.edu](mailto:sjkaplan@live.unc.edu) (please only contact me via this email address)

Class meets: MTuWThF from 1:15 to 2:45 in Room 208 of Manning Hall

Class duration: 1:15PM to 2:45PM (we will break at 2pm every day for a brief respite)

Office hours: 30 minutes before and after every class or by appointment (SILS Room 019)

# Course Description

Introduction to the problems and methods of organizing information, including information structures, knowledge schemas, data structures, terminological control, index language functions, and implications for searching.

Learning Objectives

This course is designed to teach you:

• Basic elements that constitute the structure and arrangement of organizing systems:

o Things (entities, resources, items, phenomena...).

o Categories (attributes, dimensions, properties, elements, fields...).

o Values (terms, tags, descriptors, categories...).

o Relationships (between things, between categories, between values).

• The role of categorization

• The ubiquity of organizing systems and categorization processes and their complex integration throughout our forms of life—social, cultural, scientific, technical.

• The inherent instability, ambiguity, and arbitrariness of any organizing system

• The power and potential for misuse of organizing systems

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

• Design an organizing system.

• Implement an organizing system.

o Explain how others should implement it.

• Assess an organizing system.

• Explain an organizing system.

• Consider

## Class materials

All materials will be available in Sakai

# Feedback:

Your feedback is extremely important to me! Please use the Qualtrics form below **at least once a week** to tell me what’s working and what you think I can improve! You can click the link below or copy and paste the longer link. All feedback is completely anonymous.

[https://520feedback.com/whenever](https://unc.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3xGbnTIuPrUV7ql)

(actual link: <https://unc.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3xGbnTIuPrUV7ql>)

# Schedule

The schedule is subject to change – changes will be announced in class and Sakai.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date | | Readings/activities to be completed before class | Class overview | Keep in mind |
| WEEK 1 | June 26, 2017 MONDAY  Introduction | N/A | 1. Introductions 2. Review of the syllabus (Q&A) 3. Why does IO matter? 4. 10 activity | Begin thinking about topic selection for assignments.  Readings for tomorrow |
| June 27, 2017 TUESDAY  What’s in a name? | Sandwich readings  Taylor & Joudrey, Ch1  Glushko, Ch1 | 1. Questions 2. Discuss reading 3. What’s a sandwich |  |
| June 28, 2017 WEDNESDAY  The basics | Taylor & Joudrey, Ch2  Glushko, Ch2 | 1. Intro to terms | Metadata, taxonomy, classification, naming |
| June 29, 2017 THURSDAY  The basics | Taylor & Joudrey, Ch11 | 1. Lecture, discussion activity |  |
| June 30, 2017 FRIDAY  Implicit bias in IO | Find an example of an IO failure | 1. IO design 2. Discussion of your examples |  |
| WEEK 2 | July 3, 2017 MONDAY | Taylor & Joudrey, Ch4  Metadata for all  Glushko, Ch4 | 1. Intro to metadata |  |
| July 4, 2017 TUESDAY | 🎆🎆🎆 NO CLASS! 🎆🎆🎆 | | |
| July 5, 2017 WEDNESDAY | Bring drafts/outlines (or post to Sakai forum) of your descriptive schema to work on with peers | Project work day |  |
| July 6, 2017 THURSDAY  Metadata | Taylor & Joudrey, Ch7, 8 |  |  |
| July 7, 2017 FRIDAY  Classification | Bowker & Star, Ch 2 (Kindness of Strangers), 7 (Classification of Nursing Work) |  | Your descriptive schema is due before Monday’s class |
| WEEK 3 | July 10, 2017 MONDAY  Identification & Classification | Search LOC catalog/classification for a term you think is outdated/offensive  T&J, 9  Submit descriptive schema before class  Karen Coyle. 2006. Identifiers: unique, persistent, global. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 32(4): 428-431.  Aguilera NYT  Bowker & Star, Ch. 7 (Race Classification) | CVs can be bad |  |
| July 11, 2017 TUESDAY  Categorization | Glushko, Ch5, 6 |  |  |
| July 12, 2017 WEDNESDAY Peer review/ workshop day | Bring drafts/outlines (or post to Sakai forum) of your taxonomy to work on with peers | Project work day | Your taxonomy is due before Monday’s class |
| July 13, 2017 THURSDAY | Glushko, Ch7 |  |  |
| July 14, 2017 FRIDAY  CVs | T&J, 10 |  |  |
| WEEK 4 | July 17, 2017 MONDAY  Boundary objects, obsolescence | Susan Leigh Star and James Griesemer. 1989. Institutional ecology, “translations” and boundary objects: amateurs and professionals in Berkeley’s Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, 1907-1939. *Social Studies of Science* 19, 3: 387-420. |  |  |
| July 18, 2017 TUESDAY  Social IO | Abbas, Ch. 6&7 |  |  |
| July 19, 2017 WEDNESDAY  Peer review/ workshop day | Bring drafts/outlines (or post to Sakai forum) of your OS explanation to work on with peers | Project work day |  |
| July 20, 2017 THURSDAY  Databases for IO | Manovish  Dourish |  |  |
| July 21, 2017 FRIDAY  Standards | Taylor & Joudrey, Ch5 |  |  |
| WEEK 5 | July 24, 2017 MONDAY | RDF (<https://www.w3.org/TR/2014/NOTE-rdf11-primer-20140624/)>  FRBR  <http://www.loc.gov/cds/downloads/FRBR.PDF> |  |  |
| July 25, 2017 TUESDAY |  |  |  |
| July 26, 2017 WEDNESDAY  Peer review/ workshop | Bring drafts/outlines (or post to Sakai forum) of your OS explanation to work on with peers | Project work day |  |
| July 27, 2017 THURSDAY | Make-up day |  |  |
| July 28, 2017 FRIDAY  Art v. Science |  | Final Qs  Class debate | OS Explanation is due by 2:30pm on August 1st |
| ENJOY THE REST OF YOUR SUMMER! | | | | |

# Grading Policy

The class has four graded components:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Schema | 50 points | Due July 10th before class |
| Taxonomy | 50 points | Due July 17th before class |
| OS Explanation | 50 points | Due by 2:30pm on August 1st |
| Attendance & Participation | 50 points | Ongoing evaluation |

## Late work:

If you submit an assignment late there is a 10% point penalty.

## Extensions:

Depending on circumstances and the date requested, extensions will be granted at the discretion of the instructor. If you anticipate needing an extension, please set up a meeting to discuss it as soon as possible. Asking for extensions at the last minute will not be regarded with welcome except for extreme circumstances.

UNC-CH graduate students are graded on the H/P/L/F scale. The following definitions of these grades will be used for this course. While assignments are not graded "on a curve," most students should expect to get a P, if they fully complete the course assignments.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Letter grade** | **Numeric range** | **Description of grade** |
| H | 190-200 | High Pass: Clear excellence; beyond expectations for the course. |
| P | 160-189 | Pass: Entirely satisfactory; fully meets expectations for the course. |
| L | 140-159 | Low Pass: Minimally acceptable; clear weaknesses in performance. |
| F | Below 140 | Fail: Unacceptable performance. |
| IN | NA | Work incomplete. |

## UNC Honor Code

It is your responsibility to read the Honor Code, which is available online at: [http://studentconduct.unc.edu/ sites/studentconduct.unc.edu/files/Fall2012print.pdf](http://studentconduct.unc.edu/%20sites/studentconduct.unc.edu/files/Fall2012print.pdf). The section on Academic Dishonesty is printed here for your reference.

Academic Dishonesty. It shall be the responsibility of every student enrolled at the University of North Carolina to support the principles of academic integrity and to refrain from all forms of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Plagiarism in the form of deliberate or reckless representation of another’s words, thoughts, or ideas as one’s own without attribution in connection with submission of academic work, whether graded or otherwise.

2. Falsification, fabrication, or misrepresentation of data, other information, or citations in connection with an academic assignment, whether graded or otherwise.

3. Unauthorized assistance or unauthorized collaboration in connection with academic work, whether graded or otherwise.

4. Cheating on examinations or other academic assignments, whether graded or otherwise, including but not limited to the following: (a) using unauthorized materials and methods (notes, books, electronic information, telephonic or other forms of electronic communication, or other sources or methods), or (b) Representing another’s work as one’s own.

5. Violating procedures pertaining to the academic process, including but not limited to the following: (a) violating or subverting requirements governing administration of examinations or other academic assignments; (b) compromising the security of examinations or academic assignments; or (c) engaging in other actions that compromise the integrity of the grading or evaluation process.

# Assignments

There are three main assignments for this course

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Project | Due date | Submission Details |
| Designing a descriptive schema | Due July 10th before class | Submit final version in Sakai |
| Designing a taxonomy | Due July 17th before class | Submit final version in Sakai |
| Explaining an organizing system | Due by 2:30pm on August 1st | Submit final version in Sakai |

# Attendance and Participation

It is extremely important that you attend as many sessions of our class as possible. Because of the aggressive pace of a Summer course, you will be at a particular disadvantage if you miss multiple sessions. Missing more than one session a week or five sessions total is cause for reducing your overall participation score. If you anticipate this being an issue, please see me to discuss.

The class will be mostly based around discussions, in-class activities, and project work, with relatively few lectures. Class participation is a vital component of the course.

The essence of good participation is in helping the class to attain a greater understanding of concepts, readings, and activities. Asking questions and talking about things that you don’t understand are excellent forms of participation.

Participation is also measured in active listening and attentiveness. While I hope you will all grow to feel comfortable expressing yourselves to the class, there are other ways to join in and enhance the environment. In the Sakai site, there is a forum for musings and reflections on our readings and another forum to share information organization-related news. Participation and attendance also means coming to class **on time and** **prepared.**

**Technology use in class**

I understand and support students using these devices in class to, for example, refer to notes and required readings. There will be activities where you need to use personal devices. Please take care that your devices support your ability to participate in class, rather than detract from it.

**Classroom environment**

We will discuss a wide array of topics and need to consider the views of others (those expressed and those that go unexpressed). We must nourish our classroom community so that we welcome the diversity of understanding we wish to analyze. To do so, we must listen to our discussions with an open mind and give all views attention and consideration.

# Descriptive Schema Project Details

**Project overview**

In this project, you will define a set of things, detailing its domain, scope, and means for establishing that one item is different from another. You will then outline a structure of attributes and associated values to systematically describe your set of things. Next, you will develop documentation to help someone else (not you) to use the schema to describe instances of the things in your set.

To assess your schema and improve it, you will use the schema to describe (create metadata for) five varied instances of the things in your set. In class, you will further assess your schema by having someone else use it to describe three things. After these assessments, you may decide to revise your schema or the instructions.

Finally, you will write a short essay that reflects on your experience developing and assessing the schema.

This project is NOT designing a database. Your project is merely to instruct other people how to describe a set of things in a systematic way. (A good database design requires this kind of conceptual thinking also, but this project is not specific to a database implementation.)

Project component 1: Your set of things

This part of your project includes three parts:

• Domain • Scope • Identification

*Domain*You will *define a group of things* to describe. This could be anything: concrete, physical things, informational things, or abstract, conceptual things. Intellectual movements in literary criticism.  As part of the domain, you will articulate a *purpose* and associated *target audience* to motivate your description. For example, you might want to help novice knitters find patterns that make nice gifts, or you might want to interrogate stereotypes latent in “Aztec” imagery. Each situation will suggest a different set of attributes for the same set of things, so define the audience and purpose carefully.

*Scope*  Here you will clarify what is in, and what is out, of your set of things.  For example, is a yoga pose invented by your teacher a proper yoga pose? Is a ladle a spoon? What are central members of your set of things, and what are peripheral members? What doesn’t belong at all? Thinking about central and border cases will help you create attributes that apply equally to all members of your set of things.

*Identification* Now that you’ve clearly defined your scope, you should be able to more precisely define your things. This involves deciding on a level of *abstraction*: for example, are you organizing individual physical books, or abstract literary expressions that may be manifested in various forms and editions? Are you describing a specific package of jerky or all instances of a certain product?

You also need to think about *parts* and *granularity*: do your things have parts that need to be kept track of? Are your things themselves collections? What about the *persistence* of your things: do they change over time? How much can a thing change before it is no longer the same thing?

Explain how you will distinguish between two different things. Do they have some intrinsic property that you can rely on for identification? Will you need to assign identifiers?

Project component 2: Attributes, value parameters, and documentation

You will articulate a set of 10-15 attributes to define your things in support of your identified audience and purpose. You will label and document each attribute in sufficient detail so that someone else can assign values for things of the type that you have described. For each attribute, you will set parameters for acceptable values and provide guidelines that show how values should be expressed.

*Preliminary assessment*

Once you have sufficiently defined your attributes, use the structure that you have developed to preliminarily describe five instances to represent both central and border cases of your entity set. If there are cases where you are unable to satisfactorily describe an instance, use this as an opportunity to revise the schema and clarify your attribute definitions. (You might even need to clarify the boundaries of your group of entities and sharpen its description.) Then use your revised schema to create five final descriptions for your entity instances.

*User assessment*

You will further assess your schema by having someone else use it to describe three things. We will do this in class, but you will include your assessors’ results with your final submission.

Project component 3: Reflection essay

Finally, write a brief critical reflection on your design process and resulting product. You might discuss questions such as the following:

* Did designing the schema clarify or complicate any of the ideas we’ve been reading about in class?
* What was difficult about designing the schema?
* How did you decide which attributes to include in the schema?
* How do you know what makes an attribute good or useful?
* How do you know if you’ve defined an attribute well?
* What might you keep in mind when designing similar kinds of organizing systems?  These are *examples* of questions that you *might* discuss. To create a concise yet cohesive essay, you will need to concentrate on a few design issues of particular relevance to your project. *Do not merely answer the questions here.*  Note that the point of this reflective essay is *not* to justify why your schema is awesome. Clearly, it is awesome, and you don’t need to persuade me of that. Instead, the goal of this essay is to explore how the practical experience of designing a schema provokes insight onto the conceptual foundations of information organization.

Deliverables

Your final assignment should include:

1. The domain, scope, and identification information for your set of things.
2. Your attribute descriptions, value parameters, and associated guidelines for using the schema to  describe the things. The description for each attribute should follow a consistent format. (You can use something similar to the NISO standard for Dublin Core metadata elements or devise your own format. You may use tables if you wish.)
3. Your descriptions of five instances. Use a consistent format for each record (perhaps a table for each instance).
4. The instance descriptions created by your peer testers.
5. Your critical reflection. This should be written in narrative form, as a cohesive paper of about 1000  words (3-4 pages).

*Grading criteria*

A successful schema will exhibit these characteristics:

* The following are clearly described: what constitutes a member of the defined set of things, the  schema’s audience and purpose, and how a thing should be identified and distinguished from  other things.
* The defined attributes effectively represent the selected things in the context of the described  purpose, and the value space effectively represents the extent of the attributes. For example, when describing yoga poses for students, an attribute that indicates level of difficulty might be appropriate. However, such an attribute might seem less appropriate if describing yoga poses in relation to the history of Hindu thought and culture. In addition, the values described for the potential level of difficulty attribute for yoga poses should encompass the full range of possibilities at an appropriate level of detail for the audience and purpose.
* The documentation is sufficient to describe actual things accurately and comprehensively within the context of the selected purpose.
* The critical reflection thoughtfully considers the design process, product, or both, using the experience of creating the descriptive schema to productively engage larger issues of theory and practice (that is, the reflection does not merely summarize or justify the design process or product; it interrogates it).
* All project components follow a logical document structure, are clearly written, and use correct grammar and punctuation.
* All the project components are included.

# Taxonomy Project Details

**Project overview**

In this project, you will develop a taxonomy of categories to relate and arrange the things that you described with your schema (if you wish to switch topics, you must discuss it with me). You will document the taxonomy so that someone else can use it to put things within the categories that you define. In class, you will assess the taxonomy and its documentation by having others use the taxonomy to classify things. Finally, you will write a short essay that reflects on your experience developing and assessing the taxonomy.

Project component 1: Taxonomy

First, you will decide on a property to organize your things. This could be an attribute from your schema or it could be a new property.

To create a worthwhile taxonomy, the property that you select must be complex enough so that its values can be arranged in multiple levels of hierarchy. You might need to play around with several ideas before making your final selection. To begin, select a property that has between 10-15 specific values that can then be organized under more general categories.

Here are some examples.

If your entity set was *yoga poses,* you might create a taxonomy of *skills* associated with each pose: for example, arm strength, open hamstrings, balance, breath control, mental presence.

If you entity set was *spoons,* you might create a taxonomy of *materials:* teak, silver, plastic, bone, glass. If your entity set was *still-life paintings,* you might create a taxonomy of depicted *objects:* lemons,

oysters, goblets, petunias.

If your entity set was *gardening implements,* you might create a taxonomy of gardening *activities* that the implements are used in: weeding, insect spraying, harvesting, sowing, mulching.

We will work on creating the basic taxonomy structure in class, but here are the fundamental steps for a bottom-up design approach:

1. Identify 10-15 specific values—the ones that you would have specified in your descriptive schema.
2. For each value, generalize it into a broader category. From lemons, go to citrus, or fruit. From teak, go to wood. From arm strength, go to upper body strength. From insect spraying, go to pest control.
3. For each broader category, go up another level, until you get to your top term: skills, materials, objects.
4. Now comes the hard part. Arrange, redefine, remove, add, and relabel your categories so that they are organized into proper hierarchial relationships with a single principle of division at each level of the hierarchy. (We’ll talk about what this means in class.)
5. Ensure that your taxonomy follows good design practice for hierarchies: at each level, categories are jointly exhaustive and mutually exclusive, and at a similar level of abstraction. (You’ll get a set of design principles in class.)

Your final taxonomy should include from 25-40 categories, dispersed throughout all its levels. It should be at least four levels deep (the root term, two intermediate levels, and terminating values). Arrange your final taxonomy in a diagram that shows the relationships between categories. (There is no advantage to creating a fancy diagram.)

Project component 2: Taxonomy documentation

To enable someone else to use your taxonomy to categorize actual things, you need to define each category in your taxonomy and provide guidance about which kinds of things to put where.

Here are some issues that you need to think about:

* Can things be placed into higher-level categories or only at the bottom level? If things can go into  higher-level categories, when might this occur?
* Can things go into multiple categories or just one?
* If a thing seems to fall in between or outside the existing categories, where should it go?  Your definitions should explain what the categories mean in the context of your taxonomy. For example, if you had a category of Bone to describe materials that spoons are made of, you would not transcribe the dictionary definition for Bone; that would be silly. You might write something like this:

Bone Place here any spoons made of animal bone, tusks, teeth, or horn. Do not use Bone for spoons made from shells of marine animals.

Project component 3: reflection essay

Finally, write a brief critical reflection on your design process and resulting product. You might discuss questions such as the following:

* Did designing the taxonomy clarify or complicate any of the ideas we’ve been reading about in class?
* What was difficult about designing the taxonomy?
* How did you decide which categories to include in the taxonomy?
* How do you know what makes a category good or useful?
* How do you know if you’ve defined a category well?
* What might you keep in mind when designing similar kinds of organizing systems?  These are *examples* of questions that you *might* discuss. To create a concise yet cohesive essay, you will need to concentrate on a few design issues of particular relevance to your project. *Do not merely answer the questions here.*  Note that the point of this reflective essay is *not* to justify why your taxonomy is awesome. Clearly, it is awesome, and you don’t need to persuade me of that. Instead, the goal of this essay is to explore how the practical experience of designing a taxonomy provokes insight onto the conceptual foundations of information organization. U  Deliverables  Your final assignment should include:

1. A summary of the set of things to be arranged with the taxonomy, and the audience and purpose  associated with organizing these things (this may come directly from your schema project).
2. A diagram that includes all the categories in the taxonomy and shows their relationships.
3. Your taxonomy documentation, including general guidelines and category definitions.
4. The category assignments made by your peer assessors.
5. Your critical reflection. This should be written in narrative form, as a cohesive paper of about 1000  words (3-4 pages).

Grading criteria

A successful taxonomy will exhibit these characteristics: • The taxonomy itself includes an appropriate number of categories, arranged in well-formed

hierarchical relationships, that follow best practices for taxonomy design.

* The selected categories represent the set of things well in the context of its identified audience and purpose (from the descriptive schema).
* The documentation is sufficient to categorize actual things accurately within the context of the selected purpose.
* The critical reflection thoughtfully considers the design process, product, or both, using the experience of creating the taxonomy to productively engage larger issues of theory and practice (that is, the reflection does not merely summarize or justify the design process or product; it interrogates it).
* All project components follow a logical document structure, are clearly written, and use correct grammar and punctuation.
* All the project components are included.

# Organizing System Explanation Project Details

**Project overview**

In this project, you will write a paper to explain and compare, in detail, how a set of things is presented in two or three organizing systems in the real world (if you want to use digital systems, you must discuss it with me). These should be systems that are available to the public (meaning, someone could take your paper and compare it to the systems you are analyzing without incurring cost or harm). They can organize physical or digital items. Your explanation will have several parts:

* An explanation of the category structure in each organizing system and the kinds of items placed in each category.
* An interpretation of each category structure that attempts to understand the ideas it communicates about the entity set.
* A comparison of the different ideas presented in each organizing system.

*Your goal in this paper is to understand how each organizing system interprets the entity set: how it gives the entity set a particular meaning. Your goal is not to assess the effectiveness of the organizing system for retrieval. It doesn’t matter if it’s easy or difficult for you to find items in the entity set.*  The real-world set of things  To write a meaningful, detailed, incisive explanation, you will need to focus on just one part of each organizing system. That is why you will keep your analysis to one type of things within the system. Here are some examples:

* The organization of rice in the Harris Teeter and Li Ming Global Mart.
* The organization of magazines at Barnes and Noble and the Hudson News at RDU.
* The organization of buffet items at Whole Foods and Weaver Street.
* The organization of mystery novels at Flyleaf Books and at Amazon.

As with defining an entity set to organize with your schema, you will need to identify a set of things that is specific enough to analyze in depth but broad enough to enable you to say something interesting about it. So the entire supermarket would be too broad, but just the Cheerios would be too narrow. The cereal at the supermarket might be just right.  Explanation of category structure  Your paper will need to explain each category structure that you’re investigating. Let’s say you’re looking at the cereal in a supermarket. Here are the kinds of questions you might ask:

1. What different kinds of organizing principles are at play in arranging the cereal? Are the cereals arranged by size, price, brand, primary ingredients, level of sugar? How are these principles deployed—are the most expensive items on the top shelves or the bottom shelves?
2. What principles inform the selection of items within the category? How many different kinds of cereal are there? What kinds are represented the most, and what kinds the least?
3. Can you define central and peripheral members of the set of “cereal” each supermarket, and on what basis can you make that determination?
4. How is cereal related to other entities? What is next to it?  Note that your set of things might be split up into multiple locations within the organizing system: for cereal, there might be cereal in the bulk section, or in the International section. You’ll need to investigate these as well.  When you describe the category structure in your paper, focus on *explaining* it, not documenting it. There is no need to map out or transcribe each item in the cereal section! That would be silly. Your goal is to explain how the cereal section works, not to merely copy it down.

In creating your explanation, make use of the readings and class activities from throughout the semester.

**Interpretation of category structure**

This is the fun part. What does the category structure that you’ve explained tell us about the set of things?

Here’s an example.

Let’s say my entity set is Noodles, and I’m looking at the Harris Teeter. Most of the noodles are in a section labeled Pasta that is near the tomato sauce. Indeed, based on the selection and arrangement of pasta varieties, the central idea of “noodle” is oriented around the notion of spaghetti and tomato sauce as a common meal. However, not all the noodles are in the Pasta section. Rice noodles are with other “Asian” foods in the International section. These noodles are not near the tomato sauce. Rice noodles might be similarly shaped to spaghetti, but in the organizing system of the supermarket, they are far away from spaghetti. They are, in a sense, more Asian than noodle. They certainly do not appear to be interchangeable, based on their placement within the organizing system of the supermarket. There are implications to this: the supermarket is saying, in a way, that if you invited a friend over for pasta and served pad kee mao, your friend might be surprised. And yet, aren’t rice noodles also noodles? (If you were defining “noodles” as an entity set for your descriptive schema, would you have excluded them? Probably not.)

While I encourage you to think deeply about the category structures that you’re investigating, *make sure to ground your interpretation within the evidence provided by your explanation.* You need to show how your interpretation arises from that evidence.

In making your interpretation, you should also make use of the readings we’ve done throughout the semester.

**Comparison of different organizing systems**

In comparing the two (or three) organizing systems that you are investigating, you might consider the following kinds of questions:

* What are the different ideas presented by each organizing system about the entity set? Are these ideas compatible or incompatible? (For example, rice at the Li Ming Global Mart is the foundation of one’s diet—it’s in its own section in 25-lb bags. But rice at the Harris Teeter is just an occasional companion item.)
* Would items from one organizing system take on a different character in the other organizing system? (For example, sugary cereal might be common at the Harris Teeter but uncommon at Whole Foods.)
* Would any items from one organizing system be excluded from the other system? (For example, spaghetti probably doesn’t appear at the Li Ming Global Mart, although there might be wheat noodles of similar shape.)  Paper writing details  Your explanations, interpretations, and comparisons should take the form of a cohesive essay of about 3,000 words (about 10 or so pages). Your essay should have a clearly identified argument and structure. For example, your argument might be “noodles are defined by culture, not physical properties” or “cereal has two identities: convenience food and healthy food” or “green salad is not actually salad” (based on evidence from supermarket buffets).  Although your paper needs to include your explanation of category structure, your interpretation of category structure, and your comparison of organizing systems, it does NOT need to put these into

separate sections. You should structure your paper in the way that makes the most sense for your argument.

**Peer review**

On Thursday, April 20, you will bring two copies of a complete draft to class. Two people will be assigned to read your draft and provide written and oral feedback on it at the next class session, on Tuesday, April 25; you will do the same for two drafts.

In your peer review, you will provide written answers to the following questions:

1. What is this paper’s argument?
2. What is the evidence used to make this argument?
3. What does the paper do well?
4. How can the paper be strengthened? You will give this feedback to the paper’s author. (We will also discuss the drafts in class.) You will also  turn in the feedback that you have written as part of your final paper submission.  Your goal in writing peer review feedback is to help make the paper better. Harsh criticism is not helpful; neither is mindless praise. Be honest, constructive, and compassionate. Also be a mindful and attentive reader: your feedback should not direct the writer to do things your way but help the writer to accomplish his or her goals more effectively.

Grading criteria

A successful organizing system explanation will exhibit these characteristics:

* The paper has a clearly identified argument.
* The explanations of each organizing system are adequate and cogent.
* The interpretations of each organizing system are insightful and well supported by evidence.
* The comparison of organizing systems is insightful and well supported by evidence.
* Material from course readings and activities is usefully employed to extend the argument.
* Peer reviews of others’ drafts provide helpful, constructive feedback.
* The paper follows a logical document structure, is clearly written, and uses correct grammar and  punctuation.

# Acknowledgments

This syllabus was derived from past INLS520 Syllabi, most notably from Professors Feinberg and Shaw.