

University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill
School of Information and Library Science

**Human Information Interaction
INLS 500 (Virtual section)
Spring, 2013**

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Course website: <http://sakai.unc.edu> (Sakai)
E-Journals/Reserves <http://www.lib.unc.edu> use instructor's name in E-Reserves (syllabus will specify whether to use the E-Journals, the E-Reserves, or the Web)

Course Objectives and Organization:

Human information behavior is a complex phenomenon. It involves the interactions between people, various forms of data, information, and knowledge that fall under the notion of "information," and also the various situations (contexts) in which these elements interact. In this course, you will read mostly original research, discuss and write about the practice, study and theory of human information behavior as the interaction of these components. The course is intended to introduce students to some of the enduring theoretical thinking about the human aspects of information seeking and use and you will be asked to think about some of these theories might influence the library and information science services you are expected to provide as a professional. During the semester, you will become more aware of your own information behaviors and also of others' information behaviors that you can observe in a variety of everyday settings.

The structure of the course will be provided by weekly reading lists. Access to these readings will be possible primarily through the e-journals and e-reserves found through www.lib.unc.edu via UNC's library web portal. The instructor will also provide some general notes on the readings for each week, usually each Wednesday-Thursday and a discussion of each reading will occur on a stated schedule, usually commencing each Friday midday and continuing through the weekend until Monday midnight. When the discussion period ends, the discussions will be "locked." Your participation in these discussions is essential and your frequency in posting questions and comments will be an essential performance aspect of the course. This student-centered learning approach will rely heavily upon the students' role in preparing for the discussion sessions with questions and comments on the readings. The instructor's role is to guide the student through the literature, integrate (when needed) the questions raised during the discussion sessions, and provide feedback on the various writing requirements you are asked to perform in addition to the discussions. (more on that shortly...) Spirited discussions are encouraged, but always with appropriate respect for differing opinions. Some students have reported that a major benefit to this sort of virtual course format is that they have had to learn to write, somewhat "on the fly," opinions about professional issues that they might never have had to articulate before. For some, commitment to a stated position has been difficult at first, so recognize that for some it may take time to feel comfortable articulating a position in these weekly discussions.

Goals for the Course:

- To introduce the student to literature related to information seeking, including the recognition of information needs, actions toward resolving needs, the roles of intermediaries (both human and technological), and the user's evaluation of retrieved information.
- To explore the ways in which information is created, disseminated and used in a variety of contexts (or situations) and how the use of information is affected by those contexts.
- To improve the student's critical thinking and problem-solving skills related to the study of information behavior.
- To explore the role of technology in information behavior.
- To provide a strong theoretical foundation for further work in developing research about information behavior and about general practical solutions needed to serve the user.

Course Requirements/Assignments:

The instructor assesses student performance through assignments that enable students to engage with the course materials in a scholarly way, to demonstrate understanding of key ideas and interrelationships, and to actively participate in the learning process. In order for this virtual approach to be successful, all students must complete the readings during the week they are assigned and contribute comments and discussion questions during the weekend:

1. A **discussion session** will occur nearly every weekend (**weight is 20%**). A minimum effort should include *at least one question* for discussion and **one comment** responding to the posted question from another student on each reading. Apologies for the contrivance of this numeric approach, but someone usually asks if there isn't at least a minimum expectation. Substance as well as frequency is important. Do your insights and discussion contributions/questions move the discussion along? Do they encourage responses from others? Cheerleading responses like "great idea" or "way to go" are not considered substantive and should be avoided...unless you can add some type of additional comment.
2. An **Interaction/Process Readings Journal (weight 30%)** consists of a **weekly 1 page essay, single-spaced**. These essays will be collected in a single file and submitted to the instructor in 2 parts. Each week's essay should include commentary on one of the week's readings. You may adopt an informal or an academic style of writing, but you should use the journal entry to demonstrate your engagement with some aspect of the article's content and to demonstrate an evolving understanding of some aspect of human information behavior. *Don't just report on what the journal article said*. Instead, your essay should contain an observation that the reading helps you make about some aspect of information behavior—yours or the behavior of others. You should look for *evidence of this observation* to support your reporting of it. You might do some self-reflecting or you might observe others around you in the various "information landscapes" (workplace, coffee shop, bus stop, study space, etc.) that you inhabit during the week. Be sure to label each week's essay clearly by providing the week number (given in the schedule further along) and clearly indicate the one article to which you are responding or which triggered your observation(s). The journal will be collected in two parts, roughly Weeks 2-7 and Weeks 8-13. Please put all of your essays into one single file, clearly named Journal, Part 1 and then Journal, Part 2 before submitting them to the instructor.

Each part of your journaling assignment should include on the first page:

- Student Name
- Student's email address
- Due Date of assignment

We will discuss later on about how to submit your other written efforts. As I mentioned, the journal will be collected in two parts during the semester. I will try to grade your journals online and if you provide them in a Word format I can add comments. I am easily overwhelmed with too much email, so stick with the same email address for the semester, please. If your email address is different from the one used by Sakai, let me know early in the semester. At this point, the dates for the submission of your journal "halves" look like:

- **Part 1, Feb. 25th (Weeks 2-7) and**
- **Part 2, Apr. 17th (Weeks 8-13)**

3. **A evidence-based review of a user group or technology (weight 30%).** For this assignment, you will need to envision a practical information service environment and a user group that is poorly served by this environment. The goal is to identify a practical/realistic problem encountered by your hypothetical setting in relation to this user population/technology. The problem you envision hopefully has been addressed through existing research. You will need to find this existing research that has addressed this user population/technology context. You will need to find studies that others have done on your chosen user group/technology and provide your organization with a systematic review of the evidence you have found. Systematic research summaries differ from regular article reviews in the following ways:

- Clear, explicit objectives and clearly defined study selection criteria need to be indicated. (More on this later in the term...)
- Search strategies are provided so that others could perform the same searches and produce similar results. (Forms for doing this will be provided).
- Criteria used to decide which studies are in/excluded must be specified.
- The 'study' is the unit of interest (studies may be reported in one or more publications; and a publication may report one or more appropriate studies).
- Analyses of the included studies are explicitly described (a format will be provided for doing this) so that groups of studies can be compared and patterns of findings can be used to reduce subjectivity.

Ideally, the group/technology you choose may have been studied using some aspects of the models or traits we have read about, although that is not a requirement. You are basically systematically summarizing the published evidence available on the information behaviors for this group or the characteristics that may affect the users concerning some technology. Imagine that you are presenting your summary in written form to your hypothetical organization's responsible management team and then you are preparing a somewhat simpler Power Point (described next) slide presentation that is to be shown to a potential funding/governing board for your information service. You may "invent" a donor who has provided funding to carry out your desired solution ... basically, present some type of solution to the problem you have researched.

As the semester proceeds, the “user group” or “user technology” choices will be identified so all class members will know who is looking at which group. I am quite hopeful that you might share any discovered information that might help another student, but we must be mindful of the UNC Honor Code and behave in such a way that each class member will provide a final product that is achieved independently. Since we will cover work styles and communication habits in a variety of work settings in our readings and discussions, you can also use any collaborative efforts as “fodder” for your journaling...no opportunity goes unused! Possible groups that have been explored before include: medical doctors, lawyers, certainly scholarly groups, high school or elementary students, college undergraduates and graduate students in particular subject areas, elders/seniors, journalists, archivists, genealogists, millennials, baby boomers, online role playing gamers, immigrants new to the U.S. so the possibilities are many.

The following milestone submission dates leading toward your final systematic review will help you gain a focus. Each should be submitted to me by email for a read and respond. If you need a discussion, I can phone you... just email a time and your number. We will also use some of the scholarly techniques for citation chaining to help you develop your pool of research.

- **Feb 14th - Submit a brief paragraph in your email message and 1-3 references you have found concerning a possible choice for a group/technology.**
- **Mar 5-9th - Submit a longer paragraph, include a few more (5-6 total) references, and a little longer description of your findings about the user group/technology.**
- **Apr 25-26th - Your finished evidence-based review report in due to the instructor.**
- **Short Power Point Slide Set (weight 20%) posted during the week of Apr 22-26th to be “viewed by the class” during that week, Each of you will be given a dedicated Discussion List to post your slides.** These slides should identify your group or context and cover your major findings about the information behaviors/characteristics of your chosen user group/technology. More details will be given to suggest the content and format for your presentation. This set of slides provides members of the class with some shared resources/content on the groups/technologies examined. I will provide additional suggestions for organizing your slide content and provide grading rubrics for each of the expected products--the readings journal, the systematic, evidence-based summary, and the slides.

In summary, the course products/assignments are:

Readings/Reaction Journal 30%	submitted on Feb 25th & Apr 17th
Evidence-Based Lit Review	mileposts Feb 14th & Mar 5-9th ,
Final Review/Report 30%	Apr. 26th
Power Point Slides 20%	posted and viewed Apr 22-26th
Participation/Discussions 20%	gathered each weekend, Fri-Mon

The final letter grade will be assigned based on the following accumulated score:

- H 95-100% = High Pass: Clear excellence, beyond the expectations for the course.
- P 80-94% = Pass: Entirely satisfactory, fully meets expectations for the course.
- L 70-79% = Low Pass: Minimally acceptable, clear weaknesses in performance.
- F Below 70 = Fail: Unacceptable performance.
- IN Incomplete Work incomplete. (Discussion with the instructor is needed for this.)

Format for written assignments:

- Text should be typed using MS Word or created in a PDF format, so the instructor can easily print the text. To allow for online grading, I prefer Word... but I also sometimes get eye weary and resort of printing out your written items.
- Readings journal and mileposts can be single spaced/ More detail will be supplied concerning the format for the Evidence-based review.
- Font type/size: 12 pt.
- Margins: left and right 1.5 inch; top and bottom 1.5 inch
- All pages should be numbered (except the first one)
- First Page should include student's name, email, and the due date of assignment.
- Citation style should adhere to some standard guide. The *American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual* or Turabian (if you prefer). *Chicago Manual of Style* and the *APA* are the style guides required by most of the professional publications in the LIS field.
- Items due should be submitted by midnight EST on the due date submitted. I will remind you and let you know whether to email them directly or use some other choice..
- Generally, if I decide to print out your assignment and provide annotations and comments on the paper copy, I usually FedEx-it back to SILS and your mailbox. Inform me early on if you are not coming to Manning Hall and I will snail mail to your preferred address within the U.S. I can provide a page of emailed comments for those living outside of the U.S.

Academic dishonesty:

Academic honesty is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The academic community regards academic dishonesty as an extremely serious matter, with serious consequences that range from probation to expulsion. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, or collaboration, consult the course instructor.

How to get the most from your e-learning experience in this course:

1. Read the assigned readings during the week and then read my notes (emailed to you usually by Wednesday or Thursday). Participate early in class discussion at the end of the week. (The earlier you post, the greater the likelihood that someone will respond to your post... and recall that generating responses boosts your participation grade. If you

have a time conflict with the Friday to Monday midnight schedule, email me and I can extend the discussion times. Posting at the midnight hour on the last night will not give your classmates an opportunity to respond.

2. The instructor can phone you without cost to her at any time during the week, so she is happy to call you for a “real time” chat. Just let her know a number and a time best to call you. You can do this through email.
3. All readings will be electronically accessible. Some readings will be obtained directly from UNC’s e-journals collection and when that is the case, I try to give you instructions as to how to do this (although I always suspect that you are more skilled with the e-journals than I am). Occasionally, a source is given in the readings list in the Course Schedule as a web address...usually these are pdf documents or HTML, so you should have a recent version of a PDF Reader. There is a location on the UNC Libraries page to obtain a downloadable (free) copy of the most recent PDF reader, if you don’t already have a copy.
4. And always remember to let me know about problems. The key to a successful virtual class is to create as much communication with both your classmates and you instructor. You will find a “Student Lounge” discussion area on Sakai for use to post issues to your classmates... and you instructor is “on” almost daily.