INLS-520 – Organization of Information
SILS, U. of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

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INLS 520, Section 1, Fall 2018

Brief Description:

An introductory survey of information and its organization. The course is required for students in the School's Master's program and will emphasize basic knowledge useful for those who will be innovating in leadership positions in a wide range of information professions.

Course WWW links:

Course Syllabus (this document) http://ils.unc.edu/courses/2018_fall/inls520_001/index.pdf

Course Schedule (will change as the course progresses)
http://ils.unc.edu/courses/2018_fall/inls520_001/schedule.pdf

(if you forget, there is link to this from my home page)

Course Evaluation:

Quality of class participation 40%
Homework and Proposals based on readings 35%
Final proposal/critique 25%

Professional Research Proposals Based on Readings:

For specified articles listed on the course schedule, students are expected to write a *research proposal* based on the article of a maximum of 1 page single spaced and hand in the proposal (on paper, not via email, and please use serif fonts for the body of the text) by the beginning of the class on the due date listed on the schedule. The proposal/critique should be *constructive,* having a direct use for information professionals, emphasizing ways that the research and the professional operations could be improved or expanded. Be explicit about how the answer to the question proposed would benefit the profession. The proposal might include questions that arose as you read the article whose answers would be useful, including possible research questions that could be turned into (and are focused enough and small enough to be) SILS Master's papers. Emphasize what you could do as a researcher, how you could improve the operation of the environment, not what others might be able to do. Include methodologies for addressing these questions and appropriate measures of effectiveness used to evaluate or address the outcome variable. Provide both theory and detail about what you are proposing. Place each specific research hypothesis that you are proposing in *italics*.

The first one or two sentences should discuss the aspects of the article on which you will build. Next, very discuss a goal, how to measure effectiveness, and discuss a methodology. Do not criticize the author's writing style or the choice of topic or how you wish the article had been written; emphasize how you personally could expand on the material described in the article. Less credit is given for minor changes, such as just changing the sample size or changing the demographic group used for the study. This is not about gathering data, *it is about improving the profession*. Think of this as a chance to try out some brief research proposals in your area of professional interest, one of which might lead to your end-of-the-semester proposal. That, in turn, might lead to a possible master's paper research hypothesis. Focus on answers to professional questions! Don't try to impress the reader with gigantic ideas – impress readers with your detailed ideas about how what you are proposing could be accomplished by a Master's student such as you in the time available for a Master's paper, in such a way that future behavior or actions will be improved. If you can, justify the worth of such research by briefly providing an estimate of the (economic) value of the answer to your hypothesis. Remember that we are a professional school, not a school of Arts and Sciences.

End of the Semester Proposal

By **9AM, Friday Dec 7 2018**, students will hand in a printed research proposal based upon one of the critiques they wrote during the semester. The proposal should contain a clearly stated research hypothesis (formatted in italics) in the first paragraph. This research proposal should be 3 to 6 pages, single spaced, and should include enough discussion of the related literature to base the different aspects or components of your research hypothesis and how it would be answered in the context of the research literature. You will probably use a few books or articles outside that assigned for this course. The proposal needs to emphasize an area dealing with system performance or user performance. Ideally, the hypothesis will be constructive, and if the proposal were carried out, possibly in a Master's paper, concrete recommendations about the organization of information would be made to the profession.

Honor Code:

Students should familiarize themselves with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Honor Code that is described in University publications. It should be noted that in this course, students are expected to receive (and provide) some assistance regarding the use of hardware and software and general problem solving techniques for homework assignments. Students should NOT receive (or provide) major creative assistance or continuing minor support for projects.

Plagiarism:

Student assignments that are handed in that contain more than 5 consecutive words that the instructor feels were taken from another source without proper attribution (without the proper quote marks and citations) *definitely will be referred* to the appropriate administrative authorities who address issues of Academic Integrity (e.g. the *Honor Court*) I assume that all students are equally likely to be honest and will put an equal amount of effort into considering the possibility of plagiarism for each student's paper.

Classroom Behavior:

Separate from the Honor Code but related to respect for classmates is classroom behavior, which will be a factor in your class participation grade. Students are expected to behave in a professional manner in class. Students in class are expected to focus on classroom materials. Students are expected to avoid student-to-student conversations during class. **Use of computers, tablets, or telephones should be limited to taking notes for class and to using class related materials**. Similarly, materials being read should be limited to those appropriate for the classroom lecture or discussion. Students who appear to be involved in non-class related activities during class time will be graded as not participating in class. Cellular telephones and computers should have speakers or other audio devices muted before class begins so as to not disturb others.