Syllabus
INLS 202, Retrieval and Organizing Systems, Fall 2020, Dr. Stephanie W. Haas
Tuesdays 3:00 – 4:15 (synchronous) & Thursdays (asynchronous)

Instructor: Dr. Stephanie W. Haas
Office: 215A Manning Hall
Email: shaas@email.unc.edu
Office Hours: Email (any time), or by appointment (phone or Zoom)

Syllabus Contents
Course content and work
Course policies
Practical matters

Course Description
Introduction to foundational core concepts and core techniques in information organization, information retrieval, and data mining. (3 credits)

Course Objectives
- Identify and describe the major concepts and terminology of information representation, organization, information retrieval, and related topics through readings, presentations, discussions, and exercises.
- Interpret, apply, and analyze techniques of information representation, organization, retrieval, and related topics through exercises, assignments, and examinations.
- Develop critical thinking and problem solving skills including reflection, explanation, and evaluation.
- Examine the value of information representation, organization, retrieval and related topics in the information world, and build your understanding of the field of Information Science.

Rationale and Approach
This course examines several inter-related areas in Information Science, with a focus on how information is represented, organized, and retrieved in information systems. It is intended to build on INLS 201, Foundations of Information Science, and prepare students for more advanced courses in Information Science such as INLS 509 Information Retrieval, and INLS 520 Organization of Information.

The three major areas we will study -- how information is represented, how information is organized, and how information is retrieved – are tightly inter-woven. Each constrains the other two, and each pair constrains the remaining area. We will examine the individual areas, as well as the relationships among them.

Information and information systems do not exist in a vacuum. Technology, standards (formal and informal), needs and expectations, and culture and society shape the systems and the information itself. Thus, we will also consider the context in which information and information systems exist.

Your work for this class falls into 4 categories:
1) reading/viewing/learning/asking questions about materials such as articles, videos, and slides,
2) collaborative exercises and discussions,
3) individual exercises, reflections, and a semester-long case study, and
4) assessment in the form of quizzes.

Tuesday class meetings will be synchronous (via Zoom), allowing for questions and answers, discussions and exercises, and guest speakers. Thursday "meetings" will be asynchronous. You will use that time (or equivalent time) to read/view materials, prepare for discussions, and complete assignments.

Assignments and Grading
Your final grade will be based on the following:

4 Quizzes	20%
8 Exercises	40%
4 Case Study Deliverables	20%
5 Forum Posts	15%
Participation Discussions	5%

The following grade scale will be used AS A GUIDELINE (subject to any curve).

Grade Range	Definition*
A 90-100%	Mastery of course content at the <u>highest level of attainment</u> that can reasonably be expected of students at a given stage of development. The A grade states clearly that the students have shown such <u>outstanding promise</u> in the aspect of the discipline under study that he/she may be strongly encouraged to continue.
B 80-89.9%	<u>Strong performance</u> demonstrating a high level of attainment for a student at a given stage of development. The B grade states that the student has shown solid promise in the aspect of the discipline under study.
C 70-79.9%	A <u>totally acceptable</u> performance demonstrating an adequate level of attainment for a student at a given stage of development. The C grade states that, while not yet showing unusual promise, the student may continue to study in the discipline with reasonable hope of intellectual development.
D 60-69.9%	A <u>marginal performance</u> in the required exercises demonstrating a minimal passing level of attainment. A student has given no evidence of prospective growth in the discipline; an accumulation of D grades should be taken to mean that the student would be well advised not to continue in the academic field.
F 0-59.9%	For whatever reason, an <u>unacceptable performance.</u> The F grade indicates that the student's performance in the required exercises has revealed almost no understanding of the course content. A grade of F should warrant an advisor's questioning whether the student may suitably register for further study in the discipline before remedial work is undertaken.

*Definitions are from: http://registrar.unc.edu/academic-services/grades/explanation-of-grading-system/ (underlining is my emphasis)

Keys to Success
- Plan ahead! Success in this course requires project management skills: identify milestones and deadlines, and plan your work accordingly.
- Coordinate the work schedule for this class with the schedules for your other classes, work, and other activities. You are likely to have many deadlines toward the end of the semester, so it's important for you to keep up.
- Give yourself plenty of time to prepare for each class. You may find some of the readings challenging; take the time to get as much as you can from each one. If you are not prepared for class, you will not be able to fully participate in (and benefit from) each class meeting.
- If there is something you don't understand, say so! If you don't want to ask during class, make an appointment with me, or contact me by email.
- If you have any questions or concerns about the class or your work for the class, please talk to me about them. I cannot help you if I don't know there is an issue, and it is always easier to deal with problems earlier rather than later.
- Be flexible! We have all made lots of adjustments to our schedules and habits; it is possible we will need to do more this semester.
- Communication is important: I will let you know as soon as possible if I need to make changes to some aspect of the course. I ask the same of you: please let me know as soon as possible if you need to make changes.
- Remember that I want each of you to learn and succeed in this course. If you encounter a problem, let me know, and we will solve it together.

Course Policies

Policies on Academic Integrity and Diversity
Chapel Hill has had a student-administered honor system and judicial system for over 100 years. Because academic honesty and the development and nurturing of trust and trustworthiness are important to all of us as individuals, and are encouraged and promoted by the honor system, this is a most significant University tradition. More information is available at http://studentconduct.unc.edu/honor-system

The UNC Honor Code is in effect for all work in this course. Chapter 5 of the "Instrument of Student Judicial Governance" (https://studentconduct.unc.edu/sites/studentconduct.unc.edu/files/documents/Instrument.pdf) discusses Academic Dishonesty; you are responsible for being familiar with, and abiding by all aspects of the "Instrument".

Students often ask what is okay to talk about with other students and what is not. There are some specific guidelines for this course.
- I do encourage you to help each other learn the course material – your fellow students can often be a great resource for learning. For example, you may want to work together when you are reading an assigned reading for class.

- Reflections on our guests' visits may be based on other students' comments or ideas (e.g. question that another student asked a guest), but you should add your own thoughts and ideas. Give the others credit for their inspiration.
- All work you submit for assignments, quizzes, and examinations should be your own. For assignments you work on with a partner or in a group, each group member should be an active contributor.

In support of the University's diversity goals and the mission of the School of Information and Library Science, SILS embraces diversity as an ethical and societal value. We broadly define diversity to include race, gender, national origin, ethnicity, religion, social class, age, sexual orientation and physical and learning ability. As an academic community committed to preparing our graduates to be leaders in an increasingly multicultural and global society we strive to:
- Ensure inclusive leadership, policies, and practices;
- Integrate diversity into the curriculum and research;
- Foster a mutually respectful intellectual environment in which diverse opinions are valued;
- Recruit traditionally underrepresented groups of students, faculty and staff; and
- Participate in outreach to underserved groups in the State.

The statement represents a commitment of resources to the development and maintenance of an academic environment that is open, representative, reflective and committed to the concepts of equity and fairness.

More specifically, it is important for us as information professionals, to understand that information is powerful. The way information is represented, organized, and used, in addition to the information itself, can promote or perpetuate bias, or expose and reduce bias.

Preparation and Attendance

My goal is to always be prepared for class, and to start the Tuesday Zoom classes on time. If unforeseeable circumstances prevent this for any reason, I will try to notify you beforehand if at all possible. I expect the same of you: be prepared for class, and be ready to start class on time.

You are expected to attend all Tuesday (synch) class meetings. Unexplained absences or tardiness will lower your participation grade – you cannot participate if you are not present. In addition, they are discourteous and unprofessional. (How would your manager respond to unexplained absences? How would you, as a manager, respond to unexplained absences?)
- If you know you will miss a class because of an unavoidable conflict, please inform me by email in advance of the class.
- If you must miss a class session unexpectedly, for example, because of illness or technical problems or other issue, you must inform me by email as soon as possible.
- If you miss a class for any reason, you are responsible for learning what you missed from a classmate.

Reading assignments, exercises, study questions, and other preparation should be done before the class for which they are assigned so you can ask questions and participate in discussions. Some of the readings are introductory or textbook-like, others are research articles, which may be more complex. Give each reading your honest effort, but don't panic if there's something you don't understand. Make a note of your questions so we can discuss them in class.

<u>Participation</u>

You are expected to be an active participant in this course. There are several participation opportunities.

- Sharing completed exercise results, discussions, and in-class exercises during Tuesday synch meetings.
- Responding to others' posts in the Forum, in addition to posting your own.
- Working on collaborative homework exercises during the week (the Thursday asynch work period).

Participation is not just about talking; reading or listening to others' ideas and facilitating discussions and exercises to make sure everyone has a chance to participate is equally important.

Asking a question is another form of participation. Other students may be wondering the same thing – or you may have thought of something no one else has.

What goes into good participation? Consider the aspects describe in this chart.
(adapted with permission from Dr. Emily Vardell)

	Strong	**Needs development**	**Unsatisfactory**
Preparation	Arrives with notes, observations, and questions.	sometimes arrives unprepared.	Shows little if any indication of having prepared for class or having read the assigned materials.
Listening	Actively supports, listens, and engages.	Shows effort to interact but at times shows disinterest in peer contributions.	Limited or no interaction with peers and may exhibit disrespect.
Quality of contributions	Comments and questions are relevant and show close reading and keen insight.	Participates constructively but unevenly. Comments and questions are at times irrelevant or lack depth.	Never participates or participates only when prodded and does so perfunctorily. Shows little interest in materials or peer contributions.
Frequency of participation	Participates actively at appropriate times.	Participates sometimes but fails always to be attentive.	Rarely participates and is not generally engaged.
Impact on class	Moves discussion forward; class members benefit from student's contributions and group dynamic is enhanced.	Sometimes advances discussion but at other times seems merely filler. Group dynamics are sometimes better (but never worse) as a result of student participation.	Comments and questions fail to advance conversation. Group dynamics are impaired as a result of student's participation.

<u>Guidelines for Forum Participation</u>
We'll use the forum for 3 types of discussions.

- Course business, such as your initial introductions (*Introduce yourself!),* questions you have that you think might be of general interest to the class (*Questions for Stephanie*), and suggestions for or questions about the Tuesday Zoom sessions, or other technical aspects of the course (*Tech Stuff*).

- Reflections on guest visits, such as what you learned, what surprised you, remaining questions, and other thoughts.

- Examples or observations of the "information phenomena" we study, that you can find in your own environment.

You must make at least 1 substantive post for each reflection and observation topic. These are listed as assignments in the lessons. Of course, the discussion is richer and more interesting if others respond to your posts. A good response should help carry the discussion forward.

You could think about an interesting forum discussion as improvisational theater. In improv, the goal is to keep a conversation going by providing a "hook" for another actor to pick up. This is referred to as *"yes and".* Don't just say "yes, I agree" – that doesn't have a hook. Instead, consider these types of responses:

"Yes, and", meaning "I agree, and furthermore …"
or
"Yes, but", meaning "I agree, but there are other aspects or considerations…"
or
"No, because", meaning "I disagree, or I view it differently, and here's why…"

These are just examples to give you a general idea of ways your response could help carry the conversation forward, by providing hooks for others (including the person who started the post) to join in.

Read the contributions and responses that others have made <u>before</u> you post your own, to avoid unnecessary repetition of ideas or comments that have already been said. (A reason to make your contributions earlier, rather than later!)

Be respectful of your colleagues and their ideas. Online discussions are a common tool in many professional settings, and you should always be professional in your contributions. You will sometimes disagree with something someone else says. This kind of discussion and debate is a vital part of information system design and development, but your contributions must be phrased in a courteous, professional manner. (This applies to all our interactions with each other!)

Your participation in the Reflections and Observations discussions is graded, based on the rubric below.

Discussion Rubric		
Satisfactory	Contribution is highly relevant to the topic and shows that you've really thought about the topic. It may refer to related resources or ideas. Responses to other participants engage with their contributions, provide other perspectives, and move the discussion forward, rather than just repeating others' ideas.	3 points
Unsatisfactory	Contribution is not relevant to the topic, shows little thought or depth. Response shows little engagement with other participants or repeats points others have made.	1 point
Missing	No contribution or response for the topic	0 points

Assignments

All assignments must be submitted on time through the Assignment tool in Sakai.
Although you will be able to submit an assignment after the deadline, a late assignment will be penalized.
- Exercises will be penalized 1 point (out of 10) if they are submitted within 1 day of the due date/time, and 1 additional point for each subsequent day. These exercises form part of the content of the class following the due date; they lose value to the class if they are submitted after it occurs.
- Forum discussions are more interesting when everyone contributes promptly, providing opportunities for others to respond. However, the discussion can contribute as long as it is of interest!

If you have a real problem submitting an assignment on time, please talk to me *well before* the due date. Getting a late start on an assignment does not count as a real problem.
Pay attention to the instructions for each assignment. Be sure you have completed each part of the assignment, and proofread it before you submit it.
Start working on assignments well in advance of the due date. Do not wait until the last minute (or hour or day) to ask questions about the assignment – I may not be available for consultation.

Practical Matters

Communications

I do not plan to hold regular office hours; if you (individual or group) have questions, or want to talk with me, please send an email so we can make an appointment. I am happy to meet via phone call or Zoom meeting.
The best way to get in contact with me is by email: shaas at email dot unc dot edu. Note that I receive a large amount of email and while I try to reply to student emails within 48 hours, there are times that it may take me 2-3 days to reply. Therefore, it is important that you get started on assignments early, so there is time for me to respond to any questions you may have.
Email is also the best way of letting me know if you can't be in class, or to make an appointment with me.

I may use the message/email facility within Sakai to send announcements to the class, as well as to individual students. You can also use Sakai messages to talk to me or your classmates.

Sakai
We will use Sakai for materials and assignments. All enrolled students should have access to the UNC Sakai site for this course: http://sakai.unc.edu/ I will give a brief tour of the Sakai site during our first class meeting.

Course Materials
Materials for each Unit are in that Unit's Lesson, with one section per class.
- Tuesday class materials include topics or activities for the Zoom meeting, slides (if any) and assignments and quizzes you will work on for the week.
- Thursday "class" materials include a list of work for you to complete: links to articles for you to read, and reminders of assignments or quizzes you should work on.

Official course documents (Syllabus, Schedule and Assignment Overviews) are in the Official Course Document Lesson.

Assignments and exercises must be submitted through the Sakai Assignment Tool following the submission instructions given in the assignment specifications.

You may use the Dropbox to store your notes or assignment drafts. For example, if you have a question about an assignment, and it would be helpful for me to see what you've done, you can put it in your Dropbox for me to look at.

If for some reason you are unable to submit an assignment to Sakai, as a last resort you may email it to me along with a note about the problem you encountered. Then, as soon as you are able to, it is your responsibility to either submit the exact same assignment to Sakai, or to upload it into your Sakai Drop Box. The email serves as a record that you tried to submit the assignment on time, but to receive credit, your assignment must be uploaded to Sakai.

I will use the Sakai Gradebook to record course grades.

Zoom "Customs"
This is a new section in my syllabus! I have been on a steep learning curve since the spring; you have probably all had different experiences with Zoom classes. I have a few observations and comments about our Zoom class meetings, but I also welcome your suggestions. It is likely our Zoom customs will evolve during the semester.
- I will record the Tuesday Zoom class meetings, and post the videos in Sakai for those who missed the meeting, or want to review the class.
- I will have my camera on. It is your choice whether to use your camera for all, some, part, or none of the class.
- We will use breakout rooms for small group discussions and exercises. All members of a group should be active participants.

Suggestions? You know where to post them!