

INLS 777 Perspectives

Introduction

Welcome to INLS 777 - Perspectives!

Meets: Tuesdays, 5:45-8:30 / Online

Zoom: <https://unc.zoom.us/j/97291718983?pwd=QIRJUzlZcWJ2Und6a3ZyUDREM3kwdz09> [Links to an external site.](#)

Instructor: Professor Megan Winget

Schedule Meetings: <https://calendly.com/megan-winget/15min> [Links to an external site.](#)

Course Learning Objectives

INLS 777: Perspectives on Information, Technology and People (3 credits): Examines the relationships between information, technology, and people from an array of disciplinary, professional, cultural, and other orientations. Survey from historical and future viewpoints. Explores the application of diverse perspective to understand current matters of concern.

What that means in terms of this class:

Introduction

In this required course, we will be thinking about the question: "What the \$%@?#*? is information science, and what does it mean for me and my professional development?"

To engage with these questions, we will read and think about the ways that different people in different substrates of our field have thought about information, technology, and people. We'll read current and historical scholarship, we'll be asked to make connections between scholarship and contemporary practice, and we'll engage in activities to help personalize all this information. My fondest wish is that this class will help you clarify your professional goals.

Learning objectives

By the end of this course, you will be able to

- Appreciate the diverse range of disciplines, professions, and other orientations by which people have attempted to make sense of information, technology, and

- Contextualize, critique, and compare disciplinary, professional, cultural, and other perspectives with which one might identify and interpret relations between information, technology, and
- Trace different ways of understanding current information problems through the lens of different
- Examine how your own interests and goals intersect, align, and conflict with different disciplinary, professional, cultural, and other
- Articulate your own emerging professional

Course Structure

The course is roughly organized into three parts. The first and third parts are more conceptually oriented, and the second part is more technically oriented.

- **Part 1** looks at core ideas of meaning, representation, and categorization.
- **Part 2** looks at mechanisms for modeling information computationally, to automate our interactions with information. (Our emphasis here is on understanding these mechanisms at a fundamental level, and not on implementing them.)
- **Part 3** looks at the effects of such computational models, and their associated emphasis on ranking and rating, in contemporary life.

Our time in class together will be oriented around discussion and participatory activities. There will be very little, if any, lectures during class time. Generally, the first half of class will focus on the week's assigned readings, while the second half of class will be oriented around practical dilemmas and debates—what-if scenarios, analysis of current events, and ongoing professional challenges related to the week's theme.

To ensure that our sessions run smoothly, I will include preparatory materials for each set of readings. For example, if we have a game, I'll let you know what needs to be completed before our class session. Discussion questions will be available the day before class, so that you'll have some time to prepare. There shouldn't be any surprises.

Some of our work in class will take place in groups: discussion groups and project groups. In our first session, we'll talk about how you'd like these groups to work. Some options include:

1. One consistent group for everything: all discussions, games, project work.
2. Two consistent groups: one group for discussions and games; another group for project work

Required Text

There is no required text for this course.

Grades

In collaboration with the other faculty teaching this course, we have decided that students will receive either a P (Pass) or F (Fail) grade (There will be no H or L grades). We do this to alleviate stress and allow for a more equitable grading system across sections.

To pass the course, students must:

- Satisfy participation & mutual aid requirements (described [HERE](#)).
- Complete a 4-part group project to investigate your sub-field and debate on your stance on what the field is.

Assigned work will receive written feedback aligned with each project's documented success criteria. There will be no scores or grades.

Should any assignment that you submit fail to fulfill the success criteria to a minimum standard, you will be invited to resubmit the assignment. (Complete instructions for all assigned work will be provided in Canvas. An overview of the semester project is also available in this syllabus.)

Course Policies

Keep in Mind

Email Policy

It's very difficult to explain course material via email. If you need help with course content or assignments, the first step is to make an appointment for office hours, which are always online, and can be made here: <https://calendly.com/megan-winget/15min> [Links to an external site.](#)) I love to receive emails that share interesting information (videos, news as it relates to class).

Academic Honesty

Academic honesty and trustworthiness are important to all of us as individuals and are encouraged and promoted by the honor system. More information is available at <http://www.unc.edu/depts/honor/honor.html>. [Links to an external site.](#) The web site identified above contains all policies and procedures pertaining to the student honor system. We encourage your full participation and observance of this important aspect of the University.

Late work

There are no penalties for late work. I do ask, however, that if you have to turn in your assignments more than 2-3 days late, please let me know when you think it will be in, and any plans you have for finishing it before the end of the semester.

Covid Policies

- Once we return to face-to-face instruction, it is likely that some of us may get sick, whether with COVID or with more “normal” things like colds and the flu. **If you are feeling unwell, please do not attend in-person classes.** The lectures are online, you will miss the discussion but the scribes will hopefully provide notes on interesting topics and ideas we trade in class.
 - If more than 25% of class (in this class that means 5 people) is out sick while we will have a discussion about how the class would like to handle that. We may continue meeting in person, we may decide to go online for a week or two. If more than 50% of students are sick, we will need to go remote for the following two weeks, with weekly check-ins on whether to return.
 - If I get sick, or if anyone in my family is sick and I am their caregiver, I will have to switch the class to online-synchronous.
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Services and Student Support

Please utilize me as a resource if you are having difficulty with the material or there are outside circumstances impeding your ability to learn (for example, housing insecurity, food insecurity, emotional insecurity, or need physical or mental health services). **You should also know that I am a mandatory reporter if you choose to confide in me.**

Mental Health: "CAPS is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, whether for short or long-term needs." Go to their website: <https://caps.unc.edu/> **Links to an external site.** or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Services building for a walk-in evaluation to learn more. (source: *Student Safety and Wellness Proposal for EPC, Sep 2018*) - I understand that some students have had negative experiences with CAPS. My recommendation is that students can use CAPS as a resource for referrals to professionals in the area who take student insurance.

UNC Peer2Peer: <https://www.unce2peer.com/> **Links to an external site.** "Peer2Peer is an organization that promotes free one on one peer support for UNC students. Our Peer Responders are here to listen and support individuals, especially during these uncertain

times. We hope with the diverse range of experience, backgrounds, and topics of interest, our Responders are able to provide a peer perspective."

Heels Care Network: <https://care.unc.edu/> "The Heels Care Network website is a place for all Tar Heels – undergraduate, graduate and professional students, and post-docs, as well as faculty and staff – to come together in support of each other and access the many mental health and well-being resources at Carolina."

Basic needs security. Any student who faces challenges affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in this course, is encouraged to contact the Office of the Dean of Students. Furthermore, please notify me if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable me to provide other resources I may know of. Other resources you may find helpful:

- [Student Support: Office of the Dean of Students](#)
- [Carolina Cupboard: Community Food Pantry \(on-campus\)](#)
- [Groceries for Neighbors in Need](#)
- SILS food pantry: The SILS break room (on the second floor) is stocked with food and hygienic supplies for all students.

Accommodations: The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability, or pregnancy complications resulting in barriers to fully accessing University courses, programs, and activities. Accommodations are determined through the Office of Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS) for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. See the ARS Website for contact information: <https://ars.unc.edu> or email ars@unc.edu.

Title IX: Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Please contact the Director of Title IX Compliance (Adrienne Allison – Adrienne.allison@unc.edu), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (reportandresponse@unc.edu), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators (gvsc@unc.edu; confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at safe.unc.edu.

Diversity & Inclusion: My intention as an educator is to provide a safe and inclusive environment for all learners. I work hard to include course materials and activities that promote diversity but Information & Library Science (and most disciplines in the academy) were founded by those from a privileged background. As a cisgender, straight, white, able-bodied woman, my standpoint may exclude important points of view. It is also possible that I will make unintentional mistakes. If this happens, please come, and speak to me directly. I promise to acknowledge your concerns as valid and learn from critiques. Likewise, I'm always looking for new scholarship by women, BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and non-

Western thinkers – please share resources you think would be useful. Suggestions and improvements are encouraged and appreciated.

Academic integrity: The UNC Honor Code states that: "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..."

This includes prohibitions against the following:

- Falsification, fabrication, or misrepresentation of data or citations.
- Unauthorized assistance or collaboration.

All scholarship builds on previous work, and all scholarship is a form of collaboration, even when working independently. Incorporating the work of others, and collaborating with colleagues, is welcomed in academic work. However, the honor code clarifies that you must always acknowledge when you make use of the ideas, words, or assistance of others in your work. This is typically accomplished through practices of reference, quotation, and citation.

If you are not certain what constitutes proper procedures for acknowledging the work of others, please ask the instructor for assistance. It is your responsibility to ensure that the [honor code Links to an external site.](#) is appropriately followed. (The [UNC Office of Student Conduct Links to an external site.](#) provides a variety of honor code resources.) The UNC Libraries has online tutorials on [citation practices Links to an external site.](#) and [plagiarism Links to an external site.](#) that you might find helpful.

Online Class Statement

By enrolling as a student in this course, you agree to abide by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill policies related to the Acceptable Use of online resources. Please consult the [Acceptable Use Policy Links to an external site.](#) on topics such as copyright, net etiquette and privacy protection.

As part of this course you may be asked to participate in online discussions or other online activities that may include personal information about you or other students in the course. Please be respectful of the rights and protection of other participants under the UNC-Chapel Hill [Information Security Policies Links to an external site.](#) when participating in online classes.

When using online resources offered by organizations not affiliated with UNC-Chapel Hill such as Google or YouTube, please note that the Terms and Conditions of these companies and not the University's Terms and Conditions apply. These third parties may offer different degrees of privacy protection and access rights to online content. You should be well aware of this when posting content to sites not managed by UNC-Chapel Hill.

When links to sites outside of the [unc.edu Links to an external site.](#) domain are inserted in class discussions, please be mindful that clicking on sites not affiliated with UNC-Chapel

Hill may pose a risk for your computer due to the possible presence of malware on such sites.

There Are Four Assignments and Mutual Aid Points

In uncertain times, we all need to avoid unnecessary anxiety. In this spirit, nothing in this course will be “graded” in the sense of working toward a “grade,” although all your work will be assessed, with the opportunity to improve, as described below.

In order to receive an “P” students must:

- Satisfy participation & mutual aid requirements.
- Project 1: Individual Assignment: Dream Job
- Project 2: Group Assignment: Deconstructing and Abstracting the Dream Job
- Project 3: Group Assignment: Annotated Bibliography
- Project 4: Group Assignment: Mini-Conference / Debate Day

Participation & Mutual Aid

Be excellent to each other

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.

Our time together will be oriented around discussion and group work. Generally, the first half of class will focus on the week’s assigned readings, while the second half of class will generally be oriented around project work. I expect everyone to participate in our discussions to the extent possible, and participation in these discussions must be respectful, well-reasoned, and should demonstrate knowledge of the topic (and/or the readings). This kind of participation is integral to the success of this class and will not be formally assessed. My expectation is that because we all want to have a successful, interesting, engaging class – each of us will do our best to participate in the discussion.

Some guidelines for successful discussions

Excellent participation typically involves these characteristics:

- Being prepared for synchronous class sessions.
- Enacting a non-judgmental space.
- Demonstrating engagement and attention.
- Supporting each other in mutual learning and growth.
- Exhibiting patience, flexibility, and respect for others.
- Showing interest in others’ ideas, experiences, and values.

- Having the courage to embrace discomfort (perhaps by speaking up, perhaps by being silent; perhaps by offering constructive criticism, perhaps by receiving a response gracefully).
- Taking responsibility for our mutual mastery of the course material.

Some of the ways that we can achieve excellence include:

- Getting through the materials for each unit (readings, lectures, activities) before class.
- Attending class.
- Taking the time to participate thoughtfully and deliberately; not being afraid of awkward silences.
- If it's hard for you to speak, make an effort to try it; if it's hard for you to keep quiet, make an effort to listen ("step up/step back" according to your own strengths and challenges).
- Using active listening techniques during class, so that, even when muted in Zoom, it's clear that you are paying attention (for instance, gestures, reaction emojis, chat).
- Demonstrating flexibility and graciousness in the face of technical breakdowns and other distractions.
- Taking advantage of alternate modalities (in Zoom, chat and breakout rooms; forums in Sakai).
- Acknowledging and encouraging the contributions of others; letting people know that you want to hear them (for instance, asking open-ended questions, referencing what others have said, learning each others' names).
- Taking responsibility to ask questions or get help when necessary.
- Approaching disagreement respectfully.
- Providing constructive and useful feedback for project peer reviews.

Again, I'm just going to assume that everyone will participate in the discussions to the extent possible. That's just good behavior. I don't have a list with checkmarks to see who is talking and who isn't.

I've recently been thinking about why I think participation is so important, and how to more equitably "grade" students on this very subjective metric. I've realized that participation is important because it's an element of community, and I definitely think building community is important. So I've come up with a way to measure participation in a way that's more equitable and perhaps will have a greater impact on the class. I'm calling this new form of participation "mutual aid"

Mutual Aid Points

At the end of the semester, students will be asked to give themselves points based on the ways they take care of each other in class.

Some examples of how to get mutual aid points:

- **Scribes:** Every class, we have two notetakers who will come together and post their notes online. This will include keeping track of discussion, finding any links mentioned in discussion, and providing an overview of upcoming due dates.
- **Timekeeper:** I will post the "Script" for a class session up with the timing of each step at the beginning of class, and this person will help me stay on-time. I'll ask at the beginning of class who wants to be the timekeeper. First to answer gets the job that week.
- **Class Contract:** Participate in making a class contract for shared expectations for how we all want to be treated (this is facilitated in the first two classes)
- **Work with me:** This involves doing the reading, thinking about it, and meeting with me before class (15-30 minutes) to have a brief discussion about what the class discussion questions might be. If class is on Tuesdays, best meeting day is Monday, but I'm flexible. Two people per class session.
- **Suggest readings.** If you know of an interesting reading (or ethical standard that I've missed) please let me know via the "Suggested Readings Discussion Board" and I'll look it over and may add it to the syllabus next semester!
- **Write a letter to future students:** on the last day, write a letter to next semester's students with tips and tricks for navigating the course (& my teaching/grading style) you wish they knew at the start.
- **Annotator:** Many people read texts better when they are marked up with highlights, definitions, notes, etc. Students will annotate via the hypothsi.is web app. All of the PDF links to documents on this site can be annotated through this process. This process will require students to 1) download a bookmarklet or chrome extension from [hypothes.is](#); and 2) create an account with [hypothes.is](#). Additionally, in order to get credit, BEFORE annotating, students will need to join the annotation group. The URL for this course's annotation group should be on the home page for this course. Directions are here: <https://web.hypothes.is/quick-start-guide-for-students/Links to an external site.>
- **Discussion group reporter:** volunteer to take notes in the breakout rooms / small-group discussions and then report back for the group when we return to the main room.
- **Unanticipated awesome person:** Do something that helps your peers that this list did not anticipate. I am sure that we will have more items for the list every semester.
- **Perfect Attendance!** Remember how gratifying it was to have perfect attendance in elementary school? Here's your chance to get that same warm fuzzy feeling again! (self-reported)
- **Sharing is Caring:** If you're out in the world, reading stuff, looking at TikTok, reading some article somewhere and it seems relevant to this class, share it on the "Sharing is Caring" Discussion Forum! Students will get a point for sharing an article and/or commenting on a post where someone has shared an article.
- **Shiny Happy People:** While I'm not grading participation, I will give points to students who I believe are helping to make large group discussion interesting

and engaging. I will contact students who have gone above and beyond normal discussion expectations.

Students will keep track of their mutual aid points throughout the semester and provide a review at the end of class. I will not be keeping track of these mutual aid points! Minimum level of expectation will be 6 points. Students must accrue 6 mutual aid points to pass the class.

(These ideas for grading mutual aid come from Dr. Max Liboiron on twitter: <https://twitter.com/MaxLiboiron>