**Syllabus**

**04:547:220, Sections 1 and 2**

**Retrieving and Evaluating Electronic Information**

Monday and Thursday, 11:30-12:50

**Instructor**

Professor Nina Wacholder

[ninwac@rutgers.edu](mailto:ninwac@rutgers.edu) (Preferred method of communication. Always include 220 in the subject.)

(848) 932-8784

Room 307, SC&I

Office hours: Monday, 10:15 – 11:15 and by appointment

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**Catalog Description**

In this course, students examine and analyze the information retrieval process in order to more effectively conduct electronic searches, assess search results, and use information for informed decision making. Major topics include search engine technology, human information behavior, evaluation of information quality, and economic and cultural factors that affect the availability and reliability of electronic information.

**Pre- and Co-requisites**

None.

**Learning Objectives**

Upon completion of this course you should be able to:

* Describe what kinds of information are (and are not) available on the Internet and from other electronic sources;
* Describe fundamental aspects of how search engines work;
* Describe principles of human information seeking;
* Use critical thinking and understanding of search technology in order to design effective search strategies;
* Describe and analyze the varied economic, social and cultural aspects of making information available in electronic format;
* Identify data and information quality criteria and apply them to assessing the quality of information;
* Describe the impact of the availability of electronic information on society and the relationship between information and economics.

**Core Curriculum**

Successful completion of this class earns you three credits for the following Core Curriculum requirements:

         **21ST CENTURY CHALLENGES**

c.  Analyze the relationship that science and technology have to a contemporary social issue.

         **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND RESEARCH**

y. Employ current technologies to access information, to conduct research, and to communicate findings.

z. Analyze and critically assess information from traditional and emergent technologies.

aa. Understand the principles that underlie information systems.

**Required Readings**

There are two recommended books for the course.

         Marie Radford, Susan B. Barnes and Linda Robinson Barr. (2006). *Web Research: Selecting, Evaluating and Citing*. 2nd ed. New York: Allyn & Bacon. ISBN: 0-205-46747-4

         Randolph Hock. (2007). *The Extreme Searcher’s Internet Handbook*. 2nd ed. Medford, NJ: CyberAge Books. ISBN:   
0-910-96576-5

Additional readings as listed in class schedule below or distributed in class.

**Class Requirements**

This course consists of lectures, discussions and a range of in-class learning activities, as well as an intensive reading program. The term "lecture" here implies a partnership between student and professor. Many times the professor will provide information; at other times, you will be doing so.

Most readings are available from either the Doc Sharing tab or the Webliography tab on the E-Companion LMS (http://ecollege.rutgers.edu).

There may also be online discussions via the course’s E-Companion website which students will be required to participate in.

**Methods of Assessment**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Percent of Grade** | **Task** | **Criteria** |
| 15% | Class Participation | On time attendance and full participation in discussions in class and online. |
| 20% | Exercises | Quality of information, organization, writing, and analysis. Also, complete and timely submission of exercises to drop-boxes |
| 15% | Midterm Exam | Quality of answers. |
| 25% | Information Consultant Project | Quality of information gathering, organization, writing and presentation. |
| 25% | Group Project: IT Market Analysis | Quality of information gathering, organization of information, writing and quality of class presentation. |

Things I care about when it comes to the Class Participation portion of the grade:

* Ultimately, being in a class that meets in person entails responsibilities: to yourself, to your instructor and to your classmates. I use Class Participation as part of your final grade so that I can encourage you to engage in behaviors likely to produce good outcomes for you and for the class as a whole. I do not intend it as an “E for effort” approach, consequently I am spelling out what matters to me when I am assessing this portion of your grade. Please do not consider this as an invitation to lobby me at the end of the class to change my mind about your devotion to the course; for me the largest part of this grade is actually very straightforward.
* Class Participation includes attendance. Sadly, even if your reasons are very, very good for missing class or being late, missing class is ultimately not excusable. If you miss a class where you were due to present, anything short of a well-documented medical emergency will result in a 0 for that assignment.
* Attendance will be taken at each class. Students who arrive after attendance has been taken will me marked late.
* If you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website -

https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/ - to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email will automatically be sent to me from this system. Note that if you must miss classes for longer than one week, you should contact a dean of students to help verify your circumstances.

If you need to miss classes for religious observances you will be required to make up all class work immediately; expect that failure to complete the coursework makeup in a timely fashion will impact your Class Participation grade.

* Class Participation also includes having the readings done so that you’re an active participant in the classroom. If you rarely contribute to in-class discussions, never have an answer when asked questions, and appear to not have done a thorough job with the reading, then you can also expect that this portion of the grade will be lower.
* Class Participation also includes **not** using class time to email, IM, or use a computer for anything other than class activities. This kind of behavior is disrespectful to the whole purpose of being in a classroom environment, not to mention distracting to those around you, so if you’ve been warned more than twice to knock it off, expect to see the Class Participation grade drop precipitously. Also, if you’re using a laptop in class, expect to be called on more often.
* This class will be using a course shell to post assignments, dispense readings and list resources for the course. We may also do small portions of the class as online threaded discussions. You will be expected to use eCompanion, and so you need to be able to log in. If you have difficulties logging into the eCollege server, you should contact [help@ecollege.rutgers.edu](mailto:help@ecollege.rutgers.edu), or phone one of their help lines - (732) 932-4702 is generally the best one to try – to resolve the issue as quickly as possible. Not logging in to the server to complete assignments or download readings will result in a lower Class Participation grade, so I expect that you will resolve any problems quickly.

**Grading**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Letter Grade** |  |
| A | 91 - 100 |
| B+ | 86 – 90.99 |
| B | 80 – 85.999 |
| C+ | 75 – 79.99 |
| C | 70 – 74.99 |
| D | 65 – 69.99 |
| F | 64.99 or less |

**Major Assignments**

There are two major assignments, and a midterm planned for this class. In addition to these, several minor exercises will be assigned throughout the semester. The overview of the two assignments is listed below; more details will be provided when relevant.

**Consultant Project**

For this assignment, each student will serve i) as a consultant to a classmate who wants information about a contemporary social issue such as racism, gun ownership or climate change, and ii) as a client who asks the consultant to provide information on a different contemporary social issue. As a consultant, you will perform research and produce a report for your client. As a client, you will choose the topic you want the consultant to investigate for you and you will provide ongoing feedback to your consultant.

The assignment will be graded on the resources you use to prepare the report, the breadth and depth of the content, and the quality and timeliness of the feedback you provide to your client. Concise and clear writing and presentation style will also, as always, affect your grade.

Deliverables:

1. Choose a contemporary social issue that you’d like to learn more about..
2. An annotated bibliography
3. A draft report
4. Feedback to your consultant on the annotated bibliography and the draft report using a Wiki.
5. A final report

**IT Market Sector Project (Group Project)**

This is a group project with multiple deliverables, and will involve an ongoing, information-driven investigation of an IT market sector, such as printers, mobile phones or cameras.

Topics (market sectors) and groups will be assigned. Each group will research and then select the top companies in their assigned market sector. Each individual member of a group will track one of the top companies in the assigned sector. Members will track news about the company, follow the companies’ stock value, and look for independent analysis of the companies’ future based on published reports.

Each group must provide the following:

1. A preliminary research report
2. An oral presentation of the findings. All group members must give part of the oral report.
3. A written report from each group.
4. Each group member will individually submit a 1 page paper on group dynamics, evaluating the team process and member participation.

The assignment will be graded on the breadth and depth of the company information provided and the quality of your oral and written presentation. Concise and clear writing and presentation style will also, as always, impact your grade. Peer evaluation will be also considered for this assignment grading.

**Midterm Exam**

The midterm will ask the students to show their understanding of the major topics covered in the class. The exams are based on (a) class lectures; (b) reading materials; (c) assignments, (d) information contained in the textbook readings.

**Written Work Guidelines**

These guidelines must be followed for all assignments and papers. Papers that do not meet these standards will be returned to the student for resubmission before grading, and the grade will be marked down.

  All homework assignments must be posted on eCompanion before the class on which they are due, *and* a print copy must be brought to class.

  All assignments posted to ECompanion must have your last name and the assignment title as part of the file name

Example: StudentLastName-Assignment, e.g., Lee-ConsultantProject-AnnotatedBibliography).

  Papers are due at the beginning of class on the dates noted. Late papers will be marked down 5 points per day late unless the student has obtained prior permission of the professor (in the case of illness, etc.).

  In the case of a piece of work becoming lost, regardless of fault, it is the responsibility of the student to provide a second copy.

  Include a cover sheet for all assignments with your name (or names of all group members for group assignment), title of the assignment, name of class/section (ITI220), semester, and date. A blank page at the end is not required.

  Assignments are to be in 12-point type, Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with at least 1” margins on all sides of the paper, with pages numbered.

  Pages must be stapled together. Do not use plastic covers or binders.

  Brevity and clarity are highly valued attributes for all reports and assignments.

  Papers are to be free from spelling, grammatical, and typographical errors – use spell checker and grammar checker and having someone else do a second read of your work for clarity is recommended. Please printout your paper and proof read carefully before submitting. Do not proof from the screen.

  Appropriate use of references is required for all assignments. If the assignment includes a discussion of a search engine, web site, article, or other resource, be sure to clearly specify the resources that you are using, even for homework assignments where the professor assigned the resource.

  Bibliographical citations must use the APA format, as described in Radford, Barnes & Barr (2006). Some examples of the APA format for print and electronic citations are available from the Purdue University Online Writing Lab, (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/workshops/hypertext/apa/sources/reference.html>) and the Cornell University Library (<http://www.library.cornell.edu/newhelp/res_strategy/citing/apa.html>).

**Cellphone and Laptop Policy**

Cell phones are to be turned off during class. Texting or viewing texts during class is not allowed. Laptops may be used in class for note-taking purposes. Please refrain from checking email, web browsing or other activities that are not related to the class as these activities are distracting to other members of the class. If you are using a laptop, expect to be consulted during lectures to provide ancillary information.

**Academic integrity**

The consequences of scholastic dishonesty are very serious. Rutgers’ academic integrity policy is at <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>. Multimedia presentations about academic integrity may be found at <http://www.scc.rutgers.edu/douglass/sal/plagiarism/intro.html> and <http://wps.prenhall.com/hss_understand_plagiarism_1/0,6622,427064-,00.html>

Academic integrity means, among other things:

  Develop and write all of your own assignments.

  Show in detail where the materials you use in your papers come from. Create citations whether you are paraphrasing authors or quoting them directly. Be sure always to show source and page number within the assignment and include a bibliography in the back.

  Do not look over at the exams of others or use electronic equipment such as cell phones or MP3 players during exams.

  Do not fabricate information or citations in your work.

  Do not facilitate academic dishonesty for another student by allowing your own work to be submitted by others.

If you are doubtful about any issue related to plagiarism or scholastic dishonesty, please discuss it with the instructor.

All written work will be screened through turnitin.com as part of the submission process. If your assignment does not go through. I will ask you to resubmit it. If you do not resubmit it, then it will be treated as a missing assignment and the grade will be a 0.

**Serving Student with Disabilities**

Students with documented disabilities who wish accommodations in this class must do so through the Rutgers Disabilities Services Office. See <http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/> for details. If problems arise during the semester, we encourage you to contact ITI director Sharon Stoerger [sms595@scarletmail.rutgers.edu](http://syllabus.next.ecollege.com/CurrentCourse/__System/Source/sms595@scarletmail.rutgers.edu) or SC&I Assistant Dean Kevin Ewell [kevin.ewell@rutgers.edu](mailto:kevin.ewell@rutgers.edu).