

Information Literacy: Academic Research Strategies & Contexts

HON 295K Spring 2006 M-W 3:00-4:15 ITTC Lab 1B, D.H. Hill Library

Prerequisite: Students must be enrolled in the University Honors Program

Instructors

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Course Description

“Information literacy” is a set of survival skills for the Information Age, encompassing an understanding of how information is produced and disseminated, as well as the ability to locate, evaluate, and use information effectively. It also encompasses an understanding of the social, economic, legal, and ethical issues surrounding the use of information. Rapid technological change and an overabundance of information choices make information literacy increasingly important for today’s college student. It is also indispensable as the basis for lifelong learning and an informed citizenry.

This course will give students the opportunity to explore information sources for their capstone projects or a topic of their choice while developing information literacy skills and exploring information issues. Students will improve their research skills by learning how to formulate effective search strategies for library catalogs, library article databases, and web search engines. They will also learn how to critically evaluate print and electronic information. Information issues such as plagiarism and copyright will be explored through readings, exercises, and class discussions.

GER Social Sciences Objectives

Each course in the social science category of the General Education Requirements will provide instruction and guidance that help the students to:

1. understand at least one of the following: human behavior, mental processes, organizational processes, or institutional processes.

Course outcome:

Students will understand the information creation and dissemination processes for a research topic of their choice, including the scholarly communication process

for the relevant discipline, important information sources, and related information issues.

Assessment:

Students will develop a research question of interest and create a portfolio of sources for answering the question. Through their portfolio work, class discussions, and an interview with an information expert, students will demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the processes by which information is created and disseminated, as well as the issues that affect these processes.

2. understand how social scientific methods may be applied to the study of human behavior, mental processes, organizational processes, or institutional processes.

Course outcome:

Students will conduct interviews to gain information about the scholarly communication process.

Assessment:

Students will interview a disciplinary expert, compare their results with those of classmates, and draw some general conclusions about the information seeking and sharing behaviors of practitioners in various disciplines.

3. use theories or concepts of the social sciences to understand real-world problems, including the underlying origins of such problems.

Course outcome: Students will use theories and concepts from a variety of social sciences to understand information issues such as intellectual property and copyright, plagiarism, privacy and security of information, and freedom of access to information.

Assessment:

Students will participate in class discussions of information issues and complete related exercises.

Other Student Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

1. pose an effective research question.
2. identify, describe and effectively search a wide variety of information sources, including the open web, scholarly research databases, government information sources, statistics sources, and geospatial data sources.
3. effectively evaluate information.

Textbooks & Course Packs

Most assigned readings will be distributed as handouts or through the library's course reserves. One supplementary writing manual is required: Diana Hacker, *A Writer's Reference* 5th edn.

Course Organization & Scope

See Daily Schedule.

Schedule of Assignments

See Daily Schedule.

Assignments and Evaluation

The final grade will be based on the following:

Research Portfolio (45%): Students will develop a research question of interest. Then, they will explore (i.e., examine, evaluate, and use) various sources to retrieve information pertinent to the question. Finally, they will critique their sources and retrieval strategies in portfolio entries, analyze the information found, and assemble the information into a brief report (written and oral) responding to the question.

Draft Portfolio Entries (10%): Students will submit draft portfolio entries for a website, an article found through a database, and a reference book.

Expert Interview (15%): Students will interview an expert in their area of interest regarding their information seeking habits.

Exercises and Activities (30%): Students will attend classes and participate fully in exercises, activities, and discussions on various topics. They may occasionally need to complete this work outside of class time.

Grading Scale

A+	98-100
A	94-97
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	59 and below

Additional Course Policies

- You are expected to attend every class and arrive at each class promptly. Work missed as the result of an excused absence is due within one week of your return. (See the university attendance regulations, http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/academic_affairs/pols_regs/REG205.00.4.php, for the definition of an excused absence.)
- You are encouraged and expected to participate in class discussions.

- Reading assignments should be done before class so that you can ask questions and participate in discussions.
- If there is something you don't understand, ask a question! If you don't want to ask during class, contact the instructor before or after class.
- Homework assignments must be turned in at--or emailed before--the beginning of the class in which they are due, unless otherwise noted on the class schedule/calendar. Late assignments will not be accepted.
- Incomplete grades will not be given.

Academic Integrity

Please note the university policy on academic integrity, found in the Code of Student Conduct,

http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/student_services/student_discipline/POL11.35.1.php.

The Honor Code, which prohibits giving or receiving unauthorized aid in the completion of assignments, is in effect in this class. **All assignments should be signed and labeled as "pledged".**¹ It should be noted, however, that students are expected to receive (and provide) some assistance regarding the identification of information sources and the use of hardware and software in the computer lab. Students should NOT receive (or provide) major creative assistance or continuous minor support.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with verifiable disabilities. In order to take advantage of available accommodations, students must register with Disability Services for Students at 1900 Student Health Center, Campus Box 7509, 515-7653, http://www.ncsu.edu/provost/offices/affirm_action/dss/. For more information on NC State's policy on working with students with disabilities, please see the Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Regulation, http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/academic_affairs/pols_regs/REG205.00.28.php.

¹ Honor Pledge:

"I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this test or assignment."