

Information Literacy: Academic Research Strategies and Contexts

HON 295K Spring 2006 MW 3:00-4:15
D. H. Hill Library -- ITTC Lab 2 and Collaboratory

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. Social issues such as plagiarism, intellectual property, and the economy of information will be explored through readings, exercises, and class discussions.

General Education Requirements: Social Sciences

- **Objective:** Help students to understand at least one of the following: human behavior, mental processes, organizational processes, or institutional processes.
 - **Learning Outcome:** By the end of the course, students should understand the institutional processes of information creation, dissemination, and organization, especially within the academy. Students should be able to identify, describe, use, and evaluate a wide variety of information terms and resources, including scholarly disciplines, reference books, proprietary databases, and academic journals.

- o **Assessment:** This is the chief goal of the course, and therefore almost every assignment is designed to assess it. The Information Landscape Questions and Information Landscape Final Analysis will measure how well students understand the complicated structure of scholarly communication and how it affects the practice of academic research within their disciplines. The Annotated Bibliography and Final Written Report will be applied exercises in practicing academic research.
- **Objective:** Help students understand how social scientific methods may be applied to the study of human behavior, mental processes, organizational processes, or institutional processes.
 - o **Learning Outcome:** By the end of the course, students should be able to understand how information science professionals discover how people find, use, and communicate information
 - o **Assessment:** The Expert Interview assignment will ask the students to practice a particular method of user survey practiced by information scientists.
- **Objective:** Help students use theories or concepts of the social sciences to understand real-world problems, including the underlying origins of such problems.
 - o **Learning Outcome:** By the end of the course, students should be able to define and discuss terms such as "information literacy," "intellectual freedom," "intellectual property," and "Open Access."
 - o **Assessment:** In-class exercises and discussion throughout the semester based on presentations by the instructors and by invited speakers will measure how well the students understand selected library science issues. For instance, a class on government documents will require students to identify and discuss the issue of intellectual freedom by placing FBI agents, journalists, librarians, and other information stakeholders along a privacy / freedom continuum.

Other Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, 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, and government information sources; and
3. effectively evaluate information.

Prerequisites and Restrictions

Students must be enrolled in the Honors program.

Textbooks

- Diana Hacker. *A Writer's Reference*. 5th edn. NY: Bedford St. Martin, 2003.
- Occasional assigned readings will be available in handouts and course reserves.

Course Requirements

The final course grade will be based on the following six assignments:

Information Landscape Questions (20%): Each student will develop a research question to investigate throughout the semester. Almost every week, students will describe part of their topic's "information landscape": related scholarly disciplines, useful reference books, key databases, important journals, prominent researchers and organizations, and so on. Due every Monday beginning January 30.

Annotated Bibliography (20%): Students will keep running, annotated bibliographies in RefWorks of sources they've used to help answer their research questions. The bibliographies will be examined and evaluated on a periodic basis. Due February 15, March 15, and April 12.

Expert Interview (20%): Students will interview experts in their areas of interest regarding their information-seeking habits. Due March 1.

Final Information Landscape Analysis (20%): Students will revise and submit all answers to their Information Landscape Questions along with a brief written analysis of the general characteristics of their topic area's "information landscape." This written analysis will answer the following question: Of all the sources of information in this topic area, which are the most important and why? Due April 17.

Final Written Report (10%): Students will briefly report the answer to their research question and will ask their "expert" to evaluate it. Due April 17.

Final Presentation (10%): Students will give an oral presentation on their information "journey" describing what they learned about doing research in their topic areas. Due April 19, 24, or 26.

Grading Scale

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

Attendance and Late Work Policies

- 1) Excuses for anticipated absences must be sent to and approved by Amanda French via email at least one day before the absence.
- 2) Excuses for unanticipated absences due to an emergency must be sent to and approved by Amanda French via email within one week after the absence.
- 3) Three unexcused absences will lower a student's course grade by one-third, i.e., from a B to a B-. Every additional unexcused absence will lower the student's grade an additional one-third.
- 4) Being late to class by fifteen minutes or more constitutes half an unexcused absence. The instructors reserve the right to judge a flagrantly inattentive student as absent without excuse.

- 5) Requests for extensions must be sent to and approved by Amanda French via email at least one day before the assignment due date.
- 6) Excuses for late work due to an emergency must be sent to and approved by Amanda French via email within one week after the assignment due date.
- 7) Unexcused late work will lower a student's assignment grade by one-third for each day the assignment is late, i.e., from a B to a B-.

For more information, see NCSU's Attendance Regulation (REG02.20.3) at http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/academic_affairs/courses_undergrad/REG02.20.3.php.

Academic Integrity

It is the understanding of the instructors of this course that the student's typed or signed name on any assignment indicates that the student adheres to the Honor pledge and neither gave nor received unauthorized aid on the assignment. The instructors support academic integrity as defined by NCSU's Code of Student Conduct Policy (POL11.35.1): http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/student_services/student_discipline/POL11.35.1.php.

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. For more information on NCSU's policy on working with students with disabilities, please see the Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Regulation (REG02.20.1): http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/academic_affairs/pols_regs/REG205.00.28.php.

Additional Notes

This course requires no laboratory work, field trips, extra expenses, or extra transportation.

Daily Schedule

Schedule may change to reflect course needs and class interests.

Date / Location	In-Class Topics and Activities	Assignments
Mon 1/9 ITTC Lab 2	Overview of the course and expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of instructors and students • What do you hope to learn in this course? • What do you already know about research strategies? [In-class exercise – find best article on topic.] 	
Wed 1/11 Collaboratory	Defining a research topic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What makes a good research question? 	

Date / Location	In-Class Topics and Activities	Assignments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using this course to explore a topic for your Capstone experience Guest speaker: Larry Blanton 	
Martin Luther King Day 1/16		
Wed 1/18 ITTC Lab 2	Citation Management with RefWorks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up RefWorks account 	
Mon 1/23 ITTC Lab 2 Megan	Finding background information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reference books Evaluating reference books [In-class exercise –find and evaluate one or more potentially useful reference books for your topic.] 	
Wed 1/25 ITTC Lab 2	Finding background information (cont'd.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using the library catalog to find books (What is the library catalog, as opposed to library databases and web?) [In-class exercise – find one or more potentially useful books for your topic.] WorldCat and ILL 	
Mon 1/30 Collaboratory	Understanding the concept of disciplines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are academic disciplines and how do they shape the organization of academic knowledge? Share research questions in small groups Discuss Expert Interview assignment Assign article on undergraduate research habits	Question #1 due
Wed 2/1 Collaboratory	Finding out how people find, use, and share information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion of undergraduate research habits article Discussion of Expert Interview methods 	
Mon 2/6 ITTC Lab 2	Using databases to find articles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proprietary article databases vs. web and library catalog Article database commonalities Understanding the kinds of sources they contain <ul style="list-style-type: none"> scholarly vs. popular sources (peer review) formats indexed How to find article databases for various disciplines or subjects [In-class exercise – Database Exploration] 	Question #2 due

Date / Location	In-Class Topics and Activities	Assignments
Wed 2/8 ITTC Lab 2	Using databases to find articles (cont'd.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuation of in-class Database Exploration exercise Reports on databases for different subjects 	
Mon 2/13 ITTC Lab 2	Using databases to find articles (cont'd) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constructing an effective search strategy [In-class exercise – Keyword Searching] Share search strategies in small groups; teacher demos selected searches; review and discussion	Question #3 due
Wed 2/15 ITTC Lab 2	Using databases to find articles (cont'd) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluating articles [In-class exercise – evaluate one or more of the articles identified in last class.] Finding and using conference papers and pre-prints Finding and using review articles Share questions and potential interviewee for Expert Interview	Bibliography due
Mon 2/20 ITTC Lab 2	Scholarly communication and the Open Access movement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guest speaker: Greg Raschke, Associate Director for Collection Management, Organization, and Preservation 	Question #4 due
Wed 2/22 ITTC Lab 2	Using databases to find articles (cont'd) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timeframe for dissemination of information Citation searching [In-class exercise – Web of Science] Journal Citation Reports	
Mon 2/27 ITTC Lab 2	Searching for government documents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guest speaker: Karrie Peterson, Head of Government Information Services 	Question #5 due
Wed 3/1 Collaboratory	Expert Interview reports and discussion	Expert Interview due
Spring Break 3/6 - 3/10		
Mon 3/13 ITTC Lab 2	Intellectual property and copyright <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation by Peggy Hoon, Scholarly Communication Librarian 	Question #6 due
Wed 3/15 ITTC Lab 2	Searching for and evaluating open web sources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluating web sources 	Bibliography due
Mon 3/20	Searching for and evaluating open web sources	Question #7 due

Date / Location	In-Class Topics and Activities	Assignments
ITTC Lab 2	(cont'd) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expert web searching – search engines and search strategies 	
Wed 3/22 Collaboratory	Using archives, primary sources, and rare books <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation by Steven Mandeville-Gamble, Head of the Special Collections Research Center 	
Mon 3/27 Collaboratory	Future scenarios <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPIC 2014 Libraries and intellectual freedom, privacy, Google 	Question #8 due
Wed 3/29 Collaboratory	Future scenarios (cont'd.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The library of the future 	
Mon 4/3 Collaboratory	Plagiarism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion of plagiarism terms and issues 	Question #9 due
Wed 4/5 Collaboratory	Plagiarism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exercises on avoiding accidental plagiarism Information scandals assignment	
Mon 4/10 Collaboratory	Information scandals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students present reports on information scandals 	Question #10 due
Wed 4/12 Digital Media Lab	Visit to Digital Media Lab <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation by Herman Berkhoff 	Bibliography due
Mon 4/17 ITTC Lab 2	Course summary and evaluations	Final Report due Information Landscape Analysis due
Wed 4/19 Collaboratory	Final presentations	
Mon 4/24 Collaboratory	Final presentations	
Wed 4/26 Collaboratory	Final presentations	