

**HIS9241/LIS9841 Interdisciplinary Issues in Health Information Science
Course Description - Fall 2015**

PROFESSOR:

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Office hours: By appointment in NCB254.

Course website: SharePoint - http://faculty.fims.uwo.ca/wathen/HIS9241_LIS9841/default.aspx

CLASS LOCATION:

All classes will be held in **Middlesex College, Room 6.**

Overview & Objectives

This course will provide an overview of issues in the creation, provision and retrieval of information in the health care system. A focus will be on describing the 'actors' in the health area, their information behaviour, and consideration of how services provided by various information sources meet, or do not meet, these needs. We will also consider, taking a critical approach, emerging issues in health care generally and health information specifically, and how these influence and are influenced by broader ethical, social, political, legal and economic considerations. At the end of this course, students should:

- have a basic understanding the Canadian health care system, including the provision of health information at various levels.
- be able to describe the information seeking behaviours of the major stakeholders in the health system, including health professionals, policy makers, and the public.
- for each stakeholder group, be able to identify the resources and services that would best meet their information needs.
- have basic experience with searching online health-related databases (e.g., MEDLINE) and accessing health-related resources from a variety of sources.
- understand trends and issues in evidence-based health care, health informatics, health privacy legislation, knowledge translation, and health literacy.
- be able to critically evaluate and engage with not only health information policies, practices, and sources, but also some of the fundamental assumptions and ideas that underpin these.

Course Policies

Attendance: Students are reminded that attendance at and timely arrival to all classes is required. Students needing to negotiate legitimate absences need to inform the instructor in advance in order to arrange for make-up work. **This may not be possible in the case of assignments designated for completion during class time.** In cases of emergency absences, students must contact the instructor as soon as possible afterwards.

Statement on Academic Offences: Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism-detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Support Services: Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Email policy: Student emails will be read and responded to within 48 hours of receipt, from Monday to Friday. Do not expect that emails will be answered at night or on weekends. Do not submit assignments by email, or to the course website, unless specifically indicated.

Readings & Online Discussions: A significant amount of class time will be spent discussing issues in health care of relevance to information professionals. Each week, a list of selected readings will be provided – some required and some suggested – that address the topic(s) to be covered the following week. The list will be posted to the course website with, where possible, a copy (for personal use only) of the reading, and/or a link to a website, and/or a call number or other instructions for obtaining the reading.

As we address new topics and students begin to select readings for their Critical Commentaries, they may wish to share particularly interesting or useful resources with their classmates. The threaded discussion area on the course website is ideal for this kind of exchange, and students are encouraged to make appropriate use of this feature. Appropriate/acceptable use of the course website includes: posting new discussion topic areas of relevance to the course; linking classmates to specific relevant materials or requesting that the instructor post specific relevant resources. Unacceptable use includes: discussions or responses not relevant to the course; disrespectful or otherwise inappropriate postings.

DRAFT Class Outline

(NOTE: this outline may be revised as class and student needs and preferences are identified; guest speakers will be invited to specific classes, TBD)

Class 1: Overview

Classes 2 & 3: 'Evidence' 1: what and where is it? & 'Evidence' 2: how do we find it?

Class 4: Legal issues in health information practice & policy (CC1 DUE)

Class 5: Health information users and uses

Class 6: Health information in health services policy and delivery & the role of technology

Class 7: Mid-term Recap & Discussion (CC2 DUE)

Classes 8, 9, 10: Emerging issues panels (CC3 DUE class 10)

Class 11: Telling health stories: the roles of media and journalists

Class 12: Knowledge translation

Class 13: Course wrap-up (Major Report DUE)

Evaluation & Assignments - Overview

Class participation including evidence of having read and engaged with assigned readings and participating in discussions and debates (15%)

What students get out of the course depends in large part on the quality of discussion in the classroom. The instructor, guest speakers and students should all benefit and be stimulated by the discussion in which we engage in each class. Students should participate as much as possible in all sessions. Thus, the designated readings for each week must be completed before class. A reading list will be provided with some identified as "required" and some as "supplemental" to serve as a guide to related literature on the topic.

Critical commentaries (CC) (2 commentaries per assignment; each of the 3 assignments is worth 10%, due Classes 4, 7, 10) (30%)

During the course students will submit three brief (500 word) reports, each of which will provide critical commentaries on two articles they have read related to the course. (Reviews of six articles will be submitted in total; two per report.) One of the commentaries in each report will be on a required reading from the reading list; the second will be about a very recent (within the last month) journal, newspaper or magazine article selected by the student that relates to the topic in the required reading reviewed in the report. Topics should be generally related to those covered in the preceding weeks of class (classes 1-3 for report #1, 4-6 for report #2 and 7-9 for report #3).

Panel Discussion/Presentation (15%)

Classes 8, 9 and 10 will be devoted to presentations and debates on a current issue in health, related to the course content. Each 'panel' will include 2-3 students, who will present an issue, as 'experts', to the rest of the class, which will act as a decision-making group. Topics will be refined by class consensus during week 3 (suggested topics will be provided, but students may propose another topic, with approval of the instructor).

Major report (due Class 12) (40%)

The major report will allow students to explore an issue of interest to them in a 10-15 page (double-spaced, plus references) paper. Report topics can focus on practical issues in health information provision and use (e.g., developing information literacy workshops for clinicians, new consumer health informatics applications, etc.), or on exploration of emerging issues in the field of health information broadly (e.g., health information privacy legislation; open access publishing models in the medical literature, etc.); or combinations of these. Students are encouraged to discuss their proposed topic with the instructor several weeks in advance of the final due date (class 12) to help shape the topic and decide on an appropriate scope.