

LIS 9350: An Introduction to Information Behaviour

Summer 2018

Instructor

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Office hours: By appointment

Class Times

Tuesdays, 6:30-9:20, FNB 2230

Course Pre-requisite

LIS 9004

Course description

This course will provide an introduction to a growing subfield of LIS called Information Behaviour. Information Behaviour includes motivations for seeking or not seeking information, preferences for particular information sources and channels, the impact of individuals' social/professional role and the situations in which they find themselves, as well as internal and external barriers to information seeking and use. The focus each week is on the information behaviours known or likely to be displayed by individuals in a variety of professional, scholastic, and everyday life contexts.

Course materials

There is no required text for the course. Weekly readings are available online/via Western Libraries.

Useful Sources – Books on reserve at the FIMS Graduate Library

- ◆ Case, D. O., & Given, L. M. (2016). *Looking for information: A survey of research on information seeking, needs, and behavior* (4th ed.). Bingley, U.K.: Emerald.
- ◆ Fisher, K. E., Erdelez, S., & McKechnie, L. (Eds.). (2005). *Theories of information behavior*. Medford, N.J: Information Today.

Useful Sources – Conference papers

- ◆ ISIC: The information behaviour conference <http://www.informationr.net/isic/papers.html>
- ◆ Canadian Association for Information Science annual conference proceedings <https://journals.library.ualberta.ca/ojs.cais-acsi.ca/index.php/cais-asci/index>

Useful Sources – Open access, peer-reviewed journal

- ◆ *Information research* <http://www.informationr.net/ir/>

Evaluation

Evaluation of assignments is based on the *MLIS Guidelines to the Grade Range*, available at: http://intra.fims.uwo.ca/students/handbooks/mlis/mlis-handbook-04.htm#P252_27741

Questions re: weekly readings	10%	ongoing
IB in pop culture/current events	10%	May 15, 2018
Analysis of IB models	15%	June 12, 2018
Small world short paper	15%	July 3, 2018
Interview report	25%	July 24, 2018
Promotional item for IB "solution"	10%	August 7, 2018
Participation/attendance	<u>15%</u>	ongoing
Total	100%	

Class Policies

--**Late assignments** that have not been granted an extension will lose 5% per day or any portion of a day, including weekends, until the assignment is submitted. Late assignments will not be accepted after one week, and the grade will be recorded as zero.

--**OWL course site** will be used to submit assignments via the Drop Box feature and to submit questions re: weekly readings via the Forum feature. I will post lecture slides to OWL on the day following the lecture.

--**Communicating with the instructor:** Please contact me at my UWO email (rchabot2@uwo.ca). I will endeavour to respond as soon as possible, within 24 hours. Please preface your subject line with "9350" so that I can more efficiently triage my inbox. Response time may be longer on weekends.

--**Extensions** for assignments will be considered if you notify me by e-mail at least one week in advance of the due date. Accommodation will also be made on religious, medical, or compassionate grounds.

--**Appeals** regarding graded assignments must be made within 3 weeks of receiving the graded assignment.

--**Writing & Citing:** Graduate-level writing is expected for all assignments. Where appropriate, your written assignments should be double-spaced in a 12-point font. At the top of your assignment, single spaced before your title, please include your name, the course number, and the date of the assignment. Titles of assignments should be indicative of its content (i.e., avoid titles such as "Assignment 1"). Please use APA (American Psychological Association) style, sixth edition, for all in-text and bibliographic references as this is the preferred style of much IB research.

--**Participation/attendance:** Class attendance is mandatory. Points are awarded or deducted based on the *MLIS Guidelines for Participation Grades* http://intra.fims.uwo.ca/students/handbooks/mlis/mlis-handbook-04.htm#P259_31320

--**Support services:** Students who are in emotional or 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.

Scholastic 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 the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

Learning Outcomes

Course learning outcomes: Upon successful completion of assignments, readings and class participation, students will be able to:	MLIS Program Level Learning Outcomes to which it relates	What assignments provide evidence of learning outcomes?	How will instructors assess mastery of learning outcome?
1. demonstrate an introductory yet critical understanding of the major concepts, theories and models of information behaviour (Program Level Learning Outcomes 2, 5)	2. Explain, analyse and interpret professional and scholarly literature, research data and information resources to articulate their implications for LIS and related fields of knowledge and practice. 5. Relate the practices and roles of individual librarians and information professionals to broader organizational, professional, political, economic, social and technological contexts.	Information Behaviour in Pop Culture/Current Events Analysis of Information Behaviour Models Small World Short Paper Promotional Item	* student learns to articulate IB concepts using their own sense and understanding of a particular instance of IB in pop culture or current events * using two specific models of IB, student researches and analyses key concepts, assumptions, contexts, and implications for information professionals of the models *student analyses a local milieu using Chatman’s formulation of “small worlds” *student demonstrates their understanding of IB concepts by extrapolating from their interview to develop a promotional item to support a new information product or service
2. exhibit a broad knowledge of the burgeoning field of information behaviour research through examination of a wide range of studies (Program Level Learning Outcomes 2)	2. Explain, analyse and interpret professional and scholarly literature, research data and information resources to articulate their implications for LIS and related fields of knowledge and practice.	Analysis of Information Behaviour Models IB Interview & Report Participation & Preparation	* student researches the scholarly literature to compare two specific models of IB through all iterations of each model * student effectively situates their analysis of their interview data into the scholarly IB literature * student exhibits consistent weekly engagement with assigned course materials, in-class exercises and discussions
3. understand, use and evaluate appropriate research methods for studying information behaviour (Program Level Learning Outcomes 1, 3, 9)	1. Value and support critical engagement with issues and practices in LIS and related fields through diverse approaches to independent ongoing learning 3. Exercise and enact the values and principles of the field and its specialisations with an awareness of overarching social responsibility associated with progressive public service for the public good. 9. Differentiate among the numerous areas of LIS practice and scholarship, and demonstrate a facility across media when speaking, writing and presenting about them to diverse audiences in formal and informal professional and scholarly domains.	Information Behaviour in pop culture/current events Small World Short Paper Analysis of Information Behaviour Models IB Interview & Report Promotional Item	* student identifies, describes and analyses an instance of information behaviour in pop culture or current events * student critically applies concepts of the “small worlds” to their analysis of a local milieu for IB *student examines methods of studying IB through a comparative analysis of two published models * student conducts an interview and prepares and analyzes the data * student develops a promotional item for an product or service based on what they learned from their interviewee

Assignments

Questions re: weekly readings

Due: In the 10 weeks marked by an  in the course schedule (above). Please post by 11:59pm on the Monday night before the class.

Submit: via OWL course site Forum

Length: A sentence or three is sufficient. No extra points will be awarded for writing paragraphs, editorials, or mini-essays.

Weight: 10%

Each week, there are assigned readings. After reading one of the assigned items, post a question or comment related to that reading. Avoid superficial statements or questions, e.g., “I really liked this paper”. The question should be evident of your critical engagement with the paper. The following are only examples, but you could answer one of the following questions:

- What, in your opinion, is the takeaway from this item?
- Which parts were more difficult to understand?
- If the research is qualitative, to what other situation might the findings be transferable?
- Which ideas are new to you?
- What is one question would you ask me about the item you read?
- What is one of the implications for practice (meaning working in libraries, archives, or managing/organizing information, etc.)?

Please note: the OWL Forum is set so that you will not see anyone else’s post until after yours is submitted.

Information Behaviour in pop culture/current events

Due: May 15, 2017

Submit: via OWL Drop Box for LIS9350, before beginning of class on May 15, 2018.

File format requirements: .rtf, .doc, .docx, or .pdf

Length: max. length: 2 pages, double-spaced; min. length: 1 page, double-spaced

Weight: 10%

Using Case & Givens’ definition of information behaviour (see Case, D. O., & Given, L. M. (2016). *Looking for information: A survey of research on information seeking, needs, and behavior* (4th ed.). Bingley, U.K.: Emerald), identify an instance of information behaviour in popular culture/current events. It does not have to involve a library or any other kind of formal information service.

On one page of a Word document,

- **paste** a URL that I can go to in order to see/hear what you are referring to.
- **provide** brief metadata about the video, audio, etc. For example, “Clip from Star Wars: Episode IV - A New Hope (1977)” or “The Current podcast (CBC Radio One), May 11, 2016 broadcast.”

- **indicate** where/when I should listen/view if the segment that you are analyzing is within a longer item. “Segment starts at 2:31” or “See page 4.”
- **analyze** the behaviour in your own words – don’t worry about getting it “right” in IB lingo. This assignment is about learning to notice IB, not about getting the correct names for concepts;
- **invent** your own descriptive name for the behaviour;
- **explain** why this behaviour either works or doesn’t work in this context;
- **offer** an alternative IB for the context.

Analysis of Information Behaviour models

Due: June 12, 2017

Submit: via OWL Drop Box for LIS9350, before beginning of class on June 12, 2018.

File format requirements: .rtf, .doc, .docx, or .pdf

Length: 4-5 double-spaced pages, plus a bibliography/reference list

Weight: 15%

There are multiple theoretical models to describe information behaviour in general or specific aspects of it. Choose two models and compare them. Identify the key concepts, assumptions, contexts; also consider implications of the models for librarians and/or other information practitioners. How do you envision these models being used in practice? Some models go through iterations, so check for earlier/later versions of the particular models that you choose. Details on specific models and, indeed, more models can be found in the following books:

- Case, D. O., & Given, L. M. (2016). *Looking for information: A survey of research on information seeking, needs, and behavior* (4th ed.). Bingley, U. K.: Emerald.
- Fisher, K. E., Erdelez, S., & McKechnie, L. (Eds.). (2005). *Theories of information behavior*. Medford, N.J.: Information Today.

However, do not rely entirely on secondary literature – read the original article/book/chapter in which the model was first introduced.

Small world short paper

Due: July 3, 2017 **PLEASE NOTE: This is during MLIS Research Week**

Submit: via OWL Drop Box for LIS9350, before 11:59pm on July 3, 2018.

File format requirements: .rtf, .doc, .docx, or .pdf

Length: 4-5 double-spaced pages, plus a bibliography/reference list

Weight: 15%

The IB scholar who theorized “small worlds” (sometimes referred to as “life in the round”) in LIS was Elfreda Chatman, e.g. Chatman, E. A. (1999). A theory of life in the round. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science*, 50(3): 207–217. [https://doi.org/10.1002/\(SICI\)1097-4571\(1999\)50:3<207::AID-ASI3>3.0.CO;2-8](https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1097-4571(1999)50:3<207::AID-ASI3>3.0.CO;2-8)

Read the article, then using Chatman’s explanation/description as the basis of your argument, **either** agree **or** disagree with the following statement and explain why: “The MLIS program at FIMS is an example of a ‘small

world.” Regardless of whether you agree or disagree with the statement, make sure to highlight the advantages and disadvantages to you or other individuals as a member (or not a member) of this potential small world.

Interview and report

Due: July 24, 2017

Submit: via OWL Drop Box for LIS9350, before beginning of class on July 24, 2018.

File format requirements: .rtf, .doc, .docx, .pdf

Length: 10-12 double-spaced pages, plus appendix (Appendix = 10-minute transcript from your interview), plus a bibliography/reference list

Weight: 25%

You will interview one person of your acquaintance or a “friend of a friend” about his/her information behaviour. The person must be 18 years of age or older. Do not include personal, sensitive or incriminating topics or questions in your interview which could place participants at risk or cause embarrassment.

The interview should be at least 30 minutes long but no more than 1 hour. Record the interview using either analog or digital audio recording equipment. Transcribe 10 minutes of the interview, taking care not to reveal personal information about the interviewee.

Transcribe at least 10 minutes of the interview re: information behaviour that you conducted with your research participant. You may choose 10 continuous minutes or segments of the interview that add up to 10 minutes. Remember to anonymize/pseudonymize the transcript to protect your participant’s identity. You may find it helpful however to transcribe the whole interview for ease of analysis, but only include 10 minutes of transcription as an appendix to your research report.

Thematically code the transcript. Turn in the transcript with your coding notes. You may choose to code electronically (highlighting portions of text or cutting and pasting text into categories) or on paper (coloured pens/pencils, for example). Choose the method most comfortable for you.

The research report should contain:

- introduction to and justification of the study. Why is this participant important to study? (Hint: This person is a member of a group or occupies a role or lives/works in a context that is significant because...)
- explicit statement of research question(s). Identify one or two research questions through a (scholarly) literature review about the information behaviour of a group or type of persons, e.g. dairy farmers, or a person in a particular situation, such as someone buying his/her first car, etc. If there is limited or no literature in LIS sources, look further afield in other social sciences databases.
- brief description of data collection and data analysis methods you used. (Cite authoritative sources in this section to demonstrate that you prepared for the interview and coding.)
- analysis of your interview. Focus principally on what you transcribed. Consider, for example: What is similar or different about your interviewee’s information behaviour and the behaviours described in

the literature? What surprised you about your interviewee's responses? What problems/barriers do they encounter? What are the patterns in their information behaviour?

- transcript of at least 10 minutes of your interview showing your coding work, in an appendix

Criteria for assessment include: quality and completeness of content; appropriate reference to scholarly literature; level of insight and analysis; integration of IB concepts, theories or models; logical, clear and coherent writing; and professional presentation.

Once you have received your marked assignment, you must erase or delete all data including audio recordings, online chat records, and the interview transcription.

Promotional item

Due: August 7, 2017

Submit: hard copy or digital copy. Submit digital copies via the OWL Drop Box before the beginning of class on August 7, 2018. Submit hard copies at the beginning of class.

Length & File format requirements: whatever is appropriate

Weight: 10%

Based on what you learned from your interviewee, imagine a product or service that would be ideally suited to other people in the same role or group or situation. You do not have to build or create the actual product or service, e.g., if you propose a specific subject database, do not build the database. Your job is simply to promote the database (or other product or service) appropriately.

Your promotional item must incorporate your interview research as background for the new product and will help to "advertise" the new product or service. Try to create something that would be plausible: no magic, no manipulating the laws of physics in any dimension.

You do not have to include a formal accompanying explanation or justification: it should be obvious from your promo item whom you are targeting and why.

You will be marked on presentation, content, and suitability of the medium employed.