

Faculty of Information and Media Studies
LIS 9001 – Perspectives on Library and Information Studies
Winter Term 2018

Instructor: Dr. Catherine (Kate) Johnson
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TA:

Class meets: Monday afternoon, 1:30-4:20

Room: FNB 3220

Office Hours: Monday, 4:30-5:30 pm

Course Description: This course is an overview of the profession and discipline of library and information science. It presents major current issues in library and information science and engenders an appreciation of the social, political, economic, cultural, historical, and intellectual context of information.

Course Objectives:

Upon successful completion of readings, assignments and class participation, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a critical awareness of professional values, ethics and standards (programme learning outcome (plo) 3)
2. Critically analyze and synthesize key themes and ideas in foundational texts of the field (plo 2,9,5)
3. Construct coherent arguments in a written form about major current information issues and how they impact the professions (1,9)
4. Demonstrate a deep understanding through discussion of the various contextual factors that affect the information professions and the field of library and information science (plo 5,9)

Course Policies

Attendance: Attendance at and timely arrival to all classes are required, and will be monitored each class. See the MLIS Student Handbook for details. Students needing to negotiate legitimate absences should inform the instructor in advance in order to arrange for make-up work. In case of emergency absences, students must contact

the instructor as soon as possible afterwards. Students who miss more than two classes without a legitimate reason may fail the course.

Late assignments will be subject to a penalty of 2% per day, or part thereof, unless permission or appropriate documentation is provided.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a serious academic offence. The University's plagiarism policy requires instructors to remind students that, "Students must write their assignments and essays in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt by using quotation marks when quoting directly from another work and by proper referencing such as footnotes or in-text citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offences Policy in the Western Academic Calendar)." See the MLIS student handbook for more details.

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 the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/universec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf.

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.

Course Requirements

To complete this course you must attend all classes, read the required readings, and complete the following assignments.

Assignments and grading

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Participation | 10% (throughout term) |
| Talking Points | 10% |
| 1 Opinion piece | 15% |
| 2 Topic Papers (1x15%, 1X20%) | 35% |
| 1 Field study | 30% |
| Total | 100% |

Participation – 10%

Since this course is mainly an “issues” course, our understanding of the issues is enhanced through discussion. Students are expected to contribute to discussions in class but will also be given an opportunity to contribute by posting to the forum on the class website. When contributing to the discussion, students should contribute in a way that moves the discussion along and builds on one another’s comments. Your contributions should be relevant to the topic and show familiarity with the readings for the week. During classroom discussions please be courteous, allowing other people to state their views. All evidence of engagement with the course will be taken into consideration for the participation grade. Just ‘showing up’ to class is not enough. Quality of contribution, rather than quantity, will be the main basis upon which participation grades are assigned.

Talking Points – 10%

Each week 2 or 3 students will be required to contribute something that relates to the lecture topic for that week. This could be something you’ve read, heard or watched, such as a news item, an article or book, a radio or TV programme, podcast, YouTube video, movie etc. If possible you can share the item with the class. Your talk will be brief, about 5 - 7 minutes plus 5 - 10 minutes of discussion. You will come up with questions on your talking point that will generate discussion for the class. **Format for the presentation will be Powerpoint slides (or equivalent). Please limit to 5 slides exclusive of title page and reference page.** I will randomly assign students to the weeks when you will make your contribution. Let me know the Friday before your contribution what you will talk about and I will post the relevant article, news item, video, etc. to the course website. **You will be graded on the relevance of your talk to the class topic, content, novelty, organization, and ability to generate discussion. Please hand in the printed slides to me in class.**

Opinion piece – 15%

This paper will present your opinion on what you think is the most pressing issue in information and why you think this is so. While not strictly a formal academic paper, I would like to see reference to news sources or other evidence to support your opinion. The paper will be marked on the logic and clarity of your reasoning. Length – 3 pages. Value: 15%.

Due: January 29th.

Topic Papers – (1x15%, 1x20%)

You will submit two topic papers. The papers will be in the form of a position paper, which involves stating a position or thesis and then defending it with a minimum of three pieces of evidence to support your position. **Topic paper 1 should relate to Module 1 (week 1 – week 6) and Topic paper 2 to Module 2 (week 8 – week 11).**

Topic paper 1 – Length 5-7 pages, Value 15%. Due February 12th

Topic paper 2 – Length 5-7 pages, Value 20%. Due March 12th.

The topic papers will be graded on the basis of the quality of the writing, how well they define the issue and its context and how well they provide evidence or argument in support of the thesis. Mere summary of views found in the literature constitutes an inadequate assignment. Cite at least two resources that do not appear on the course readings.

Field Study Assignment – *The professional eye view*. Value: 30%. Due April 9th.

Interview a librarian or other information professional who currently works in the field, preferably in a full time job and has an MLIS degree.

The purpose of the interview is to understand the current environment for information work, what kinds of tasks information professionals do, their level of satisfaction with their jobs, and the most pressing issues affecting their work. It is important to keep in mind during the write up of the interview the connection between the issues we have discussed in class and your interviewee's depiction of their working environment. Refer to articles relating to the type of library in which your interviewee is working and the issues she/he mentions.

2. Write a report (about 10 double spaced pages or 2500 words) that includes the following elements:

- a. A brief description of your subject's background, including approximate age and/or work experience, and other information gained from your background questions.
- b. A report of the highlights of your subject's description of their work environment, their satisfaction and projections about the future of their job and pressing issues affecting their work and how these issues relate to topics discussed in class. You can quote parts of the interview to illustrate your statements, but do not transcribe the complete interview in the report.

- c. Your own observations and reflections about what you heard in the interview. What, if anything, surprised you? Given what your interviewee told you about his/her perceptions about their work, what concerns are raised in your own mind about your chosen career?
- d. Your observations on the process of interviewing: problems you may have encountered; questions that worked/didn't work and your reflections on why.

NOTE: make sure nothing in your report names or identifies your interviewee in any way.

Instructions for carrying out the field study are posted on the OWL website.

Written assignment format: (points will be deducted if format instructions are not followed!)

All assignments are double spaced, 12-pt Times New Roman font with 1 inch margins on all sides. Put your name, date, title of paper, class number and instructor's name on the front page (no need for a cover page). All ideas or quotations taken from another source must be referenced. Please follow APA (American Psychological Association) format. See the APA website for detailed instructions on how to cite references: <http://www.apastyle.org/>. A guide for APA citation style is available on the class website under

Assignment due dates

| Assignment | Due Date | Value |
|-------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Talking points | Throughout term | 10% |
| Opinion piece | January 29th | 15% |
| Topic paper 1 | February 12th | 15% |
| Topic paper 2 | March 12th | 20% |
| Field Study | April 9th | 30% |

| Weekly lecture topics | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Week 1 | Introduction & Issues of the profession |
| Week 2 | Information & Its History |
| Week 3 | Information Society |
| Week 4 | Political economy of information |
| Week 5 | Ethics of the profession |
| Week 6 | Intellectual property & Access |
| Week 8 | Information privacy & Surveillance |
| Week 9 | Intellectual freedom, neutrality and social responsibility |
| Week 10 | Info poverty and social inclusion |
| Week 11 | Public libraries/library as place |
| Week 12 | The information professions |
| Week 13 | Current issues and the profession: Academic libraries |
| Week 14 | Current issues and the profession:Archives |