

**HIS9241/LIS9841 Interdisciplinary Issues in Health Information Science  
Senate Course Outline - Fall 2020**

**PROFESSOR:**

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**Office hours:** By appointment.

**Course website:** OWL

**CLASS TIME & LOCATION:**

Classes will be primarily online, via OWL/Collaborate, unless otherwise noted. Tentative time (TBC) is Monday afternoons from 130-430 pm Eastern Time.

**Overview**

This course will provide an overview of issues in the creation, provision and use 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, and legal considerations.

**Learning Objectives**

At the end of this course, students should:

- have a basic understanding of 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 patients/the public;
- for each stakeholder group, be able to identify the types of 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;
- have a working description of the scope and role of health information science as a discipline in both research and practice.

## Course Policies

**Attendance:** Students are reminded that attendance at and timely arrival to all classes – whether online or in person - is required unless accommodation has been pre-arranged for asynchronous online participation. 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:

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_grad.pdf](https://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 [https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental\\_wellbeing/index.html](https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/index.html) 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 by the instructor.

**Readings & Online Discussions:** A significant amount of class time will be spent discussing issues in health care of relevance to health information professionals and scholars. 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 guest speakers are identified)*

Class 1: Overview

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

Class 4: Health information users and uses (CC1 DUE)

Class 5: Technology & data in health care

Class 6: Ethical, privacy and policy issues in HIS

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

Classes 8 & 9: Panel Presentations

Class 10: Telling health stories: health in the media (CC3 DUE)

Class 11: Knowledge mobilization

Class 12: Course wrap-up (Major Paper DUE)

Class 13: Showcase [*may be combined with Class 12*]

## **Evaluation & Assignments - Overview**

### **Class Participation (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 and pre-read designated readings for each week.

### **Critical Commentaries (CC) (each assignment is worth 10%, due ~Classes 4, 7, 10) (30%)**

During the course students will submit three brief reports, each of which will provide critical commentaries on two sources they have read related to the course. Each report will synthesize a required reading from the reading list with 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. Topics should be generally related to those covered in the preceding weeks of class (e.g., classes 1-3 for report #1, etc.). Students will also participate in structured "CC Slams" in weeks their Critical Commentaries are due, briefly presenting key points from their CC.

### **Panel Presentations (Classes 8, 9) (15%)**

Two classes will be devoted to presentations and debates on a current issue in health, related to the course content. Each 'panel' will include 2-4 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 Paper (due Class 12) (25%)**

The major paper will allow students to explore an issue of interest to them in a 12-15 page (double-spaced, including references) literature review paper. Topics can build on the Critical Commentaries, or other ideas, and 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 explore an emerging issue in the field of health information

science 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 due date (final class) to help shape the topic and decide on an appropriate scope.

**Showcase Presentation (Class 12 or 13) (15%)**

Students will be asked to take one main idea/learning from the course and present it to the class using a strategy consistent with the knowledge mobilization content discussed in Class 11. The goal will be to communicate a key reflection/“irritation” (from a CC, panel, your paper, your weekly reflections, or other) in a way designed to engage a general audience. This can be visual (e.g., a poster), a pre-recorded video (vlog), a live brief oral presentation (TED-style) or other approach. You should discuss your idea (topic and format) with one of the instructors. You may also, in a small group, prepare a panel discussion to explore a topic of common interest. This Showcase may be held in conjunction with another course/class (TBD).