

**Faculty of Information and Media Studies**  
**GRADLIS 9350 – An Introduction to Information Behaviour**  
Winter 2021

### Course Information

*Time:* Asynchronous. New weekly course material added on Monday mornings.

### Instructor Information

*Instructor:* Roger Chabot, MLIS, PhD

*Email:* [rchabot2@uwo.ca](mailto:rchabot2@uwo.ca)

*Office Hours (Questions/Concerns):* By appointment over Zoom

### Course Description

Information behaviour is a term that encapsulates humans' behaviours and social practices in regard to information. This course will examine these behaviours including the information-related actions themselves, 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. This course will present important models of information behaviour, provide an opportunity to engage in information behaviour research, as well as allow students to become familiar with the literature of the information behaviour field.

### Course Prerequisite

The knowledge attained in GRADLIS 9004 is pre-required or strongly recommended to be successful in this course. We will be engaging heavily with the concepts and practices of empirical research.

### Course Objectives

***Course Objectives in Relationship to [MLIS Program-Level Learning Outcomes](#)***

1. Demonstrate an introductory yet critical understanding of the major concepts, theories and models of information behaviour (Program Level Learning Outcomes 2, 5)
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)
3. Understand, use and evaluate appropriate research methods for studying information behaviour (Program Level Learning Outcomes 1, 3, 9)

## Course Requirements

Students are expected to read the required readings and listen completely to any audio-visual lecture materials in each week of the course.

Students must complete the following assignments:

1. **Information Behaviour in Pop Culture or Current Events**
  - a. Weight: 10%
  - b. Due: Week 2
2. **Annotated Bibliography or Narrative Literature Review**
  - a. Weight: 20%
  - b. Due: Week 7
3. **Interview Report**
  - a. Weight: 30%
  - b. Due: Week 9 (Completed Draft)
  - c. Due Week 13 (Post-Peer Review)
4. **Peer Review Activity**
  - a. Weight: 10%
  - b. Due: Week 11
5. **Reading/Lecture Response Activities**
  - a. Weight: 10 x 3% each = 30%
  - b. 5 Required, due Weeks 3, 4, 5, 8, 10
  - c. 5 Student's Choice (from Weeks 1, 2, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14)

*\*\*Assignment due dates are subject to change\*\**

## Course Materials

All of the course readings are provided to you directly through each week's lesson in the course OWL site. The great majority of readings are also available through the Western Libraries catalogue (<http://lib.uwo.ca>) and the internet. Assigned book chapters have been scanned for you.

## Course Policies

**Attendance:** There are no in-class or mandatory synchronous portions to this course. However, it is advised that the assigned lectures, readings, and assignments for the course are completed in the week that they are assigned or are due. Please be aware that the OWL course management software allows me to see who in the class has been or hasn't been accessing the course materials on a regular basis. You should plan for this course to occupy approximately 3-5 hours of your time each week.

**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](http://www.uwo.ca/universec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf).

**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.

**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.

**Communication with the Instructor:** I check my email regularly throughout the day and will usually respond within a 24-hour period. Please put "9001" somewhere in the subject line so that I can effectively triage my inbox. Responses may be slower on weekends. Please plan your work ahead, as I may be unable to respond to questions about assignments immediately before deadlines. Questions that may take some time to answer are best addressed "face-to-face" by making an appointment to meet with me via teleconference.

**Potentially Re-Traumatizing Subjects:** Rarely in this course some of the topics, lectures, readings, or other audio-visual materials for this course may deal with difficult subjects. I have done my best to provide an exhaustive list of topics and readings for students to investigate beforehand and provided content warnings where I believe there is a need to. If the student has a previous, or continuing, history of emotional trauma and think some subjects may be difficult for them, please prepare ahead to address these concerns. Please come speak to me or Brandi Borman if you have any concerns about your mental health in regard to course content and I will do my best to accommodate. And of course, please consult the appropriate resources if you require ongoing medical accommodations or support.

## Guidelines, Expectations, and Advice on the Course Requirements

### **On Graduate-Level Writing**

While the MLIS is a professionally-focused, course-based degree, it remains *graduate education*. As such, your writing should strive to be high-quality, as if it were going to be published. Furthermore, the purpose of this class and its assignments are not merely for you to acquire new knowledge and regurgitate it to me, but rather to *create new knowledge and offer new perspectives* yourself.

This course is meant not only to make you familiar with the content of information behaviour but it is an opportunity to continue to further develop your academic writing skills at a graduate level. Your writing will be evaluated on its content, the mechanics of language, your rhetorical skills, and your adherence to the citation style. Writing should be done in a scholarly and professional tone. Your grade will be negatively affected by incorrect spelling and excessive grammar errors. Your writing should avoid contractions and slang. Use subheadings, if applicable, to organize your writing. Where applicable, include introduction and conclusion sentences or paragraphs that include a “roadmap” or summary of your arguments. Titles of assignments should be meaningful or indicative of its content (i.e. “Assignment #1” is an unacceptable title). Do not cite the class lectures in your written work (find instead a better source!).

### ***On Grading***

Grading for this course conforms to the guidelines published by FIMS in the MLIS Handbook. Note please that *assignments in the 80% plus range contain fresh originality, unusually clear understanding of course topics, exceptional writing practices, and overall is of high professional quality*. Please consult the [MLIS Handbook section on Guidelines to the Grade Range](#) for more information.

### ***Submitting Assignments***

**All written essay assignments should be type-written, in a standard 12-point font, with one-inch margins on all sides.** All written essay assignments must be submitted electronically through the OWL site. Please submit your essay assignments in a Microsoft Word format (.docx or .doc) to facilitate ease of commenting on your written work. Please do not submit your assignment as a PDF (they are difficult to include comments on). Graded assignments will also be returned to you through OWL. There is no need to include title pages on your assignments even though it is typical of the APA style, but make sure your name, the date, my name, and the course number is included at the head of formal written assignments.

### ***Citation Style for Assignments***

All assignments should follow the **American Psychological Association (APA) Style, 7th edition**. APA is the predominant style in LIS. If this is a style you are currently unfamiliar with, consider it an opportunity to become an expert in a new one. The ability to be fluent in a variety of styles is something that is frequently demanded of librarians. I recommend the website of the [Online Writing Lab](#) at Purdue University for their clear guidelines and the [APA Style Blog](#) for citing unique items.

**Late Assignments** will be subject to a penalty of 5% per day, or part thereof, unless permission is requested in advance of the due date or appropriate documentation is provided. Assignments will be considered late after 11:55pm on the Sunday evening before the next week of the course begins.

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

**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.