Introduction to Information Organization

INFO 5200

Syllabus Spring 2021

Contents

Note: This syllabus and all other course materials also apply to INFO 4200.

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* Canvas email for course-related communication. Please do not cold-call instructors. Please arrange a time for calls via Canvas email.

COVID-19 Impact on Attendance

It is important for all of us to be mindful of the health and safety of everyone in our community, especially given concerns about COVID-19.

If you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html) please seek medical attention from the Student Health and Wellness Center (940-565-2333 or askSHWC@unt.edu) or your health care provider PRIOR to coming to campus. UNT also requires you to contact the UNT COVID Hotline at 844-366-5892 or COVID@unt.edu for guidance on actions to take due to symptoms, pending or positive test results, or potential exposure. While attendance is an important part of succeeding in this class, your own health, and those of others in the community, is more important.

The UNT fall schedule requires this course to have fully remote instruction beginning November 28th. Additional remote instruction may be necessary if community health conditions change or you need to self-isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19. Students will need access to a [webcam and microphone – faculty member to include what other basic equipment is needed] to participate in fully remote portions of the class. Additional required classroom materials for remote learning include: [list specific software, supplies, equipment or system requirements needed for the course]. Information on how to be successful in a remote learning environment can be found at https://online.unt.edu/learn (Links to an external site.).

Face coverings are required in all UNT facilities. This course has been approved for an exception to the face covering requirement to facilitate student learning. Portions of the class are to be delivered without face coverings. Times when face coverings can be removed will be indicated during each class period. If you are unable to wear a face covering or do not feel you can safely attend class without your face covering due to a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Access to request an accommodation. UNT face covering requirements are subject to change due to community health guidelines. Any changes will be communicated by your instructor.

Course Description

Graduate catalog

Principles, concepts, and practices of information organization and presentation. Concepts and problems of human information behavior, classification, and categorization related to information organization. Database technology, structure, and design. Standards for information organization, data representation, and information exchange. Systems for organizing information and facilitating access in various information use environments.

Goals and objectives

This course is designed to serve as a foundation for subsequent coursework and professional practice. The course **goals** are to:

- Introduce concepts and problems of information organization and its relationship to information retrieval in the context of human information behavior and information technologies
- Introduce conceptual tools and information technologies for the multiple processes involved in organizing information

- Develop problem-solving, analytical reasoning, technical writing, and other professional skills

The **objectives** are for students to develop and apply understandings of:

- Basic concepts of information and its representations, information user and use environments, information systems, information organization, and information retrieval/access
- Major theories and models underlying concepts of information need, information representation and categorization, and information seeking and searching behaviors
- Types of knowledge structures and representations, and techniques and standards for representing information objects and intellectual content
- Types of databases and information retrieval mechanisms designed for certain information use environments
- Types and techniques of bibliographic control and standards
- Types and techniques of vocabulary control
- Approaches to design and evaluation of information systems as related to information organization
- Developments in electronic information systems and networks and their implications for information organization
- The role of research in understanding and evaluating information organization, human information behavior, and information system design
- Analytical thinking and practical problem-solving skills for effective organization and retrieval of information
- Professional technical skills (information organization, software use), communication skills (interpersonal, online, technical writing), and research skills (literature searching and synthesis)

Technology Requirements

Internet access and Canvas (Canvas)

Reliable Internet access is required. Canvas is the course management software used at UNT. This class uses Zoom for weekly chats.

Hardware and software

It may be necessary to upgrade your computer system. This course requires the use of a web-based Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC). Several weeks into the semester you will be given a password for this software.

In order to access some course files in pdf format, you must have the latest version of Adobe Acrobat Reader. You can download this free from http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html

For help with Canvas and Windows technology problems, contact The UNT Computing and Information Technology Center (CITC) Help Desk (http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm or 940-565-2324).

Responsibility for technology compatibility with INFO 5200 lies solely with the student. Students are expected to have functional compatible machines prior to the due dates for any given assignment. Students are encouraged to test their particular computer setup with Canvas, and any other class related material as soon as possible. Technological help is not available on or the day before assignment due dates. Technological problems are not accepted as excuses for late assignments.

Technology competencies

Familiarity with Internet, Windows, Microsoft Office products and general PC use is essential for success in this class. . **INFO 5200 personnel do not provide training or troubleshooting in INFO entry-level technology skills.**

INFO 4200/5200 requires basic competency in word processing, email, and database management programs, as well as the ability to download and upload files, and a working knowledge of MS Word. If you lack skills in these areas, expect to devote extra time to learning them at your own expense and initiative. Extensions will not be granted because of technical difficulties. The onus of having a functional, usable computer is on the student.

We assume you have taken or are taking INFO 5000/4000 and have been oriented to Canvas.

Course Requirements

Readings

The required textbook is:

> Taylor, A. G. (2018). *The organization of information* (4th ed.). Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.

Additional required readings from various professional and scholarly sources are explained in class. The full reading list is available under the Readings & Assignments in Canvas.

Style manual

In written reports, you are required to cite sources according to format rules in the APA style manual:

> American Psychological Association. (2008). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Guidelines for using a style manual and additional advice for citing electronic sources are provided in:

> Schamber, L. (2005). *Tips for coursework*. [personal publication; latest revision].

This document includes general advice for improving class papers, team projects, and oral presentations. It is available free with the course (see FAQ & Helps in Canvas).

Assignments

Information Organization Project (IOP): The semester project requires understanding and applying major concepts of information organization covered in the course. You will choose or be assigned a collection of information objects, develop a system for organizing the collection, and implement the system using online database software. You will submit the project report in a series of drafts throughout the semester. You must complete all parts of the IOP assignment in order to receive a final grade for the class. You may not skip parts of the IOP. Doing so will result in a grade of 0 for that part of the assignment.

Concept Briefing: This is a short research report that provides an opportunity to explore a concept related to information organization. You will be assigned a specific concept and deadline. Your report will define the concept, explain purposes and implications, and provide examples.

SWOT Analysis : This is a short report that provides an opportunity to evaluate one of four library Information Retrieval Solutions.

Online participation: Students are required to use Canvas to submit and exchange assignments electronically and contribute to online discussions. They are also expected to visit the course Canvas site daily to read and respond to communications and course material. Specific assignments included in the online participation grade are:

- Canvas startup assignments
  - Howdy message posting

- IOP-related assignments
  - Draft 1 electronic submission (for instructor approval of topic)
  - IOP description posting (describe IOP topic to entire class)

All online assignments are intended for student benefit. Detailed assignments are available in Canvas under Assignments and help documents under FAQ and Helps.

Assignment competencies

INFO 5200 assignments require the following intellectual and communication competencies. If you lack skills in these areas, you may have a difficult time completing course assignments successfully.

- Applying analytical thinking and problem-solving skills
- Writing professional-quality documents including concise descriptions and technical instructions
- Searching the literature using library catalogs and indexes as well as Web search engines
- Using bibliographic reference style based on a standard style manual
- Following specific assignment instructions
- Meeting assignment deadlines
- Communicating online in clear and succinct language

Effort expected

This is a challenging 3-credit-hour course. You can expect to work 3 to 4 hours per week for each credit hour. This means you may spend about 12 to 16 hours a week on readings, assignments, and communications (in addition to class meetings). Beyond comprehending the subject matter, you are expected to develop or refine various professional skills, including the technology and assignment competencies listed above. In order to succeed, you are advised to:

1. Ensure that your technology competencies meet the INFO entry-level standards at the outset.
2. **Keep up** with the course. Set a personal schedule to maintain a consistent level of effort throughout the semester.
3. Participate. Attend class sessions and online chats. **Check Canvas daily** for communications and new course material.
4. Follow instructions and **meet deadlines** for assignments (see grading criteria below).
5. Use the many sources of help available, including readings, lecture slides, online modules, study aids (resources lists, software helps, *Tips for Coursework*, tutorials, examples), and of course instructors and assistants, and other students. INFO 5200 has a vast amount of material available online for your use. It is the student's responsibility to acquire a working knowledge of the website, the location of all materials, the schedule of operations and class related procedures.
6. Do not work ahead. Do not begin work on assignments until they are formally assigned by the instructor.

The INFO 5200/4200 instructors and staff want you to succeed and are available to help. If you are having problems or falling behind, **contact your instructor** as soon as possible. Personal circumstances will generally not be retroactively applied to previously received grades.

Grades and Grading

Grading system

Grades indicate the degree to which a student completes assignments according to stated requirements. Grades are determined on a 100-point scale in 10 point increments (90-100 = A, 80-89 = B, etc.). An **A** signifies **superior work well beyond basic written requirements and instructions** of the course, **B** signifies adequate work that meets most requirements but does not go significantly beyond written assignment instructions, and **C** or lower signifies inadequate work that does not meet the requirements. This is a core course in the master's program: Master's students who do not earn a B- or higher grade must retake the course. Students enrolled in INFO 4200 who are pursuing bachelor's degrees are graded somewhat more leniently than graduate students (those enrolled in INFO 5200).

Mandatory Plagiarism quiz	0%
IOP draft 2	20%
IOP draft 3	20%
IOP draft 4	20%
SWOT analysis	10%
Concept Briefing	25%
Online participation	5%

Online participation includes   startup assignment (Howdy message) (2%); Chat participation (2%) and IOP description posting (1%). Participation scores are tallied throughout the semester and posted in Canvas as a single score at the end of the semester.

This is a core course in the INFO master's program: **INFO 5200** students who do not earn a final grade of B- or higher must retake the course. If you take a minimalist approach to this class, you will probably receive a minimal grade.

Grading criteria

Deadlines: To facilitate timely grading, all assignments must be submitted by the due date. **Half a grade (5 points) will be deducted for each day an assignment is late.** An exception, at the instructor's discretion, can be made if you absolutely cannot meet the deadline and notify the instructor in advance. Without this notification and an extension by the instructor, **any assignment submitted more than three days (3 days) late will not be reviewed or graded.** Assignments are very detailed. Many students lose points for incomplete submissions and failure to follow instructions. A common remark on graded assignments is **RTA**: read the assignment. If you do not understand the assignment, ask your instructor for help **prior** to the deadline. Instructors reserve the right to reject incomplete assignments, as well as those that do not adhere to instructions.

Extensions: Generally extensions are granted only in the case of major life crisis, such as a death in the immediate family, extended hospital stay, or catastrophe. Computer failure, viruses, illness, anxiety, employment situations, family situations, pet related situations, or course load are not accepted as criteria for extension. Extensions are at the instructor's discretion only. Notification of difficulties from the student does not in of itself constitute an extension.

Writing: Both the substantive content of the reports and the quality of the writing are considered. Substantive content includes completeness and adherence to the assignment, knowledge of appropriate concepts, strong supporting material, and reasonable conclusions or solutions. Quality of writing covers organization and clarity of expression, appropriate use of references, adherence to the format prescribed by the assignment, and correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling. References must be made in APA style (see above). **Up to half a grade (5 points) will be deducted for inaccurate references.**

Participation: This course requires a high level of participation in both onsite and online discussions and activities. (See attendance policy below.) All students are expected to **login to Canvas daily** and to reply to email within 24 hours. Exceptions are weekends and holidays unless an assignment is due.

Grade options

Extra credit: No requests for extra credit or alternative assignments will be granted under any circumstances. If you are having trouble with regular assignments, contact your instructor as soon as possible for advising.

Withdrawal: See UNT *Graduate Catalog* for policies and semester schedule for deadlines. A grade of Withdraw (W) or Withdraw-Failing (WF) will be given depending on your participation and grades to date. Note that if you simply disappear and do not file a **UNT withdrawal form**, you may receive an F. **You are responsible for ensuring that course drops and withdrawals are initiated and completed. Instructors cannot withdraw you from a course and will not follow up on your intent.**

Missed assignments: Missed assignments (more than three days late) may not be made up. If you miss an assignment, you forfeit all points for that assignment. It is up to you to determine if it is worthwhile or mathematically feasible to continue the class. Generally, missing a major assignment precludes you from passing.

Incomplete: See UNT *Graduate Catalog* for policies and semester schedule for deadlines. A grade of Incomplete (I) will be given, at the discretion of the instructor, only for a justifiable reason, only after the university regulated first day to request an incomplete, only if you are passing the course, only if you have made significant progress in the class, and only if you have signed a letter of agreement with the instructor. **You are responsible for contacting the instructor to request an incomplete** and discussing requirements for completing the course. Incompletes are not automatically granted if you meet the criteria above. If the incomplete is not removed within the time frame agreed upon by you and the instructor, you may receive a grade of F. An incomplete is not a "reset" to start over and erase poor grades. If you are granted an incomplete, you keep the grades you have already earned. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor when ready to finish an incomplete. Instructors will not remind students of unsatisfied incompletes. INFO 5200 has a "one-try-only" policy for resolution of incompletes. In other words, you must finish your incomplete in the same semester in which you resume working on your incomplete. Instructors may not be available during semester breaks.

Course Policies

Attendance

Students are required to attend and complete all days of required classes. Failure to do so will result in being dropped from the course.

Instructors and students are expected to be prompt and prepared for class. You are asked to **notify your instructor in advance** if you cannot attend class, must arrive late or leave early, expect to submit work late*, or intend to withdraw from the course. Notifying the instructor does not constitute permission to be absent, late, etc. For some assignments, students rely on each other to meet deadlines and do their fair share of the work. If you are falling behind or intend to withdraw from the course, inform your partners and instructor so you can work out alternatives.

For the face to face section:
- Attendance at all classes is mandatory. If you have more than one unexcused absence you will be dropped from the class.
- If you are more than 10 minutes late, you will not be allowed into the classroom until the next break, and you will not receive credit for attending. It will count as an unexcused absence.
- If you leave early without instructor permission, you will be counted as absent.
- You must sign in each time you attend class.
- Signing in for someone else will be considered academic dishonesty and both students will be dropped from the class and reported to the Department of Academic Integrity.

*Notification of late submission does not constitute an extension. It merely means you accept the grade penalties for turning in late work.

Plagiarism

INFO has an Academic Misconduct Policy that addresses plagiarism. A signed acknowledgement form related to this policy is required from each student for continuation in this class.

Guidelines: To avoid charges of plagiarism in INFO 5200/4200, you are advised:

- Do not quote or paraphrase **published works,** including assigned readings and Web-based sources, without explicit reference to the original work. Credit the source using appropriate citation style according to the required style manual.
- Do not insert parts of **course materials** (class lectures, online modules, tutorials, examples) into your own work. These are published by the instructors, who properly cite the sources of any external published sources.
- Do not insert parts of **previous students' work** into your own work. In some cases the department may display work form previous students. The previous students have given written permission for their work to be displayed for illustrative purposes only. A warning about plagiarism precedes each example.
- Do not co-develop assignments.
- Do not insert parts of **current students' work** into your own work..
- If you are repeating the class, you may not use your work from prior semesters.
- If obsolete material from previous semesters appears in your assignment, that assignment will automatically be graded as "0", and may provoke a plagiarism investigation.
- Sanctions assessed in the event of plagiarism are at the discretion of the instructor and may vary in severity based on the severity of the offense, and may range from a warning to dismissal from the class.
- All procedures will be done in accordance with the UNT plagiarism policy.

You are expected to study and learn from the materials available, then to use your own words in your assignments, or clearly credit sources using appropriate citation style. It is wrong to blindly copy another person's intellectual content or syntax. It is particularly shortsighted–and glaringly obvious–when a student copies another student's errors. You do not have to police every word you write, just be aware of your sources. It is **not necessary to cite sources of general knowledge**, such as definitions of basic concepts in the field, but it is wise to reword them. When in doubt, ask your instructor.

Procedures:

- **IOP drafts and Concept Briefings may be submitted by 5200 staff to Turnitin.com for verification of originality.** Instructors look for passages of text that conspicuously fail to adhere to the parameters above (excluding required parts of assignments that obviously will be duplicated).

- **All students are required to take and pass a plagiarism awareness quiz.**

- **Penalties:** Plagiarism is illegal, unethical, and unacceptable. Instances of plagiarism in INFO 5200/4200 will be handled in accordance with current university guidelines regarding academic misconduct.

- **Due Diligence:** Students are solely responsible for their progress in this class. In this class you will be required to make connections between concepts, make decisions, and think "outside the box". Graduate school means that you the student are responsible for whatever it takes to learn the material once it is presented. The responsibility of familiarization with instructions, course procedures, due dates and deadlines, course organization, location of course materials, and other disseminated class related information lies solely with the student. As a student applying to a profession that specializes in finding information, you are expected to quickly gain a working familiarity with all the locations, methods of distribution, and work flow of class related materials.

Electronic tracking

Canvas enables instructors to track the times of your first and last logins, number of discussions postings, and visits to certain pages. (You can also view your own usage record in Canvas under My Information.) This information may be used, in part, in determining your level of activity in the course.

Class conduct

Availability: Instructors are usually available for student consultation after class, by appointment, and online in Canvas. You are asked not to detain instructors during their preparation time immediately prior to onsite classes or at the beginning of class breaks**. Instructors will not under any circumstance provide reviews of student work prior to submission of that work for a grade.**

Do not under any circumstances call instructors at their personal phone numbers nor approach their residences, or approach them at or near their vehicles without prior permission. Do not wait outside the instructor's office unless you have an appointment. Instructors at their discretion may decline to meet with students who do not follow appropriate appointment procedures.

You are expected to check Canvas mail daily to see whether instructors or others are trying to reach you. Do not assume that instructors and teaching assistants are online 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to answer your questions immediately. Instructors typically respond to email messages within 24 hours. Instructor and teaching assistant response time may be longer during peak periods. As various members of the 5200 team have specific assignments, it is up to the student to learn to which person email should be sent. Sending email to the wrong team member may result in delay in getting an answer.

Courtesy: 5200 maintains a zero tolerance policy with regard to violations of online etiquette and professional behavior. In class discussions and assignments, both onsite and online, instructors and students are expected to demonstrate professional behavior at all times and in all modes of communication. This means cooperating and interacting in a courteous, supportive, and tactful manner based on mutual respect for and open exchange of each other's ideas. Disrespectful communication will be dealt with immediately, may result in your progress in the class being held in abeyance, and may involve the Department Chair and/or College Dean. Any student creating a disrespectful, hostile or threatening learning environment will be remanded to the IS Department Chair or appropriate authorities. Instructor is the final judge as to what constitutes disrespectful, hostile or threatening environment or communication. Instructors are not required to prove to the student that they have been disrespectful, hostile or threatening. Written communication in the form of email, public postings and otherwise are expected to adhere to proper conventions of online composition, such as brief salutation, grammar, punctuation and signature. "Textspeak" such as "i w/2 read th assmt… whr is it, LOL" will not be tolerated in any form or venue, and such communications will be ignored regardless of import.

If you have concerns about the material being presented or the method of presentation, please make an appointment with the instructor to discuss your concerns.   Class time will not be taken to address these concerns.

A university classroom is not considered a public setting. Recording of lectures and photographing presentation materials is not permitted without prior consent of the instructor.

Instructors make plans and keep records based on students' attendance and work. Inform your instructor if you cannot attend at the scheduled class period, cannot meet an assignment deadline, or are withdrawing from the course.

Class Online Lecture Topics

Topic 1: A Conceptual Overview of Information Organization
Topic 2: Users and Information Behavior
Topic 3: Information and Representation: Metadata and Bibliographic Control
Topic 4: Information Systems and Databases
Topic 5: Rules, Standards, and Authority Control
Topic 6: Verbal Subject Representation
Topic 7: Classification
Topic 8: Name Authority Control
Topic 9: Information Retrieval: Models and Evaluation

Topic 10: Information Behavior: Models and Implications for IR Systems
Topic 11: Information Organization Horizons

These topics are disbursed among various module lectures, and the concepts in the topics may span more than one module. At the conclusion of the class, the student should have a working knowledge of all 11 topics.

UNT Policies

ADA accommodation

Any student with a disability who requires accommodation under the terms of the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) must present a written accommodation request to the instructor by the end of the **second week of the semester**. A request should be submitted even if it is possible that accommodation may not actually be necessary later in the semester. The student should register with the UNT Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA; <https://disability.unt.edu/ (Links to an external site.)> or 940-565-4323), which provides many kinds of support services. The Disability Accommodation Policy in the *UNT Policy Manual* <https://policy.unt.edu/policy/16-001I (Links to an external site.)> explains all relevant procedures.

Note: the ADA provision "Extended time for all in class assignments: tests, quizzes, etc. up to 2x" applies only to tests and quizzes taken in a classroom environment, and does not apply to long-lead assignments such as the IOP or Concept Briefing.   There are no tests or quizzes taken in a classroom environment in this class. ADA/ODA letters may not be applied retrospectively. Rather, the provisions take effect at the time the letter is submitted to the instructor.

Academic misconduct

Academic misconduct includes cheating, plagiarism and other unethical and illegal activities. Penalties range from reducing the grade for a test or assignment to revoking an academic degree already granted. Specific policies, penalties, and the appeals process are explained in the UNT *Graduate Catalog,* the *Code of Student Conduct and Discipline*, and the *Policy Manual*, all of which are available online. The instructors of this course abide by and enforce the UNT policy on academic misconduct. Students should be particularly aware of the risks of plagiarism (see above).

International student requirement

To comply with U.S. immigration regulations, F-1 Visa holders who take online courses may need to participate in an on-campus experience. For this course, the requirement applies only to international students in **Web Institute sections**, and the on-campus institute fulfills the requirement. Further information and a UNT form for documenting the on-campus experience are provided in class.