A. Catalog Description of Course
The nature, structure, development, and application of information policy including the interactions of social objectives, stakeholders, technology, and other forces that shape policy decisions.

B. Detailed Description
The access, exchange, and management of information have been key recurring issues throughout the history of the United States, from the Declaration of the Independence through today. This course examines selected public policy questions relating to information and communications, with special attention to complex policy issues that involve value conflicts among information ownership rights, personal privacy rights, and public access rights to information. It focuses on policy on all scales, ranging from rules enforced by organizations to voluntary and de facto standards to constitutional principles, statutory provisions, laws and regulations, and federal policies. Topics include information equity, universal service, privacy, intellectual property, censorship, and e-government. The course focuses on providing library and information professionals with a fundamental understanding of the importance and impact of information policy on the information profession.

Objectives
At the completion of the course, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate a broad understanding of major information and telecommunications policy issues;
- Comprehend cross-disciplinary debates about information policy issues;
- Demonstrate familiarity with significant literature, constitutional and statutory provisions, domestic laws, regulations and federal policies relating to information and telecommunications policy issues;
- Apply concepts and critiques from information studies perspectives to analyze information and telecommunications policy issues;
- Demonstrate the interrelationships among key information and telecommunications policy issues such as information access rights, universal service, and privacy;
- Evaluate both opportunities and risks in new information policy arenas;
• Propose policy approaches to social challenges in areas such as information access, equity, privacy, and intellectual property.

This course is designed as a policy primer. Thus, students will be exposed to a number of policy issues and literature. Given the breadth and depth of a number of these issue areas, it will not be possible to cover all aspects of the issues throughout the course.

C. Attendance and Expectations of Student Participation
This course meets once a week on Wednesdays from 5:30pm- 8:15pm in room 2118A. The course will be conducted as a seminar. It is essential that every student participates in the discussions of course materials. Participation means active involvement in class discussions. Students read the assigned readings for each week PRIOR TO THAT WEEK. The students are expected to question, challenge, argue, and discuss issues and topics related to that session's readings.

Regular attendance and participation in this class is the best way to grasp the concepts and principles being discussed. However, in the event that a class must be missed due to an illness, a reasonable effort should be made to notify the instructor in advance of the class. If a student is absent more than 2 times due to illness, please meet with the instructor to discuss plans for make-up work. If a student is absent on days when papers are due, he or she is required to notify the instructor in advance and turn in the paper via email. Please see the extensions policy below if extra time is needed due to illness.

D. Classroom Environment
As a graduate seminar, the classroom environment should be professional and respectful. Discussions should be based on course readings and critical thinking. Issues of policy can involve strongly held beliefs and current political controversies. Remember--your classmates may have different perspectives on issues than you, but they still deserve your respect. As another aspect of respect in the classroom environment, turn off or mute all phones and other communication devices during each class session. If you use your laptop in the classroom, limit the usage of the computer to course-related reasons (i.e., taking notes).

E. Students with Disabilities
Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Disability Support Services office, and (2) discuss any necessary academic accommodation with their teachers. This should be done at the beginning of the semester.

F. Extensions
Timeliness is an essential component of graduate work, and extensions will only be available during personal emergencies. Students who need to request an extension should discuss the matter in advance with the professor. If an extension is granted, the work must be submitted within the extension period to avoid grade penalties. Unexcused delays in submission of the paper will result in a deduction of a letter grade for each day the paper is late, while unexcused delays in presentations will result in a deduction of a letter grade for each class meeting the presentation is late.
G. Academic Honesty
Work submitted in this course will be individual and original, in line with the University’s Academic Honor Code and Honor Pledge. Engaging in any academic dishonesty will result in consequences in line with university policies. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to plagiarism, cheating, buying work, multiple submissions of the same paper, forging signatures, submitting fraudulent documents, and facilitating the academic dishonesty of others. When writing papers, be sure to carefully and thoroughly cite all materials you use in writing your paper and make sure all ideas and quotations are properly acknowledged.

H. Course Materials
There is no required text for the course. All readings will be available to students online or in another accessible format. Nearly all the required journal article readings are accessible through the University’s library e-journal/database holdings accessible at http://www.lib.umd.edu.

I. Office Hours & Contact Information
My office hours for Fall 2011 are Wednesdays, 1-4 pm in HBK 4121H. (Note: I will not hold office hours on 10/12 or 11/9 due to travel. I will reschedule closer to those dates.) I can also be contacted via email at kshilton@umd.edu.

J. Weekly Topics, Readings, and Review Material
The class begins on August 31 and ends December 7 for a total of 15 class sessions. Please note there is no class on November 9.

Schedule and Preparing for Class

Week 1 – 8/31: Introduction
Week 2 – 9/07: Where Does Information Policy Come From?
Week 3 – 9/14: The Digital Divide
Week 4 – 9/21: Beyond Access to Participation
Week 5 – 9/28: E-government and Government Participation
Week 6 – 10/05: Open Government and Transparency (Assignment #2 due)
Week 7 – 10/12: Information Technology Design and Policy
Week 8 – 10/19: Privacy and Security
Week 9 – 10/26: Beyond Privacy: Forgetting, Awareness and Other Paradigms
Week 11 – 11/09: No class. (Work on Assignment #3)
Week 12 – 11/16: Intellectual Freedom (Bring draft of Assignment #3 to class)
Week 13 – 11/23: Preserving Access
Week 14 – 11/30: Information Institutions as Policy Makers
Week 15 – 12/07: Wrap-up (Assignment #3 due).

Please read the required readings before the date for which they are listed. Getting the most out of readings is an important skill for understanding both information policy and information studies more broadly. Whether reading theoretical perspectives or persuasive arguments, “close reading” is a valuable technique to learn for information policy and graduate school. Terri Senft has put together a wonderful primer on close reading, available here: http://tsenft.livejournal.com/413651.html
As part of the technique of close reading, **prepare a 2-3 sentence summary** of the article. Imagine you had to describe the article to a colleague at a networking event or cocktail party. (Alternately, what two sentences would you tell your parents if they asked about what you were reading?) Sometimes, it’s useful to try to describe ideas visually, so instead of a short summary, you may also draw a picture or diagram that relays the main idea(s) of the article. You should prepare this short summary for each article you read; I will call on a few students each week in class to share their summaries or illustrations. This will count towards your participation grade.

*Please note: this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.*

### K. Assignments and Grading

Your grade will be based on five items:

- Classroom participation and analysis of the readings (25% of final grade)
- Assignment #1: Classroom session leadership (20% of final grade)
- Assignment #2: Current Topics Analysis and Presentation Assignment (20% of final grade)
- Assignment #3: Information Policy Issue Op/Ed Assignment (35% of final grade)

Details for classroom preparation and writing assignments are included separately in the “Assignments and Grading” document. All written materials for the course should be double-spaced, using 12-point Times New Roman font. The margins should be 1 inch on each side. Citations both in the text and in the references section must conform to the most recent APA style manual. Pages should be numbered and format should be consistent.

### L. Key Characteristics of a Policy

The word policy is used in a number of different ways, ranging from a large-scale meaning (“foreign policy”) to a very particular meaning (“the police chief’s policy of ticketing people driving yellow cars”).

In studying information policy, policy can be used collectively (“information policy in the United States”) to refer to particular policies (“the policy of filtering Internet access in public libraries”). As an area of study, information is rife with specific policy issues; often these policies have an acronym or shorthand descriptor—DOPA, CIPA, USA PATRIOT, DMCA, Section 508, IP, E-gov, etc.

In terms of policy research and analysis, a policy can be generated by executive or legislative arms of a local, state or provincial, or federal government; the judiciary; supranational organizations; and even professional or governing bodies. A policy can be articulated through the creation, enactment, implementation, or enforcement of legislation, executive orders, judicial holdings, administrative rules or guidelines, proposals, authorizations, programs, outputs, outcomes, or processes.

### M. Key Characteristics of Policy Research and Analysis

1. It is about real social and political problems that exist in society.
2. It is oriented toward identifying and solving social and political problems that arise from the creation, implementation, and enforcement of public policy. It can also serve to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of the policy process.

3. It is multi-disciplinary. Research methods, approaches, and perspectives can be drawn from numerous academic disciplines—primarily those of social science, behavioral science, and law—in analyzing policy. The methods can include quantitative and qualitative approaches. The tools used will depend heavily on the policy at hand and the design of the researcher.

4. It can employ literature reviews, scientific research methods, and interpretation and analysis based on the findings of the research.

5. It is influenced by contextual factors, often beyond the control of the researcher. Policy research does not occur in laboratory; as a result, the researcher cannot change many factors that influence a policy and its implementation. Research must be designed with such realities in mind.

6. It accounts for the populations, organizations, and government agencies affected by the policy and the significance of the impacts.

7. The findings and recommendations should be actionable. Findings from policy research can be innovative and creative, but they must also be practicable and practical.

N. Major Areas in which to Analyze a Policy

1. Clarity – Does it have a clear meaning? Can a reasonable person understand the intent? Are the key terms carefully defined? Are there examples or applications in the policy?

2. Consistency – Is the policy internally consistent?

3. Ambiguity – Can the policy be interpreted in multiple plausible ways? Are there established parameters for the policy? Does the policy cover one topic or multiple topics?

4. Contradiction – Does this policy run counter to another policy? Are there inherent contradictions within the policy? Does the policy comply with related judicial holdings? Is it constitutional?

5. Duplication – Does the policy duplicate another policy?

6. Implementation – Are methods of implementation defined? Are responsibilities in implementation defined? Are timelines for implementation defined?

7. Enforcement – Are methods of enforcement defined? Are responsibilities for enforcement defined? Are timelines for enforcement defined?

8. Gaps – Is additional guidance not in the document needed to implement it? Is there sufficient detail to implement and enforce the policy?

9. Combination – What happens when the policy is viewed in combination with other policies?

10. Evaluation – Are there mechanisms for citizen or agency input? Are there modification processes? Are there sunset clauses? Are there timeframes or benchmarks for policy evaluation or reevaluation?

11. Impacts – What populations, organizations, or government agencies are affected? Are there disproportionate impacts on certain populations? Is the policy biased in favor of or against certain groups? What short-term and long-term social impacts can be reasonably foreseen from the policy? What is the best-case impact of the policy? What is the worst-case impact?
O. Identifying and Focusing Policy Issues for Research

1. Does the policy create a social or political problem?
2. Is the problem of significance?
3. Who is affected by the problem?
4. Is the problem solvable?
5. Can actions be taken?

P. Research Materials

In conducting policy research, there are several important types of materials.

1. Source policy documents. The laws, regulations, executive orders, guidelines, and other government documents are the literal source of public policy. These can be retrieved from Lexis-Nexis, Thomas, FirstGov, and other sources.

2. Scholarly materials. Key journals that feature scholarly materials related to information policy include:

- CQ Researcher
- Electronic Journal of E-Government
- First Monday (online journal)
- Foreign Policy
- Governance
- Government Information Quarterly
- Information, Communication & Society
- Information Research
- Information Society
- International Journal of Electronic Government Research
- International Journal of Internet Research Ethics
- Internet & Policy (online journal)
- Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology
- Journal of Government Information
- Journal of Information Policy (online journal)
- Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory
- Library and Information Science Research
- Library Quarterly
- Media, Culture & Society
- New Media & Society
- Policy Studies Journal
- Political Research Quarterly
- Public Administration Review
- Social Science Computer Review
- Telecommunications Policy
- Telematics and Informatics
- Washington Quarterly
Also, check for relevant scholarly books and academic studies. If you go trolling for materials on the Internets, make sure that they are from legitimate sources. There is a big difference in academic merit between reports from respected think tanks and reports from lobbying groups.

3. Popular media. The media often provide reports on perceptions or impacts of policies. Generally, it is best to use only materials from highly regarded media, such as major newspapers (i.e., The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times, The Washington Post), major news magazines (i.e., The Economist, Newsweek), and prominent news websites (i.e., CNN.com, MSNBC.com). Keep in mind that most media outlets, even the well-respected ones, still will have a particular perspective on most policy issues.

4. Professional organizations. Perspectives on policy issues are often provided by related professional organizations, though these will directly reflect the goals of the organization. The ALA has a major policy arm, and SLA and SAA do some policy work as well.

Q. Acknowledgements
This syllabus is based in large part on earlier syllabi created by Drs. John Bertot and Paul Jaeger.