UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, COLLEGE PARK

Information Policy (INST 612) – 3 credit hours
Spring 2013 Syllabus

Instructor: Katie Shilton, Assistant Professor, College of Information Studies
Email: kshilton@umd.edu
• Instructor will respond to email inquiries within 24 hours, unless otherwise noted in an “out of office” message
• Include INST612 in the subject line of all course correspondence

Phone/Office/Skype hours: by appointment

Course 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.

Course Format
This course is conducted online through ELMS. No onsite meetings are required. This course applies reading and discussion-based learning approaches, as well as investigative learning approaches, to information policy. The readings, activities and discussions presented in the course materials provide opportunities to apply abstract theories and concepts to real-world information policy challenges. Each week you will be asked to reflect on the course materials for that week in online discussion boards. You are encouraged to draw on personal experiences and external literature and resources to support your commentary.

Course Readings
There is no required text for the course. However, we will read three chapters from Weinberger, D. (2012). Too Big to Know: Rethinking Knowledge Now That the Facts Aren’t the Facts, Experts Are Everywhere, and the Smartest Person in the Room Is the Room. New York: Basic Books. It's a smart and very enjoyable read, and so I'd recommend picking up a copy if you like to read on paper, or if you're generally interested in the topic.

All readings will be available to students online on the ELMS site or in another accessible format. Nearly all the required journal article readings are also accessible through the University’s library e-journal/database holdings accessible at http://www.lib.umd.edu.

Introductory slides for each weekly course module will be provided on ELMS.

Course materials for each week should be reviewed prior to participation in the weekly discussion section.

Coursework
The course is made up of 4 key components:

1. **Readings & Materials:** All readings will be available to students online on the ELMS site or in another accessible format. All readings are listed by week under the “Modules” section of ELMS.

2. **Discussion Board Participation (40% of your final grade):** A weekly discussion board can be found under “Discussions” on ELMS. I will provide discussion questions based on the readings and activities for the week.

Each week, post an original post responding to one or more discussion questions (about 150-200 words) by Friday night (11:59pm) of each week. You may post multiple responses, but at least one of your posts needs to be a minimum of 150 words (the others can be shorter if you wish). Draw on the course readings, outside resources, and personal experiences to frame your arguments/comments. **Cite references accordingly:** e.g. (Quinn, 2012, p. 237) and add a brief citation list to the end of your post following APA citation style if you use citations (as explained here: http://www2.liu.edu/cwis/cwp/library/warehouse/citapa.htm). The citation list does not count towards your word count for that post. During the course of the semester, you
should demonstrate that you have participated in both the suggested activities and the readings.

**Title your original post** with a word or two about your topic. For example, if you are talking about an email privacy issue, title your discussion posting something like “Email Privacy and Fairness”.

Each week, post at least one reply to other students’ posts and comments by **Tuesday night (11:59pm) of each week** (about 75-150 words for each response). Please be respectful and professional when you reply to each other.

Your Discussion Board participation will be graded based on the insightfulness of your original post(s), your careful consideration and response to other students’ posts, the timeliness of your posts, and your ability to draw on the readings and external resources to justify and support your claims.

***It is strongly recommended that you draft your posts in a word or text document before you post it to ELMS in order to check for spelling errors and ensure you have met the word count requirement.

Your weekly discussion participation will be graded using the following rubric:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is insightful about reading material</td>
<td>20 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backs conclusions with evidence</td>
<td>20 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduces own ideas</td>
<td>20 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responds thoughtfully to others</td>
<td>20 pts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Presentation**

| Uses correct grammar and punctuation          | 10 pts     |
| Writes in clear, concise sentences            | 10 pts     |

**Total**                                      **100 pts**

3. **Written Assignments:**

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.

All written assignments will be graded using the following rubric:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension of material</td>
<td>20 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes a persuasive argument</td>
<td>10 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backs conclusions with evidence</td>
<td>20 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduces own ideas</td>
<td>10 pts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Organizes argument logically | 10 pts
---|---
Presentation
Uses correct grammar and punctuation | 10 pts
Writes in clear, concise sentences | 10 pts
Uses clear word choice and professional vocabulary | 10 pts
Total | 100 pts

Paper #1: Federal or State Policy Analysis
(4-5 pages. 20% of your final grade. Due Week 5, February 26.)
Investigate a piece of federal or state information legislation to consider the values in its writing and implementation. These might include personal values, moral values, societal values, cultural values, ethics, etc. Reflect on the legislation using the following questions as a guide:
1. What are the technical, legislative, and policy issues covered in this legislation?
2. What are the key issues and debates surrounding this legislation?
3. What values does the policy enable? What values does it discourage?
4. What features of the implementation highlight (or de-emphasize) these values?
5. What biases do you see in the policy? Where do those biases come from?
6. What could be done to address those biases?

Paper #2: Policy in Technology Analysis
(4-5 pages. 20% of your final grade. Due Week 10, April 2.)
Investigate a social media technology that you currently use (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, Google+, MySpace, Orkut, Ravelry, etc.). Consider policy implications (including public policy as well as principles or rules that guide decisions) of that technology. Also think about the values incorporated into that technology: personal values, moral values, societal values, cultural values, ethics, etc.) Reflect on this technology using the following questions as a guide:
1. As a user, what values does the social media platform enable? What values does it discourage?
2. What features and functions of the social media platform highlight (or de-emphasize) these values?
3. What biases do you see in the systems? Do you think they are pre-existing, technical, or emergent?
4. Look at the policy statement or terms of service for your social media platform. What values does the policy enable or discourage?
5. How do the values in the policy relate to your perception of values in the system? Are the same or different?
6. What design solutions might mitigate some of these values conflicts?

(3-4 pages. 20% of your final grade. Due Week 15, May 7.)
Write a 750-1000 word (3-4 double-spaced typed pages) article of opinion/editorial in support of, in support of, in opposition to, or using as a point of departure any one of the following assertions. In addition to the below topics, students are encouraged to seek out their own articles/issues to which
to react. There are many information policy-related issues in the news on a daily basis from which to choose. Don't be shy or hesitant. If an issue strikes you as interesting, pursue it!

1. "If words don't incite action, I'm in the wrong line of work. I'm a librarian. My life's work is based on the belief that words and images stimulate action....We can't support free expression by saying it won't do any harm." John N. Berry III, "If Words Will Never Hurt Me, Then...," Library Journal, January 1992, p. 6.

2. "In privacy circles, everybody's talking about the Right to be Forgotten. The European Commission has even proposed that the 'right to be forgotten' should be written into the up-coming revision of the Privacy Directive. … For most people, I think it's an attempt to give people the right to wash away digital muck, or delete the embarrassing stuff, or just start fresh. But unfortunately, it's more complicated than that. More and more, privacy is being used to justify censorship." Peter Fleischer, "Foggy Thinking About the Right to Oblivion," blog entry, (March 9, 2011) http://peterfleischer.blogspot.com/2011/03/foggy-thinking-about-right-to-oblivion.html.


4. "Too often, casual observers treat privacy as a singular trait. We either have privacy or we do not. Personal information is either within the control of the data subject or privacy does not exist....Analyzing privacy is considerably more complex than examining a light switch to see if it is on or off." Robert Gellman, "Perspectives on Privacy and terrorism: All is not list -- yet," Government Information Quarterly, 19(3), 255-264, 2002.

5. “A new political system is taking shape in the United States. As we approach the twenty-first century, America is turning into an electronic republic, a democratic system that is vastly increasing the people's day-to-day influence on the decisions of state.” Lawrence K. Grossman, The Electronic Republic: Reshaping Democracy in the Information Age. New York: Viking, 1995, p. 3.

6. “Do characters belong to the person who created them? Or to the fans who love them so passionately that they spend their nights and weekends laboring to extend those characters' lives, for free? There's a division here, a geological fault line, that looks small on the surface but runs deep into our culture, and the tectonic plates are only moving farther apart. Is art about making up new things or about transforming the raw material that's out there? Cutting, pasting, sampling, remixing and mashing up have become mainstream modes of cultural expression, and fan fiction is part of that. It challenges just about everything we thought we knew about art and creativity.” Lev Grossman, The Boy Who Lived Forever. Time, July 7, 2011. http://www.time.com/time/printout/0,8816,2081784,00.html.

Before you start, familiarize yourself with the editorial pages of at least one or two major newspapers. Both the New York Times (http://www.nytimes.com) and the Washington Post (http://www.washingtonpost.com) are available free of charge online, though you may have to go
through a site registration process to access the sites. Finally, many of you have local and/or regional newspapers that are accessible via the Web (or you have delivered). Be aware that editorial writing is a different style of writing than normal descriptive prose. After you've decided which journal you are writing for, but before you start writing, read several editorials and letters to the editor in back issues of that publishing venue to get a sense of the style and tone of the "editorial voice." A great example is Dr. Keri Kraus’s recent Op-Ed in the New York Times: 

A formal letter to the editor would not include citations or footnotes, but since this is coursework, please include citations and references to support your ideas. A letter to the editor does also not need to be balanced or neutral – in fact, it works best if you make an argument and take a side. However, you should present and acknowledge counterarguments in order to explain why your point of view holds more water.

Submit all assignments through ELMS, unless otherwise specified. If you have any technical issues with ELMS, contact the Help Desk immediately: 301-405-1400; 
https://elms.umd.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab_id=_300_1

Grading
Your work in this course will be evaluated via your weekly Discussion participation, your midterm assignment, and your final assignment. The weighted percentages for each component are listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluated Components</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion board</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Assignment #1: Federal or State Policy</td>
<td>2/26/13</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Assignment #2: Policy in Technology</td>
<td>4/2/13</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Assignment #3: Op-ed</td>
<td>5/7/13</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Letter Grades:

A+ 97-100
A 93-96
A- 90-92
B+ 87-89
B 83-86
B- 80-82
C+ 77-79
C 73-76
C- 70-72
D+ 67-69
D 63-66
D- 60-62
F 0-59
Checking Grades
You will receive grades for weekly discussion boards within one week of the submission due date. You will receive grades for your midterm and final assignments within two weeks of the submission due date. The instructor will provide comments and feedback to accompany the numerical grade. To check grades on Blackboard throughout the term click on “Grades”.

Late Submissions Policy (Assignment & Discussion Board Postings)
Late assignments will be automatically marked down 10% for each day past the due date. Discussion boards will be closed every week on Monday at 11:59 PM. If you did not post to the Discussion Board by then, you will receive zero discussion points for that week. Discussion boards will be made available in advance of each week to give you plenty of time to contribute to the Discussion board within the confines of your personal schedule.

Academic Integrity
Students are reminded that the University of Maryland has absolute expectations for academic integrity from every student. The Code of Academic Integrity strictly prohibits students from cheating on assignments, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, buying papers, submitting fraudulent documents, and forging signatures. Instances of any suspected academic dishonesty will be reported and handled according to University policy and procedures. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit http://www.shc.umd.edu. For a more detailed description of the University’s definition of academic dishonesty, visit http://www.faculty.umd.edu/teach/integrity.html.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
The University is committed to providing appropriate accommodations for students with documented disabilities. In order to ascertain what accommodations should be provided to facilitate your learning experience, please be sure to inform the instructor of your needs at the beginning of the semester. The instructor will then contact relevant parties such as the University’s Disability Support Services, who will make arrangements with you to determine and implement appropriate academic accommodations. For more information on the University’s policies, see http://www.faculty.umd.edu/teach/disabilities.html.

CourseEvalUM
Your participation in the evaluation of courses through CourseEvalUM is a responsibility you hold as a student member of our academic community. Your feedback is confidential and important to the improvement of teaching and learning at the University as well as to the tenure and promotion process. Please go directly to the website (http://www.courseevalum.umd.edu) to complete your evaluations at the end of the semester.

Three Keys to Success
As a graduate seminar, the online 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. Open-mindedness and respect are critical to engaging in collegial dialog in an Information Policy course. With this in mind, here are some tips for ensuring your success in this course:
1. **Be courteous and respectful.** The Discussions are a place to bring out healthy debates, but those debates should remain collegial and academic at all times – never personal.

2. **Be timely.** Posting to Discussion and submitting your mid-term and final assignments via ELMS on time show respect for your fellow cohort members, and your instructor, and are crucial to your success in this course.

3. **Be open-minded.** Information Policy will involve exploring a wide range of federal, local, and institution-based policies. Engaging in critical thinking while reading the course materials and developing your assignments will help you gain the most from this course and will ensure a high grade in the class. Don’t be afraid to think from new perspectives and challenge yourself.

Syllabus Change Policy
This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.

Topics and Readings
Each course week will begin with introductory material to orient you to the week’s activities and readings. Please read the introductory material, read the required readings, and complete the activity before the date for which they are listed.

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

Week 1: Introduction

A. Introduction to course and discussion of course expectations
B. Sources of information policy and locating policy resources
C. Overview of topics and concepts to be covered

Readings:

Week 2: Where Does Information Policy Come From?

A. “Big P” and “little p” policy
B. Rules, regulations and standards
C. Constitutional origins of federal information policy
D. Stakeholders in information policy

Readings:

Activity: Issue Spotting
- Examine U.S. Constitution, Articles 1-3, VI, Amendments I, IV, X, XIV. You can get an online version in the historical documents section of Thomas (http://thomas.loc.gov)

Week 3: E-Government and Government Information
A. The E-government Act
B. Current state of e-government
C. E-government services
D. E-government challenges
E. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and government transparency

Activity:

Readings:

Week 4: The Digital Divide: Stakeholders and Issues
A. What is the digital divide? Does it exist?
B. Who are the digitally divided? Special and underserved populations
C. Implications of the divide on policy, access, dissemination of government information, policies, and e-government
D. Universal access to telecommunications
Activity: Measuring the Digital Divide


Readings:


Week 5: Beyond Access to Participation

Paper #1 due: Policy Analysis

A. The difference between access and participation
B. Information policy for promoting participation
C. Problems and challenges of participation

Readings:


Week 6: Information Technology Design and Policy

A. How the design of technology shapes policy
B. How policy shapes design of technology

Readings:

Activity: Civic Apps
- Check out the participatory apps available from http://sunlightfoundation.com/projects/, http://www.shareable.net/blog/five-mobile-apps-for-civic-engagement, or http://musematic.net/2011/10/12/mobile-apps-for-citizen-science/ (or find your own!). Try downloading and using one that interests you. What was the experience like? Did the technology evoke any values or policy issues for you?

Week 7: Intellectual Property
A. Copyright
B. Fair use

Readings:
- Browse the Columbia University Libraries Copyright Advisory Office site, especially the “Copyright Quick Guide”: http://copyright.columbia.edu/copyright/copyright-in-general/copyright-quickguide/

Activity: Video
TED Talk: “Creativity Comes from Without”
Week 8: Open Access
   A. Licensing
   B. Open source and creative commons
   C. Open access, libraries, and universities

Readings:

Activity: Institutionalizing Open Access
   • The Berlin declaration on Open Access to Scientific Knowledge: http://oa.mpg.de/lang/en-uk/berlin-prozess/berliner-erklarung/

Should your institution sign the Berlin Declaration? Why or why not?

Week 9: Privacy
   A. Information privacy
   B. Secrecy and surveillance
   C. Privacy needs of governments, corporations and individuals

Activity:

Readings:
Week 10: Beyond Privacy: Forgetting, Awareness, and Other Paradigms

Paper #2 Due: Values in Social Media Design

A. Approaches to information protection beyond privacy
B. Forgetting
C. Awareness
D. Anonymity and pseudonymity
E. How policymakers and the public decide on new paradigms

Readings:

Activity: Why Privacy Matters video

Activity: Finding your internet footprint
Scan Google searches, Facebook pages, and browser histories for things you’d want remembered and forgotten. Try:
- [www.whattheinternetknowsaboutyou.com](http://www.whattheinternetknowsaboutyou.com)
- [http://www.google.com/ads/preferences](http://www.google.com/ads/preferences) (sign in to your Google account)
- [www.spokco.com](http://www.spokco.com)
- [www.zabasearch.com](http://www.zabasearch.com)

What privacy issues does this information raise? Is this data from surveillance (visual) or capture (data) models of privacy? What information should be forgotten? What information would you like more control over or participation with? What role could anonymity or pseudonymity play in protecting this data?

Week 11: Cybersecurity

A. Defining security
B. Security in a networked world
C. Security policy
D. Security and institutions
**Readings:**

**Activity: Staying safe online**

**Week 12: Intellectual Freedom**
- A. Banned Books and Materials Challenges
- B. Filtering
- C. Intellectual Freedom on the Internet

**Activity:**

**Readings:**

**Week 13: International Information Policy**
- A. Comparative issues in information policy
- B. Differences in European, Asian, African, South American information policy
C. International issues in information policy

Readings:


Week 14: Preserving Access

A. Preserving Future Access
B. E-records

Readings:


Week 15: Information Institutions as Policy Makers

Paper # 3: Op-Ed due

A. How information institutions set policy
B. Our responsibilities as policy makers

Readings:

Activity: Brainstorming your institutional policy role
Think about the institution for which you currently work (or have worked for recently). What institutional policies are you aware of? Are they appropriate to your institution’s missions or goals? If you could make changes, what would they be?