

INST 152 – Foundational Scholarship and Critical Inquiry in the Information Age

Meeting days/times: Mondays 6-8:45pm

HBK 0109

Contact and office hours:

James Donaldson, Adjunct Professor

jdonald3@umd.edu, office hours available upon request

All course policies are maintained and updated here:

<http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html>

Catalog Description: Claims of “fake news” have recently become commonplace, but false, inaccurate, misleading, and poorly researched statements (unintentional or otherwise) are hardly new. This course allows students to assume the role of an information professional, who is literate in analyzing, evaluating, and creating information ethically, and accurately.

Extended Description: The concept of ‘literacy’ derives from the Latin, *littera* – letters or characters that represent sound when spoken. Information professionals understand that data or characters create information when appropriately arranged. This suggests that literacy, understanding characters (or data), depends heavily on one’s ability to find, retrieve, analyze, evaluate, create, and disseminate information. Practicing this new literacy provides a foundation for any career, and for success in life as savvy consumers and creators of information and information sources. Assignments will give students ‘real-world’ experience in the literacy that is information.

Learning Outcomes

1. Examine the quality and veracity of information in a range of contexts – personal, scholastic, and professional, as well as platforms, both physical and virtual.
2. Act as analysts to critically evaluate bodies of text for alignment with literacy standards relevant to the information discipline.
3. Through analysis, evaluation, and creation of myriad information types, the student will create a personal information profile to establish where they have authority.
4. In planning the creation of an authentic information product, students will apply their information literacy to the necessary research related to a ‘clients’ need.
5. The student will apply information literacy to critique, revise and refine authentic Information products that have value for a “client.”
6. Using proper information literacy, students will demonstrate ethical product dissemination that effectively communicates a “client’s” need.

Key Objectives:

In this course, students will identify ways in which misinformation is spread; understand the broader social and societal implications of misinformation; engage in scholarly discussion with classmates and faculty.

Assignment 1 – Personal Essay/ Information Profile – 100 pts

Assignment 2 – Fact-Finding Mission – 100 pts.

Assignment 3 - Fact-checked information product – 100 pts

Assignment 4 – Class Participation and Discussion – 150 pts

Assignment 1 Personal Essay - 100 pts

This assignment is a formal essay and will follow appropriate academic writing conventions.

Prompt: To establish the value and broad applications of information literacy, each student will create a personal 'information profile' that reflects their unique information needs and behaviors.

The essay will total 500-700 words and follow proper APA format.

Assignment 2: Fact-finding Mission - 100 pts

This assignment requires students to critically analyze a source and serve as scholarly "fact-checker." The student will work to identify appropriate source material that either supports or refutes claims within the source. In a short, written analysis, the student will identify each claim and support that claim's accuracy with a relevant, accurate, reliable source. The catch is that you can only use each source type once. For example, if you find a primary source to back up one claim, you cannot use a primary source or related secondary source to back up the next claim.

Feel free to get creative in how you present this. Your submission will include a References page and should be visually interesting. You have the option to submit this assignment electronically or, if it is not an electronic object, you may hand it in.

Assignment 3: Project Portfolio and Deliverables - 100 pts total

Students will compile an official report and reflection that includes the project proposal and details the creation process.

Each deliverable supports one or more **Scholarship in Practice** outcomes:

1. Demonstrate an ability to select, critically evaluate, and apply relevant areas of scholarship.
2. Articulate the processes required to bring about a successful outcome from planning, modeling, and preparing, to critiquing, revising and perfecting.

3. Demonstrate an ability to critique existing applications of scholarship to learn from past success and failures.
4. Demonstrate an ability to collaborate to bring about a successful outcome.
5. Recognize how an application of scholarship affects or is affected by political, social, cultural, economic or ethical dimensions.
6. Produce an original analysis, project, creative work, performance or other scholarly work that reflects a body of knowledge relevant to the course.

3a. Project Proposal 15 pts

Working with a current event/ issue (something likely to remain in the news for the duration of our class or beyond) of your choosing, you will track information disseminated about the topic, identify problems with the presentation; identify a population that stands to lose something substantial from 'fake' information; and create an information product that presents the issue accurately, and in a form that best appeals to the population you've selected.

Assignment 3b: Annotated Bibliography 20 pts total

Prompt: Each student will select and critically evaluate information sources that support a population's information needs and behaviors, rights and access. The students will conduct research on the topic and compile no less than 15 sources into a strong, clear annotated bibliography that follows the scholarship conventions discussed in class.

First Draft - 10 pts

The first draft will include a relevant summary and brief rhetorical evaluation on the authority, benefits and weaknesses of each source. For each entry, the student will include the source title; author/ producer and/ or publication; the source title; the relevant summary; the rhetorical evaluation.

Final - 10 pts

3c. Product design/ creation – 15 pts

Design and create an information product for the population or community you've researched that accurately conveys information around the issue. The product can be print, digital, visual or oral. Consider: define the issue in a term that they can connect with; use language that appeals to the demographic; make the product appropriately accessible to the population; present accurate information in a way the community will not reject.

Deliverables:

Project Update 1 w/ mock-up or outline of the information product

3d. Revised information product design with user evaluations and feedback – 30 pts total

Solicit peer feedback from at least two classmates; make revisions and corrections as they apply. Adapt/revise your information product so that it can reach and appeal to both authoritative and marginalized groups.

Deliverables:

Project Update 2 w/ applied revisions and rationale - **20**

This is the final product, and an essay incorporating source material that describes your product, and how and why it will be effective in the population you've identified.

Product evaluation and feedback from tentative users - **10**

Submit the feedback from your classmates with your final product – their forms are part of their grade AND yours. They will be graded on the quality of their feedback, and you will be graded on your rationale for accepting or rejecting the suggestions. (5 pts for you, 5 pts for them)

3e. Persuasive Conversation – 20 pts

Your presentation of your final product should take on a town-hall style discussion where the class will assume the role of your community. You will share the product and communicate information about this issue as it affects the population.

Assignment 4: Class Participation and Weekly Discussions - 150 pts

Criteria: Class discussions will form a critical component of this course. Your attendance is expected in every session. If you will be unable to attend class, you must notify the instructor **before** the class you will be missing, barring an emergency that renders this impossible. You are expected to complete all assigned readings **before** class and participate in all class discussions and activities.

Course Calendar

August 27- *Introductions, Course outline, Expectations, Ground Rules. Your Information lense and some historical context.*

Readings: N/A

September 3 – Labor Day, no class

September 10 – *Power, Privilege, and Perception*

Assignment due: Personal Essay due by 11:59pm on 9/9/18

Readings:

Information Rights: Citizenship in the Information Society
Social Change and Reasoned Argument

September 17 – *Information vs. News*

Readings:

Checking the Fact-Checkers in 2008

This TedTalk: https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PLvzOwE5IWqhSrnPm-9awXCCbzybGg0GHM&time_continue=754&v=sNV4ylyXXX0

Assignment for next week: Find and select 2 video ads from opposing sides in a current or recent election. You can browse <http://newrepublic.com/political-ad-database> and/or <https://politicaladarchive.org> or do a simple internet search. Come prepared to present to the group on 9/24/18. Detailed expectations will be provided in class.

September 24 – *Information Literacy Part 1: Digging Deeper*

Assignment Due: Project Proposal due by 11:59pm 9/23/18

Readings:

We Are All Confident Idiots
ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education

October 1 – ***Bias, Propaganda, and Political Persuasion***

Readings: Go to www.allsides.com and select a news story of interest to you. You do not all need to pick the story at the top of the page. Read all 3 articles relating to your news story (left, right, center). Does one of them appeal more to your confirmation bias? Analyze each according to the criteria discussed in class and come prepared to present your findings to the group.

October 8 – ***Information Literacy Part 2: Creation and Control***

Readings: N/A

Assignment Due: Fact-Finding Mission

October 15 – ***Research Literacy***

Readings: Internet Research Made Easy

October 22 - ***The Information Marketplace***

Readings:

The Uncertain Future of Fair Use in a Global Information Marketplace

Self-Publishing: Opportunities and Threats in a New Age of Mass Culture

Assignment Due: Annotated Bibliography

October 29 – ***Information Literacy Part 3: Authority***

Readings: What's so Important about Peer-Review?

Assignment for next week: Work in pairs to design a survey/questionnaire regarding a polarizing topic. Use this tool to initiate a conversation with at least 5 individuals (individually or in a group). Come to class prepared to discuss the survey data and the experience.

November 5 – ***Crowdsourcing and Confirmation Bias***

Readings: N/A

Due: Product Design, initial product

November 12 – ***Group Conferences***

There will be an online discussion this week and each student will be scheduled a conference with the instructor to discuss their project.

Readings: TBD

November 19 – ***Peer Feedback***

Each student will offer a 7-10 minute preliminary presentation on their initial product

design to solicit feedback.

Readings: N/A

November 26 – ***Privacy and Protection***

Readings: Detecting, Preventing, and Responding to Fraudsters

December 3 – ***Presentations***

Readings: N/A

Assignments Due: Final Annotated Bibliography; Persuasive Conversations