INST 311: Information Organization

Section 0101
TuTh 11:00am-12:15pm
[ATL (Links to an external site.)](#) 2428

Dr. Katrina Fenlon, Instructor

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- Hornbake 4105C
- Office hours:
    - Wednesdays 12:30pm-1:30pm
    - Thursdays 12:30pm - 1:30pm
    - By appointment (email Prof. Fenlon for an appointment)

Dan Yang, TA

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- Office hours:
    - Tuesdays 3:30pm-4:40pm in Hornbake South Wing 4115
    - By appointment (email Dan for an appointment)

Course Description

This is an introductory course examining the theories, concepts, and principles of information, information presentation and representation, organization, record structures, description, and classification. Topics to be covered in this course include the methods and strategies to develop systems for storage, organization, and retrieval of information in a variety of organizational and institutional settings, as well as policy, ethical, and social implications of these systems.

Your Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course, you will be able to:

- Describe and evaluate information organization systems
- Select/compare suitable information organization systems, tools, and practices for specific contexts
- Identify, critically analyze, and discuss:
  - Formal information representations, structures, and their properties
  - Applications of classification principles and other standards for knowledge representation in information systems
  - Social and ethical aspects of classification and policies governing information organization
- Demonstrate ability to translate key concepts and practices across contexts
- Develop basic familiarity with key standards and tools for information organization

The Topics You'll Learn About

- Information resources and collections
- Metadata and metadata schemas
- Values and ethics in information work
- Classifications and controlled vocabularies
- Information architecture
- Information retrieval systems

Your Required Resources

- Course website: **www.elms.umd.edu (Links to an external site.)**
- Readings, videos, tutorials, and other resources will be made available via the weekly **Reading Memos**, which are available in the Modules section of our ELMS site.

Campus Policies

It is our shared responsibility to know and abide by the University of Maryland's policies that relate to all courses, which include topics like:

- Academic integrity
- Student and instructor conduct
- Accessibility and accommodations
- Attendance and excused absences
- Grades and appeals
- Copyright and intellectual property

Please visit www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html (Links to an external site.) for the Office of Undergraduate Studies' full list of campus-wide policies and follow up with the instructor if you have questions.

Your Activities, Learning Assessments, & Expectations

- Please bring laptops (preferred) or tablets to class. Certain parts of each class will be "computer-free". Plan to take notes during "computer-free" parts using non-digital technologies, like pens and paper. During certain parts of each class, you will have the opportunity to use laptops/tablets responsibly to engage with course-related material. Phones are not an acceptable replacement for laptops or tablets.
- You may not use cell phones during class.
- Each session will combine lectures with small group discussions and activities so that you can further experience, unpack, and tease apart the concepts we have covered in readings and lectures.
- In each unit's Reading Memo, which will be posted in that unit's ELMS module, you will see required readings and (sometimes) enrichment readings. **You must complete all assigned readings by the time designated in the Reading Memo.** Content from course readings is fair game for quizzes and exams, regardless of whether the content was included in the in-class slides and lecture.
- I adhere to the University's definitions of excused absences; you will never be penalized for an excused absence as long as you give timely notification to the instructor.
- Policy on late work:
  - o There will be five individual, out-of-class homework assignments this semester. You may choose to take advantage of a 48-hour grace period a maximum of 2 times, with no questions asked, **as long as you give prior notification to the instructor**.
  - o If both grace periods have been used, or **if a student submits a late assignment without prior notification**, the assignment grade will be docked 5 points per 24-hour period, beginning one minute after the due date/time.
  - o Group assignments must be handed in on time. Late group assignments will be docked 5 points per 24-hour period, beginning one minute after the due date/time.
- You will take 5 regular quizzes in ELMS.
  - o Your 5th quiz grade will be a duplicate of your highest quiz grade to date.
  - o Late quizzes will be docked 5 points per 24-hour period, beginning one minute after the due date/time.
- You will take a Midterm exam in class on paper.
- You will take your final exam on ELMS. The final will be published immediately after our last class session and will be due at a time to be announced later in the semester.

- o If there is **ANY** actual or suspected violations of academic integrity during the semester, all students will have to take the final exam on paper.
- Late exams (midterm or final) will not be accepted and will receive a grade of 0.
- You may use external resources (readings, lecture slides, notes, Web, etc.) during any quiz or exam, but all answers must be in your own words, and **it is forbidden to consult with any other humans**.
- Early in the semester, you will be assigned to a 4- or 5-person team. This will be your 311 Team for the duration of the semester. As a team, you will participate in small-group discussions and activities about course topics, and you will also work together on a team project to develop an app and the accompanying documentation, metadata schema, and sample data. You will learn together from each other through these experiences.
- 15% of your course grade is allocated for participation. Your participation score is calculated using the following three factors:
  - o 40% in-class participation. Throughout the semester, there will be in-class activities, worksheets, and one-question mini-quizzes. These will be un-announced, and your score on these will be either 1 or 0. Students with excused absences will not be penalized for missing activities.
  - o 20% peer & self-evaluation participation. After each graded group assignment (including the group discussions and the final group project), you will be asked to complete a survey evaluating your own and your peers' performance in the group for that activity. To receive full credit for this element of your participation grade, you must complete all of the surveys.
  - o 40% evaluation scores. The scores that you receive on the peer & self evaluation surveys will be averaged and will count toward 40% of your participation grade. To receive full credit for this element of your participation grade, you should be an active, helpful, and respectful member of your 311 Team.

Get Some Help!

- You are welcome and encouraged to visit your instructor, Prof. Fenlon, during office hours or by appointment, for any reason at all.
- **You are expected to take personal responsibility for your own learning.** This includes acknowledging when your performance does not match your goals and doing something about it.
- Everyone can benefit from some expert guidance on time management, note taking, and exam preparation, so we encourage you to consider visiting http://ter.ps/learn (Links to an external site.) and scheduling an appointment with an academic coach.
- Sharpen your communication skills (and improve your grade) by visiting http://ter.ps/writing (Links to an external site.) and schedule an appointment with the campus Writing Center.

- Find guidance and counseling about your career and personal life at the campus Counseling Center, http://www.counseling.umd.edu (Links to an external site.).

Grades

Grades are not given, but earned. Your grade is determined by your performance on the learning assessments in the course and is assigned individually (not curved). If earning a particular grade is important to you, please speak with me any time so that I can offer some helpful suggestions for achieving your goal.

You will receive all scores in ELMS. Occasionally, feedback will be given on paper and returned in class. If you would like to review any of your grades (including the exams), or have questions about how something was scored, please email me to schedule a time to meet and discuss. **It's important that you feel as though you are treated fairly in this course, and there will never be a negative consequence to you for opening a conversation.**

Learning		Points	Cate
Assessments	#	**Each**	**Total**
Quizzes : topic-based quizzes on reading & lecture; taken on ELMS. Your lowest quiz grade will be dropped, and your highest quiz grade will count twice.	5	100	500
Homework : hands-on assignments related to in-class topics	5	100	500
Individual Project : using JSON-LD and Schema.org to describe an event	1	100	100
Group Discussion Notes : summaries and observations based on in-class group discussions and activities	5	100	500
Group Project : design an app	1	100	100
Midterm Exam : assessment of understanding of course concepts from Session 1 – Midterm. Date To Be Announced.	1	100	100
Final Exam : assessment of understanding of course concepts from entire semester, with emphasis on Midterm – Final class. Date To Be Announced.	1	100	100

Participation : raw score calculated using:

- evaluation scores from your group peers (40%)
- participation in the peer evaluation process (20%)
- mini-quiz & activity scores (40%)

NA   100

Final letter grades are assigned based on the percentage of total assessment points earned. To be fair to everyone I have to establish clear standards and apply them consistently, so please understand that being close to a cutoff is not the same this as making the cut (89.99 ≠ 90.00). It would be unethical to make exceptions for some and not others.

Final Grade Cutoffs

+	97.00%	+	87.00%	+	77.00%	+	67.00%
A	93.00%	B	83.00%	C	73.00%	D	63.00%	F	<60.0%
-	90.00%	-	80.00%	-	70.00%	-	60.00%

Names/Pronouns and Self-Identifications

The University of Maryland recognizes the importance of a diverse student body, and we are committed to fostering equitable classroom environments. I invite you, if you wish, to tell us how you want to be referred to both in terms of your name and your pronouns (he/him, she/her, they/them, etc.). The pronouns someone indicates are not necessarily indicative of their gender identity. Visit trans.umd.edu (Links to an external site.) to learn more. Additionally, only you may choose to disclose how you identify in terms of your gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, and dis/ability, among all aspects of your identity. I will do my best to address and refer to all students accordingly, and I ask you to do the same for all of your fellow Terps.