

## INSC 531: INTRODUCTION TO INFORMATION SOURCES & SERVICES

University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Fall 2020 Class Meetings: Mondays, 8:00-9:10 p.m. on [ZOOM](#); additional weekly asynchronous 1:15

### Faculty Contact Information

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### A NOTE ABOUT FALL 2020:

#### Things are rough!

As we begin the term, the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic in the U.S. has exceeded 6 months. In fact, I am writing this 6 months to the day UTK announced students would not return to campus after spring break.

Throughout the pandemic the U.S. has been reckoning with its legacy of violent racism, including that perpetrated by institutional actors. This has profoundly personal meaning for some of you, and I want to acknowledge the compounded trauma you're continuing to experience.

#### Things aren't normal!

We are all experiencing stress, anxiety, and disruption.

Some of us have lost work; some of us have lost loved ones or are profoundly worried about loved ones who might be vulnerable. Some of us are vulnerable!

Some of us (raises hand) are angry.

All of this makes it more difficult to buckle down, focus, and produce quality work.

#### We'll get through it!

I will be as flexible as I can with deadlines and attendance this semester as long as you do your best to communicate with me. I worry about my students when they don't attend class, miss a deadline, or leave my emails unanswered.

I know you are all diligent and hardworking; when you go "off-grid" I assume there's something wrong.

Please do your best to let me know what's going on.

### COURSE INFORMATION

#### Catalog Description

Introduction to reference services in libraries and information centers, including the reference interview, service standards and guidelines, and general reference sources and source types.

#### Additional Information

INSC 531 builds upon introductory material related to reference and information sources and services presented in the required courses. While not a formal prerequisite, INSC 531 can be considered a "bridge

course” connecting the required courses to other information sources/services-related electives in the 53X sequence.

We will pay particular attention to the ways in which a variety of factors—including the American library’s institutional history of racism and other types of discrimination—contributed to and continue to influence the design and provision of information sources and services.

## Student Learning Outcomes

Students who complete this course will be capable of demonstrating awareness, knowledge, and/or understanding of...

- information behavior-related research that provides a window into why and how people ask the questions they do (and don’t);
- the reference interview from initiation to conclusion and follow-up, including
- the ways in which social and personal context can shape communication between information service providers and information seekers;
- effective approaches to parsing information requests, and
- identifying the appropriate resources for addressing them;
- the main categories of information sources and important titles in each (print and web-based); and
- approaches to managing and evaluating information sources and services.

## Required Texts

Cassell, Kay Ann, and Uma Hiremath. [\*Reference and Information Services: An Introduction, Fourth Edition\*](#). Chicago: ALA/Neal-Schuman, 2018.

## Recommended Texts

Style handbook of your choice (APA or Chicago Manual of Style).

[ARBAOnline](#) and [Choice](#).

## COMMUNICATION

### Email

I am required to communicate with you through your UTK email address. If you prefer to use another address, consult the [OIT Helpdesk](#) to obtain directions for forwarding your UTK mail to your preferred address if you don’t wish to check both accounts.

### Instructor Availability

Email is the most expedient way to get in touch with me. If I will be unable to check my email for a significant period of time (less than once/24-hour period) I will provide you with an alternative method of contacting me.

Note: Because I have administrative responsibilities in the School, I receive A LOT of email, much of it from students. It is *tremendously* helpful to me if you include our course number in the subject line of emails you send.

## COMPUTING REQUIREMENTS AND RESOURCES

### Requirements

You must have adequate computing skills, including but not limited to use of word processing, Web browsers, e-mail, listservs, Canvas, and ZOOM software.

You must learn how to submit your assignments using Canvas.

The [Office of Information Technology \(OIT\)](#) provides training classes in using varied technologies for students at no charge (advance registration is required).

You must obtain a Tmail account and subscribe to the SIS student listserv. In addition, you must have the PowerPoint Reader or the regular PowerPoint software installed on your computer to download the lecture notes from Canvas.

## Technical Support

Please review the SIS Technology Introduction website for help getting started with the tools you'll need in the program: <https://sis.utk.edu/techintro/>

For assistance with technical and computing issues, contact the OIT HelpDesk by phone at (865) 974-9900, using the [Contact Form](#), or at the [Walk-in HelpDesk](#).

## Course Resources

Most lecture notes will be posted on Canvas before the class meeting for you to download. Note that lecture notes do not substitute for the assigned readings. Read the class announcements posted on Canvas to stay current with course matters.

# COURSE ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICIES

## Attendance and Participation<sup>1</sup>

Because the format of this class is 1:15 synchronous/1:15 asynchronous, I gauge participation and attendance a little differently.

*Asynchronous:* students will complete the 1:15 asynchronous class segment by participating in a variety of independent and small group activities. These are not optional.

I will evaluate your participation for completeness, relevance, timeliness, and substance as part of your participation grade.

If extenuating circumstances such as illness prevent you from completing your asynchronous activities on time, please inform me as soon as possible.

If you are absent from our class meeting, I will still expect you to complete that week's activity unless circumstances are sufficiently significant to prevent you from doing so.

*Synchronous:* I assume that each student will be present and participate in class. Missing multiple classes and/or failing to participate will lower your grade; frequent participation will raise the grade.

Regular attendance is required and necessary, and unexplained absences will affect your grade. Contact me as soon as possible if you cannot attend class. If you will be absent from class, you must:

- Inform me in advance or as soon as possible after class
- Submit any work due from the missed class period
- Listen to class recording
- Obtain notes, handouts, etc. from Canvas
- Check with classmates for notes, announcements, etc.
- Complete any assigned activity

*Acceptable reasons for absence from class include:*

- Illness
- Serious family emergencies,
- Military obligation,

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<sup>1</sup> See the "Note about Fall 2020" on p. 1

- Severe weather conditions,
- Religious holidays and
- Obligations for court imposed legal obligations (i.e., jury duty, subpoena)

Missing more than one class meeting for reasons other than those listed above will have a negative impact on your course participation grade.

## **Inclement Weather**

“The University of Tennessee will remain open except in the most severe weather conditions. The Chancellor (or appointed representative) may officially close or suspend selected activities of the university because of extreme weather conditions. When a decision to close is reached, campus and local radio and TV stations will be notified and a UTAAlert will be issued. The notice will also be posted on the front page at [www.utk.edu](http://www.utk.edu)...” SIS will cancel classes when UT is closed. Please check the SIS student listserv ([UTKSIS-L@LISTSERV.UTK.EDU](mailto:UTKSIS-L@LISTSERV.UTK.EDU)) for messages about closing.

If you face inclement weather conditions in your home location and attending class is impossible or unwise, please let me know when you are able.

## **ADDITIONAL POLICIES AND POINTS OF INFORMATION**

### **Disabilities that May Impede Learning**

Any student who feels they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact [Student Disability Services \(sds@utk.edu\)](mailto:sds@utk.edu) in 2227 Dunford Hall at 865-974-6087, or by video relay at 865-622-6566 to coordinate reasonable academic accommodations.

### **Civility**

“In 2011, the university adopted the Principles of Civility and Community. They are designed to work in concert with all existing codes of conduct. The principles encourage all members of the campus community to foster a learning environment where the differences of our diverse culture are valued, respected and celebrated. Civility is an act of showing regard and respect for others including: politeness, consideration, tact, good manners, graciousness, cordiality, affability, amiability and courteousness...” (Hilltopics, p.10).

This statement applies to communicating with the instructor, classmates, and other members of the UT community.

### **CCI Diversity Statement**

The College of Communication and Information recognizes that a college diverse in its people, curricula, scholarship, research, and creative activities expands opportunities for intellectual inquiry and engagement, helps students develop critical thinking skills, and prepares students for social and civic responsibilities. All members of the College benefit from diversity and the quality of learning, research, scholarship and creative activities is enhanced by a climate of inclusion, understanding and appreciation of differences and the full range of human experience. As a result, the College is committed to diversity and equal opportunity and it recognizes that it must represent the diversity inherent in American society. The College is acutely aware that diversity and fairness are foundations that unite the College’s faculty, staff, students, and the larger communication and information community.

### **Instructor Status as a Title IX Mandatory Reporter**

University of Tennessee faculty are committed to supporting our students and upholding gender equity laws as outlined by Title IX. Please be aware that if you choose to confide in a faculty member regarding an issue of sexual misconduct, dating violence, or stalking, we are obligated to inform the University’s Title IX Coordinator, who can assist you in connecting with all possible resources both on- and off-campus. If you would like to speak with someone confidentially, the Student Counseling Center (865-974-2196) and the

Student Health Center (865-974-3135) are both confidential resources. For additional resources and information, visit [titleix.utk.edu](http://titleix.utk.edu).

Please note that my mandatory reporting responsibilities extends to incidents that occurred prior to this semester, even by several years. **By no means** do I want to discourage students from speaking with me about these or any other issues, but it's important that you are aware I may not be able to maintain confidentiality before you choose to speak with me.

## ASSIGNMENTS, ASSESSMENTS, AND EVALUATIONS

### Academic Integrity

Students should be familiar and maintain their *Academic Integrity* described in <https://hilltopics.utk.edu/academics/>, p. 15 as: “Study, preparation and presentation should involve at all times the student’s own work, unless it has been clearly specified that work is to be a team effort. Academic honesty requires that the student present his or her own work in all academic projects, including tests, papers, homework, and class presentation. When incorporating the work of other scholars and writers into a project, the student must accurately cite the source of that work.”

Students should abide by the **Honor Statement** (<https://hilltopics.utk.edu/student-code-of-conduct/> Section X. Honor Statement)

*“As a student of the University, I pledge that I will neither knowingly give nor receive any inappropriate assistance in academic work, thus affirming my own personal commitment to honor and integrity.”*

### Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious offense, subject to disciplinary action that may include failure in a course and/or dismissal from the University. (p. 22)

Attention to matters of documentation in all written work is expected and required. Inadvertence, alleged lack of understanding, or avowed ignorance of the various types of plagiarism are not acceptable excuses.

*Specific examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:*

1. Copying without proper documentation (quotation marks and a citation) written or spoken words, phrases, or sentences from any source;
2. Summarizing without proper documentation (usually a citation) ideas from another source (unless such information is recognized as common knowledge);
3. Borrowing facts, statistics, graphs, pictorial representations, or phrases without acknowledging the source (unless such information is recognized as common knowledge);
4. Collaborating on a graded assignment without the instructor’s approval;
5. Submitting work, either in whole or in part, created by a professional service and used without attribution (e.g., paper, speech, bibliography, or photograph). (p. 22)

The [UTK Code of Student Conduct](#) outlines the process for addressing instances of suspected plagiarism:

#### **Section 10.7.1 Notice of Academic Dishonesty and Informal Opportunity to Respond to Allegations.**

When an act of alleged academic dishonesty is discovered by, or brought to the attention of an instructor, the instructor shall

- notify the student about the alleged academic dishonesty,
- describe the information supporting the allegation, and
- give the student an informal opportunity to respond to the allegation(s) and information.

The instructor may proceed with imposing an academic penalty for academic dishonesty if the student has not responded to the instructor’s notice to the student concerning the alleged academic dishonesty within five (5) business days of the notice. (p. 23)

Students who may be unsure of the nature of plagiarism should consult the instructor or a guide for writing research reports. (Additional resources are available at <http://www.lib.utk.edu/instruction/plagiarism.>)

## Assignments and Grading

Student work is assigned a grade based on quality of thought and writing style, thoroughness of research and of references, appropriateness of length, and originality. Only exceptional work will receive an "A" grade. Papers that are received after the due date will be assigned a lower grade than would otherwise be received. All sources must be cited, quotations must be in quotation marks and attributed correctly. Not doing so constitutes plagiarism.

## Preparation of Written Work

Please use either APA or CMS documentation styles for in-text citations and list of references/bibliography. Formatting assignments themselves per APA or CMS guidelines (e.g., headers, headings, etc.) is not necessary.

You must cite all sources, format and attribute all quotations correctly. Not doing so constitutes plagiarism.

Grades for assignment submissions that include incomplete in-text citations or reference lists will be lowered by one-half grade level (e.g., an assignment that would have received 17/20, or an 85/100: B, will be lowered to 16/20, 80/100: B-).

All assignments must be word-processed and **include your name**.

## Pre-submission Feedback

I am happy to look at a good draft of assignments prior to final submission. I will not pre-grade assignments, just provide general feedback and tips. These pre-submissions should be sent via email attachment (i.e., not Canvas) no later than one week prior to final due date.

## Due Dates and Late Assignments

- Submit assignments to the "assignments" area of Canvas.
- Assignments are due (officially) at 11:59 p.m. Eastern on the due date listed on the syllabus.
- I will download the submissions from Canvas early the next morning.
- I will **ONLY** download assignments from Canvas **ONCE**.

Therefore, if your assignment is not ready by the deadline...

- You must send me an email informing me that your assignment will be late. Not doing so will result in a one-point deduction for each day I don't hear from you.<sup>2</sup>
- When it's ready, you must **submit it to me via email**, as an attachment (i.e., **NOT** using Canvas)
- One point will be deducted for each 24-hour hour period the assignment is not turned in.

## Incompletes

Based on adopted University of Tennessee-Knoxville and SIS policy, a grade of *I* (Incomplete) is reserved for emergencies that prevent the student from completing the course on time. Incompletes are granted only under "the most unusual of circumstances" and solely at the discretion of the instructor (in other words, I may refuse a student's request for an incomplete). Plan your semester's course of study carefully to insure sufficient time to complete the required work.

For students who simply "disappear" without contacting the instructor and without completing the required form, an "F" is submitted.

## Assigning Grades

Please note that I do not assign letter grades for individual assignments, but will mark your paper with my comments and provide a point score based on the possible points earned for that assignment. If you'd like to compute a letter grade based on the score provided, divide your score by the total points possible for the

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<sup>2</sup> See my note about Fall 2020.

assignment and refer to the “Evaluation” scale for the corresponding letter grade. For example, if you earned 23/25 points on an assignment, your percentage grade would be  $92/100=A-$ . Your final grade will be based on total points earned/100 possible points over the course of the semester.

## Evaluation

Semester grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

Letter grade	Score range	Quantitative and qualitative significance
A	93≤	(4 quality points per semester hour) superior performance.
A-	90-92.99	(3.7 quality points per semester credit hour) intermediate grade performance.
B+	88-89.99	(3.5 quality points per semester hour) better than satisfactory performance.
B	83-87.99	(3 quality points per semester hour) satisfactory performance.
B-	80-82.99	(2.7 quality points per semester credit hour) intermediate grade performance.
C+	78-79.99	(2.5 quality points per semester hour) less than satisfactory performance.
C	70-77.99	(2 quality points per semester hour) performance well below the standard expected of graduate students.
D	60-69.99	(1 quality point per semester hour) clearly unsatisfactory performance and cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements.
F	59.99≥	(no quality points) extremely unsatisfactory performance and cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements.
I		(no quality points) a temporary grade indicating that the student has performed satisfactorily in the course but, due to unforeseen circumstances, has been unable to finish all requirements. An I is not given to enable a student to do additional work to raise a deficient grade. The instructor, in consultation with the student, decides the terms for the removal of the I, including the time limit for removal. If the I is not removed within one calendar year, the grade will be changed to an F. The course will not be counted in the cumulative grade point average until a final grade is assigned. No student may graduate with an I on the record.
S/NC		(carries credit hours, but no quality points) S is equivalent to a grade of B or better, and NC means no credit earned. A grade of Satisfactory/No Credit is allowed only where indicated in the course description in the <i>Graduate Catalog</i> . The number of Satisfactory/No Credit courses in a student's program is limited to one-fourth of the total credit hours required.
P/NP		(carries credit hours, but no quality points) P indicates progress toward completion of a thesis or dissertation. NP indicates no progress or inadequate progress.
W		(carries no credit hours or quality points) indicates that the student officially withdrew from the course.

## Course Evaluation

You will be invited to evaluate the course at the end of the term. Please participate in this valuable process. I also invite your comments throughout the course and read all comments, suggestions, and recommendations.

## MSIS Program Outcomes

It is our vision to provide a quality educational program, and for students to have the very best educational experience possible. By the end of their time in the MSIS program, each student should be able to:

1. Describe and discuss the processes of creation, organization, distribution, storage, access, retrieval, management, use, and preservation of information.
2. Describe and discuss the nature of leadership and management in the information professions and the importance of participation in the global information society.
3. Apply the general principles, values, and ethical standards of providing information services in a variety of settings and for diverse populations.
4. Comply with the changing responsibilities of the information professional in a culturally diverse and networked global society.
5. Identify critical professional issues in a variety of organizational, cultural, societal, disciplinary, transdisciplinary, and historical contexts.
6. Analyze and apply standards or policies related to the processes of creation, organization, distribution, storage, access, retrieval, management, use or preservation of information.
7. Explain the changing nature of information, information needs, and information behavior.
8. Assess and implement information technologies, systems, sources, and services that serve users effectively and efficiently.
9. Analyze research and apply it to information practice.

### Assignments: Descriptions, Due Dates, and Program Outcomes for SLC

This table provides a quick reference for assignment names, due dates, point distribution, and MSIS Program Outcome for the Student Learning Collection. A fuller description of each assignment follows the table.

Unit	I/G	Assignment	Due Date	Required?	Description	Deliverable	Points	MSIS Program Outcome(s)
A.	I	Participation	Ongoing	Yes	Comments/Interaction with Instructor and Classmates	Var., Canvas posts	15	
B.	I	Question Set 1: 9/7	9/21	2/5	Provide answers and description of process for reference-style questions.	WD	25	3, 8
	I	Question Set 2: 9/21	10/5					
	I	Question Set 3: 10/5	10/19					
	I	Question Set 4: 10/19	11/2					
	I	Question Set 5: 11/2	11/16					
D.	I	Reference Interview	10/12	Yes	Description of reference interview experience. May be conducted in person (if you can do so safely), on the telephone, or online (chat).	WD	30	3, 6, 8
C.	I	Resource Evaluation, individual option 1	11/9	1/3	Individual recorded or live evaluation and presentation (10 minutes, max., formal). May cover <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a single resource or</li> <li>• be topical, e.g., "Social Justice Resources for Middle School Students" (must include at least 3 resources).</li> </ul>	WD (informal), mp4	30	8



Unit	I/G	Assignment	Due Date	Required?	Description	Deliverable	Points	MSIS Program Outcome(s)
	G	Resource Evaluation, group option			Group recorded or live presentation (15 minutes, max., formal), topical rather than focused on a single resource, e.g., "Social Justice Resources for Middle School Students" Must include at least 1 resource per student in group, minimum of 3 resources.	WD (informal), mp4		
	I	Resource Evaluation, individual option 2	11/23		Individual brief written description/evaluation (see: ARBAOnline or <a href="#">Choice</a> ) of three different resources. Resource may be of similar or unrelated topics.	WD		
		TOTAL					100	

### Participation (15%)

Much of the course material will be presented in the readings and discussions. I expect that you will complete the reading assigned each week and come to class prepared to offer your opinions and insights.

This class meets synchronously for 1.25 hours weekly. On most weeks we will have an out-of-class activity to account for the additional hour of class time. These may be independent or small group activities, and will typically require some type of discussion board post or verbal summary at their conclusion. These activities will contribute to your participation grade.

### Question Set Exercises (at least) any 2/5 (25%)

- Beginning on 9/7, I will distribute 5 brief question set exercises each two weeks. Please complete at least 2 of the 5.
- These assignments are designed to encourage you to think about both the utility of individual information sources and the theory and practice of information services and will include, among other things, questions for you to research.
- While you'll be expected to provide answers to these questions, the more important consideration in completing these assignments is an explanation of your process in pursuing the question's answer.
- This is a DE course and I understand that your access to print collections varies dramatically by home location; therefore, it will be possible to complete the exercises using free and subscription-based online sources.

### Reference Interview Exercise (30%)

This assignment is designed to help you rethink the nature of reference and information services through outsider and participant observation. First, complete the assigned readings related to the Reference Interview, paying particular attention to [RUSA's Guidelines](#). Then, utilize a library's in-person (if possible to do so safely, and at a library at which you are not known), phone, and/or reference chat service and ask a question.

Some guidelines:

- Make this a question on a topic that you actually know about or that is meaningful to you.
- Select a topic that you are comfortable sharing in your report.
- If you visit a library in-person, it is important that you visit one at which you are not known.
- Do not ask your question of a friend, colleague, or professional acquaintance.
- Let the staff person lead you through the reference interview and answer as you think a patron needing this information would respond.

Take notes on your experience and submit a comprehensive narrative that addresses the following:

- The type of library and service you utilized, and the time and day of the week;
- The individual's reference interview techniques and quality of the transaction, paying special attention to the following:
  - ✓ Their verbal and nonverbal behaviors.
  - ✓ The questions they asked
  - ✓ Questions they didn't ask (but should have)
  - ✓ Your comfort with the interaction
  - ✓ Evidence of policies for providing reference assistance, including signage (in person), phone menus (on the phone), and/or web directions, notices, or links (online)
  - ✓ The extent to which your question was answered
- Note any other impressions (staff person was friendly/harried, user was angry/polite).
- Were you satisfied? Why or why not? What could have been done differently?

Rewrite your notes into an organized essay about your observations, using the assigned readings to support your evaluation.

- Do not identify the name of the library nor librarians in your paper.
- Be sure to cite supporting material (using APA or Chicago style) and attach a bibliography of sources.

### **Resource Evaluation (one of three options) (30%)**

#### *Option 1: Individual*

- You will select an information (reference) resource to evaluate and share with the class in a recorded presentation (10 minutes, maximum).
- If you have access to a screencasting software package like Camtasia, that's fine; if not, use ZOOM to record your presentation (and convert it to an mp4 file).
- You may consult our text, [ARBAOnline](#), [Choice](#), or another selection tool to choose your resource.
- Your source may be print, electronic, free, or fee-based. Be creative!

During your presentation you should explain why and how you selected your resource, identifying the referring sources, and describe the resource using Cassell and Hiremath's evaluative criteria:

1. Scope
2. Quality of Content
3. Accuracy
4. Currency
5. Authority
6. Ease of use (incl. usability, interface, and searching capabilities for electronic resources)
7. Arrangement
8. Appropriateness for users (you should identify the type of library and user for which the resource would be appropriate)
9. Format.

### *Option 2: Group*

Your group of 2-4 students should select at least one resource per student, minimum 3 (i.e., if yours is a group of 2, select at least 3 resources; if yours is a group of 4, select at least 4 resources) focused on similar topics (e.g., “Social Justice Resources for Middle School Students”, “Guides for Citizen Science”) to evaluate and share with the class in a recorded presentation (15 minutes, maximum).

- If you have access to a screencasting software package like Camtasia, that’s fine; if not, use ZOOM to record your presentation (and convert it to an mp4 file).
- You may consult our text, [ARBAOnline](#), [Choice](#), or another selection tool to choose your resources.
- Your sources may be print, electronic, free, or fee-based. Be creative!

During your presentation you should explain why and how you selected your resource, identifying the referring sources, and describe the resource using Cassell and Hiremath’s evaluative criteria:

1. Scope
2. Quality of Content
3. Accuracy
4. Currency
5. Authority
6. Ease of use (incl. usability, interface, and searching capabilities for electronic resources)
7. Arrangement
8. Appropriateness for users (you should identify the type of library and user for which the resource would be appropriate)
9. Format.

### *Option 3: Individual*

Select and evaluate (briefly) three information resources. Topics may be similar or unrelated. Evaluations should be modeled on those in [ARBAOnline](#) or [Choice](#).

## **DISCLAIMER**

*I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus and schedule as the semester progresses, but I will never make a change that would have a negative impact on student grades, add to workload, or accelerate deadlines.*