COURSE INFORMATION

INSC 201 Introduction to Information Sciences
  Spring 2020, 3 Credit Hours
  University of Tennessee, Knoxville
  Course Mode: On-campus
  Location: Nursing 315
  Class Meetings: Tuesday, Thursday 11:10-12:25

Faculty Contact Information
  Dr. Diane Kelly, Professor and Director
dianek@utk.edu, 865.974.5882
  Communications Building, Suite 451
  Office Hours: by appointment, online and in-person

SIS Office Information
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  Fax (SIS): 865.974.4667

Course Welcome and Overview
Welcome to INSC 201 Introduction to Information Sciences! I am excited to lead you through this learning journey and look forward to getting to know you better. I hope this course will ignite your interests in the information sciences and also give you new ideas and ways to think about our information environment and your own information practices.

Reading is extremely important to me. This course requires a lot of reading. I have carefully selected our course readings and I hope you will find them interesting. You will encounter a range of different types of readings including textbook chapters, journal articles, newspaper and magazine articles, blog posts, video segments and book chapters (from both academic book and popular press books). I have included a number of examples of contemporary information situations, issues and practices to help you better understand some of the foundational concepts and ideas, and to help you relate these to your own personal experiences. To make things easier for you, I have placed all of the readings in the Files section of our Canvas site (course slides will also be posted in this section). There are links to the readings from the Schedule (some links are to Web pages, while others are to items in our Canvas site).

Writing is also important to me. For each day of readings, you will be asked to submit a reading reflection. These reflections are due the evening before the date on which we will discuss the readings in class. Writing about what you read is one of the best ways to help cultivate your understanding of the material. Your reading journal is worth 40% of your
grade, so it really is important! Class participation is worth 10% of your grade, which means you have total control over 50% of your course grade (i.e., no tricky tests!). For some of you, maintaining a weekly reading and writing practice will require a great a deal of discipline, but you can do it! There will also be in-class quizzes (10%) and three homework assignments (30%). We will wrap-up with a final exam (10%). Tip: one great way to prepare for the final exam is to maintain your reading journal! All assignments will be submitted and returned via Canvas.

You will have two opportunities to earn extra credit. The first is to attend a lecture and write a short report about what you learned. The second is a group effort and requires at least 90% of the class to complete the course evaluation at the end of the semester.

If at any time you are experiencing difficulties in this class, or have questions, or just want to chat more, please reach out (dianek@utk.edu). I am happy to speak with you in-person or via Zoom. Best wishes for a terrific semester!

Catalog Description
This is an introductory course covering information representation, organization and retrieval, human information seeking and interaction; information consumer, information ethics and information literacy.

Student Learning Outcomes
Students who complete this course will:

- Understand the history and foundations of information science, including the fundamental concepts, ideas, and practices.
- Cultivate scientific, computational, social scientific, and humanistic approaches to understanding information science.
- Develop critical and ethical perspectives of information technologies and systems.
- Relate information science concepts and ideas to current events, situations, and technologies.
- Reflect on, and critically exam, their own information practices and those of society.

Required Texts
There is no required textbook for this course. Readings are either available for free on the Web or have been provided to you in Canvas site.

COMMUNICATION AND “OFFICE HOURS”

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
Please don’t hesitate to email me with updates, questions, or concerns. I will typically respond within one or two days during the week, but I might not respond on the weekend. I will notify you if I will be out of town and/or if connection (or other) issues may delay a response.

Office Hours
I do not have regular office hours, but I am on-campus nearly every day unless I am traveling. You are always welcome to come to my office for a visit. It is generally best to schedule an appointment so I can make sure I am available (as Director of SIS I have a lot of meetings!). I am also happy to talk with you via Zoom – just let me know your preference!

Computing Requirements and Resources

Requirements
You should plan to bring your laptop to class with you.

Laptop Policy
The main purposes of having your laptop are to view course readings and take in-class quizzes. You might also want to take notes on your laptop. During class, your laptop should only be used to support classroom activities: accessing readings, taking notes or viewing/doing something based on my instructions. There are studies that show that students are distracted by what is displayed on their neighbor’s laptop screen (and certainly most Web pages are designed to capture attention with lots of moving parts), so please also think of others. This is your about attention as well as our entire learning environment!

If you do not have access to a reliable, working laptop with an Internet connection, please send me an email so we can discuss options.

Cell Phone Policy
The use of cell phones is not allowed in class. You are expected to put your cell phone away out of view. If there is some reason you need to be available via cell phone (e.g., your child is sick and you are waiting to hear from their school) then I will let you know ahead of time. You might be surprised (or not) to know that cell phones reduce brainpower even when they are powered-off and just sitting there:

“A smartphone can tax its user’s cognition simply by sitting next to them on a table, or being anywhere in the same room with them, suggests a study published recently in the Journal of the Association for Consumer Research. It finds that a smartphone can demand its user’s attention even when the person isn’t using it or consciously thinking about it. Even if a phone’s out of sight in a bag, even if it’s set to silent, even if it’s powered off, its mere presence will reduce someone’s working memory and problem-solving skills.” Yikes!

Course Resources
We will use Canvas, so make sure you can access our course via your account.
COURSE ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICIES

Learner Expectations
- Be prepared for all classes
- Be respectful of others
- Actively contribute to the learning activities in class
- Abide by the UT Honor Code

Instructor Expectations
- Be prepared for all classes
- Evaluate all work fairly and equitably
- Provide timely feedback
- Be respectful of all students
- Be responsive to student emails and requests for meetings
- Create and facilitate meaningful learning activities
- Behave according to University codes of conduct

Attendance and Participation
See section below, Assignments. In sum, you are expected to attend all classes and participate.

Inclement Weather
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 made, information is distributed to the campus community, shared with local media, and posted on the front page at http://utk.edu.

ADDITIONAL POLICIES AND POINTS OF INFORMATION

Disabilities that may Impede Learning
Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact Student Disability Services in 2227 Dunford Hall at 865-974-6087, or by video relay at 865-622-6566 to coordinate reasonable academic accommodations.

Civility
Civility is genuine respect and regard for others: politeness, consideration, tact, good manners, graciousness, cordiality, affability, amiability and courteousness. Civility enhances academic freedom and integrity, and is a prerequisite to the free exchange of ideas and knowledge in the learning community. Our community consists of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and campus visitors. Community members affect each other’s well-being and have a shared interest in creating and sustaining an environment where all community members and their points of view are valued and respected. Affirming the value of each member of the university community, the campus asks that all its members adhere to the principles of civility and community adopted by the campus: http://civility.utk.edu/.
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.

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
Statement about plagiarism and penalties, e.g., Plagiarism in any of its several forms is intolerable, and 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 are:
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).

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.)

Infractions of academic integrity are penalized according to the severity of the infraction but may include a course grade of "F."

ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment Descriptions and Due Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance &amp; Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>various</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>various</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Reflections</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>various</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework (3 @ 10%)</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>2/16 3/13 4/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Attendance and Participation (10%)**

*Attendance.* You are expected to attend all classes and to arrive to class before it starts. You will lose participation points for excessive and unexcused absences and for arriving late to class. You should be seated and ready to start at 11:10 AM. **You can miss one day of class for any reason, no questions asked and without penalty.**

If an unexpected problem arises for you during the course of the semester (serious illness, death in the family, etc.), please let me know so that we can discuss an appropriate plan. If
you need to miss class because of a military obligation, religious holiday or university activity, then we can make alternative arrangements for this as well. You must contact me ahead of time with all requests unless there is an unexpected emergency. Excessive unexcused absences may result in your final course grade being lowered.

**Participation.** Being engaged in this course is predicated on consistent attendance and timeliness, and coming to class having closely read and considered the assigned material. But more than this, “engagement” entails frequently contributing your ideas and your voice to class discussions. I recognize that it is often difficult to speak up in a classroom setting; we all sometimes get nervous, become unsure of ourselves, question if our ideas are valuable or worthy of being said. These feelings are understandable, and because of them, participation is something that takes a great deal of practice.

Grade guide: A=voluntarily asking questions, engaging with ideas of fellow classmates, and offering responses to the readings that show insight and appreciation; B=voluntarily contributing to class discussion and able to respond thoughtfully to questions about readings; C=contributing only when called upon in class discussion; D=present with books/readings and basically attentive; F=present but unprepared, without book/readings; subtracted points=distracting or disruptive behavior.

At two points during the semester, you will evaluate your own participation using the rubric above. You will evaluate your participation for the first-half of the semester, and then again for the second-half. You will post short 1-2 paragraph participation self-assessments and assign yourself scores each time. I will consider your self-assessment along with my own assessment and provide you with a grade.

*Acknowledgment: The participation description above comes from the [syllabus for EH 104](https://example.com) at the University of Oregon.*

**Quizzes (10%)**

During some of our class meetings, I will ask you to write for a few minutes on a specific question. We might use these in-class entries to stimulate or conclude a discussion. The format of these ‘quizzes’ will vary, although most will be open-writing exercises so that I can hear your thoughts. Quizzes cannot me made-up.

**Reading Reflections (40%)**

One of the most important things I’d like you to do in this course is carefully read and actively engage with the assigned readings. One of the best ways for me to evaluate the extent to which you do this is through a reading journal. I believe you will benefit from keeping the journal because writing about what you have read should help you synthesize, consolidate, integrate and subsequently retain the material and be better prepared for class.

The point of the journal is to develop a regular, habitual practice of figuring out what you think of our course materials. If you add to your journal consistently and regularly, you’ll find that you will deepen your thinking and enhance your ability to make connections.
between different texts and ideas, and between the readings and your own life. By writing regularly in your journal you will also have a wealth of material and ideas to draw on for other class assignments.

Your entries will allow you to summarize and reflect on the course readings, connect them together, and to your own personal experiences. Your journal will also give you a chance to reflect critically on issues addressed in the readings and in class. Your entries will allow you to reflect on how your knowledge of information science is changing. Finally, your entries will help me track your progress throughout the course and provide me with a window into your learning.

**Frequency and Due Dates.** You are expected to create journal entries for *each day we have assigned readings and also before the last day of class.* Each entry is worth 5 points. You can skip ONE entry without penalty (except for the last one). Thus, you will submit a total of 25 entries (total points possible is 125). *Your entries are due at 11:59 p.m. the day before the readings will be discussed. You will not receive credit for late entries, so it is imperative that you carefully schedule your time.*

**Writing Tips, Techniques and Guidelines.** First, do not plagiarize the readings and remember that I’ve read them so you don’t need to give me a summary. Instead, consider incorporating the following into your entries: connections you see between the readings and prior readings and class discussion, and/or your personal experiences; questions you have about the readings and/or points of confusion; things you’d like to learn more about in the future; reflections about how the readings changed your ideas about information science; revisions to your earlier thinking after having the benefit of additional time for reflection, or because of new ideas introduced in the readings.

Other possible specific approaches include discussing a passage from the reading that puzzles, moves, or upsets you—it’s tempting to skate past those moments, but instead slow down and focus on them. They might be good ways to start your reflection.

It’s okay to think about how you felt reading a particular text or whether you enjoyed it or not. Just make sure always then to ask yourself, *why?* What is important is *why* you found a particular text appealing or unappealing, *why* you had a particular emotional reaction, *why* you agreed or disagreed with particular aspects of a text. Responding to these second level questions can refine your thinking about information science, your knowledge of yourself, and your values.

Feel free to write in the first person. One key to being successful when writing journal entries is to let the words flow quickly. Disregard spelling and punctuation; just be sure I can make out what you have written.

**Length.** It is difficult to provide a specific length requirement because of variability in writing style and I want you to focus on quality not quantity. As a rough guide, each entry should be about 200-400 words.

**Evaluation.** Your entries will be evaluated based on quality, depth and thoughtfulness. I will look for evidence of learning, including substantial analysis of the readings, integration of
the readings with prior course content and personal experiences. If I see ways your entries could be improved, then I will provide you with feedback. If you do not incorporate the feedback, then I will lower your grade for subsequent entries.

**Acknowledgments.** Parts of this assignment description come from the [English 104 syllabus](Links to an external site.) at the University of Oregon.

**Homework (30%)**

Homework assignments are designed to give you an opportunity to apply, and engage with, the material from different sections of the class (roughly 1/3 for each homework).

- You will complete three homework assignments.
- Each homework assignment is worth 10% of your grade.
- You will work with at least one other person on these assignments (group sizes will be 2-3 people depending on how many total people are in our class).
- I will assign your homework partners.
- Your partners will be different for each assignment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Homework</th>
<th>Material Included</th>
<th>Released</th>
<th>Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homework 1</td>
<td>1/14 - 2/6</td>
<td>2/5</td>
<td>2/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework 2</td>
<td>2/11 - 3/5</td>
<td>2/28</td>
<td>3/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework 3</td>
<td>3/12 - 4/7</td>
<td>4/3</td>
<td>4/17</td>
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</table>

**Final Exam (10%)**

- Your final exam is scheduled for May 1, 10:15 a.m. to 12:15 a.m.
- Your final exam will be a written exam rather than a multiple-choice exam since we are primarily writing in this course.
- More details will be provided later in the semester.

**Submitting Assignments, Late Assignments**

Assignments should be submitted to the “assignments” area of Canvas and are due (officially) at 11:59 p.m. EST on the due date listed on the syllabus. Late assignments are not accepted unless prior arrangements have been made, or if you have an unexpected emergency. Quizzes and reading reflections have firm due dates and cannot be made-up.
Extra Credit
See Canvas Site for details.

Grading Scale
Semester grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Points per credit hour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93≤</td>
<td>(4 quality points) superior performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92.99</td>
<td>(3.7 quality points) intermediate grade performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>88-89.99</td>
<td>(3.5 quality points) better than satisfactory performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-87.99</td>
<td>(3 quality points) satisfactory performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82.99</td>
<td>(2.7 quality points) intermediate grade performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>78-79.99</td>
<td>(2.5 quality points) less than satisfactory performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-77.99</td>
<td>(2 quality points) performance well below the standard expected of graduate students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-69.99</td>
<td>(1 quality point) clearly unsatisfactory performance and cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59.99≤</td>
<td>(no quality points) extremely unsatisfactory performance and cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>(no 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.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S/NC</td>
<td>(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 Graduate Catalog. The number of Satisfactory/No Credit courses in a student's program is limited to one-fourth of the total credit hours required.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P/NP</td>
<td>(carries credit hours, but no quality points) P indicates progress toward completion of a thesis or dissertation. NP indicates no progress or inadequate progress.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>(carries no credit hours or quality points) indicates that the student officially withdrew from the course.</td>
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Incompletes
Based on adopted University of Tennessee-Knoxville 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. 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.

Course Evaluation
You will be invited via email to evaluate the course at the end of the term via TNVoice. Please participate in this valuable process. I also invite your comments throughout the course and will carefully consider any of your comments, suggestions, or recommendations.
Accessing Course Readings: If a URL is provided you will need to follow it. If no URL is provided, please check our Canvas site.

January 9: Course Overview

January 14: Information Science(s): A Brief History

January 16: What is Information?

January 21: Misinformation, Disinformation, and Bullshit, Part 1

January 23: Misinformation, Disinformation, and Bullshit, Part 2

January 28: Information Literacy, Digital Literacy and Digital Inclusion

January 30: Information Literacy and Data Literacy

February 4: Information Seeking Behavior

February 6: Credibility, Trust and Cognitive Heuristics/Biases

February 11: Information Organization: Making Distinctions in Everyday Life

February 13: Information Organization in Practice 1

**February 18: Categorization and Classification**

**February 20: Information Organization in Practice 2**

**February 25: Information Systems and Structures: Databases**

**February 27: Research Data Management; Online Synchronous Class Meeting**
• On this day we will have class online via Zoom: [https://tennessee.zoom.us/j/5595360815](https://tennessee.zoom.us/j/5595360815)

**March 3: Big Data and Machine Learning; Online Synchronous Class Meeting**
• On this day we will have class online via Zoom: [https://tennessee.zoom.us/j/5595360815](https://tennessee.zoom.us/j/5595360815)

**March 5: Big Data, Big Bias?**

March 10: Free Lunch and No Readings!
• The School of Information Sciences will provide you with a pizza lunch as we hear from a successful information professional who has an undergraduate degree in information sciences.

March 12: Information Ethics
• Skim: ACM Code of Ethics: https://ethics.acm.org

March 17, 19: Spring Break

March 24: User Experience Design, Part 1; Guest Lecturer: Dr. Dania Bilal

March 26: User Experience Design, Part 2; Guest Lecturer: Dr. Dania Bilal

March 31: Search Engines
• How Google Search Works https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LVV_93mBfSU
April 2: Search Algorithms & Evaluation

April 7: Critical Perspectives on Search

April 9: UTK Holiday

April 14: Information Policy
- Chen, A. (2014). The laborers who keep dick pics and beheadings out of your Facebook feed. Retrieved from: https://www.wired.com/2014/10/content-moderation/ Wired. Note: As the title of this article suggests, the content of this article might be difficult for some students. If you have questions about this article, or concerns about reading it, please let me know and I will find an alternative.

April 16: Information Policy (and Ethics)

April 21: Brain-hacking, Digital Well-Being and Deep Work
- What is “Brain-hacking”? Tech insiders on why you should care. 60 Minutes, June 11, 2017. Retrieved from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ML55uumQgzA

April 23: Course Wrap-Up
DISCLAIMER

Please be aware revisions may be made to this syllabus over the course of the semester, and as such, the content contained within may be subject to change.