INFO 300: Intellectual Foundations of Informatics  
Autumn 2006

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Overview: Informatics refers to the study of information systems – the people, the information, and the information technology. But, what is information? How can it be supported by technology? And, what is the relationship between human activity, information, and information technology? In this course, we take up these questions and more. We begin by examining information, its definition and scope, as an object. We will study information systems, how people use them, and how they are organized. We will study how information can be represented, manipulated, and categorized. Next, drawing on our understandings of information and information technology, we explore the implications of information systems for human values and human activity. We will conclude by considering the ethical, political, and social aspects of information control and ownership.

Goals and Expectations:

Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:
- identify key areas of interest pertinent to the field of Informatics;
- analyze issues and problems of specific interest to those in Informatics;
- describe tools and practices that may be used for resolving an Informatics problem.

Expectations for your professional career:
- acknowledge and commit to continuous learning in support of further development in Informatics;
- strive to be a “systems expert” in your work environment by learning as much as you can about how information is managed legally and socially for both colleagues and clients who may come in contact with it.

Readings: Readings are available from the library's electronic reserves.  
https://eres.lib.washington.edu/eres/

Requirements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation/Class Work</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Quizzes</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Projects</td>
<td>Due Dates, 10/19 and 11/30</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Labs</td>
<td>Due next lab period</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Tentative Course Outline and Readings

I. Introduction: What is Information?:


II. Classification


Gill, Tony, Anne J. Gilliland, Mary S. Woodley; ed. By Murtha Baca. Introduction to Metadata: Pathways to Digital Information. Online ed., version 2.1 J. Paul Getty Trust, 2000. Available at: http://www.getty.edu/research/conducting_research/standards/intrometadata/index.html (Please read these sections: Introduction, Setting the Stage, Metadata and the WWW, and Crosswalks: The Universal Path to Universal Access?) There are many introductions to metadata on the web, and most of them have a specific audience in mind. This one assumes a museum practitioner audience.)

“An Introduction to Taxonomies and Categorization” (part of a commercial website, but an excellent short introduction) http://www.ideaeng.com/services/intro_taxonomies_land.html

III. Representation and Manipulation


### IV. Interfaces, Design, Evaluation, and Values


Hamilton & Chervany, “Evaluating Information Systems”

Sedden et al, “Dimensions of Information Systems Success”

### V. Intellectual Property


### VI. Privacy


VII. Globalization: Designing for Internationalization, Community Networks, and Ecommerce


“Barlow v. Denning: On Hacking and Security”

Overview of Requirements:

1. **Participation/Class Work (10%)**. Throughout the term there will be numerous opportunities to participate in discussions and complete in-class exercises. For example, students may be asked to write a discussion question or give a brief overview of an article etc….

2. **Four Quizzes (50%)**. Date and time – TBA. These quizzes will test for knowledge of the material presented in readings and lectures. There will be a bonus make-up quiz given at the end of the term. Format: multiple choice, true/false, and short answer.

3. **Projects (20%)**. Each student will complete two projects throughout the term.

4. **Labs (20%)**. There are 8 lab class periods for this course – one lab class period each week excluding 9/27/06 (the first week of class) and 11/22/06 (Thanksgiving week). Lab write-ups should be turned in as finished documents: well organized; written clearly and concisely; spell checked, and grammatically sound. Lab write-ups are due the following lab class – the next week. The last lab write-up should be turned in by the end of class. Lab make-ups will be given at the TA’s discretion and only with a documented legitimate excuse. The labs will be graded A = 10 points, B = 8.5 points, C = 7.5 points, or D = 6.5 points.

*If you have any further questions about these class requirements please see me.*

Scales and Criteria for Grading

General grading information for the University of Washington is available at: [http://www.washington.edu/students/gencat/front/Grading_Sys.html](http://www.washington.edu/students/gencat/front/Grading_Sys.html)

When converting letter grades to points and total points to decimal grades the following scale will be used.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Individual Assignment</th>
<th>Total Class Points</th>
<th>Decimal Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100-93</td>
<td>400-370</td>
<td>400-385 = 4.0, 384-370 = 3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>89-87</td>
<td>357-346</td>
<td>357-354 = 3.4, 353-350 = 3.3, 349-346 = 3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>86-83</td>
<td>345-330</td>
<td>345-341 = 3.1, 340-335 = 3.0, 334-330 = 2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>82-80</td>
<td>329-318</td>
<td>329-327 = 2.8, 326-324 = 2.7, 323-321 = 2.6, 320-318 = 2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>79-77</td>
<td>317-306</td>
<td>317-314 = 2.4, 313-310 = 2.3, 309-306 = 2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>305-290</td>
<td>305-301 = 2.1, 300-295 = 2.0, 294-290 = 1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>72-70</td>
<td>289-278</td>
<td>289-287 = 1.8, 286-284 = 1.7, 283-281 = 1.6, 280-278 = 1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>69-67</td>
<td>277-266</td>
<td>277-274 = 1.4, 273-270 = 1.3, 269-266 = 1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>66-63</td>
<td>265-250</td>
<td>265-261 = 1.1, 260-255 = 1.0, 254-250 = 0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>62-60</td>
<td>249-238</td>
<td>249-244 = 0.8, 243-238 = 0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>59-0</td>
<td>237-0</td>
<td>237-0 = 0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There will be no curves and no extra credit in this class. You will not be graded relative to your fellow students. What this means is that it is possible for everyone to get an A (4.0) or an E (0.0) or anything in-between. In order to pass the course you must complete all assignments with an additive percentage of 60% or higher. Your written work in this course will be evaluated on the following criteria:

1. **Accuracy** of use of concepts and theories; in the presentation of the views of others.
2. **Clarity** of expression of your own views.
3. **Cogency or Strength** of the arguments that you present.
4. **Completeness** — every part of the assignment must be done and submitted.
5. **Insightfulness** displayed in your writing and presentation, where insightfulness refers to a complex attitude encompassing thought, imagination, sensitivity, and sensibility.

**General Information**

1. **Attendance and Participation.** Attendance is very important for doing well in the course. We will be discussing numerous cases, examples, beliefs, issues, and theories. Moreover the class builds upon itself — meaning that the cases, examples, and theories will come up again and again. Thus, attendance, participation, discussion, and asking questions, are all very important.

2. **Policy on Missed Quizzes, Make-up Work, Late Papers.** An extension on the due date can be granted only if (i) you contact me in advance of the due date and (ii) you have a documented excuse of a very serious or emergency nature. Late assignments are penalized a letter grade for each calendar day late (e.g. a lab that is turned in one day late would drop a full letter grade).

3. **Academic Conduct.** The following paragraphs discussing academic integrity, copyright and privacy outline matters governing academic conduct in the iSchool and the University of Washington.

   a. **Academic Integrity:** The essence of academic life revolves around respect not only for the ideas of others, but also their rights to those ideas and their promulgation. It is therefore essential that all of us engaged in the life of the mind take the utmost care that the ideas and expressions of ideas of other people always be appropriately handled, and, where necessary, cited. For writing assignments, when ideas or materials of others are used, they must be cited. The format is not that important—as long as the source material can be located and the citation verified, it’s OK. What is important is that the material be cited. In any situation, if you have a question, please feel free to
ask. Such attention to ideas and acknowledgment of their sources is central not only to academic life, but life in general.

Please acquaint yourself with the University of Washington's resources on academic honesty (http://depts.washington.edu/grading/issue1/honesty.htm).

Students are encouraged to take drafts of their writing assignments to the Writing Center for assistance with using citations ethically and effectively. Information on scheduling an appointment can be found at: http://www.uwtc.washington.edu/resources/eiwc/

b. **Copyright:** All of the expressions of ideas in this class that are fixed in any tangible medium such as digital and physical documents are protected by copyright law as embodied in title 17 of the United States Code. These expressions include the work product of both: (1) your student colleagues (e.g., any assignments published here in the course environment or statements committed to text in a discussion forum); and, (2) your instructors (e.g., the syllabus, assignments, reading lists, and lectures). Within the constraints of "fair use", you may copy these copyrighted expressions for your personal intellectual use in support of your education here in the iSchool. Such fair use by you does not include further distribution by any means of copying, performance or presentation beyond the circle of your close acquaintances, student colleagues in this class and your family. If you have any questions regarding whether a use to which you wish to put one of these expressions violates the creator's copyright interests, please feel free to ask the instructor for guidance.

c. **Privacy:** To support an academic environment of rigorous discussion and open expression of personal thoughts and feelings, we, as members of the academic community, must be committed to the inviolate right of privacy of our student and instructor colleagues. As a result, we must forego sharing personally identifiable information about any member of our community including information about the ideas they express, their families, life styles and their political and social affiliations. If you have any questions regarding whether a disclosure you wish to make regarding anyone in this course or in the iSchool community violates that person's privacy interests, please feel free to ask the instructor for guidance.

Knowing violations of these principles of academic conduct, privacy or copyright may result in University disciplinary action under the Student Code of Conduct.

d. **Student Code of Conduct:** Good student conduct is important for maintaining a healthy course environment. Please familiarize yourself with the University of Washington's Student Code of Conduct at: http://www.washington.edu/students/handbook/conduct.html

e. Students suspected of academic misconduct will be referred for disciplinary action pursuant to the Student Conduct Code of the Washington Administrative Code, and if found guilty are subject to sanctions. These sanctions range from disciplinary warnings (which encompasses a grade of zero on the assignment/exam in question) to dismissal from the University of Washington.

4. **Students with Disabilities.** If you are a disabled student, be sure to identify yourself to the University and the instructor so that reasonable accommodation for learning and evaluation within the course can be made. To request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact Disabled Student Services: 448 Schmitz, 206-543-8924 (V/TTY). If you have a letter from DSS indicating that you have a disability which requires academic accommodations, please present the letter to me so we can discuss the accommodations you might need in the class. Academic accommodations due to disability will not be made unless the student has a letter from DSS specifying the type and nature of accommodations needed.
5. **TA Concerns:** If you have any concerns about an Apprentice Faculty/Teacher or a TA, please see that person about these issues as soon as possible. If you are not comfortable talking with them or not satisfied with the response that you receive, you may contact the instructor of the course. If you are still not satisfied with the response that you receive, you may contact Joseph W. Janes, the Academic Dean for Academics in 370 Mary Gates Hall, by phone at (206) 616-0987, or by e-mail at jwj@u.washington.edu. You may also contact the Graduate School at G-1 Communications Building, by phone at (206) 543-5900.

6. **Critical Thinking and Respect for Others.** In philosophy, critical thinking is a constructive activity aimed at seeking wisdom. I expect students to maintain a high level of professionalism in dealing with each other in the classroom. Taking class members seriously means listening carefully to what they say (including what they mean that may not be expressed). It means recognizing good ideas and effective contributions; it also means questioning ideas you do not understand or do not agree with. Evaluative comments should be presented in a considerate way, even if disagreement is warranted. *It is important to treat others with the respect that we would like for ourselves.*