INFOST-910: Doctoral Seminar in the Organization of Information

Draft Syllabus Spring 2015

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1. Description of the Course and its Content

Catalog description: In-depth and critical study of the historical, philosophical, theoretical, and methodological foundation of the organization of information. Prerequisite: INFOST-901, at least six grad credits in the organization of information, or consent of the instructor.

Professor's synopsis: Significant questions related to problems of information organization are identified and studied with close attention to theory-building through research. Emphasis is on autonomous student investigation, writing, and discussion. Students will conduct original research during the course of the semester; results are to be reported in the seminar. Note: this is not a survey or review course; rather it is a seminar—students will learn from each other as they conduct and present research under the professor's guidance.

2. Orientation of the Course

The seminar will begin with an overview of basic concepts of information organization (and we also will deal with the problem of the duality of terms information organization and knowledge organization) and a review of classical literature, including philosophy, research methods, history, and theory. A major component of the seminar will be a thorough review of the 13th International Conference on Knowledge Organization held in Krakow in 2014. The final segment of the seminar will be based on students’ self-selected research topics.

3. Research Topics

Each student will conduct research on a topic of the student's choice in the broad area of information organization.

Topics may fall into the following broad areas:

• the historical context for knowledge organization;

• problems related to metadata (e.g., resource description, subject headings, web metadata applications);
• Knowledge representation (ontology, taxonomy, classification);

• Domain analysis (works, content representation, content evolution, informetric analysis of domains);

and,

• Language processing (subject analysis, indexing, vocabulary control, thesaurus construction, etc.).

The research must contribute to theory. Students are encouraged to consult the professor to discuss topics and potential research methods. Both quantitative and qualitative methodologies are encouraged.

The following were published from student papers in prior seminars. Students might check these to get an idea of what is expected:


4. Grades

50% Preparation and Participation
50% Research including all drafts

5. Journals and other resources

5.1 Journals in Information Organization

The following journals are refereed, and are committed to one degree or another to publishing research in information organization. Students would be well advised to peruse the past 3 to 5 years of each of these to gain insight into the research front before positing a research problem:

Knowledge Organization

Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology

Journal of Documentation

Cataloging & Classification Quarterly

5.2 Conference Proceedings

A major proportion of research in information organization appears in the proceedings of conferences, including the biennial International Conference on Knowledge Organization (even-numbered years, in Vienna in 2006, Montréal in 2008, Rome in 2010, Mysore in 2012, Krakow in 2014). These are available online for members of ISKO (there is an inexpensive rate for students, join at: http://iskocus.org/).

Regional ISKO conferences are held all over the world during odd-numbered years. The most critical for us are the North American Symposium on Knowledge Organization (odd-numbered years, in Toronto in 2007, Syracuse 2009, Toronto 2011, Milwaukee 2013). Also important are the proceedings of the ASIST SIG-CR (Classification Research), formally titled Advances in classification research. A fair bit of information organization is included each year in the proceedings of the annual conference of the Canadian Association for Information Science/L'Association canadienne des sciences de l'information. These are online at: http://www.cais-acsi.ca/. Specialist conferences also generate substantial research, especially the International UDC Seminar (odd-numbered years).

5.3 Texts for this Course

These will be read in full (this list is chronological); students should consult the professor about acquiring copies, e-books, or in the case of out-of-print works, online pdf versions:


The rest of the reading list for the seminar will be determined by students’ individual interests, in consultation together with the professor.

### 6. Schedule

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28 January</td>
<td>Introduction, Overview, Synthesis of Research in Knowledge Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 February</td>
<td>Theory</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 February</td>
<td>The Role of Philosophy in Information Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 February</td>
<td>History</td>
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<tr>
<td>25 February</td>
<td>Research: Metadata</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 March</td>
<td>Research: Ontology, Taxonomy</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 March</td>
<td>Research: Domain analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 March</td>
<td><em>Spring break</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>25 March</td>
<td>Research: KOS</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 April-6 May</td>
<td>Student presentations</td>
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