UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MILWAUKEE
SCHOOL OF INFORMATION STUDIES

901 – Doctoral Seminar in Current Issues in Information Studies, Section 001
DRAFT Syllabus (subject to change)
Fall 2019

Instructor: Dietmar Wolfram
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Meeting Times: Thursdays 9:30am-12:10pm, NWQ 2450
Office Hours: TBA.

DESCRIPTION:
Covers the nature of scholarship in information studies, socializes doctoral students to research culture, and addresses current research topics and methodologies in the field.

3 credits

PREREQUISITES: Doc st; or cons instr.

OBJECTIVES: Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

• Articulate the nature of scholarship in information studies
• Outline philosophical issues that underlie research in information studies
• Apply ethical principles in research conduct
• Recognize and promote diversity and diverse perspectives in information studies research
• Evaluate the merits of published research and methodologies in information studies
• Compare and evaluate research approaches applied to the study of research problems in our field

METHOD: Seminar/Discussion

Students with special needs should contact the instructor as early as possible for accommodations.

TEXT
Readings will be assigned from sources available through the course D2L site or publicly on the Web.
COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS:

The course schedule will be finalized towards the beginning of semester. There will be a combination of pre-defined topics during the first half of semester and identified current research issues during the second half of semester.

- What is Scholarship? Doctoral Education
- Information Studies Identity
- The Research Process in Science and LIS
- Scholarly Publishing
- Forms of Information
- iSchools & Allied Fields
- Current Research Topics/Issues & Student-led Seminar Topics

The focus of these sessions will be on a current issue within the presented topic areas. SOIS faculty members will lead discussions on current areas of research in the field. Readings will be assigned based on the presented topics.

Students will also identify a relevant topic area and lead the class in a discussion on the selected topic for one half of a class, focusing on a research area relevant to the topic.

ACADEMIC POLICIES

Academic policies may be found on the UWM Web site at: http://uwm.edu/academicaffairs/facultystaff/policies/. Additional policies may be found at the end of the syllabus.

ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments are due in class on specified dates. Grades will be reduced for late papers (one full grade for each week or part thereof) unless there are extenuating circumstances. Written assignments are to be word-processed. Submissions are to be double-spaced using a 12-point font with 1 to 1.25 inch margins. You may not resubmit work that has already been used in fulfillment of the requirement of this or any other course. Rules of academic conduct require that you not use the work of others without clearly indicating it as such. Academic misconduct may result in a lowered grade, no credit for a given assignment, or removal from the course. It is expected students will consult and appropriately cite the research and professional literature where appropriate. Grades will also be reduced for papers that include irrelevant content to “fill up space” to meet the length specifications for a paper. An example of this practice is submitting a paper that presents a cursory treatment of several topics when a detailed treatment of a single topic was expected.

Please rely on a commonly used style manual for your submissions (e.g. Turabian, Chicago, APA, MLA). These are available in the UWM Bookstore or may be purchased through online book vendors. If you are uncertain about how to cite electronic sources, consult one of the many electronic guides to citing electronic sources available on the net. Minimal reference content includes: author (if known), date (if given), title, URL, and date accessed. A good starting point is available at: http://www.libraryspot.com/grammarstyle.htm.
1. SEMINAR DISCUSSIONS – Undertaken over the course of the semester 20%
Students will lead one class discussion during the semester that will occupy the second half of class. The discussion topic will deal with a current research area in information studies. The topic selected cannot be the same as for the final paper. The student will first identify current topic of research interest in the selected area and develop a 20 minute presentation providing an overview of the topic area. A methodological approach used in the selected area will be identified, along with appropriate readings assigned to class members in consultation with the instructor. One week following the discussion, the student will submit a 5-page essay (approx. 1200 to 1500 words) reflecting on the significance of the selected method, the nature of the discussion, and the key points made by class members. Students will be assessed on their preparedness for the topic, treatment of the methodological issues, and summarization.

2. REFLECTIVE JOURNAL – Compiled over the Semester 15%
Each student will submit a weekly posting to the course D2L site outlining their assessment and thoughts on the readings and topics covered. Weekly reflections should be approximately 250-300 words and are to be posted to the appropriate discussion thread by the following week’s meeting time. Students may wish to respond to any of the following prompts:
- At what moment in class this week did you feel the most engaged with what was happening?
- At what moment in class did you feel most distanced or disconnected from what was happening?
- What action or incident that the instructor or other student took in class did you find the most helpful?
- What action or incident that the instructor or other student took in class did you find the most confusing?
- What happened in class this week surprised you the most?
- How did you work through this reaction?
- What impact did the class have on your perceptions of information studies in general?

Students will be prepared to discuss and summarize their experiences in the last week of class. You may also use the forum for a “pre-flection” posting, where questions regarding the readings may be asked for clarification in class. Note that these are not required, but the reflection posting is required. If you decide to post a pre-flection prior to class, please limit to a single posting to save the bulk of the discussion on the topic for class.

3. FINAL PAPER - Due in three parts 35%
Each class member will submit a final paper that will immerse the student in the research literature of an area of interest to them in information studies. The assignment will be due in two parts.

3.1 Topic Proposal
The initial submission will serve as a foundation for the final paper. It will consist of a one-page summary of the topic area selected plus a bibliography of 25-30 sources that demonstrates the adequacy of available literature. Initial feedback from the instructor will help the student in ensuring a viable topic with sufficient resources has been selected.
3.2 Paper Outline  
Provide a one-page outline for the planned structure of your paper. There is no one correct way to organize the paper as this will depend on the topic. Indicate: 1) how you plan to introduce the topic; 2) Which one or two current issues you plan to make the focus of the paper, and; 3) how you plan organize the critical assessment of the literature (e.g., based on theme, time period).

3.3 Completed paper - Due December 14th  
The final paper will: 1) define a general area for potential research; 2) survey key research and theoretical literature in that area including classic studies and influential “think” pieces as well as contemporary work, and; 3) identify and focus on no more than two current issues of interest to that area. The paper will be substantial (approximately 20-25 pages), illustrating the student’s ability to evaluate an existing body of work. Class members should be prepared to briefly present their topic informally and answer questions by other class members during the last week.

CLASS PARTICIPATION  
It is expected that students will be active participants in the weekly discussions in class. Participation implies discussion contributions that are productive and insightful, and integrate the weekly readings.

EVALUATION  
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<tr>
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<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seminar Discussion</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflective Journal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>95-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>91-94</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>87-90</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>satisfactory, but undistinguished work</td>
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<tr>
<td>84-86</td>
<td>B</td>
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<td>80-83</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>below 60</td>
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<tr>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<td>74-76</td>
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UWM AND SOIS ACADEMIC POLICIES  
The following links contain university policies affecting all SOIS students. Many of the links below may be accessed through a PDF-document maintained by the Secretary of the University: [http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/SyllabusLinks.pdf](http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/SyllabusLinks.pdf). For doctoral students, there are additional guidelines from the Graduate School: [https://uwm.edu/graduateschool/doctoral-toolbox/](https://uwm.edu/graduateschool/doctoral-toolbox/).