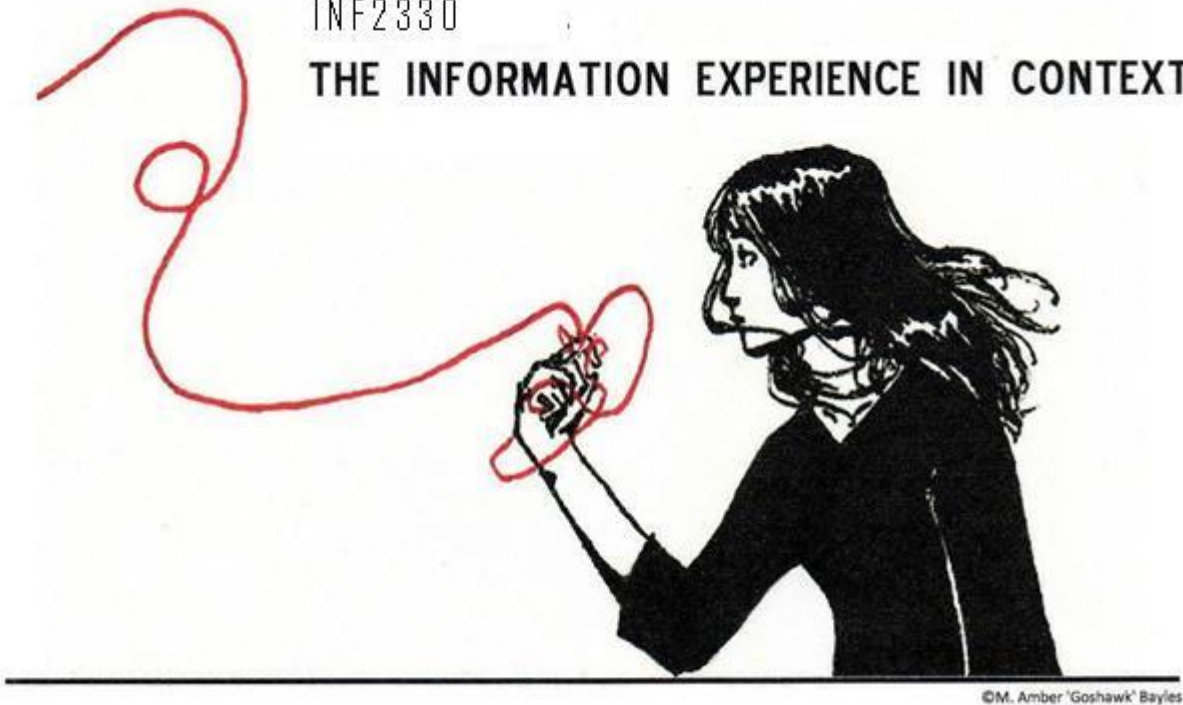


INF2330

THE INFORMATION EXPERIENCE IN CONTEXT



Instructor: Dr. Jenna Hartel, jenna.hartel@utoronto.ca
Class meets: Wednesday, 9:00-12:00 a.m., Bissell 319
Office Hours: Wednesday, 3:00-4:00 and by appointment at Bissell 645

COURSE DESCRIPTION

INF2330 focuses on identifying and understanding what is “informational” in any setting. Students will develop sharpened vision to discern informational patterns, that is, an ability to trace what Bates (1999) calls the “red thread” of information pervading life. To this end, the course involves a fusion of information theory and ethnographic method that is structured as 4 units:

- *Introduction.* In Sessions 1-3, foundational ideas about information research are introduced.
- *Methods Workshop.* In Sessions 4-8, students will learn the tenets of ethnography and techniques of ethnographic fieldwork.
- *Featured Context.* In Sessions 9 and 10 *The Home* and *12-Step Recovery* will be profiled and considered as exemplar information contexts.
- *Synthesis.* Sessions 11-13 feature training in ethnographic analysis and writing, and presentations of independent Research Projects.

As the semester unfolds, students will refine their observational and analytical skills through an exploratory, ethnographic Research Project about the information experience within a context of personal interest or career relevance. A Blackboard course website will provide an online environment for peer review and discussion outside of class time.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

To instill an awareness and understanding of the information dimension within human affairs, and to develop the observational and analytical skills necessary to do so.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Awareness of metatheory as a guiding lens for information research, and an ability to recognize major information metatheories and their impact on research and practice.
- Familiarity with several major models of information behavior.
- A working knowledge of ethnographic field methods, ethics, and tools such as: observation, fieldnotes, interviews, photography, analysis and writing.
- Ability to design and execute a small-scale, exploratory, ethnographic field study that leads to insights on information phenomena.
- Understanding of the features of information in the contexts of *The Home* and *12-Step Recovery*.
- Specialized expertise in the information experience within the chosen context of personal interest and an inkling of how to transfer discoveries to professional practice.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

The objectives of the course will be achieved through lectures, guest speakers, case studies, in-class discussions, readings, and written exercises. A workshop approach and the Research Project provide hands-on experience in ethnographic field methods.

PREREQUISITES & REQUIREMENTS

This is an advanced graduate seminar and suits students who have completed INF1001 (required) and FIS1240 (recommended). Participants should be comfortable with theoretical and methodological discussions and have a passion for conducting original research into information phenomena within a specific population or setting. Students should also be adept at word processing and digital photography. The course demands considerable initiative, curiosity, and creativity. Outside of class meeting times, 8-10 hours (per week) of additional reading and research are expected.

STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY OR HEALTH CONSIDERATION

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have a disability or health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach the instructor and/or the Accessibility Services Office at <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility.htm> as soon as possible. The Accessibility Services staff is available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals, and arrange appropriate accommodations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to Anna Oh, *Circulation & Public Services Technician* at the Inforum, as well as the entire Inforum team, for help in administrating this course.

ASSIGNMENTS

Major written assignments (noted in **bold** on the table below) are due on paper in class. Major assignments will not be accepted late unless formal permission for an extension has been negotiated with the instructor in advance of the due date, and will not receive instructor feedback. The official style guide for the course is APA. Additional details on assignments are available at the end of the syllabus and will be discussed in class. The final grade for the course is based on:

ASSIGNMENT	VALUE	REQUIREMENTS	DUE
Ethnographic Warm-Up Exercise	10%	short answers	Session 4 – in class on paper
Personal Space of Information Exercise	20%	750 word paper	Session 9 – in class on paper
Class and Course Website Engagement	10%	various	ongoing
Research Project, composed of:	50%		
<i>A. Topic Statement</i>	1 %	250 words	Session 5 - website Mon. 9:00 p.m.
<i>B. Research Design</i>	1 %	250 words	Session 8 - website Mon.9:00 p.m.
<i>C. Field Data</i>	1 %	various	Session 11 - website Mon. 9:00 p.m.
<i>D. Memo</i>	1 %	250 words	Session 12 - website Mon. 9:00 p.m.
E. Final Paper	46%	3000 word paper	Monday, December 13, 5:00 p.m.
F. Class Presentation	10%	TBD	Sessions 10, 11, 12, 13 - in class

Note: 250 words equals 1 double-spaced page of 12-point font; word limits are *firm*.

COMMENTS ON GRADING

Evaluation of student work will conform to guidelines found in the University of Toronto *Graduate Grading and Evaluation Practices Policy*, at: <http://www.utoronto.ca/govcncl/pap/policies/grgrade.pdf>. According to this source, grades in the A range (A+, A, A-) are defined as being “excellent” and grades in the B range (B+, B, B-) are defined as being “good.” A detailed description of these categories is at: <http://www.ischool.utoronto.ca/images/documents/about/fisgradeinterpretations%282%29.pdf>.

Elements A, B, C, & D of the Research Project are graded as complete/incomplete. 1 point (1% of the total course grade) is awarded for a working draft of recommended length that is posted to the course website *by the Monday 9:00 p.m. deadline*. Students who do not post a draft by deadline receive 0 points for this element, which impacts the ultimate point value of their final paper. For each of these four assignments you are also to leave comments in response to the postings of *two* peers (for a total of 8 posted comments throughout the semester); comments will be tallied and contribute to class and course website engagement grades.




COURSE WEBSITE ON BLACKBOARD

A course website will be maintained on Blackboard at <http://portal.utoronto.ca>. All students should log into Blackboard during the first Session of classes to be enrolled for important email notices. Weekly readings, handouts and other materials will be posted when appropriate. Presentations slides will be provided at the start of class, and posted to the website by the day after class. Participation in the discussion area of the course website will be factored into class engagement grades. Technical questions about Blackboard can be resolved at <http://www.portalinfo.utoronto.ca/student.htm> and specific technical questions can be emailed to portal.help@utoronto.ca.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The essence of academic life revolves around respect not only for the ideas of others, but also for their rights to those ideas and their promulgation. It is therefore essential that all of us who are engaged in the life of the mind take the utmost care that the ideas and expressions of ideas of other people are always appropriately handled, and, where necessary, cited. When ideas or materials of others are used in writing assignments, they must be cited. Please acquaint yourself with the University of Toronto’s *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* at <http://www.utoronto.ca/govcncl/pap/policies/behaveac.pdf>.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES & ASSIGNED READINGS

Key:  Assignment Due
 Guest Lecture
 Student Presentation

The weekly readings, listed below, are available for short term loan at the Inforum, as digital files through U of T e-resources, or as full text digital documents on the Blackboard folder entitled *PDF Readings*.

Session 1 – September 15: Introduction to the Information Experience

Bates, M. J. (1999). The invisible substrate of information science. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science*, 50(12), 1043-1050. (e-article)

http://resolver.scholarsportal.info/resolve/00028231/v50i0012/1043_tisois

Foster, N. F. (2007). Introduction. In N. F. Foster & S. Gibbons (Eds.), *Studying students: The undergraduate research project at the University of Rochester* (pp. v–ix). Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries. (report)

http://www.librarycareers.org/ala/mgrps/divs/acrl/publications/digital/Foster-Gibbons_cmpd.pdf

[And Inforum: 025.5877 S933S – Course Reserves - [check availability](#)]

Taylor, A. S., & Swan, L. (2005). Artful systems in the home. In *Proceedings Of The SIGCHI Conference On Human Factors In Computing Systems* (pp. 641-650). New York, NY: ACM.

Available online at <http://doi.acm.org/10.1145/1054972.1055060>

Optional: Join a listserv about the use of ethnographic research in libraries:

<https://lists.rochester.edu/wa.exe?A0=ANTHROLIB>

Session 2 – September 22: Information Metatheories and Foundational Concepts

Bates, M. J. (2005). An introduction to theories, metatheories, and models. In K. E. Fisher, S. Erdelez, & L. McKechnie (Eds.), *Theories of information behaviour* (pp. 1-24). Medford, NJ: Information Today. [Available PDF in Blackboard; and Inforum: 020.72 T396T – Course Reserves - [check availability](#)]

Case, D.O. (2007). Perspectives, paradigms, and theories. In *Looking for information: A Survey of research on information seeking, needs, and behavior* (2nd ed., pp. 142-168). London: Elsevier.

[Available PDF in Blackboard; and Inforum: 025.524 C337L2 – Course Reserves - [check availability](#)]

Tuominen, K., Talja, S., & Savolainen, R. (2002). Discourse, cognition and reality: Towards a social constructionist metatheory for library and information science. In R. Fidel, H. Bruce, P. Ingwersen, & P. Vakkari (Eds.), *Emerging Frameworks and Methods: CoLIS4: Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on Conceptions of Library and Information Science* (pp. 271-283). Greenwood Village, CO: Libraries Unlimited. [Available PDF in Blackboard; and Inforum:

Tuominen, K., Talja, S., & Savolainen, R. (2003). Multiperspective digital libraries: The implications of constructionism for the development of digital libraries. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 54(6), 561-569. (e-article)
http://resolver.scholarsportal.info/resolve/15322882/v54i0006/561_mdltioftdodl

Session 3 – September 29: Models of Information Behavior

☞ Panel of past 2330 students discuss their Research Projects

Bates, M. J. (2002). The cascade of interactions in the digital library interface. *Information Processing and Management*, 38(3), 381-400. (e-article)
http://resolver.scholarsportal.info/resolve/03064573/v38i0003/381_tcoiidli

Case, D.O. (2007). Appendix A: Glossary. In *Looking for information: A Survey of research on information seeking, needs, and behavior* (2nd ed., pp. 1329-338). London: Elsevier.
[Available PDF in Blackboard; and Inforum: 025.524 C337L2 – Course Reserves - [check availability](#)]

Wilson, T. D. (1999). Models in information behavior research. *Journal of Documentation*, 55(3), 249-270. (e-article) http://resolver.scholarsportal.info/resolve/00220418/v55i0003/249_miibr

Lofland, J. & Lofland, L. H. (2006). Starting where you are. In *Analyzing social settings: A guide to qualitative observation and analysis* (4th ed.), (pp. 9-14). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. [Available PDF in Blackboard; and Inforum: 301.072 A532A4 – Course Reserves - [check availability](#)]

Spradley, J. (1980). The ethnographic research cycle. In *Participant observation* (pp. 26-35). New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston. [Available PDF in Blackboard]

Session 4 – October 6: Methods Workshop, Part 1, Introduction to Ethnography

☞ Ethnographic Warm-Up Exercise due in class

☞ Guest Lecture by Dean Sharpe of the University of Toronto's Office of Research Ethics

Agar, M. H. (2004). Ethnography. In N. J. Smelser & P. B. Baltes (Eds.), *International encyclopedia of the social & behavioral sciences* (pp. 4857-4862). Amsterdam, Netherlands: Elsevier. [Available PDF in Blackboard]

Emerson, R. M. (1988). Introduction. In *Contemporary field research* (pp. 1-35). Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press. [Available PDF in Blackboard; and OISE/UT: 301.072 C761 – [check availability](#)]

Fetterman, D. M. (1998). Walking in rhythm: Anthropological concepts. In *Ethnography: Step by step* (2nd ed.), (pp. 26–40). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. [Available PDF in Blackboard; and Robarts: GN345 .F47 1998X - [check availability](#)]

Stebbins, R. A. (2001). What is exploration? In *Exploratory research in the social sciences* (pp. 1-30). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. [Available PDF in Blackboard; and Inforum: 300.72 S811E –

Course Reserves - [check availability](#)]

University of Toronto, Ethics Review Office. (2007). *Guidelines and Practical Manual for Research Involving Human Subjects*. Retrieved from http://www.research.utoronto.ca/wpcontent/uploads/2009/03/ERO_Guidelines_Manual-2007.pdf

Session 5 – October 13: Methods Workshop, Part 2, Observation and Fieldnotes

✍ *Topic Statement draft due to website 9:00 p.m. Monday; and post two comments*

Bernard, H. R., Pelto, P. J., Werner, O., Boster, J., Romney, A. K., Johnson, et al., (1986). The construction of primary data in cultural anthropology. *Current Anthropology*, 27(4), 382-396. (e-article) <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2743060>

Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I., & Shaw, L. L. (1995). Fieldnotes in ethnographic research. In *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes* (pp. 1-16). University of Chicago Press. [Available PDF in Blackboard; and Inforum: 305.800723 E53W – Course Reserves - [check availability](#)]

Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I., & Shaw, L. L. (1995). In the field: Participating, observing and jotting notes. In *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes* (pp. 17-38). University of Chicago Press. [Available PDF in Blackboard; and Inforum: 305.800723 E53W – Course Reserves - [check availability](#)]

Spradley, J. (1980). Making descriptive observations. In *Participant observation* (pp. 73-84). New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston. [Available PDF in Blackboard]

Session 6 – October 20: Methods Workshop, Part 3, Interviews

Bernard, H. R. (2006). Interviewing: Unstructured and semistructured. In *Research methods in anthropology: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (4th ed.), (pp. 203-239). Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press. [Available PDF in Blackboard; and St. Michael's: GN345 .B36 2006 - [check availability](#)]

Spradley, J. P. (1979). Interviewing an informant. In *The ethnographic interview* (pp. 55-68). New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston. [Available PDF in Blackboard; and Robarts: GN346.3 .S66 - [check availability](#)]

Lofland, J. & Lofland, L. H. (2006). Logging data. In *Analyzing social settings: A guide to qualitative observation and analysis* (4th ed.), (pp. 81-117). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. [Available PDF in Blackboard; and Inforum: 301.072 A532A4 – Course Reserves - [check availability](#)]

Session 7 – October 27: Special Event - Ethnographer's Brouhaha

Professor Hartel is attending the Annual Meeting of the American Society for Information Science and Technology, in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. This class will be hosted by doctoral candidate Lisa Quirke and another ethnographer who will share stories of their ethnographic research. There are no assigned readings this week; use the extra time to catch up on missed readings and/or read ahead.

Session 8 – November 3: Methods Workshop, Part 4, Visual Approaches

✍ *Research Design draft due to website 9:00 p.m. Monday; and post two comments*

Collier, Jr., J. & Collier, M. (1986). The cultural inventory. *Visual anthropology: Photography as a research method* (Rev. ed.), (pp. 45-64). Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
[Available PDF in Blackboard; and Robarts: GN347 .C64 1986 - [check availability](#)]

Foster, N. F. (2007). Photo surveys: Eliciting more than you knew to ask for. In N. F. Foster & S. Gibbons (Eds.), *Studying students: The undergraduate research project at the University of Rochester*. (pp. 40–47). Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries. (report)
http://www.librarycareers.org/ala/mgrps/divs/acrl/publications/digital/Foster-Gibbons_cmpd.pdf [And Inforum: 025.5877 S933S – Course Reserves - [check availability](#)]

Prosser, J. & Loxley, A. (2008). Introducing visual methods. ESRC National Centre for research methods review paper. NCRM/10. Available online in PDF at:
<http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/420/1/MethodsReviewPaperNCRM-010.pdf>

Sonnenwald, D. H., Wildemuth, B. M., & Harmon, G. L. (2001). A research method using the concept of information horizons: An example from a study of lower socio-economic students' information seeking behaviour. *The New Review of Information Behavior Research*, 2, 65-86. [Read Introduction to 4.4 Creative Methods] [Available PDF in Blackboard]

Session 9 – November 10: Featured Context, *The Home*

✍ *Personal Information Space Exercise due in class*

Crabtree, A. & Rodden, T. (2004). Domestic routines and design for the home. *Computer Supported Cooperative Work*, 13(2), 191–220. (e-article)
http://resolver.scholarsportal.info/resolve/09259724/v13i0002/191_dradfth

Harper, R. (2007). Into the home. In D. Randall, R. Harper, & M. Rouncefield (Eds.), *Fieldwork for design: Theory and practice* (pp. 255-287). London: Springer. (e-book)
<http://simplelink.library.utoronto.ca/url.cfm/65050>

Swan, L., & Taylor, A. S. (2005). Notes on fridge surfaces. In *CHI '05 Extended Abstracts on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (pp. 1813-1816). New York, NY: ACM.
Available online at <http://doi.acm.org/10.1145/1056808.1057029>

Swan, L., & Taylor, A. S. (2008). Photo displays in the home. In *DIS 2008* (pp. 261-270). New York, NY: ACM. Available online at: <http://doi.acm.org/10.1145/1394445.1394473>

Session 10 – November 17: Featured Context, *12-Step Recovery* & Student Presentations

👤 *Student Presentations*

Kari, J. (2007). A review of the spiritual in information studies. *Journal of Documentation*, 63(6), 935-962. (e-article) http://resolver.scholarsportal.info/resolve/00220418/v63i0006/935_arots

Kari, J. & Hartel, J. 2007. Information and higher things in life: Addressing the pleasurable and the profound in information science. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and*

Technology. 58(8): 1131 - 1147. (e-article)

http://resolver.scholarsportal.info.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/resolve/15322882/v58i0008/1131_iahtilatp

How it Works. From the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, 4th ed. (2001). Available online at: http://www.aa.org/bigbookonline/en_bigbook_chapt5.pdf

Me, an Alcoholic? From the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, 4th ed. (2001). Available online at: http://www.aa.org/bigbookonline/en_theystoppedintime13.pdf

Session 11 – November 24: Ethnographic Analysis & Student Presentations

✍ *Field Data due to website 9:00 p.m. Monday; and post two comments—bring all data to class*

👤 *Student Presentations*

Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I., & Shaw, L. L. (1995). Processing fieldnotes: Coding and memoing. In *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes* (pp. 142-168). University of Chicago Press. [Available PDF in Blackboard; and Inforum: 305.800723 E53W – Course Reserves - [check availability](#)]

Lofland, J. & Lofland, L. H. (2006). Developing analysis. In *Analyzing social settings: A guide to qualitative observation and analysis* (4th ed.), (pp. 179-203). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. [Available PDF in Blackboard; and Inforum: 301.072 A532A4 – Course Reserves - [check availability](#)]

Session 12– December 1: Ethnographic Writing & Student Presentations

✍ *Research Memo due to website 9:00 p.m. Monday; and post two comments—bring memo to class*

👤 *Student Presentations*

Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I., & Shaw, L. L. (1995). Writing an ethnography. In *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes* (pp. 169-208). University of Chicago Press. [Available PDF in Blackboard; and Inforum: 305.800723 E53W - Course Reserves - [check availability](#)]

Becker, H. S. (2007). One right way. In *Writing for social scientists: How to start and finish your thesis, book, or article* (2nd ed.), (pp. 43-67). University of Chicago Press. [Available PDF in Blackboard; and OISE: 808.0663 B395W 2007 - [check availability](#)]

Session 13 – December 8: Student Presentations & Conclusion

👤 *Student Presentations*

✍ *Final Paper due Friday, December 13th to Student Services by 5:00 p.m.*

No Assigned Readings, work on your research

[Links accessed by the Inforum on: July 8, 2010]

ASSIGNMENTS

An overview of assignments and grading policies appears on page 3 of this syllabus. Specific assignments are described in detail below.

Ethnographic Warm-Up Exercise

Value: 10%

Due: Session 4 in class

Requirement: A short report on the literature of ethnography, Q & A format

The goal of this exercise is to expose you to the literature of ethnography, which is spread across many disciplines. Instructions and guiding questions will be distributed by email after Session 1.

Personal Space of Information Exercise

Value: 20%

Due: Session 9 in class

Requirement: 750 word paper, following the questions/topics provided below

We all live and work within one (or more) personalized space of information that may exist in traditional documentary (i.e. paper), digital, or hybrid forms. The objective of this assignment is to examine your own personal space of information.

Identify an information-based space, system, or environment within *your* life (examples are listed below) for study. Using the ethnographic perspective and data gathering methods introduced in Sessions 4-8, analyze and document the space. Then, address the questions/topics below in report format--do not exceed the 750 word limit. Be prepared to discuss your discoveries and insights during class. This exercise is meant to serve as practice for the fieldwork component of your Research Project.

Example Spaces

- Financial record keeping system
- Academic project
- Hobby related information (i.e. photo or recipe collection)
- Email account
- Personal computer desktop
- iTunes music collection

Questions/Topics

1. Provide a name for your space.
2. What role does it play in your life, or what purpose does it serve?
3. Describe the space in rich ethnographic detail. How does it work? (Use models, diagrams, photographs as necessary)
4. Select a concept from the lectures and/or readings thus far and relate your space to this concept.

Grading Criteria

- Depth of understanding and insight into the system.
- Effective use of ethnographic methods.
- Fluency in concepts and terms used in the class and readings to date.
- Writing quality, style and clarity.

Research Project

Value: 50%

Due: Components as drafts to website in Sessions 5, 8, 11, and 12; final paper due Monday, December 13th to Student Services by 5:00 p.m.

Requirements: Varies per component. Upon completion, a 3000 word paper and class presentation.

The Research Project is an opportunity to study an information experience first-hand and in-depth, and to practice ethnographic research methods. The assignment will result in a 3000 word paper due at the end of the term, and a class presentation. The main components of the project (A, B, C & D, below) are due as individual parts in draft form over the duration of the semester. The drafts are to be posted to the course website by Monday, 9:00 p.m. where peers will provide feedback. The drafts are the building blocks for the final paper and can be substantially reformulated or edited before final submission on December 13.

A. Topic Statement

Value: 1 point

Due: Session 5 – website Monday 9:00 p.m.

Requirement: 250 words

Select an information experience in context that is of personal interest or relevance to your career, or that is an interest outside of your studies and work. (See the Lofland & Lofland reading “Starting Where You Are” from Session 3, for some ideas; and the Spradley reading “The Ethnographic Research Cycle” has a relevant section entitled *Selecting and Ethnographic Project*.) Your topic should be accessible locally, and serve as a site for field research. Topics *cannot* be general or abstract, such as “Google,” or “teenagers.” Rather, topics should entail a *local* context that includes information phenomena, a person (or people), and an activity, such as:

- A participant at a rock-climbing gym (example from 2330 Winter 2009)
- A Toronto subway car (example from 2330 Winter 2009)
- Starbuck’s (the ordering process; example from 2330 Winter 2009)
- A professional’s office, i.e. stock broker, nutritionist (examples from 2330 Winter 2009)
- The personal library of a famous Canadian author (example from 2330 Winter 2009)
- The creation of maps in a multiplayer video game (example from 2330 Fall 2010)
- Avatar formation in a video game (example from 2330 Fall 2010)
- Collaborative home gardening (example from 2330 Fall 2010)
- Information at a heavy metal concert (from 2330 Summer 2010)
- Role of information when purchasing a diamond ring (from 2330 Summer 2010)

Due to restrictions from the Office of Research Ethics, topics should not entail vulnerable or at-risk populations such as children, prisoners, or the mentally ill; or relationships with uneven power dynamics (i.e. teacher/student; boss/employee). All topics require the instructor's approval. You may consult with the instructor on topics if necessary.

For the topic statement, provide the following:

- A definition and description of the person or population
- A definition and description of the context and *scope* (see Spradley, Session 3)
- The metatheoretical perspective that frames your inquiry
- Any sensitizing concepts
- The information phenomena of interest – it is important to narrow the range of what will be examined (for ideas see the Glossary by Donald Case, from Week 3). Express your focus in 1-3 general questions
- 3-5 citations to articles that are relevant to the topic, and brief annotations to the articles

B. Research Design

Value: 1 point

Due: Session 8 – website Monday 9:00 p.m.

Requirement: 250 words

Utilizing readings and the Session 4-8 methods workshop, create a research design for a small-scale, exploratory, ethnographic field study. For the purposes of this assignment, the research design outlines *what you will do* to answer your research questions or to learn more about your topic. *Do not attempt to design a grand research project!* The inquiry must be focused and entail 3-6 hours of fieldwork; and 1-3 interviews. The research design should outline:

- The fieldwork setting and an access plan
- Ethical practices and human subjects protocols
- Data gathering techniques (i.e. application of one or more of the following: interviews, unobtrusive observation, participant observation, field notes, photographic inventory, document analysis, data gathering instruments)
- Process for handling data (captioning, transcription, etc.)
- A project timeline

***Once your Research Design is complete and approved,
GO INTO THE FIELD!***

Fieldwork should occur during Sessions 8-11

C. Field Data

Value: 1 point

Due: Session 11 – website Monday 9:00 p.m. and bring to class

Requirement: various formats

Once executed, your research design will generate field data (an *ethnographic record*) of different forms (e.g. field notes, memos, sketches, photographs, interview transcripts, etc.). Process and organize these materials into a format that is useful for further analysis and dissemination. Some preliminary analysis may be expressed at this point in the way you organize and display the data.

D. Memo

Value: 1 point

Due: Session 12 – website Monday 9:00 p.m. and bring to class

Requirement: 250 words

During the process of analysis, ethnographers produce research memos that begin to synthesize findings and articulate themes, concepts, and ideas. Memos become the building blocks of a final report. Create a memo by following the instructions outlined in the Emerson, Fretz and Shaw reading of Session 11 (pp. 155-157); for another perspective, see Lofland and Lofland (Session 10, pp. 193-197).

E. Final Paper

Value: 50%

Due: Monday, December 13th to Student Services by 5:00 p.m.

Requirement: 3000 word paper (maximum; word limits are firm)

Your findings should provide a rich description of the information experience named in your Topic Statement. A key part of this stage is to bring conceptual order to your data through a compelling, lively narrative. Your text should follow the “fieldnote-commentary unit” format outlined in the Emerson, Fretz & Shaw reading, “Writing an Ethnography.” You may have more data and insights than necessary. In this case, winnow and refine your insights. When your findings are fully developed, create an introduction that frames and integrates all the components of the Research Project and then finish with a summarizing conclusion (and/or “future research” or “reflections” section). Your complete Research Project submitted at the end of the term should integrate all or most prior elements (A, B, C & D) into a polished, vivid document. A template will be provided for the final draft.

F. Class Presentation

Value: 10%

Due: Sessions 10-13 (Sign-up for a presentation date will occur mid-semester)

Requirement: A 10 minute presentation, with 5 minutes for Q & A

Present the highlights of your Research Project to the class utilizing handouts, PowerPoint, and/or original data. Presentations will be timed and kept on schedule. If your project is still underway, present your research design and discoveries to date. Depending on the class size, it may not be possible for *all* students to present during class time—this will be discussed as the term progresses. A presentation schedule will be developed mid-semester.

Grading Criteria for final paper and presentation

- Extent to which an information experience has been identified and framed for study
- Application of concepts presented in lectures and readings
- Implementation of ethnographic field methods
- Clarity, depth, and engaging delivery of findings

Class Engagement

Value: 10%

Due: Throughout term

This is an advanced graduate seminar and class engagement is important. All participants are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the topic and readings. For each of the four Research Project elements submitted to the course website, you are expected to *comment thoughtfully and constructively upon the work of at least two classmates* (these submissions will be tallied and factored into your class engagement grade; 10 comments is the baseline for a good Class Engagement grade).

OPTIONAL READINGS

[Session 4] Sandstrom, A. R., & Sandstrom, P. E. (1995). The use and misuse of anthropological methods in library and information science research. *Library Quarterly*, 65(2), 161-199. (e-article)
http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&res_dat=xri:pau-us:&rft_dat=xri:pau:article:1154-1995-065-02-000003:1

[Session 6] Bates, J. A. (2004). Use of narrative interviewing in everyday information behavior research. *Library & Information Science Research* 26(1), 15-28. (e-article)
http://resolver.scholarsportal.info/resolve/07408188/v26i0001/15_uoniieibr

[Session 11] Brewer, J. D. (2000). The analysis, interpretation and presentation of ethnographic data. In *Ethnography* (pp. 104-142). Buckingham, UK: Open University Press. [Available PDF in Blackboard; and Robarts: GN345 .B74 2000 - [check availability](#)]

[Session 11] Fetterman, D. M. (1998). Finding your way through the forest: Analysis. In *Ethnography: Step by step* (pp. 92-110). Newbury Park, CA: Sage. [Available PDF in Blackboard; and Robarts: GN345 .F47 1998X - [check availability](#)]

[Session 11] Hammersley, M. & Atkinson, P. (2007). The process of analysis. In *Ethnography, principles in practice* (3rd ed.), (pp. 158-190). London, UK: Routledge. [Available PDF in Blackboard; and Criminology: GN345 .H35 2007 - [check availability](#)]

[Session 12] Lofland, J. & Lofland, L. H. (2006). Writing analysis. In *Analyzing social settings: A guide to qualitative observation and analysis* (4th ed.), (pp. 220-240). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. [Available PDF in Blackboard; and Inforum: 301.072 A532A4 – Course Reserves -[check availability](#)]

[Session 12] Fetterman, D. M. (1998). Recording the miracle: Writing. In *Ethnography: Step by step* (2nd ed.), (pp. 111-128). Newbury Park, CA: Sage. [Available PDF in Blackboard; and Robarts: GN345 .F47 1998X - [check availability](#)]

[Session 12] Hammersley, M. & Atkinson, P. (2007). Writing ethnography. In *Ethnography, principles in practice* (3rd ed.), (pp. 191-208). London, UK: Tavistock. [Available PDF in Blackboard; and Criminology: GN345 .H35 2007 - [check availability](#)]