SI 110: Introduction to Information Studies
University of Michigan - School of Information
(cross listed as UC 110)

WINTER 2020

Tuesday and Thursday @ 11:30 am - 1:00 pm
in **M1020 SPH II**
(Updated:Mar 16)

**Instructor**

**David A. Wallace Ph.D.**, Clinical Associate Professor, School of Information  
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*Email*: davwal@umich.edu  
*Office Hours*: by appointment  

**Zoom Lectures:**
- 1st time registration  
  https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0ldO-srz0rJE4kG7_4Bz49xTn42jmN2w  
- Subsequent sessions  https://zoom.us/j/898364161

**Teaching Team**

**Megan St. Andrew**, MSI Student, School of Information, Lead GSI  
*Section*: 002 (49 UMMA, Tues 3:00 - 4:00p)  
*Email*: meglynst@umich.edu  
*Office Hours*: Wednesday 2:00 - 4:00p (https://bluejeans.com/623854310)  
*BlueJeans Discussion*:  https://bluejeans.com/537359994

**Caitlin Endyke**, MSI/MBA Student, School of Information & Ross School of Business  
*Sections*: 003 (G311 DENT, Wed 9:00 - 10:00a) , 007 (1046 DANA, Wed 11:00a - 12:00p)  
*Email*: endyke@umich.edu
Course Objectives

Are we in the midst of an Information Revolution? Is the Information Age essentially different from other periods in history and if so, how? What role does Information, and the myriad systems for processing and disseminating Information, play in individual lives, or in society as a whole? How can we build effective Information Systems to accomplish important goals such as supporting human relationships, fostering civic participation, and facilitating commerce?

This course will provide the foundational knowledge necessary to begin to address the key issues associated with Information and its impact on human lives. Issues will range from the theoretical (what is Information, and how do humans construct it?), to the
cultural (is life on the screen a qualitatively different phenomenon from experiences with earlier distance-shrinking and knowledge-building technologies such as telephones?), to the practical (what are the basic architectures of computing and networks?). Successful completion of this "gateway" course will give you the conceptual tools necessary to understand the culture, politics, and economics of the Information Age, providing a foundation for later study in Information or a valuable complement to studies in other disciplines.

More specifically, after taking this course, you will:

1. Be able to identify and explain important concepts related to the study of Information.
2. Be able to articulate arguments related to current debates about information policy and the impacts of Information on society.
3. Be able to critically reflect on your own use of contemporary information systems, such as social media sites and services.
4. Be knowledgeable about basic principles and strategies for designing effective information systems.

Assignments and Points

There is a total of 830 points available to earn in the class. There are many opportunities to gain points, most of which are scheduled. Of course, you'll need to do several assignments in order to get to higher grade levels, and some assignments count for many more points than others. The grading scheme is inspired by the notion of “gamification” (adding game-like elements into non-game environments, like college courses), and thus allows you to apply some strategy to earn the grade you want. You'll also have to spend some time to make sure that you understand the “rules of the game” so that you can play effectively.

An important note on the assessment philosophy. Most assignments will have rubrics attached, which will spell out our expectations. However, just meeting the details of the assignment is by definition average work, which we normalize at the B level. If your goal is to get an A, you will have to "go above and beyond" on these assignments. We don't necessarily spell out how to “go above and beyond" because each assignment is different. It will be up to you to think about and accomplish work that "exceeds expectations" (your teaching team is a good sounding board for this). Please see the communication policy below, but note there that IAs can explain/clarify why a particular
grade was given via comments on submissions, but changes in grades have to be discussed with the GSI and then approved by the instructor.

There are two types of “quests” (a.k.a. “assignments”) in the course - Major and Minor. 1. **Major Quests and Battles** are worth the most points, and are due at scheduled times that are listed in the [Readings and Topics Schedule](#). Major quests are essentially required—you cannot get a good grade in the course without doing well on the major quests. 2. **Minor quests** are also required, but you can pick from several and **must complete at least four.** You can’t get an A without doing the Minor Quests. Each of these quests is managed in Canvas.

**Major Quests (Writing Assignments) and Battles (Quizzes) are major assignments scheduled throughout the term, and have differing degrees of difficulty. Up to 710 points can be earned through Major Quests and Battles.**

- **Battles (Quizzes) - 240 points (best of 3 out of 5 @ 80 points each)**
  - There will be five quizzes throughout the term, of which your best 3 scores will count (i.e., your 2 lowest quiz grades will be dropped). These are quizzes that focus on detailed content in the readings and the lectures.

- **Occupy Social Media: Proposal (Level 1) (20 points and required to “unlock” OSM Level 2)**
  - Check in for your Occupy Social Media Major Quest.

- **Occupy Social Media (OSM): Final Report (Level 2) (200 points)**
  - You'll need to pick a social media platform you don’t currently use. You will spend the first two-thirds of the semester (about 7 weeks) participating on the site. This activity will culminate in a final report. The details and expectations of this assignment will be up on Canvas early in the semester before your Occupy Social Media Proposal is due.

- **Participation I: Midterm (50 points)**
  - This is the participation grade for the first half of the term in your discussion section (and, where applicable, in lecture). Your GSI will assign your grade based on your section (and lecture) activities.

- **Participation II: Final (50 points)**
○ This is the participation grade for the second half of the term in your discussion section (and, where applicable, in lecture). Your GSI will assign your grade based on your section (and lecture) activities.

● **InfoMaven (150 points total)**
  ○ This assignment is designed to let you show your mastery of the course material over the course of the semester. You will pick only ONE form for the InfoMaven assignment. Details of each type can be found in Canvas. The different forms are:
    ■ Argumentative Essay
    ■ Infographic
    ■ UX Analysis
    ■ Video

**Minor Quests.** There are three types of Minor Quests: BiblioQuests, ExploroQuests, and RandoQuests. Altogether, *up to 120 points can be earned through Minor Quests*. There will be multiple opportunities to complete these over the course of the semester.

● **BiblioQuests (30 points for each assignment) (10 opportunities)**
  ○ Due dates for BiblioQuests are noted in the [Reading & Topics Schedule](#) and in Canvas
  ○ BiblioQuests are the main type of Minor Quests and are available almost every week. They are brief reports on designated Optional Readings. A number of such readings are indicated on the [Readings & Topics Schedule](#).
  ○ When will you get your graded BiblioQuest back? The grading timeline is a week from when the assignment closes with the exception of BiblioQuest #1 which all will be required to turn in - this BiblioQuest will take 2 weeks to grade.

● **ExploroQuests (30 points for each assignment) (5 opportunities)**
  ○ ExploroQuests are brief reports on talks, lectures, and similar events around campus or web content (online video, podcast etc) related to the topic of Information. As such, they occur less frequently and you should think of them as something special - an opportunity to do something different than the BiblioQuest and an opportunity that comes up with short notice.
○ ExploroQuest will be announced as they become available. This means that the announcements can come on short notice. Please note however that we have listed open and due for Exploroquests in the Readings & Topics Schedule as a means to stagger assignments.

● RandoQuests (30 points for each assignment) (2 opportunities)
  ○ RandoQuests are random and unanticipated. They are not yet defined, but there almost certainly will be options here. So don’t count on them!
  ○ There may be several chances to participate in these quests. First, you might participate in the experiments of some professors on campus. If that happens, then you will find out about it through this class (do not go off and participate without hearing about it here first). Or, you might do something special in discussion sections. Or you might complete a challenge with your “House” (discussion section). Or do some other thing entirely!
  ○ However, this should not be what you count on to get points, and the announcements can come on short notice.
  ○ Due dates for RandoQuest are 7 days (one week) to submit from the date it is opened.

● Minor Quest Requirements
  ○ You must do four Minor Quests in total.
  ○ You may do up to six and then we will take your best four.
    ■ For example, you could do three BiblioQuests and one ExploroQuest. Or you could do two BiblioQuests, an ExploroQuest and a RandoQuest.
    ■ Everyone is required to complete BiblioQuest #1: Gleick (Chapter 2) due on Tuesday, January 21 before 11:30am.

● Grading
  ○ Your four best scores across all of your submissions will be applied to your final grade.
  ○ If you submit more than six Minor Quests, only the first six submitted will be considered.
  ○ If you complete less than four Minor Quests, you will receive zeros for the number you that you fall short of the four.

● Extra Credit:
  ○ There are four opportunities to earn extra credit points.
1. Introduce Yourself by Thursday January 16 you will earn 10 points
2. If you submit two Minor Quests by Thursday, February 20 before 11:30am you will receive 8 extra credit points.
3. If you submit two Minor Quests between Friday, February 21 by 11:59pm and Tuesday, April 7 by 11:30am, you will receive 8 extra credit points. Alternatively, if you submit four Minor Quests by Tuesday April 7 by 11:30am you will also receive 8 extra credit points.
4. Complete the “Final” Assignment by Tuesday April 28 to earn 15 points

**TL;DR Table**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major Writing Assignment (Major Quest): <strong>Occupy Social Media</strong></td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Writing Assignment (Major Quest): <strong>InfoMaven</strong></td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major <strong>Quizzes</strong> (Battles) based on readings and lectures.</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best 3 of 5 scores</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Participation (Quests): <strong>Discussion Section Participation:</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm and Final</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor Writing Assignments (Minor Quests): <strong>BiblioQuests,</strong></td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ExploroQuests, RandoQuests.</strong> Best 4 (optional total attempts of 6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra Credit points</td>
<td>variable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>830</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE > Most assignments require submission in PDF format!**

**Grading Scale**

Here are how the different scores will convert to grades when sent to the Registrar. There are more than 830 points available in the course, even though the percentages required for particular grade levels are scaled to 830.
**Late Assignments and Absences**

Things come up. We understand that not everyone will be able to make it to class every week and there may be reasons why an assignment needs to be turned in a bit late. Here are the course policies regarding absence and lateness:

- **Late Quests** will be assessed a 10% penalty for each day that they are late. Quests that are more than four days late will not be accepted.

- To spell it out (because this is how Canvas is going to "see" and "mark" your submission):
  - Before the deadline: No penalty
  - 00:00:01 - 24:00:00 hours after the deadline: 10% off
  - 24:00:01 - 48:00:00 hours after the deadline: 20% off
  - 48:00:01 - 72:00:00 hours after the deadline: 30% off
  - 72:00:01 - 96:00:00 hours after the deadline: 40% off
  - > 96:00:01 hours after the deadline: 100% off

- If an extension is required for "legitimate reasons", you must make your request to the teaching team by email at least **12 hours** before the deadline.

- "Legitimate reasons" for absence and lateness include illness, family emergencies, exceptional job duties, and significant emotional distress. A doctor’s note, sports related travel notice from a coach, or curricular-related travel notice from an instructor is necessary to determine legitimacy. The legitimacy of other specific instances that may not necessarily fall within the above is at the discretion of the teaching team. Please note that "legitimate
reasons” do not include awesome parties or excessive course-related or extracurricular work. You are required to plan ahead to meet your deadlines in all classes.

Readings and Other Materials

All readings and materials (e.g., videos) will be available either on the public Internet or via Canvas. All materials will be accessible from the Readings & Topics Schedule.

Classroom Comportment, Laptops, Distractions

Be cool.

Come to class on time, having done the assigned readings and turned off your ringer. Be prepared both to listen and to engage in fruitful discussions. Feel free to ask questions--usually, if you are confused, others are too.

One thing to realize about engaging with non-course relevant content and activities during lectures and discussion sections that are not part of the shared classroom experience, is that they not only detract from your own ability to learn and benefit but they often distract others in the class, and contribute to a general environment that is not conducive to learning. You are strongly discouraged from engaging in non-class activities (e.g., emailing, game playing, web browsing, Tweeting, Facebooking, Pinteresting, etc. etc. etc.). If you find it difficult to refrain from such activities, you might spend some time reflecting on why this might be so. Of course, the teaching team reserves the right to ask you to put devices away if need be.

Communication Policy

In order to reduce any uncertainty and anxiety regarding the response time on our communications, here is our policy:

- Your first communication should be to reach out to your discussion section GSI.
- You should always include [SI 110] in your subject heading otherwise it can easily get lost in the morass.
● If you wish to have a response by Friday 5pm, then you must SEND the email by Thursday at 10pm.
● If you wish to have a response by Monday 5pm, then you must SEND the email by Sunday at 5pm.
● These timelines cannot be guaranteed, but we will work towards ensuring that you receive responses in a timely manner.
● Please note that a response is not necessarily a resolution. For simple queries, it is possible that the response could contain a resolution. However, in some cases, the request in the email might require more time to handle and might involve multiple parties to resolve. In such cases, the resolution will depend on the complexity of the request.

Collaboration and Original Work

● Collaboration

UMSI strongly encourages collaboration while working on some assignments, such as homework problems and interpreting reading assignments as a general practice. Active learning is effective. Collaboration with other students in the course will be especially valuable in summarizing the reading materials and picking out the key concepts. You must, however, write your assignment submissions on your own, in your own words, before turning it in. Read the instructions carefully and request clarification about collaboration when in doubt.

● Plagiarism

All written submissions must be your own, original work. Original work for narrative questions is not mere paraphrasing of someone else's work: you must not share written answers with each other at all. At most, you should be working from notes you took.

You may incorporate selected excerpts, statements or phrases from publications by other authors, but they must be clearly marked as quotations and must be attributed. If you build on the ideas of prior authors, you must cite their work. You may obtain copy editing assistance, and you may discuss your ideas with others, but all substantive writing and ideas must be your own, or be explicitly attributed to another. See the LSA student handbook for the definition of plagiarism, resources to help you avoid it, and the consequences for intentional or unintentional plagiarism.
In this course, an assignment containing plagiarized material will receive zero points. This applies whether the plagiarism is intentional or inadvertent. If you are unsure about whether a passage in your writing constitutes plagiarism, you are encouraged to seek help from the teaching team or from the Sweetland Writing Center. Be sure to plan sufficiently ahead in your writing so that you can receive and incorporate feedback if you are uncertain about the boundaries of plagiarism.

- Cheating

Cheating is a violation of the norms, values and ethics of education and will not be tolerated if any form. All episodes of cheating uncovered will receive a zero on the assignment in question and a report will be made to the appropriate Academic Affairs authority.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know at your earliest convenience. Some aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities, and the way the course is usually taught may be modified to facilitate your participation. As soon as you make me aware of your needs, we can work with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) https://ssd.umich.edu/ office to help us determine appropriate academic accommodations. SSD (734-763-3000) Accommodations via a Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) form. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.

Student Mental Health and Wellbeing

The University of Michigan is committed to advancing the mental health and wellbeing of its students, while acknowledging that a variety of issues, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, and depression, directly impacts students’ academic performance. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, contact the Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at (734) 764-8312 and https://caps.umich.edu/ during and after hours, on weekends and holidays or through its counselors physically located in schools on both North and Central Campus. You may also consult University Health Service (UHS) at (732) 764-8320 and https://www.uhs.umich.edu/mentalhealthsvcs or for alcohol or drug concerns, see www.uhs.umich.edu/aodresources. For a more comprehensive listing of the broad
range of mental health services available on campus, please visit: http://umich.edu/~mhealth/.