Library and Information Studies 450: Information Agencies and Their Environments

Prof. Jonathan Senchyne
University of Wisconsin, Madison,
4191F Helen C. White Hall
LIS 450 - Fall 2015
T 9-11:30am

"The Librarian," 1960. George Herms
Assemblage: wood box, papers, books, loving cup, and painted stool

Course Description

This course is about information and its settings in a broad context. We will study many social, legal, political, historical, cultural, theoretical, and ethical issues surrounding information creation, dissemination, use, and control. Throughout the course we will question the relation of information to power, control, and access by studying a representative range of information agencies, memory institutions, and their contexts.

A key part of this course is students' critical engagement with the course material. You will be responsible for reading the material before class, having thoughts about that material when you arrive for class, and discussing the material during class. Class meetings will be a combination of lecture and discussion. Some components will be led by the instructor, others by guest lecturers, and some by students.

LIS 450, Information Agencies and Their Environments, is intended to provide --- in conjunction with LIS 451 (Foundations of Reference) and LIS 551 (Organization of Information) --- an introduction to major

themes and topics in the field of library and information studies (LIS), as well as the language and literature of the field and cognate disciplines.

Essential Questions

- What are some of the major information and memory institutions in contemporary and historical U.S. culture?
- How does the continuum from high control to high openness shape outcomes and debates in information agencies and their contexts?
- How do information, memory, and interpretive institutions shape our understanding of information itself (at large and small scales)?
- How do information professionals and scholars enter and effect LIS debates and practices?

Contact

- Office: 4255 Helen C. White   Office Hours: Tues 12:30-1:30, by appointment
  email: senchyne@wisc.edu

Required Books

Most of the reading for this course will be provided through e-reserves or using our library's journal subscriptions. Because the length of some required reading materials, you will be asked to have access to copies of some books. You may buy them, request them through the library system, or access the copy on reserve in the SLIS library.

- Cheryl Knott, *Not Free, Not for All: Public Libraries in the Age of Jim Crow*, UMass Press
- Frank Pasquale, *The Black Box Society: The Secret Algorithms that Control Money and Information*

Work for the Course

For graduate level classes, each semester hour of discussion or lecture normally entails at least three hours of outside preparation for the average student. Therefore you should expect to do at least nine hours of preparatory reading and thinking for each class session. You are expected to do the required reading for this course. You are not, however, expected to fully master everything that you are reading at first. I expect that you will make a good faith effort at understanding by doing the reading; looking up words, terms, allusions, and references you may not know; and coming to class meetings with things to say about what you understood and questions about what you haven't yet grasped. In this way, you will become increasingly familiar and confident in the field, and capable of making your own contributions to the practice and scholarship of information studies.

Calendar

Week 1, September 8: introduction to the course, objectives & purposes, topics & themes

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What is "information," what is an "information agency" and "environment." How ongoing conversations about power, control, and freedom will structure the course.

Week 2, September 15: Theorizing "Library" and "Information"

How do we think about what "the" library is, or about "information?" What are the histories and cultures surrounding these terms that organize our thought and practice?

- Walter Benjamin, "Unpacking My Library"
- John Palfrey, "Bibliotech: Why Libraries Matter More than Ever in the Age of Google" book talk, https://cyber.law.harvard.edu/events/2015/06/Palfrey
- Amelia Abreu, "The Collection and the Cloud" *The New Inquiry,* *http://thenewinquiry.com/essays/the-collection-and-the-cloud/*
- James Gleick, The Information, Chapters 7 and 8, "Information Theory" and "The Informational Turn"
- Optional: Read Palfrey's book.

Week 3, September 22: Ethics, Professional Values, Professional Shortcomings 1

Exploring the professional values/ethics of librarians through histories of conflict and current policies.

- Cheryl Knott, *Not Free, Not for All: Public Libraries in the Age of Jim Crow* (entire book)

- American Library Association. "Library Bill of Rights." http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/

- ———. "Code of Ethics of the American Library Association." http://www.ala.org/advocacy/proethics/codeofethics/codeethics .

- ———. "History of the ALA Code of Ethics." http://www.ala.org/advocacy/proethics/history

Week 4, September 29: Ethics, Professional Values, Professional Shortcomings 2

Exploring the professional values/ethics of librarians through histories of conflict and current policies.

- Student Group Discussions and Presentations on Cheryl Knott, *Not Free, Not For All*

- Emily Drabinski, "Librarians and the Patriot Act." *The Radical Teacher* 77 (Winter 2006) pgs 12-14.
- American Library Association, "The USA PATRIOT Act" (and Further Reading) http://www.ala.org/advocacy/advleg/federallegislation/theusapatriotact
- Don Fallis, "Information Ethics for Twenty-first Century Library Professionals." *Library Hi Tech* 25.1 (2007): 23–36.

Week 5, October 6: The Neoliberal University

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- Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*, 9-78, 175-222.

- *Skim:* Bill Readings, *The University in Ruins,* "Introduction," "The Idea of Excellence," and "The Decline of the Nation State" pages 1-53.

- Sydni Dunn, "As Their Role Changes, Some Librarians Lose Faculty Status," *The Chronicle of Higher Education,* March 18, 2013. http://chronicle.com/article/As-Role-of-Librarians-Evolves/137937/

- "Goodbye Faculty Status," *Library Journal,* March 11, 2013. http://lj.libraryjournal.com/blogs/annoyedlibrarian/2013/03/11/goodbye-faculty-status/

- Alan Bernstein, "Academic Librarians and Faculty Status: Mountain, Molehill, or Mesa." *Georgia Library Quarterly* 46.2, Article 6. http://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/glq/vol46/iss2/6

Week 6, October 13: Collection, Curation & Censorshop –
Guest Lecture by Lauren Gottlieb-Miller

- Borges, Jorge Luis. "The Library of Babel" *Collected Fictions.* 112-118

- Nethersole, Reginard. World literature and the library. (2013). In T. D'haen, D. Damrosch, & D. Kadir (Eds.), *Routledge literature companions: The routledge companion to world literature.* London, United Kingdom: Routledge. (Available online through UWs Credo Reference database)

- Darnton, Robert (2011) "Jefferson's Taper: A National Digital Library" New York Review of Books http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2011/nov/24/jeffersons-taper-national-digital-library/

- Darnton, Robert (2014) "A World Digital Library is Coming True!" New York Review of Books http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2014/may/22/world-digital-library-coming-true/

- Ashiem, L. (1954) "Not Censorship, but Selection" http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/censorshipfirstamendmentissues/notcensorship

- Flood, A. "Are Americans Falling in Love with Censorship?" The Guardian, Web 9/7/2015 http://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/aug/07/are-americans-falling-in-love-with-censorship

  Please skim/browse around in at least one

- CCBC Intellectual Freedom Resources (esp. for those interested in school/children's collections): https://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/freedom/
- ALA Intellectual Freedom Resources (esp. those interested in Public Libraries): http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom
- IFLA International Collection of Intellectual Freedom Statements:
- http://www.ifla.org/publications/intellectual-freedom-statements-by-others
- Collection Development Policy from Madison Public Library: http://www.madisonpubliclibrary.org/policies/collection-development

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Week 7, October 20: Demos, Undone: Technology, Democracy, Humanity

What is happening to information and information environments in the neoliberal economy?

- Student Group Discussions and Presentations on day's readings in relation to prior course convos, esp vis a vis Wendy Brown
- Peter Frase, "Ours to Master," *Jacobin 17*
- Nicole Aschoff, "The Smartphone Society" *Jacobin 17*
- Megan Erickson, "Edutopia" *Jacobin 17*
- Guy Rundle, "All Power to the Makerspaces" *Jacobin 17*
- All articles in *Jacobin* issue 17 can be found here: https://www.jacobinmag.com/issue/ours-to-master/
- David Golumbia, "Cyberlibertarianism's Digital Deletion of the Left" *Jacobin* online, https://www.jacobinmag.com/2013/12/cyberlibertarians-digital-deletion-of-the-left/
- Avi Asher-Shapiro, "Against Sharing," *Jacobin* online, https://www.jacobinmag.com/2014/09/against-sharing/
- Charles Petersen, "Lions in Winter" *n+1*, https://nplusonemag.com/issue-14/essays/lions-in-winter/
- Zadie Smith, "The North West London Blues," *New York Review of Books, http://www.nybooks.com/blogs/nyrblog/2012/jun/02/north-west-london-blues/*

Week 8, October 27: Access to (and Enclosures of) Information

Enclosures of the Information Commons, "The Digital Divide," and Critical Information Needs of the Public. Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality as Important Factors in Information Disenfranchisement

- Elinor Ostrom and Charlotte Hess, "Introduction: An Overview of the Knowledge Commons" in *Understanding Knowledge as a Commons: From Theory to Practice.* pages 3-26

- Nancy Kranich, "Countering Enclosure: Reclaiming the Knowledge Commons" in *Understanding Knowledge as a Commons: From Theory to Practice.* pages 85-122.

- Bo Kinney. "The Internet, Public Libraries, and the Digital Divide." *Public Library Quarterly* 29.2 (2010): 104–161.

- Vibeke Lehmann, "Challenges and Accomplishments in U.S. Prison Libraries" *Library Trends* 59.3 (Winter 2011) 490-508.

- Julie Hersberger, "The Homeless and Information Needs and Services" *Reference & User Services Quarterly,* 44.3 (Spring 2005): 199-202.

- "Library for the Homeless" *Street Pulse: Madison's Homeless Cooperative Newspaper* 7.17 (August 2013) pg 5.

- Noah Phillips, "Central Public Library to Open September 21st" *Street Pulse: Madison's Homeless Cooperative Newspaper* 7.19 (September 2013) pg 1.

- James Gleick, "Wikipedia's Women Problem" *New York Review of Books* http://www.nybooks.com/blogs/nyrblog/2013/apr/29/wikipedia-women-problem/

- Rebecca Solnit, "Men Explain Things to Me" https://www.guernicamag.com/daily/rebecca-solnit-men-explain-things-to-me/

Week 9, November 3: Theories of the Archive

The relationship between archives and power, memory, and history – theorized. No neutral containers. Concept of "the archive" different than "an archive." "Find[ing] things where we have already put them."

- Jacques Derrida, "Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression" *diacritics* 25.2 (Summer 1995) pgs 9-63.
- Carolyn Steedman, *Dust: The Archive in Cultural History*, "In the archon's house," "'Something she called a fever: Michelet, Derrida, and dust," "The magistrates," and "The space of memory: in an archive" New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press: 2002. pgs 1-83
- Marlene Manoff, "Theories of the Archive from Across the Disciplines" *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 4.1 (2004) p. 9-25.
- Suzanne Fischer. 2012. "Nota Bene: If You 'Discover' Something in an Archive, It's Not a Discovery." *The Atlantic.* http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2012/06/nota-bene-if-you-discover-something-in-an-archive-its-not-a-discovery/258538/
- Helena Iles Papaioannou. 2012. "Actually, Yes, It *Is* a Discovery If You Find Something in an Archive That No One Knew Was There." *The Atlantic.* http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/12/06/actually-yes-it-is-a-discovery-if-you-find-something-in-an-archive-that-no-one-knew-was-there/258812/

Week 10, November 10: Big Data Cultures 1

- Frank Pasquale, *The Black Box Society*
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Week 11, November 17: Big Data Cultures 2

- Student group discussions and presentations on *Black Box Society* by way of the articles below…
- Alan Rubel, "Libraries, Electronic Resources, and Privacy: The Case for Positive Intellectual Freedom," *Library Quarterly* 84(2) (April 2014):183-208
- American Library Association. "Privacy and Confidentiality." http://www.ala.org/offices/oif/ifissues/privacyconfidentiality
- Magi, Trina J. 2007. "The Gap Between Theory and Practice: A Study of the Prevalence and Strength of Patron Confidentiality Policies in Public and Academic Libraries." *Library & Information Science Research* 29 (4) (December): 455–470.
- Alan Rubel and Kyle Jones, "Student Privacy in Learning Analytics: An Information Ethics Perspective" *The Information Society*, 2015. http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2533704

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Week 12, November 24: Evaluation/Assessment/ Value: Telling our Story

Guest Lecture by Michele Besant

- John Pat Leary, "Accountability" *Keywords for the Age of Austerity,*
  http://jpleary.tumblr.com/post/89767836008/keywords-for-the-age-of-austerity-8-accountability

- John Pay Leary, "Learning Outcomes" *Keywords for the Age of Austerity,*
  http://jpleary.tumblr.com/post/78981217882/keywords-for-the-age-of-austerity-2-5-learning

- Kizlik, Bob. "Measurement, Assessment, and Evaluation in Education"
  http://www.adprima.com/measurement.htm

- University of Washington's Office of Educational Assessment, FAQ: "How is evaluation different
  than assessment?" http://www.washington.edu/oea/services/research/program_eval/faq.html

- Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). "Outcome Based Evaluation"
  http://www.imls.gov/applicants/outcome_based_evaluations.aspx
  In particular, in the "Presentations" section:
  "Knowing What Audiences Learn: Outcomes and Program Planning" (Powerpoint Presentation)

- McWhite, Leigh. 2010. "'So, Your Institution Is Hosting a Presidential Debate…': A Case Study of
  2008 Programming by the University of Mississippi Archives and Spcial Collections." *American
  Archivist* 73 (1): 219-234.

  Browse/Skim:

- "Libraries Matter: Impact Research" http://www.ala.org/research/librariesmatter/

- Brown, Karen and Kara Malenfant. 2012Connect, Collaborate, and Communicate: A
  Report from the Value of Academic Libraries Summits. ACRL.
  http://www.ala.org/acrl/sites/ala.org.acrl/files/content/issues/value/val_summit.pdf
  or see info on at: http://www.acrl.ala.org/value/?p=381 (includes Podcast)

- "Guidelines for Evaluation of Archival Institutions"
  http://www2.archivists.org/groups/standards-committee/guidelines-for-evaluation-of-archival-
  institutions

- "American Archives Month: The Power of Collaboration:
  http://www2.archivists.org/initiatives/american-archives-month

- Simmons, Annette. 2006. "The Six Stories You Need to Know How to Tell."
  Chapter 1 in *The Story Factor*. New York: Basic Books.
  http://www.annettesimmons.com/wp-content/files_mf/1294790921StoryFactorChap1.pdf

Week 13, December 1: Week 11 - Intellectual Property and Licensing

Guest Lecture by Alan Rubel

- Okerson, Ann. 2000. "Are we there yet? Online e-resources ten years after." *Library Trends* 48
  (4): 671–693.

- Davis and Feather. 2008. "The Evolution of License Content." In *Electronic Resource Management in Libraries: Research and Practice*, eds. Holly Yu and Scott Breivold, 122-144. Hershey, PA: Information Science Reference.

- Harris, Lesley Ellen. 2009. *Licensing Digital Content: a Practical Guide for Librarians*. 2nd ed. Chicago: American Library Association. Chapter 4, "Key Digital License Clauses."

- Ashmore, Beth. 2012. *The Librarian's Guide to Negotiation: Winning Strategies for the Digital Age*. Medford, New Jersey: Information Today, Inc. Chapter 7, "Negotiating in the Era of Publisher Consolidation and the Big Deal."

- Zhang, Tian Xiao. 2012. "Pay-Per-View: a Promising Model of E-Articles Subscription for Middle/Small Sized Academic Libraries in the Digital Age." In *Proceedings of the 2012 Libraries in the Digital Age (LIDA) Conference*. Zadar, Croatia.

Recommended:

- Boyle, James. 1996. *Shamans, Software, and Spleens: Law and the Construction of the Information Society*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press. Chapter 5, "Intellectual Property and the Liberal State," and Chapter 6, "Copyright and the Invention of Authorship."

- Litman, Jessica. 2001. *Digital Copyright: Protecting Intellectual Property on the Internet*. Amherst, N.Y: Prometheus Books. Chapter 12, "Revising Copyright Law for the Information Age."

Week 14, December 8: Student Generated Syllabus Day

- Students will generate the reading list and discussion topics for this day.

Week 15, December 15: Summing Up: Issues and Presentations

- Student group issue analysis and final presentations

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Description of Assignments and Grading

Your final grade will be based on the following. I will provide a more complete description of each assignment and expectations at least two weeks before it is due.

Class Participation and Preparation: 10%
An important aspect of this course is your critical engagement with the material and active participation in class. You will be responsible for reading the material before class, having thoughts about that material when you arrive for class, and discussing the material during class. Quality of in-class participation is more important than quantity, but do try to get in the conversation. **Ongoing.**

Small Reading and Discussion Groups: 10%
At least twice a month in Sept-November you will be expected to meet outside of class time *once each month of the semester (Sept, Oct, Nov, Dec)* with a small group to discuss current events and recent publications relating to books, ideas, culture, and politics. These meetings can be scheduled and held at your group's convenience, in a location of your own choosing, and while meetings should probably last at least 30 minutes, they can go on as long as you like. Topics and readings will be up to you, though they should have some demonstrable relation to the LIS world –even if it's a stretch. I will circulate some guidelines that I think might be helpful, and some sources for good readings. The latter includes *The New York Review of Books*, *The Los Angeles Review of Books*, *The London Review of Books*, *The New Yorker*. The length of your reading should be (or at least approach) what journalists consider "longform," even if that definition is rather elastic. The idea behind these groups is to strengthen your social and intellectual bonds with each other while also building habits of reading and conversation that follow recent publications and contemporary culture. Groups will submit an informal report of their reading and conversation each month, via email to the professor. One email per group per meeting is all that's necessary. The email should let me know what the article was and what you discussed. **Ongoing.**

Journal Review: 25%
You will select a peer-reviewed academic journal relating to an LIS or LIS-related topic/field, read its most recent two-year run in entirety. Then, write a report summarizing and synthesizing the "state of the field" based on your observation of the academic conversations/debates and reflections on professional practice that emerge across the span of your reading. **Due: October 6**

Collection Development Exercise: 25%
You will be given a budget and a topic and asked to build your library's collection. The end product will be a spreadsheet with the additions, and a short paper (5 pages or less) describing and justifying your approach the exercise and explaining your decisions. **Due: November 10**

Group Discussion and In-Class presentation days: 10%
Occasionally, on the syllabus you will see a day marked off as "group discussion and presentation" of a text or an issue. On these days, your group will discuss together for half the session, debating relevant issues and planning some interesting claims about the topic. During the second half, each group will take a turn leading discussion using their conversations and claims as starting points. **Due: Ongoing**

Issue Analysis Presentation on Final Day: 20%
Working with a group, you will select both an information agency and a pressing issue facing it. You will analyze the issue of your choice, explain the implications for the institution, put the issue within the

context of the ethical, legal, and intellectual traditions/demands of the library and information professions, and base your claims in current peer-reviewed research and rigorous original thinking. **Due: Final day of class.**

Grading Policy

A: 94 - 100
Outstanding achievement. Student performance demonstrates full command of course materials and evinces a high degree of originality and/or creativity that far surpasses course expectations.

AB: 88 – 93
Very good achievement. Student performance demonstrates thorough knowledge of course materials and exceeds course expectations by completing all course requirements in a superior manner.

B: 82 - 87
Good work. Student performance meets designated course expectations, demonstrates understanding of the course materials, and performs at an acceptable level.

BC: 77 - 81
Marginal work. Student performance demonstrates incomplete understanding of course materials.

C: 72-76
Unsatisfactory work and inadequate understanding of course materials. Course work at this level triggers probationary status unless balanced by an A earned in another course during the same semester.

Academic Integrity

Please see http://students.wisc.edu/doso/acadintegrity.html and http://students.wisc.edu/doso/students.html for the University's policies on academic integrity and misconduct, including plagiarism.

Accommodations

It is my intention to fully include persons with disabilities in this course. Please let me know immediately if you need any special accommodations to enable you to fully participate. I will try to maintain confidentiality of the information you share with me to the fullest extent possible, given that we may need to speak with your site supervisor. To request academic accommodations, you must register as soon as possible with McBurney Disability Resource Center (1305 Linden Drive; 263-2741; www.mcburney.wisc.edu.)

Late Assignments

Assignments are due on the dates listed in the Schedule. In fairness to your classmates, assignments will be marked down if turned in late. Only catastrophic emergencies will be considered justifiable exceptions to this policy. Late work will incur a penalty of one percentage point a day, unless you contact me on or before the due date, to negotiate an alternative reduction.

Absence Policy

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Class attendance is mandatory. Attendance is defined as being present for the entire class meeting. Anything substantially less than that, e.g., leaving at break, will be considered an absence. If illness or an emergency prevents you from attending class, please notify me, and any team members for group projects, by email or telephone before class begins. You should also make arrangements with another student to get her or his notes. An absence will be excused only if the absent student notifies me in advance of the class, or if the absent student can clearly
demonstrate that such notification was not possible. If a student does not notify me of an absence prior to the start of class, students should assume that the absence will be considered unexcused.