

INF 335 – Information in Cyberspace

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Unique Number 28065
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Syllabus

The syllabus for INF 335 includes goals for the course, the grading policy, and an overview of assignments. If, at any time throughout the semester, you have questions about the syllabus, please contact your instructor for clarification.

Contact

Instructor: Jeremy Selvidge
Office Hours: Mondays 10 a.m. to noon or by appointment
Email: (please contact me using Canvas) selvidge [at] utexas.edu
Office: UTA 5.414

Course Goal

Information in Cyberspace (INF 335) is a course designed for undergraduate students that provides an overview of the history and social impact of Internet and Web technology. INF 335 emphasizes technology self-sufficiency and information literacy.

The purpose of this course is to prepare students to think about information technology in a critical, thoughtful manner. The goal of this course is to pull back the curtain on some of the inner workings of information technology and empower students to navigate confidently through information spaces in networked environments. While it may be safe to assume the Internet will continue to exist for the foreseeable future, we can count on our description of cyberspace changing over time. This course aims to give students the tools to think critically about networked information communication technologies and their role as information consumers, producers, and leaders in the evolution of cyberspace.

Course Objectives

In this course students will learn:

- about technical applications that make the Internet possible;
- about political, financial, and social implications of creating content on the Internet;
- how to find, evaluate, and cite Information resources on the Internet;
- how to protect themselves and their personal information online;
- how to create content (such as Web pages) on the Internet.

Students will enact the following learning techniques:

- reading about history and current news related to information technology;
- discussing history and current news related to information technology;
- completing hands-on projects to practice presenting and assessing information in a variety of contexts.

Students will develop an online portfolio that is both a formative and summative evaluation of their learning over the course of the semester.

Course Prerequisites

While there are no prerequisite classes for INF 335, you should know the following before taking this course:

1. You need to contact your instructor to ask questions or get help at the first sign of trouble.
2. You need to pay very close attention to the course home page to keep up with what's going on.
3. You need to organize your time effectively so you can spend adequate time each week working on this class.

4. Students who are unable to motivate and organize themselves, and especially those who don't communicate with their instructors, tend to be unsuccessful in a virtual classroom environment.
5. Although it is not necessary to be a computer expert to complete this course successfully, you do need to know the basics of operating a personal computer and navigating the Internet. You are expected to know how to:
 - a. create folders and view the contents of a disk;
 - b. open an application or program;
 - c. send and receive e-mail;
 - d. search the Internet.
6. submit work that meets college-level writing standards.

If you don't know how to do these things, let your instructor know during the first week of class. I will be happy to sit down and show you how to do it.

Required Readings

Readings are available online via the course modules.

Assignments and Grading

INF 335 is organized by week, with a discussion and quiz due each week. Additionally, project assignments are due three times throughout the semester (Week 4, Week 8, and the end of the semester).

Late Assignments

It is important to complete your work on time, both so you can stay on track and so you can work with your fellow students. To this end, late discussions and quizzes will not be accepted. Please begin work on these assignments early, as I will not grant exceptions to this policy. Computer problems, network outages, and other technical problems won't be considered valid excuses for not submitting work on time.

Projects submitted after the deadline will be eligible for partial credit according to the following scale:

- Submitted on time: up to 100% credit
- Submitted one day (up to 24 hours) after the due date: up to 90% credit
- Submitted two days (up to 48 hours) after the due date: up to 75% credit
- Submitted three days (up to 72 hours) after the due date: up to 50% credit

Projects submitted more than three days after the due date will receive no credit. All project assignments must be completed to earn a passing grade, even if you are taking this course credit/no credit (pass/fail).

If, for whatever reason, you think you will be unable to complete an assignment on time, please let me know as soon as possible. I am happy to work with you to find a solution, but that can only happen with appropriate notification and planning.

Required Readings

All required readings for this course are available through the course modules. I will ask you to read articles from other schools and websites, watch online videos produced here or elsewhere, and work through online tutorials created by School of Information.

Grading

There are three types of graded assignments in this class: discussions, quizzes, and the semester-long portfolio project. All three are important components of the class, and are designed to help you not only master the material, but think critically about real issues you may encounter with information online.

Discussions

Each week, you will participate in group discussions with other members of the class. These discussions will allow you to "think out loud" in an online class, ask questions of one another, and learn together as you share ideas and insights. You'll be responsible for making at least three (3) contributions to each week's discussion. So that you have more time to explore your classmates' posts and respond thoughtfully, these three contributions should occur on different days. (That means you'll be responsible for reading, reviewing, and

responding to the discussion at least three days each week.) Your two lowest discussion scores will be dropped and will not count toward your final grade.

Quizzes

You'll finish up each week with a brief quiz to test your understanding of course content and outside readings. Your two lowest quiz scores will be dropped and will not count toward your final grade.

Project

Throughout the course, you'll complete work on a semester-long portfolio project. This portfolio will be a website, created by you, that introduces you in a professional way and features an in-depth exploration of one of the topics discussed in the class. The project is split into three phases: evaluation, planning, and your final submission.

Evaluation

In this initial phase, you'll investigate a handful of options for hosting your portfolio (blogging services, web publishing platforms, hosted services, etc.) and evaluate them to determine which one is right for you. This phase will be due at the end of Week 4.

Planning

As we explore new topics in the class, you'll choose one that you want to investigate further. This might be a topic related to your major or potential career, or it may simply be a topic you find interesting. You'll select an aspect of this topic to focus on and prepare an in-depth outline of how your final project might look. This phase will be due at the end of Week 8.

Final Submission

In the last weeks of the course, you will build and edit your new website. There, you'll publish your in-depth exploration of your selected topic. You will submit the URL of your completed website by Saturday, December 3.

After the course ends, you are encouraged to continue working on your website, adding projects from other classes and other examples of your work to create a portfolio. This can be a valuable tool to show off your accomplishments to future employers and others who may be interested.

Grade conversions

I will make every effort to have your submissions graded within a week of the assignment deadline. There are some assignments that take longer to grade. If you have any questions or concerns about your grades, please let me know!

You will find your grades in the left-hand menu of Canvas. If you have trouble, please contact me for assistance.

A	93 - 100%
A	90 - 92%
B+	86 - 89%
B	83 - 86%
B-	80 - 82%
C+	77 - 79%
C	73 - 76%
C-	70 - 72%
D+	67 - 64%
D	63 - 66%
D-	60 - 62% (minimum for pass/fail students to pass)
F	Below 60%

University Policies

Academic Integrity

Please abide by the University's policy on academic integrity. All work you submit must be your own. "Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating and plagiarism... Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. University policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced."

From: The University of Texas: General Information, Appendix C.

Special Needs

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. To determine if you qualify, please contact the Dean of Students at 471-6259 (voice) or 471-4641 (TTY).

Religious or Holy Day Observance

"A student who misses classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day should inform the instructor as far in advance of the absence as possible, so that arrangements can be made to complete an assignment within a reasonable time after the absence."

(<http://www.utexas.edu/student/registrar/catalogs/gi04-05/ch4/ch4g.html>)

Email

"Electronic mail (e-mail), like postal mail, is a mechanism for official University communication to students. The University will exercise the right to send e-mail communications to all students, and the University will expect that e-mail communications will be received and read in a timely manner."

(<http://www.utexas.edu/student/registrar/catalogs/gi04-05/app/appn.html>). I will respond to student emails and messages within a business day, barring a rare and extenuating circumstance.

I look forward to working with you all this semester. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please don't hesitate to get in touch!