INF 335C – Information in Cyberspace
Syllabus

Unique Number: 28076

Semester: Fall 2016

Instructor: Virginia Luehrsen (email through Canvas website)

Office: UTA 5.554
                            http://www.utexas.edu/maps/main/areas/admin.html

Office Hours: In person and online – by appointment

Class Time and location: Online

Summary

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. In addition to the standard readings, you will have the opportunity to research and share concepts from each module that are related to your area of study or personal interests. The focus will be on learning through discovery, and developing skills that will serve you both in your other classes and your future career.

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 content and resources from malicious attacks.
- 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.

Course prerequisites

While there are no prerequisite classes for INF335, you should know the following before taking this course:

- You need to contact me to ask questions or get help at the first sign of trouble. Waiting to the last minute may not give me time to respond before the due date.
- You need to pay very close attention to the course home page on Canvas to keep up with what's going on.
- You need to organize your time effectively so you can spend at least three to four hours a week working on this class.

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.

You are expected to know how to...

- create folders and view the contents of a disk;
- open an application or program;
- send and receive e-mail;
- search the Internet.
- submit work that meets college-level writing standards.

If you don't know how to do these things, let me 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 Canvas. No books to purchase!

Schedule

Each week, we will explore new topics related to information in cyberspace. Most material will be presented as text or video, with the use of some Canvas approved learning tools for alternative ways to learn the material.

Assignments and grading

This course will include weekly content with discussions, three Resource Assignments, several small quizzes, and a Final Project that you will work on throughout the semester. For all assignments, you will provide feedback to each other and engage in (what I hope are meaningful) conversations via the discussion tool on Canvas. **To earn a passing grade in this class, you must complete and submit all your Resource Discovery (RD) Assignments and Final Project (FP) Assignments**. I encourage you to explore multiple sides of issues, and even take a stance that is not comfortable for you in order to understand it better. Most important, I want you to have fun while you are learning. Do all the work, and you will do well in this class.

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. You will be docked 10% each day for every day late for any assignment. **I will not accept assignments for points more than five days late unless pre-arranged with me, or you have an excused absence via a doctor's note or Student Emergency Services. However, students must complete all written Assignment work to earn a passing grade in this class**. Be sure to submit all assignments even if the five day deadline has passed.

Plan ahead. This is an online course and you have between one and two weeks to ensure you complete everything on time. As there is no scheduled class time, you must be responsible for getting work done in a timely manner. There is a lot of flexibility for when that happens throughout your schedule, so I will be very strict about excused late work.

Class Participation (40 points)
Every week, you will contribute to the discussion forum as part of the class participation assignment. Think of these online discussions as your chance to share what you know, ask questions, and challenge the readings just as you would in small group discussions in class. *Please note: you will need to post on at least two different days each week. This assures that everyone has a chance to respond to each other's posts.* (30 points)

In addition to online (asynchronous) discussions, each student will be required to "attend" two (2) live (synchronous) discussions hosted on Canvas by the instructor. You will have the option to participate via webcam or simply in the text chat. I will send out a Doodle poll on the 5th class day to find days and times of the week that work best for us. I expect that I will need to host these discussions multiple times a week. Each discussion will be approximately 30 minutes, and we will focus on the topics covered for the week, or whatever questions you have about already covered content. (10 points)

Quizzes (50 points)

At a few points during the semester, I will post a pre-test for upcoming content. Each pre-test is worth two points, and you receive the points for completing the quiz, not for getting the correct answers. You must take the pre-tests to unlock upcoming content. (10 points)

Additionally, throughout the semester, there will be four quizzes each worth ten (10) points, including one on this syllabus! All quizzes are open book, and my aim will be not to test what you have memorized, but how you apply what you learned. (40 points)

Resource Discovery (RD) Assignments (60 points)

Throughout the semester, you will have three (3) Resource Discovery Assignments (RD1, RD2, and RD3). With these assignments, you will need to find three articles, videos, or products related to the content we are covering in the course. You will need to provide links to the resources, and a short write-up (4-5 sentences) detailing what they are about. Once you have posted your RD Assignment, you will have an additional week to review and comment on at least two (2) of your classmates resources. *Please note: Of the above 60 points, 30 points are for your submission, and 30 points are for your responses to your classmates.*

Final Project (FP) Assignments (150 points)

For your final project, you will research and write, create, or design a product that explores topics from the course. The final project will be broken down into seven (7) separate assignments due throughout the semester. *Please note: Of the above 140 points, 90 points are for your submission, and 60 points are for your responses to your classmates.*

Extra Credit (10 points)

For this course, I will offer two opportunities for extra credit. If you set up a time to meet with me in person during the first two weeks of course (by September 9th), you can earn **2 extra credit points**.   In an online course, I rarely get to meet my students, so this is a chance for us to chat and learn a bit about each other. I make this extra credit because I know some students are not on campus much, if at all, so I don't want to make it a requirement. Also, if you are an athlete or in a program that requires you meet with your instructors (honors program, sorority points for academic success program, etc.) we can use this time for you to meet your meeting requirement! Of course, I am happy to meet with any of you at any time during the semester as well.

Finally, we are still developing an HTML module for this course, and you can earn up to **8 extra credit points** by working through the content. It is rather fun: you get to edit some code, experiment with publishing a website, and play a few games to test your knowledge. For this extra credit, the more you complete, the more points you get. I also would love to receive feedback on how we can improve the module. You can complete it at any time before the last class day to receive the points.

Grade conversions

Points	Percentage	Grade
279 - 300	(93% - 100%)	A
270 – 278	(90% - 92%)	A -
264 – 269	(88% - 89%)	B +
246 – 263	(82% - 87%)	B
240 – 245	(80% - 81%)	B -
234 – 239	(78% - 79%)	C +
216 – 233	(72% - 77%)	C
210 – 215	(70% - 71%)	C -
186 – 209	(62% - 69%)	D (a D translates into a PASS for "CR/F")
0 – 185	(0% - 62%)	F (an F is not a passing grade)

A note on rounding: I will round up if your points are xxx.50 or higher
All written assignments must be completed in order to pass the course.

Academic dishonesty

Students are held to the same standards for academic integrity in an online class as they are in a standard, face-to-face class. This means you are not allowed to copy work from other students or online, work together on independent projects, or take quizzes for another student.

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. This course uses Turnitin plagiarism software to check assignments for plagiarism whenever possible. **Bottom line: Don't cheat.** I will catch it, and you will face a failing grade in this class and possible expulsion from the University.

Disabilities

Any student with a documented disability (physical or cognitive) who requires academic accommodations should contact the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259 (voice) or 471-4641 (TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing) as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations.