

Local Contexts and Information Behavior

(INLS 690: Information Exchange/Seeking in Local/Place-Based Communities)

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Class meetings: March 3-April 26, Tuesday & Thursday, 12:30 – 1:45 pm, 014 Manning

Office hours: Tuesdays, 2:30-3:30pm and by appointment

Course Description and Objectives: This course is designed to help students develop a better understanding of information needs, seeking, and sharing in local and community settings. Students in this course will become familiar with ILS literature focusing on face-to-face interactions in a variety of community settings, as they plan a project designed to support or improve information seeking or sharing in a local, place-based community. Students will leave the course with tools for the following:

- Identifying actors/stakeholders within a local community
- Understanding how information needs/behaviors occur in local contexts
- Exploring different practical and theoretical perspectives on information behaviors in local communities and contexts
- Reasoning through implications for programming and services in the chosen setting/organization

Teaching Philosophy:

“The constructivist role of the teacher is to provide feedback and guidance and to prompt dialogue and reflection.” (Cooke, 2014)

This class is project based, and largely student led. That said, the course will include brief lecture sessions to help introduce students to ideas, guide your project development, and allow you to build your work and work through challenges with the help of your peer community. My instruction style is focused on empowering students to become co-creators of knowledge in the classroom.

Rationale

For many practitioners and professionals, building a strong understanding of the local community is instrumental to successfully meeting patron and user needs. This course introduces students to a few strategies for understanding and describing communities, and using project-based learning, encourages students to examine ways that information behavior shapes and is shaped by, local contexts.

Library and lab resources

You will be using SILS [library](#) and [lab](#) resources during the course of the semester. Please remember that many of your fellow students also need to use the same material. Follow the proper checkout procedures and return materials promptly to be a good SILS citizen.

The Honor Code

The UNC Honor Code, which prohibits giving or receiving unauthorized aid in the completion of assignments, is in effect in this class. The Instrument of Student Judicial Governance gives examples of actions that constitute [academic dishonesty](#).

There are some specific guidelines for this class.

- I encourage you to discuss the issues raised in class or by the readings with each other. Class time will be used for this purpose, but such discussions are also appropriate outside of class meetings.
- You may give and receive assistance regarding the use of hardware and software, including statistical analysis software.
- You will be expected to read and critique your classmates' work, as noted on the class schedule. While this activity may also give you ideas for your own work, each student's profile is expected to be unique. If you have any questions about the influences of your classmates' thinking on your own work, please discuss them with me.

Other course policies

- You are encouraged and expected to participate in discussions, both during class sessions and on the Web-based discussion forum.
- Reading assignments should be done before class so that you can ask questions and participate in discussions.
- All cell phones and other devices (other than laptops) should be turned on silent during class; there should be no text messaging during class. *If you receive an emergency alert, please inform us!*
- If there is something you don't understand, ask a question! If you don't want to ask during class, come to my office.

Assignments

Participation (20%)

Class sessions will be largely student-led and discussion based (with brief lectures each day). Because this is a half-semester course, we will adhere to a fairly rigid schedule. Students should come prepared for discussion (by completing all readings and pre-class assignments), and ready to engage with challenging ideas fully but respectfully.

The class will include 4 guest lectures, with readings assigned by the lecturer. I expect that students will come prepared, and with questions for our guests.

Discussion Days (15%)

Each student will be responsible for managing discussion on one class day. Class management involves the following:

1. Providing one reading from popular material (magazine or news article, TED-talk or whitepaper) related to the day's lecture/other readings.
2. Pose 2 discussion questions to help the class think through the issue of the day. Post your questions to the class wiki the day before your discussion day.

Presentation Days (15%)

Each student will have equal time on presentation days to update the class on their findings up to that point. Presentations should be focused on the topic given that day, should incorporate approaches and concepts discussed in class, and should include questions to help you further your profile project.

Community Profile (50%) – Final version due April 29th

Each student will demonstrate their understanding of the material through (half) semester-long development of a community profile, which will describe a group/community of individuals within a real place-based community. *This profile is not meant to be exhaustive, but is meant to familiarize students with the issues and processes involved with understanding local contexts.* The profile will include the following:

Description of Place (2-3 pgs.)

1. Physical description and a brief history of the location (at the regional/city/county scale), including, but not limited to, the following:
 - Size
 - Brief description of geography
 - Description of organizations/institutions that might be important for your selected community
 - Information about the municipality/government or other influential governing bodies
2. Describe the local context (at smaller scale – internal to the community) that you have chosen as your focus. This might be a specific library, community center, or business. Give some background about this local space, and a brief description of social importance and physical layout of the space. A few questions you might explore are: What facilities are available (if any)? Is this a permanent physical space? An information ground? Is it a space dedicated to information services, or another type of space? Is this space open to the public, or limited to members of your selected community?

Description of Population (Actors/Stakeholders/Social Types)(2-3 pgs.)

1. Describe your chosen population/community (demographically, or using other characteristics).
2. Provide some information about other stakeholders/social types/actors who share the local context with your chosen population/community.

Description of Information Needs/Information Seeking Behavior (2-3 pages)

1. Based on research (peer reviewed, through popular literature, interview/discussion, other citable firsthand exposure), provide some discussion about the information needs or information seeking behavior of your chosen population/community.
2. Provide some discussion about things you might want to investigate further in order to expand your understanding of this community, and how you might go about doing that investigation.

Proposed Services (1 page)

Based on your understanding of your selected population/community and its local context/information world, make a brief proposal for an information related service that might help individuals in your group.

Schedule

March 3: Introduction/Guest Lecture: Deborah Turner (Assistant Professor, Drexel University)

Syllabus

Turner, D. (2015). Reconsidering library collections: Community services as documents. 12th Meeting of the Document Academy. Sydney, Australia, July 20-22, 2015. Available at <http://ideaexchange.uakron.edu/docam/>

March 8: What is community? What is context?

Johnson, J. D. (2003). On contexts of information seeking. *Information Processing & Management*, 39(5), 735-760.

Assignment: Describe two local communities (ideally real places) and possible populations within those communities to study/plan for with a 1-paragraph explanation/rationale for each. The rationale should explain why you chose this community/population. 2 paragraphs total.
Due midnight after class.

March 10: Place and access

Jaeger, P. T., Bertot, J. C., Thompson, K. M., Katz, S. M., & DeCoster, E. J. (2012). The intersection of public policy and public access: Digital divides, digital literacy, digital inclusion, and public libraries. *Public library quarterly*, 31(1), 1-20.

Lingel, J. (2013). "Keep it secret, keep it safe": Information poverty, information norms, and stigma. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 64(5), 981-991.

Spring Break (March 11-20) NO CLASS

March 22: Presentation Day 1: Describing our local contexts

Each student will do a 15 minute presentation on your chosen situations and local contexts.

March 24: Places, Communities and Services

Lynn Westbrook, & Jeanine Finn. (2012). Community information as boundary object: police responsibility for abuse survivors. *Journal of Documentation*, 68(6), 806–825.

<http://doi.org/10.1108/00220411211277055>

Gibson, A. N., Bertot, J. C., & McClure, C. R. (2009, January). Emerging role of public

librarians as E-government providers. In *System Sciences, 2009. HICSS'09. 42nd Hawaii International Conference on* (pp. 1-10). IEEE.

Description of place draft due at midnight

March 29: Information Worlds/Guest Lecture: Gary Burnett (Professor, Florida State University)

Pendleton, V. E. M., & Chatman, E. A. (1998). Small World Lives: Implications for the Public Library. *Library Trends*, 46(4), 732–751.

Jaeger, P. T., & Burnett, G. (2010). *Information Worlds: Social Context, Technology, and Information Behavior in the Age of the Internet (1 edition)*. New York: Routledge. Chapter 2.

March 31: Information Grounds and Information Horizons

Fisher, K. E., Durrance, J. C., & Hinton, M. B. (2004). Information grounds and the use of need-based services by immigrants in Queens, New York: A context-based, outcome evaluation approach. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 55(8), 754-766.

Tsai, T. I. (2012). Coursework-related information horizons of first-generation college students. *Information Research: An International Electronic Journal*, 17(4).

April 5: Marketing Approaches/Guest Lecture: Christie Koontz (Research Associate in Information Studies, Florida State University)

Reading: TBA

April 7: Presentation Day 2: Describing our Populations

Each student will do a 15 minute presentation on your selected population, keeping in mind the three frameworks we have discussed in class (you may choose one or elements from any of the three).

Description of population draft due at midnight

April 12: Implications for services/Guest Lecture: Toni Davenport (Director, Universal City Public Library)

Reading: TBA

April 14: Information Needs/Seeking in Local Contexts Pt. 1

Aabø, S., & Audunson, R. (2012). Use of library space and the library as place. *Library & Information Science Research*, 34(2), 138-149.

<p>April 19: Information Needs/Seeking in Local Contexts Pt. 2</p> <p>Lloyd, A., Anne Kennan, M., Thompson, K. M., & Qayyum, A. (2013). Connecting with new information landscapes: information literacy practices of refugees. <i>Journal of Documentation</i>, 69(1), 121-144.</p> <p><i>Description of Information Needs draft due at midnight</i></p>
<p>April 21: Information Use in Local Contexts</p> <p>Mandel, L. H. (2010). Geographic information systems: tools for displaying in-library use data. <i>Information Technology and Libraries</i>, 29(1), 47.</p> <p>LeRoux, C. J. (2009, September). <i>Social and Community Informatics Past, Present, & Future: An Historic Overview</i>. Speech presented at the 10th Annual DIS Conference. Retrieved from http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.551.1067&rep=rep1&type=pdf</p>
<p>April 26: Presentation Day 3: Information Behavior/Wrap Up</p> <p>Each student will do a 10 minute presentation of Description of Information Needs/Information Seeking Behavior portion of your profile.</p> <p><i>Community Profile Final Version Due April 29 at midnight</i></p>

References

Cooke, N. A. (2014). Connecting: Adding an affective domain to the information intents theory. *Library & Information Science Research*, 36(3), 185-191.