

The Structure of Information [04:189:152:05]
Instructor: Jessica Crowell
Jessica.Crowell@rutgers.edu
Spring 2015

Mondays, 7:40-9:00 PM @CI-201
OH: Annex B @192 College Ave.
Mondays, 6:00-7:00 PM - 3rd floor
Online: <https://ecollege.rutgers.edu/>

Course Description

Through the lens of different media such as newspaper articles, blogs, Wikipedia entries, Twitter posts, and news programs, students examine and judge the quality of information presented, analyze the economic and cultural factors that affect the availability and reliability of electronic information, and compare and contrast with other sources. After this exploration of information searching and evaluation, the class will address how information is organized and attributed. Above all, this course attempts to offer a framework through which to think critically about how information is created, organized, searched and regulated.

A note on hybrid courses:

This course will be offered using a hybrid model, meaning that it will include both classroom attendance and online participation. There is an eCollege website for the class, where you will find resource material and forums for individual and group participation, team or small group projects, class discussions, submission of assignments, and interactive exercises. Course work takes place in class, as well as via the eCollege website. Class meets on Mondays, but there will always be an assignment due on **Sundays at 9:00 pm** before class, which constitutes part of your online participation for the class.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Explain the differences among varying theoretical concepts and philosophical views of information creation, distribution, organization, search behaviors, and impact.
- Analyze and describe the function of societal institutions for creation, distribution, and management of information and their impact on use of information in society.
- Evaluate the effect of information, information technologies, information systems and media on cultures and societies.
- Interpret information and its delivery in an economic framework.
- Identify and explain key information policy issues and institutions of the past and present.
- Understand their role in producing information, both actively and passively, and the ethical, economic, and business aspects of the production and second and third-party use of this information.

- Compare, contrast, and critique various media coverage of the same event such as in newspapers, television, and on the Internet.
- Discuss the ethical uses of information through an analysis of decision models.
- Search effectively in a variety of information environments

Class Website

eCollege (also known as eCompanion) (<https://ecollege.rutgers.edu/>) is the class website for this course. The eCollege website will host online discussions for the class as a whole and for smaller groups, and many of the lectures, tutorials, and other resources for the class.

eCollege will send (or already has sent) to all registered students an email with an ID and password that will provide access to eCollege. Since eCollege uses your official address as recorded in the Rutgers University Registrar's records, please check your official address in the Rutgers Online Directory (Finding People Locator) <http://www.acs.rutgers.edu/directory> before you conclude that you have not received the email. It's imperative that your email address is correct, and up to you to make sure that it is!

To log in to eCollege, go to <http://www.ecollege.rutgers.edu/> and click the login button. If you have trouble using eCollege after you log in, clicking the red Help Desk tab provides access to documentation and also gives instructions for contacting the Rutgers Online help desk; this desk is staffed 24 hours a day, although email response is not always immediate. It is recommended that you call eCollege at **877-778-8437**.

If you receive the error message "*There is a problem with your authentication, possibly due to inactivity. For your safety, you have been logged out and must sign in again to continue*" when attempting to log into eCollege, check your web browser and make sure that it is set to always accept cookies. Then, clear your browser cache and restart the browser.

Course Materials

There will be no textbooks for this course. However, there are a number of readings every week including book chapters, articles from newspapers and magazines, blogs, websites etc. All such readings will be available on the eCollege website or library reserves website at least a week in advance of use. Library Reserve materials are listed on the "course reserves" tab under the name "LISCHER-KATZ,ZACHARIAH" the course coordinator for all Structure of Information Sections at **http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/reserve_services**.

Other material used for the course such as videos/films etc will either be made available on eCollege or you will be guided about how to access those. Many of the articles we will read are through the *New York Times*, and their website has certain restrictions on the number of articles you can read for free before they require payment. If you have any

issues/concerns, I would encourage you to purchase a digital subscription to the *New York Times* for the semester. The rate for students is 99 cents for the first month and \$1.88 in each subsequent week, so for the semester it would cost around \$20.00. However, you would need to remember to cancel when the course ends or you will continue to be billed. The website to pay for a student rate subscription is available at: <https://myaccount.nytimes.com/verification/education>. If you choose not to subscribe, you can also go to Alexander Library and ask a librarian for help accessing the articles. In this case, I might suggest pulling all the articles from NYT you will need at one time and printing.

Assignments, Exams, and Methods of Assessment

Detailed information about each of these assignments will be given in class at least two weeks in advance of the assignment dates. Assessment of student achievement in this class will include:

<u>Course grades are assessed as follows:</u>		<u>DUE:</u>
Exam 1:	45 points (22.5%)	3/2
Exam 2:	45 points (22.5%)	4/20
Information Analysis Paper:	45 points (22.5%)	[exam period]
Weekly Group/Solo Work:	33 points (16.5%)	in class
Participation:	11 points (5.5%)	in class
Online Blog Posts:	21 points (10.5%)	Sundays @ 9:00 pm
	(7 online blog discussions posts each due for 3 points the day before class, Sunday, by 9:00 pm. <i>Must complete all but 3 of your choice.</i> In other words, you can skip 3.)	

Total: 200 points

Optional Extra Credit:	(5 points)	5/4
------------------------	------------	-----

No late submissions will be accepted for online work and weekly posts must be made the day before class (Sunday) by 9:00 pm. If you must miss a post, then you should use that as one of the three you can choose to not complete. In other words, you should save these in the event you really need them during the semester. Make sure to complete those weekly assignments – this is a hybrid course & the points add up!

If the information analysis paper is late, you will receive a deduction of 5 points per hour as this is due in the final exam period. More information will be provided in March.

Makeups for all exams and final projects will not be granted for reasons other than an emergency, unless you have made specific arrangements with the instructor in advance of the exam date.

There will be ONE optional extra-credit opportunity. Your grade will not be negatively

impacted if you choose not to complete it: it is optional. The assignment information is posted on eCollege in the “extra credit” folder and will be discussed in-class and must be submitted by start of the last class on 5/4. Extra credit will be for a maximum of 5 points to be added to your final cumulative score. The full assignment must be completed for any credit. *There will be no additional assignments or exceptions. Please see the “Extra Credit” folder on eCollege for more information.*

Grading

The following are the standard grades and criteria:

90-100, A:

- Work fulfills terms of assignment, shows excellence, great creativity, highly original thought

86-89, B+:

- Work fulfills terms of assignment, some creativity, some original thought

80-85, B:

- Work fulfills terms of assignment, some original thought

76-79, C+:

- Work fulfills terms of assignment; limited original thought

70-75, C:

- Work fulfills terms of assignment

65-69, D:

- Failure to fulfill terms of assignment

64 and below, F:

- Failing and incomplete work

Rubrics to be used for key assignments:

Rubrics are provided for all graded work so that you are aware of my expectations. Please check eCollege.com to access my rubrics. If you have any questions regarding the rubrics, please ask.

Attendance

We have very little class time this semester, and therefore, attendance is expected. Because of the hybrid nature of our class, and because class time will be used for lecture, group work and activities that require face-to-face presence, attendance and participation in each class is an important requirement. For more information on how class engagement impacts your grade, please consult the rubric on eCollege.

Students should inform the instructor, in advance when possible, of conditions warranting absence from class including:

- Illness requiring medical attention;
- Curricular or extracurricular activities approved by the School;

- Personal obligations claimed by the student and recognized as valid (for example, death / serious illness of relative or family member);
- Recognized religious holidays;
- Severe inclement weather causing dangerous travel conditions; (note that the university formally advises via the Rutgers Web site if classes are canceled due to weather)

If you expect to miss one or two classes, to indicate the date and reason for your absence, please use the University absence reporting website at: <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra>. Note that if you must miss classes for longer than one week, you should contact a dean of students to help verify your circumstances.

Regarding absences for religious observance: “It is University policy (University Regulation on Attendance, Book 2, 2.47B, formerly 60.14f) to excuse without penalty students who are absent from class because of religious observance, and to allow the make-up of work missed because of such absence. Examinations and special required out-of-class activities shall ordinarily not be scheduled on those days when religiously observant students refrain from participating in secular activities. Absences for reasons of religious obligation shall not be counted for purposes of reporting. Students are advised to provide timely notification to instructors about necessary absences for religious observances and are responsible for making up the work or exams according to an agreed-upon schedule.”

Office Hours

I strongly recommend you make use of office hours (Mondays, 6:00 – 7:00 pm) to ask questions, clarify doubts or simply engage in discussion that we might not be able to in class due to time constraints. I am happy to spend as much time with you in office hours as you need to help you through the course. I am also available for appointments on skype if that is better for you. My skype ID is: Jessica.Kathleen.Crowell.

Expectations

(a) The instructor expects the following from students enrolled in the course:

1. This is a hybrid course, which means you agree to check your email daily for course updates and information.
2. You are expected to be prepared for class by having read every assigned reading before class, completing all assignments by their due dates, and be ready to discuss and ask questions.
3. Adhering to the policies of the course, including the use of technology (see below)
4. Attend class regularly, arrive on time and stay for the duration of class.

5. Be open to voicing your thoughts and opinions, while being respectful of others (including your instructor).

(b) The students can expect the following from the instructor:

1. You'll receive a response to your emails in a timely manner (within 48 hours during the week however slightly more on weekends/breaks). If you do not have a response within that time, you should assume that I have not received your email and please resend to me.

2. I will be available to meet with students during office hours or by appointment, face-to-face, or via Skype.

3. I will answer your questions regarding the material and concepts.

4. Exams and papers will be returned no later than one week after the exam.

5. Comments, thoughts, and opinions are welcome, and I look forward to listening and responding to you.

6. All students will be treated with respect.

Academic Integrity and Code of Student Conduct

The consequences of scholastic dishonesty are very serious. Rutgers' academic integrity policy is at <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>.

Multimedia presentations about academic integrity may be found at <http://www.scc.rutgers.edu/douglass/sal/plagiarism/intro.html> and http://wps.prenhall.com/hss_understand_plagiarism_1/0,6622,427064-,00.html

Academic integrity means, among other things:

- Develop and write all of your own assignments.
- Show in detail where the materials you use in your papers and online work comes from. Create citations whether you are paraphrasing authors or quoting them directly. Be sure always to show source and page number within the assignment and include a bibliography in the back.
- Do not look over at the exams of others or use electronic equipment such as cell phones or MP3 players during exams.
- Do not fabricate information or citations in your work.
- Do not facilitate academic dishonesty for another student by allowing your own work to be submitted by others.
- Do not submit work that you have previously submitted for another class- yes, it IS considered plagiarism if you plagiarize yourself!

If you are doubtful about any issue related to plagiarism or scholastic dishonesty, please discuss it with the instructor. Please take it seriously – I do.

Students are also responsible for adhering to the policies of this course and of Rutgers University, which includes the Code of Student Conduct. Please see <http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~polcomp/judaff/docs/UCSC.pdf> for more information. Failure to comply with the policies of this course and of the university will result in disciplinary action.

Use of Technology in Class

Please do not use cell phones in the classroom – that includes text messaging. If you have an emergency and must text, you may excuse yourself from class. Laptops may be used for note taking, digital readings and for group presentations or group planning/work sessions. Use of laptops for purposes unrelated to class, including email, instant messaging, and checking websites not for use in class, is a distraction to you, to those around you and to me.

Students with Disabilities

I wish to fully include persons with disabilities in this course. If you have documented disabilities, please contact the Rutgers Disabilities Service Office at <http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/> for details.

Please let me know if you need any special accommodations in the curriculum, instruction, or assessments of this course to enable you to fully participate. I will try to maintain the confidentiality of the information you share with me.

Course Schedule

The assignments as described below are tentative and subject to change. For example, if a current event is relevant to topic or discussion, I may substitute a reading that week. Any changes will be provided weekly via handouts or announcements in class and will be posted in the eCollege course shell at least one week prior. Many readings are available at http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/reserve_services under “LISCHER-KATZ,ZACHARIAH” the name of the course coordinator for all Structure of Information sections. I will provide links to, or post on eCollege, others.

Week 1 – January 26 – Welcome!

Introductions and an overview of class expectations

(Don't Forget: Discussions are due online Sunday the night before class @ 9:00 pm. Read early. For first week **only** you can email the professor your response by 9:00 pm if you have issues accessing eCollege. After the first post, it is your responsibility to contact

the professor *prior to the deadline* if you are having difficulties to discuss alternative arrangements to submit on time.)

Week 2 – February 2 – An Information Case Study: Edward Snowden and the NSA

Mark Andrejevic (2007) “iSpy: Surveillance and Power in the Interactive Era.” *Reserve* (Library Reserve materials are listed on the “course reserves” tab under the name “LISCHER-KATZ,ZACHARIAH” the course coordinator for all Structure of Information Sections at http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/reserve_services.)

Alex Lyda (2014), “Edward Snowden is More Narcissist than Patriot” *Chicago Tribune*. (Link: <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/opinion/commentary/ct-snowden-cia-citizenfour-oscars-korea-perspec-1225-jm-20141223-story.html>)

Note: If you have trouble with a link, Google the article and you should be able to locate.

Peter Maass (2013), “How Laura Poitras Helped Snowden Spilled His Secrets.” *New York Times*.

(Link: <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/18/magazine/laura-poitras-snowden.html?pagewanted=all>)

Note: If you have trouble with a link, Google the article and you should be able to locate.

Ruth Marcus (2013), “Edward Snowden, the Insufferable Whistleblower.” *The Washington Post*.

(Link: http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/ruth-marcus-snowden-the-insufferable-whistleblower/2013/12/31/7649539a-7250-11e3-8b3f-b1666705ca3b_story.html)

Note: If you have trouble with a link, Google the article and you should be able to locate.

Homework Due: Introductions & Online Discussion on Snowden Case Study due Sunday 9:00 pm

(Don’t Forget: Discussions are due online Sunday the night before class @ 9:00 pm. Read early. For first week **only** you can email the professor your response by 9:00 pm if you have issues accessing eCollege. **After the first post, it is your responsibility to contact the professor prior to the deadline if you are having difficulties to discuss alternative arrangements to submit on time.**)

Week 3 – February 9 – Concepts and Classification of Information

Geoffrey C. Bowker and Susan Leigh Star (1999), “Introduction: To Classify is Human” In *Sorting Things Out: Classification and Its Consequences*.
eCollege Document Share – For digital download

June Lester (2007), “Chapter 2” in *Fundamental Concepts of Information Studies*.
Reserve – Available for check-out in hard copy at Alexander Library.
eCollege Document Share - For digital download

Homework Due: Online Discussion on Information and Classification due Sunday 9:00 pm

Week 4 – February 16 – The Promises and Threats of Digital Information

Anderson & Rainie (2012), “Main Findings: Teens, Technology, and Human Potential in 2020.” *Pew Internet Research Project*.

(Link: <http://www.pewinternet.org/2012/02/29/main-findings-teens-technology-and-human-potential-in-2020/>)

Note: If you have trouble with a link, Google the article and you should be able to locate.

Pavlik & McIntosh (2004), “Chapter 1: Mass Communication and its Digital Transformation”

Reserve (Library Reserve materials are listed on the “course reserves” tab under the name “LISCHER-KATZ,ZACHARIAH” the course coordinator for all Structure of Information Sections at http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/reserve_services.)

Henry Jenkins (2007), “What is Media Convergence?” Video excerpt from *MIT Enterprise Forum Lecture*.

(Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SFbJCdCoNIc>)

Note: If you have trouble with a link, Google the article and you should be able to locate.

Homework Due: Online Discussion on Media Convergence due Sunday 9:00 pm

Week 5 – February 23 - Who Controls Information in the Digital Age?

Discuss in Class: Exam 1 Review

Yochai Benkler (2006), “Part One: The Networked Information Economy” in *The Wealth of Networks* (p. 29 – 35).

(Link: http://www.benkler.org/Benkler_Wealth_Of_Networks.pdf - Note: be sure you use book’s pages and not the pages in your viewfinder.)

Note: If you have trouble with a link, Google the article and you should be able to locate.

David Croteau, William Hoynes, and Stefanie Milan (2012), “The Economics of the Media Industry” In *Media/Society: Industries, Images, and Audiences*.

Reserve (Library Reserve materials are listed on the “course reserves” tab under the name “LISCHER-KATZ,ZACHARIAH” the course coordinator for all Structure of Information Sections at http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/reserve_services.)

Mashable, “Reddit, A Beginner’s Guide”

(2 Links: <http://mashable.com/2012/06/06/reddit-for-beginners/> and http://www.reddit.com/r/IAMa/comments/p9a1v/im_woody_harrelson_ama/)

Note: If you have trouble with a link, Google the article and you should be able to locate.

Homework Due: Online Discussion on Control of Digital Information due Sunday 9:00 pm & begin studying for Exam 1

Week 6 – March 2 – Exam 1

Homework Due: (Study for examination)

Week 7– March 9 – Information Seeking and Search

Discuss in Class: Informational Analysis Paper

June Lester (2007), “Chapter 3” in *Fundamental Concepts of Information Studies*.
eCollege Document Share - For digital download

Gary Marchionini (1995), “*Information-Seeking Perspective and Framework*”
Reserve (Library Reserve materials are listed on the “course reserves” tab under the name
“LISCHER-KATZ,ZACHARIAH” the course coordinator for all Structure of
Information Sections at http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/reserve_services.)

Steven Levy (2010), “How Google’s Algorithm Rules the Web.” *Wired*.
(Link: http://www.wired.com/magazine/2010/02/ff_google_algorithm/)
Note: If you have trouble with a link, Google the article and you should be able to locate.

Eli Pariser (2011), “Beware Online ‘Filter Bubbles.’” *TED Talks*.
(Watch: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B8ofWfx525s>)
Note: If you have trouble with a link, Google the article and you should be able to locate.

Homework Due: Online Discussion on Information Search due Sunday 9:00 pm &
Google Docs Mini Project

(Spring recess, no class)

Week 8 – March 23 –Journalism and Information Ethics (POSSIBLY CONDUCTED ONLINE..stay tuned)

June Lester (2007), “Chapter 13” in *Fundamental Concepts of Information Studies*.
Reserve – Available for check-out in hard copy at Alexander Library.
eCollege Document Share - For digital download

Timothy Burke & Jack Dickey (2013), “Manti Te'o's Dead Girlfriend, The Most
Heartbreaking And Inspirational Story Of The College Football Season, Is A Hoax” in
Deadspin.
(Link: <http://deadspin.com/manti-teos-dead-girlfriend-the-most-heartbreaking-an-5976517>)
Note: If you have trouble with a link, Google the article and you should be able to locate.

David Griner (2013), "Sports journalism faces moment of truth in week of Lance Armstrong, Manti Te'o hoax." *Poynter*.

(Link: <http://www.poynter.org/latest-news/everyday-ethics/200985/sports-journalism-faces-moment-of-truth-in-week-of-lance-armstrong-manti-teo-hoax>)

Note: If you have trouble with a link, Google the article and you should be able to locate.

Ira Glass (2012), "Retraction" on *This American Life*

(Listen: <http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/460/retraction>)

Note: If you have trouble with a link, Google the podcast and you should be able to locate.

Homework Due: Online Discussion on Information Ethics due Sunday 9:00 pm

Week 9 – March 30 –Information Privacy

David Segal (2013), "Mugged by a Mugshot Online." *New York Times*.

(Link: <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/06/business/mugged-by-a-mug-shot-online.html?pagewanted=all>)

Note: If you have trouble with a link, Google the article and you should be able to locate.

Hartzog and Selinger (2013), "Obscurity: A Better Way to Think About your Data than Privacy." *The Atlantic*.

(Link: <http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2013/01/obscurity-a-better-way-to-think-about-your-data-than-privacy/267283/>)

Note: If you have trouble with a link, Google the article and you should be able to locate.

Daniel Solove (2011), "Why Privacy Matters Even if You Have Nothing to Hide." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

(Link: <http://chronicle.com/article/Why-Privacy-Matters-Even-if/127461/>)

Note: If you have trouble with a link, Google the article and you should be able to locate.

Gary Stern (2014), "NY Plans to Share Data From Pre-K to Workforce; Aims to Unlock Keys to Student Success" in *The Journals News* (lohud.com).

(Link: <http://www.lohud.com/article/20140125/NEWS02/301250047/N-Y-plans-share-data-from-pre-K-workforce-aims-unlock-keys-student-success>)

Note: If you have trouble with a link, Google the article and you should be able to locate.

Homework Due: Online Discussion on Information and Privacy due Sunday 9:00 pm

Week 10 – April 6 –Information and Power

Discuss in class: Exam 2 Review

Virginia Eubanks (2011), "Deconstructing the Digital Divide." *Chicago Humanities Festival*.

(Watch: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pJwZcUJQFkk>)

Note: If you have trouble with a link, Google the article and you should be able to locate.

Kenneth Goldsmith (2013), "The Artful Accidents of Google Books." The New Yorker. (Link: <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/books/2013/12/the-art-of-google-book-scan.html>)

Note: If you have trouble with a link, Google the article and you should be able to locate.

Andrew Norman Wilson (2011), "Workers Leaving the Googleplex"
(Watch: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w0RTgOuoI2k>)

Judy Woodruff (2013), "Cut Off From Opportunity without Equal Access to the Internet." *PBS Newshour*.
(Watch: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X537MiN6COI>)

Homework Due: Online Discussion on Information and Power due Sunday 9:00 pm & begin studying for Exam 2

Week 11 – April 13 – Exam 2

Homework Due: (Study for examination)

Week 12 – April 20 – Evaluating Information Part I: Finding Facts in a World of Disinformation

Discuss in Class: Optional Extra Credit

Discuss in Class: Informational Analysis Paper

Jackson, B., & Jamieson, K. H. (2007). "Chapter 2: A Bridesmaid's Bad Breath: Warning Signs of Trickery;" "Chapter 3: Tall Coffees and Assault Weapons" & "Chapter 8: Was Clarence Darrow a Creationist: How to Be Sure" in *UnSpun: Finding facts in a world of disinformation*.

eCollege Document Share

Homework Due: Online Discussion of Evaluating Information Part I due Sunday 9:00 pm & begin working on informational analysis paper

Week 13 – April 27 – Evaluating Information Part II: Framing Information

DUE: Optional Extra Credit

Discuss in Class: Informational Analysis Paper

Kitzinger, J. (2007). Framing and frame analysis. In Devereux, E (Ed.) *Media studies: Key issues and debates*. Sage: London. Pp 134-161
Reserve (Library Reserve materials are listed on the "course reserves" tab under the name "LISCHER-KATZ,ZACHARIAH" the course coordinator for all Structure of Information Sections at http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/reserve_services.)

The Dream Team, (Feb, 2014). Did a senator break a federal labor law with his Volkswagen statement? *Al Jazeera America*.

(Link: <http://america.aljazeera.com/watch/shows/the-stream/the-stream-officialblog/2014/2/14/did-sen-bob-corker-violate-federal-labor-law.html>)

Note: If you have trouble with a link, Google the article and you should be able to locate.

The AP. (Feb, 2014). VW workers vote down UAW representation. *Fox News Online*.

(Link: <http://nation.foxnews.com/2014/02/16/vw-workers-vote-down-uaw-representation>)

Note: If you have trouble with a link, Google the article and you should be able to locate.

Homework Due: Online Discussion on evaluating information and policy due Sunday @ 9:00 pm & continue working on information analysis paper

Course Wrap Up/Flex Day- May 4.

Final Paper: As we do not have a final exam, your informational analysis paper will be due at the end of the exam time schedule by the university for the course. More details will be provided in March.