University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign
Graduate School of Library and Information Science
LIS 518LE Community Informatics Spring 2014
Meets online Wednesdays 4-6 Central Time
and Friday, February 28 9-4, On-Campus Day
Course documents and website https://courses.lis.illinois.edu/

Instructor
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Office hours by appointment.

Course description
A survey of key concepts in an emerging field that studies how local, historical communities are
using information and communications technologies. Covers key principles for work in the non-
profit/public sector as people harness new technologies and media as individuals, students,
families, community organizations, and so on. Overarching ideas prepare both professionals and
researchers to understand and master this environment, whatever their technology background.
Especially useful for those interested in public or community libraries, youth services, social
work, education, and anyone interested in working with or studying underserved communities.
The required course for the community informatics specialization.

Course structure and assignments
1. LEADING DISCUSSION. Each student will lead discussion of several readings by
identifying three key passages, supplying a drawing/diagram/chart/table about or from the
reading and three discussion questions, all on three slides or less.

2. CYBERNAVIGATING. Each student will volunteer as a CyberNavigator at a local
institution of your choice. Keep structured field notes on each visit and append those to your
final reflection paper. Also see the assignment instructions. Plan four hours a week for this
and cyberorganizing combined, through the week of April 23.

3. CYBERORGANIZING. A major project of the class this semester is to help build a
localwiki for Champaign-Urbana. It is already launched at http://cuwiki.net. We will plan
this together starting week 2. Also see the assignment instructions. Plan four hours a week
for this and cybernavigating combined, through the week of April 23.

4. FINAL REFLECTION PAPER. This 2500 word essay uses ideas from at least three course
readings (and anything else you choose) to reflect on and analyze your experience in the field
cyberorganizing and cybernavigating. Include answers to: What did you teach? What did you
learn? What were the challenges? The breakthroughs? Make sure I can find your answers to
those four questions in your essay. Illustrations, for instance photos, are encouraged, just
don’t use them to cut corners on the five page length. Attach as two appendices 1) your field notes from CyberNavigating, 2) a description such as a list of what you did for cyberorganizing, and 3) a press release about what you and your site accomplished this semester, with accompanying photo if possible and a note on where you will submit it. Due by midnight on May 6.

5. ACTIVE LEARNING. All students are expected to be fully engaged, raising questions and contributing to discussion to demonstrate understanding and contribute to the general progress of the class. “Read with a pencil,” that is, mark passages of interest, take notes, make a list of key concepts or questions or ideas, formulate questions to bring to class. For reading help, which is something everyone in graduate school needs, make use of Paul Edwards, “How to Read a Book,” in the course reading collection online.

Texts


Other readings will be available online. 

Bring readings to class to refer to. Read with a pencil.

Grading

You will be graded on your active participation in class making use of the literature (this includes leading discussions on articles; 20%), your cybernavigating and cyberorganizing (60%), and your final reflection paper (20%).

Schedule

January 22. Context. Cybernavigating

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4CV05HyAbM
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NLlGopyXT_g
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Us-TVg40ExM


CI in China and the US, Chapter 12. Kate Williams. Informatics Moments.
**January 29. Cyberorganizing**

View: Philip Neustrom “Edit your city: Collaborative media in the 21st century” (video and slides) presentation at eChicago 2012. [http://echicago.illinois.edu](http://echicago.illinois.edu) (click on events, find 2012).


Check out: [http://localwiki.org/faq](http://localwiki.org/faq) and [http://cuwiki.net](http://cuwiki.net).


**February 5. What is community informatics?**

Read: *CI in China and the US*, Chapter 8: Williams and Durrance, Community Informatics.

Carolyn Anthony, Building Community Bit by Byte. eChicago 2009 [proceedings], Kate Williams, editor. pages 99-107. [http://echicago.illinois.edu/conferences.html](http://echicago.illinois.edu/conferences.html)


**February 12. Community as history**


View: Debra Lissak, Executive Director of the Urbana Free Library. Mary Ellen Farrell, Board Chair of the Urbana Free Library. Policy: The Public Library October 8, 2009.

Due: BY TUESDAY MIDNIGHT FEBRUARY 11 TO THE MOODLE. IRB certification.

Do this training on your own by logging in, reading, and answering questions. Then post your certificate (proof that you completed) to the Moodle. [http://www.irb.illinois.edu/?q=education/RequiredTrainingInvestigators.html](http://www.irb.illinois.edu/?q=education/RequiredTrainingInvestigators.html)

**February 19. Community as network**


Yan Hui 闫慧, Zhou Wenjie 周文杰, Han Shenglong 韩圣龙. Social Capital, Digital Inequality, and a "Glocal" Community Informatics Project in Tianzhu Tibetan

February 26. No online session this week

ON CAMPUS DAY! Friday, February 28. Special population: Older adults

Bring to class your portable digital devices. More about this in class.


Visit: The pictures here go with the article above; scroll down to the bottom of the page: http://www.tecn.upf.es/~ssayag/TellingOlderPeopleStoryEmailing/


March 5. No online session this week

March 12. Community in inforeach 1: The digital divide


Explore: Find what Pew Internet and American Life Project has to say about the digital divide. http://www.pewinternet.org/
**March 19. Community in inforev 2: Manuel Castells**


View: Greg Bruner, Illini Football Video Coordinator, U of I Intercollegiate Athletics. Overcoming digital divides in a college football team, Digital Divide Lecture Series, October 21, 2010. [http://go.illinois.edu/digitaldividetalks](http://go.illinois.edu/digitaldividetalks)

**March 26. No class, Spring Break**

**April 2. Other key theories of the information society**


View: Project Gutenberg. Panel 3 of “Fifty Years of Public Computing at Illinois.”  
[http://50years.lis.illinois.edu](http://50years.lis.illinois.edu)  
Luis Von Ahn, Massive-scale online collaboration. April 2011.  
[http://www.ted.com/talks/luis_von_ahn_massive_scale_online_collaboration.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/luis_von_ahn_massive_scale_online_collaboration.html)

Explore: Internet Public Library and the earlier Librarian’s Index to the Internet (LII),  
[http://www.ipl.org/div/about/](http://www.ipl.org/div/about/)

**April 9. Virtuality: Early experiments**


**April 16. Public computing: The place, people, tools**

[http://muse.jhu.edu.proxy2.library.illinois.edu/journals/library_trends/toc/lib.62.1.html](http://muse.jhu.edu.proxy2.library.illinois.edu/journals/library_trends/toc/lib.62.1.html)  


Explore: *The Great Good Place* author Ray Oldenburg’s site, starting with:  
April 23. Public computing: Lessons about literacy
And: This is the last week of your field work, so that you can shift to writing it up.

April 30. Cyberpower: Making a difference

May 7. Applying the Illinois model: Santa Monica and Amsterdam
Bring: Highlights of your final reflection paper to share
Due: BY MIDNIGHT TUESDAY MAY 6 TO THE MOODLE: Final reflection paper with three attachments.