

<p style="text-align: center;">Syllabus Information Seeking Behavior (IS 246)</p>

Dr. Leah A. Lievrouw
Fall 2004 / Fridays 1:30-5:00 p.m. / GSE&IS 121
Department of Information Studies
Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, UCLA
Office Hours: Wednesdays 2-4 p.m. or by appointment
Office: 216 GSE&IS Bldg., 5-1840
Email: llievrou@ucla.edu

Course Description

In this seminar the individual and social aspects of human information needs, seeking and use are examined, based on current theoretical and empirical research. The course will be structured around the main elements of the information seeking process:

- * The **nature of information**, including its quality and value;
- * The **characteristics of seekers**, including cognitive traits, social intelligence, individual differences, social roles, demographics, and other relevant concepts drawn from user studies;
- * The **contexts** of information seeking, including social, cultural, and professional settings and practices;
- * The **precursors** to information seeking, for example information needs, problematic situations, knowledge gaps, Belkin's Anomalous State of Knowledge (ASK), sense-making, etc.;
- * **Representations** of inquiry, including question negotiation, problem statements, narratives, framing, queries, search term selection, and the role of language;
- * Search **strategies** and techniques, for example search tactics and heuristics or browsing;
- * **Barriers** to information seeking, including social and economic resources and inequity, language barriers, technical/infrastructural issues, avoidance, and so on; and
- * **Resolution**, that is, the adequacy or sufficiency of search results, or when searching is abandoned or reframed.

Goal and Objectives

The main goal of the course is to familiarize students with the principles and research related to human information seeking. In addition, the course has several objectives. As a result of their participation, all students in the seminar should be able to:

1. Identify the major concepts and findings of the literature on information needs, seeking, and use, including the important research programs and the questions, theories, and researchers associated with each;
2. Critique the major areas of research on information seeking, including a description of their strengths and weaknesses;
3. Apply concepts and frameworks from the research literature to examples or cases; and
4. Observe and analytically describe information seeking/use activities and behavior in both library/archive/museum contexts and in everyday life situations.

Course Requirements

Readings. Students are required to come to class having read the materials assigned for that day (listed below under "Weekly Topics and Readings"). **There are two resources for the course: a required text, *Looking for Information* by Donald Case (Academic Press, 2002), which is available at the LuValle Bookstore, and a bibliography on information seeking behavior provided by the instructor.** Please note that there is a reading assignment for the first class meeting (Chapters 1 and 2 of Case). In addition, students will select readings from the bibliography (or other sources) for each week's topic and prepare abstracts to post online for class discussion.

Class Participation. The course will be taught as a seminar, and students are expected to contribute substantively to class discussions, both in class and online.

Examinations/Papers. Students may choose one of the following evaluation options. Students may not change options after mid-term:

Option 1) Examinations: Students choosing this option will take two take-home examinations: a mid-term, due no later than start of class (1:30 p.m.) on November 5, and a final exam, to be returned not later than Monday, December 13, during exam week. Both exams will be distributed at the beginning of the quarter.

Option 2) Term Paper: Students choosing this option will write a literature review/critical essay on the work of a prominent scholar in the information-seeking literature. The paper assignment will be distributed at the beginning of the quarter. A draft of the paper will be due at mid-term, and the finished paper will be due no later than Monday, December 13, during exam week.

Grading Formula

Examination Option	60% (mid-term and final, 30% each)
OR	
Term Paper Option	60%
Class Preparation & Participation	40%
	100%

Weekly Topics and Readings

- October 1** **Introduction to the Course**
- Required: *Case, Looking for Information, Chapters 1 & 2*
-
- October 8** **The Nature and Value of Information**
- Required: *Case, Chapter 3*
 Student Selections, Information Seeking Bibliography
-
- October 15** **Overview of Research Literature in Information Seeking Behavior**
- Required: *Case, Chapters 10 & 13*
 Student Selections, Information Seeking Bibliography
-
- October 22** **Models of Information Seeking**
- Required: *Case, Chapters 6 & 7*
 Student Selections, Information Seeking Bibliography
- Recommended: *Case, Chapters 8 & 9*
-
- October 29** **NO CLASS: INSTRUCTOR AT U. OF OULU (FINLAND)**
-
- November 5** **Contexts of Seeking and Characteristics of Seekers**
 MID-TERM EXAMS/TERM PAPER DRAFTS DUE AT START OF CLASS (1:30 P.M.)
- Required: *Case, Chapters 11 & 12*
-
- November 12** **Precursors to Information Seeking**
- Required: *Case, Chapter 4*
 Student Selections, Information Seeking Bibliography
-
- November 19** **Representations of Inquiry (Online Class Discussion)**
- Required: *Student Selections, Information Seeking Bibliography*

November 26 **Thanksgiving Holiday**

December 3 **Search Processes and Barriers**

Required: Case, Chapter 5
Student Selections, Information Seeking Bibliography

December 10 **Resolution**

Required: Student Selections, Information Seeking Bibliography

EXAM WEEK **Final Exams or Final Term Papers Due 5:00 p.m. Monday, December 13**