

**Syllabus
Doctoral Seminar
Information Seeking and Use (LIS 275)**

**Dr. Leah A. Lievrouw
Winter 1996 / Mon 2-5 p.m.
Department of Library and Information Science
Graduate School of Education and Information Science, UCLA
Office Hours: Th 1-3 p.m. or by appointment**

Course Description

This seminar considers the theoretical and empirical aspects of research concerning human information seeking and use, both in terms of individual behavior and social context. The course will address both the philosophical and methodological issues involved in research design, as well as the specific behavioral and situational issues that emerge in the sites of social action that are characterized by information seeking.

Students will be expected to contribute substantively to seminar discussion, and will also be required to write a conference-quality term paper in which they identify a research question or hypothesis relevant to information seeking based on a comprehensive literature review and critique, and to formulate a research design that would adequately address the question.

Goals and 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 research literature on information needs, seeking, and use, including questions, theories, and researchers associated with each;
2. Relate research on information seeking and use to the major epistemological and methodological traditions in social research;
3. Critique the major subfields and constructs of research on information seeking and use;
4. Articulate new research problems in terms of these main research concepts and programs; and
5. Propose research projects whose design and theoretical grounding would adequately address those research problems.

Course Requirements

Prerequisites. Students participating in this seminar are expected to have already taken LIS 280 (Information Seeking Behavior) and to be familiar with the concepts presented in that course, which serve as a foundation for the material presented in the seminar. Students without this prerequisite may enroll in the course with the consent of the instructor.

Readings/Discussions. Because the course will be taught in seminar form, students will be expected to make cogent and prepared contributions to class discussions. Readings on the philosophy and methods of social research are listed below under "Weekly Topics and Readings;" other readings will be drawn from the Information Seeking & Use reading list for the standardized Ph.D. qualifying exams, and will be assigned week by week.

Assignments. Students will be responsible for writing and distributing abstracts of readings from the Information Seeking & Use qualifying exam reading list to the instructor and all class members each week. Readings will be assigned on a week-by-week basis. Abstracts may be no longer than one page each, and must conform to the style specifications of a standard research publication manual, such as APA, MLA, or the Chicago Manual of Style. In addition, students will be required to write and present in class a conference-quality term paper in which they identify a research question or hypothesis relevant to information seeking based on a review and critique of the research literature, and propose a theoretically and methodologically sound research design to adequately address the question. More information about the written assignments will be given in class.

Grading Formula. Grading for the course will be based on the following formula: 40% for the quality of the student's preparation for, and participation in, the seminar; 20% for the weekly abstracts; and 40% for the term paper.

Weekly Topics and Readings

The topics for each week of the course are listed below, along with readings for each topic. Additional readings will be assigned week to week from the Information Seeking & Use qualifying exam reading list. Students are expected to come to class having read the materials assigned for that day. (Please note: Class dates in brackets may need to be rescheduled due to University holidays on those days.)

January 8 **Introduction to the course**

<January 15> **How do we know? An introduction to epistemology**

REQUIRED READINGS:

Gillies, D. (1993). Philosophy of Science in the 20th Century: Four Central Themes. Oxford: Blackwell.
Chapter 1, "Some Historical Background: Inductivism, Russell and the Cambridge School, the Vienna Circle and Popper"
Chapter 2, "Popper's Critique of Inductivism. His Theory of Conjectures and Refutations (or Falsificationism)"

January 22 **Epistemology, continued**

REQUIRED READINGS:

Brown, H.I. (1977). Perception, Theory and Commitment: The New Philosophy of Science. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
Part 1, "Logical Empiricist Philosophy of Science" (pp. 13-76; Chapters 1-5)

January 29 **Paradigms**

REQUIRED READINGS:

Kuhn, T.S. (1970). The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press (2nd ed.).

February 5 **The linguistic and relativist turns in social science**

REQUIRED READINGS:

Gillies, D. (1993). Philosophy of Science in the 20th Century: Four Central Themes. Oxford: Blackwell.
Chapter 7, "Is Observation Theory-Laden?"
Chapter 8, "Is Metaphysics Meaningless? Wittgenstein, the Vienna Circle, and Popper's Critique"

Brown, H.I. (1977). Perception, Theory and Commitment: The New Philosophy of Science. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
Part II, "The New Image of Science" (pp. 79-167; Chapters 6-10)

February 12 Theory construction: Proposing explanations

REQUIRED READINGS:

Reynolds, P.D. (1971). A primer in theory construction. Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill.
Chapter 5, "Forms of Theories" (pp. 83-114).

Turner, J.H. (1987). "Analytical Theorizing." In Anthony Giddens and Jonathan H. Turner (Eds.) Social Theory Today (pp. 156-194). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

Stinchcombe, A.L. (1968). Constructing social theories. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World.
Chapter 3, "Complex Causal Structures: Demographic, Functional, and Historicist Explanations of Social Phenomena" (pp. 57-130).

Babbie, E. (1992). The Practice of Social Research (6th ed.) Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
Chapter 2, "Theory and Research" (pp. 54-65).

Littlejohn, S.W. (1992). Theories of Human Communication. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
Chapter 2, "Theory in the Process of Inquiry" (pp. 21-37).

<February 19> Social theory: foundations and evaluation

REQUIRED READINGS:

Giddens, A. and Turner, J.H. (1987). "Introduction." In Anthony Giddens and Jonathan H. Turner (Eds.) Social Theory Today (pp. 1-10). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Alexander, J.C. (1987). "The Centrality of the Classics." In Anthony Giddens and Jonathan H. Turner (Eds.) Social Theory Today (pp. 11-57). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Zuckerman, H. (1978). "Theory choice and problem choice in science." In J. Gaston (Ed.) Sociology of Science (pp. 65-95). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

February 26

**Relating selected theories to information seeking & use, part 1:
Structuralism and Post-Structuralism / Foucault, Derrida, Lacan**

REQUIRED READINGS:

Giddens, A. (1987). "Structuralism, Post-structuralism and the Production of Culture." In Anthony Giddens and Jonathan H. Turner (Eds.) Social Theory Today (pp. 195-223). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Storey, J. (1993). An Introductory Guide to Cultural Theory and Popular Culture. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.

Chapter 4, "Structuralism and Post-Structuralism" (pp. 69-96).

Foucault, M. (1972). The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language. New York, NY: Pantheon.

Part III, "The Statement and the Archive" (pp. 79-134)

Part IV, "Archaeological Description" (pp. 135-195).

March 4

**Relating selected theories to information seeking & use, part 2:
Simulacra and Hyperreality / Baudrillard, Eco, Debord
The Field of Cultural Production / Bourdieu**

REQUIRED READINGS:

Johnson, R. (1993). "Editor's Introduction: Pierre Bourdieu on Art, Literature and Culture." In Pierre Bourdieu, The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature (pp. 1-25). Edited and introduced by Randal Johnson. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Garnham, N. and Williams, R. (1986). "Pierre Bourdieu and the Sociology of Culture: An Introduction." In Richard Collins, James Curran, Nicholas Garnham, Paddy Scannel, Philip Schlesinger and Colin Sparks (Eds.) Media, Culture and Society: A Critical Reader (pp. 116-30). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Eco, U. (1985). "Strategies of Lying." In M. Blonsky (Ed.) On Signs (pp. 3-11). Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Eco, U. (1986). "Towards a Semiological Guerrilla Warfare." In Travels in Hyperreality (pp. 135-144). New York, NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Baudrillard, J. (1987). The Ecstasy of Communication (pp. 9-27). Paris: Semiotext(e) Foreign Agents Series.

Baudrillard, J. (1988). "Simulacra and Simulations." In Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings (pp. 166-184). Edited and introduced by Mark Poster. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Debord, G. (1995). The Society of the Spectacle. Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith (original publication 1967, La Société du Spectacle, Buchet-Chastel). New York: Zone Books (pages to come).

March 11

**Theoretical contributions in information seeking and use /
Presentation of term papers in class**