

INLS 385 Information Use for Organization Effectiveness

Summer Session I, 2018

M-F, 11:30am-1:00pm, Manning 304

Instructor Information

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Office Hours: M-F 1:30-2:30pm, or by appointment

Course Overview

The flow of information is the lifeblood for all kinds of organizations, from small community groups to academic universities to global corporations. In order to understand how these organizations function, we need to understand how individuals communicate, interact, and exchange information across all levels. Organizations also need to understand effective communication in order to achieve organizational goals. This course will explore the role of information in many different organizational contexts, and from many different angles.

We will investigate how individuals encounter, use, and make sense of information. We will look at how individuals collaborate in teams, groups, and other organizational structures. Throughout the course, we will consider the current dynamic global context, and especially the influence of technologies on how individuals and organizations interact with information.

Course Materials

We will be using two textbooks throughout the course, as well as some supplementary readings posted to Sakai.

Hitt, Michael, Adrienne Colella, and C. Chet Miller. 2015. *Organizational Behavior*. 4th ed. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley.

The 4th edition (most current) is available for purchase in the Student Stores; used and new copies are also available through online retailers (Amazon, AbeBooks, etc.).

Choo, Chun. 2005. *The Knowing Organization: How Organizations Use Information to Construct Meaning, Create Knowledge, and Make Decisions*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

This book is available **electronically through UNC libraries**. Feel free to purchase a paper copy if you prefer this to the e-book format, although I will **not** be ordering this book through the Student Stores.

Class Policies

Honor Code

All students are required to follow the UNC Honor Code (<https://studentconduct.unc.edu/>):

As a condition of joining the Carolina community, Carolina students pledge “not to lie, cheat, or steal” and to hold themselves, as members of the Carolina community, to a high standard of academic and non-academic conduct while both on and off Carolina’s campus. This commitment to academic

integrity, ethical behavior, personal responsibility and civil discourse exemplifies the “Carolina Way”, and this commitment is codified in both the University's Honor Code and in other University student conduct-related policies.

Diversity

“In support of the University's diversity goals and the mission of the School of Information and Library Science, SILS embraces diversity as an ethical and societal value.

We broadly define diversity to include race, gender, national origin, ethnicity, religion, social class, age, sexual orientation and physical and learning ability.

As an academic community committed to preparing our graduates to be leaders in an increasingly multicultural and global society we strive to:

- Ensure inclusive leadership, policies and practices;
- Integrate diversity into the curriculum and research;
- Foster a mutually respectful intellectual environment in which diverse opinions are valued;
- Recruit traditionally underrepresented groups of students, faculty and staff; and
- Participate in outreach to underserved groups in the State.

The statement represents a commitment of resources to the development and maintenance of an academic environment that is open, representative, reflective and committed to the concepts of equity and fairness.

Remember, on occasion you may have felt yourself to be a member of a minority group, picked on by a majority group. Here at school, you may find those roles reversed. Do not fall prey to the temptation to use your new majority sensibility to get back at those who may have picked on you in the past, when you were in a minority group. **Treating others as you would have them treat you is always a good rule to follow.”**

- Faculty of the School of Information and Library Science (<http://sils.unc.edu/about/diversity>)

Grading

Grade Range	Definition *
A = 94-100% A- = 90-93.9%	A: Mastery of course content at the highest level of attainment that can reasonably be expected of students at a given stage of development. The A grade states clearly that the student has shown such outstanding promise in the aspect of the discipline under study that he/she may be strongly encouraged to continue.
B+ = 87-89.9% B = 84-86.9% B- = 80-83.9%	B: Strong performance demonstrating a high level of attainment for a student at a given stage of development. The B grade states that the student has shown solid promise in the aspect of the discipline under study.

C+ = 77-79.9% C = 74-76.9% C- = 70-73.9%	C: A totally acceptable performance demonstrating an adequate level of attainment for a student at a given stage of development. The C grade states that, while not yet showing any unusual promise, the student may continue to study in the discipline with reasonable hope of intellectual development.
D+ = 67-69.9% D = 64-66.9% D- = 60-63.9%	D: A marginal performance in the required exercises demonstrating a minimal passing level of attainment for a student at a given stage of development. The D grade states that the student has given no evidence of prospective growth in the discipline; an accumulation of D grades should be taken to mean that the student would be well advised not to continue in the academic field.
F = 0-59.9%	F: For whatever reasons, an unacceptable performance. The F grade indicates that the student's performance in the required exercises has revealed almost no understanding of the course content. A grade of F should warrant an adviser's questioning whether the student may suitably register for further study in the discipline before remedial work is undertaken.

These definitions are from:

<http://www.unc.edu/faculty/faccoun/reports/2000-01/R2001GradingStandardsAddendum.htm>

Attendance

Regular attendance for this class is expected, and constitutes the foundation for student's success in the course. Class meetings give us an opportunity to discuss the readings, develop key concepts, and build knowledge together. Please let me know ahead of time if you expect to miss any class sessions. I am generally understanding and flexible. I count an absence as missing half or more of a class session.

Students who miss 3 or more class sessions will need to meet with me to discuss how to make up this lost time. For students who continue to miss class sessions after this initial 3 absences, I will detract 5% from your final grade for each additional absence.

For students who miss more than 3 class sessions, and do not arrange make up work with me, you will lose your 10% participation score. I will continue to detract 5% of your final grade for each additional absence after the initial 3 absences.

Late Assignments

All assignments are expected to be turned in on time by the date specified on the syllabus—unless you make arrangements with me for an extension before the due date. Late assignments will be marked down 25% for each day following the due date. In other words, assignments turned in more than 4 days late will not be accepted for any credit.

Note on extensions: I am generally lenient and understanding, so if you have extenuating circumstances that you expect will prevent you from turning in an assignment on time, see me as soon as possible to discuss an extension. If you fail to turn the assignment in by the date of the extension, the above policy will apply.

Special Needs

Please make an appointment with me if you feel that you may need an accommodation for a disability, or if you have any other special need that you feel will prohibit you from succeeding in this course. I will strive to meet all special needs, and I will be better able to address these if I am aware of them earlier in the course.

If you do need an accommodation for a disability, please register with the Accessibility Resources & Services Office (<https://ars.unc.edu/>)

Schedule

Part 1 – Introductions, Overviews, and Core Terms

W, 05/16 – Introductions

- No assigned readings.
- We will introduce ourselves, go over expectations for the class, and look ahead at some of the key terms, concepts, and ideas.

Th, 05/17 – Studying Information in Organizations, pt. 1

- Chapter 1, *Organizational Behavior*
- Buckland, Michael. 1991. "Information as Thing." *Journal of the American Society for Information Science* 42 (5): 351–60.

F, 05/18 – Studying Information in Organizations, pt. 2

- Chapter 1, *The Knowing Organization*
- Saracevic, Tefko. 1999. "Information Science." *Journal of the American Society for Information Science* 50 (12): 1051–63.

Part 2 – The Individual and the Organization

M, 05/21 – Sense-making

- Chapter 2, *The Knowing Organization*

T, 05/ 22 – Personality and intelligence

- Chapter 5, *Organizational Behavior*

W, 05/23 – Professional Identities

- Clavir, Miriam. 1998. "The Social and Historic Construction of Professional Values in Conservation." *Studies in Conservation* 43 (1): 1–8. doi:10.2307/1506631.
- Walkowitz, Daniel J. 1990. "The Making of a Feminine Professional Identity: Social Workers in the 1920s." *American Historical Review* 95 (4): 1051–75.
- In-class activity: report on professional identities.

Th, 05/24 – Leadership

- Chapter 8, *Organizational Behavior*

F, 05/25 – Groups and Teams

- Chapter 11, *Organizational Behavior*

M, 05/28 – NO CLASS, Memorial Day

- **Report #1 due** by 5pm

Part 3 – Organizational Behavior

T, 05/29 – Organizational Structure and Culture

- Chapter 13, *Organizational Behavior*

W, 05/30 – Global Contexts

- Chapter 3, *Organizational Behavior*

Th, 05/31 – Knowledge Production and Sharing

- Chapter 4, *The Knowing Organization*

F, 06/01 – Organizational Diversity

- [“Machine Bias”](#) report at *ProPublica*
- [“Bias in Technology”](#) article at *Communications of the ACM*
- [“Google faulted for racial bias”](#) at *The Washington Post*

M, 06/04 – Group Project 1 **due**

- We will spend this class period sharing our presentations for Group Project 1.

T, 06/05 – Informal Networks and Communities of Practice

- “Informal Networks” by Krackhardt and Hanson
- “Communities of Practice” by Wenger and Snyder

W, 06/06 – Organizational Decision Making

- Chapter 5, *The Knowing Organization*

Th, 06/07 – Organizational Memory and Artifacts

- Ackerman, Mark. 1996. “Definitional and Contextual Issues in Organizational and Group Memories.” *Information Technology & People* 9 (1): 10–24.
- Ketelaar, Eric. 2005. “Sharing: Collected Memories in Communities of Records.” *Archives & Manuscripts* 33 (1): 44–61.

Part 4 – Information Technologies

F, 06/10 – History IT in Organizations

- Selections from: Yates, JoAnne. 1989. *Control through Communication: The Rise of System in American Management*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- In-class activity: Organizational IT timeline

M, 06/11 – IT and Organizational Strategy

- “IT Doesn’t Matter” by Nicholas G. Carr
- Chapter 14, *Organizational Behavior*
- **Report #2 due** by 5pm.

T, 06/12 – Emerging Modes for Communication

- “Yammering away at the office,” <http://www.economist.com/node/15350928>
- Duranti, Luciana. 2015. “Digital Records and Archives in the Commercial Cloud.” In *Regulating the Cloud: Policy for Computing Infrastructure*, edited by Jean-François Blanchette and Christopher S. Yoo, 197–213. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.

W, 06/13 – Digital Nomads and Mobile Labor

- Nash, Caleece, Mohammad Hossein Jarrahi, Will Sutherland, and Gabriela Phillips. 2018. “Digital Nomads Beyond the Buzzword: Defining Digital Nomadic Work and Use of Digital Technologies.” In *Transforming Digital Worlds*, 207–17. Lecture Notes in Computer Science. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-78105-1_25.
- Nelson, Sarah Beth, Mohammad Hossein Jarrahi, and Leslie Thomson. 2017. “Mobility of Knowledge Work and Affordances of Digital Technologies.” *International Journal of Information Management* 37 (2): 54–62. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2016.11.008>.

Th, 06/14 – IT in Libraries and Archives

- Borgman, Christine L. 1997. “From Acting Locally to Thinking Globally: A Brief History of Library Automation.” *The Library Quarterly* 67 (3): 215–49. doi:10.1086/629950.

Fri, 06/15 – IT in Museums

- Selections from: Marty, Paul F., and Katherine Burton Jones, eds. 2008. *Museum Informatics: People, Information, and Technology in Museums*. New York: Routledge.
- **Group Project #2 due** by 5pm.

M, 06/18 – Summary and Review

- We will review what we’ve learned from the class, and take time to answer any remaining questions.
- **Report #3 due** by 5pm.

T, 06/19 – NO CLASS, reading day

- Prepare for the final exam
- I will send out the exam by 5pm on this day.

W, 06/20 – Final Exam

- The final exam is a take home, open note and open book exam.
- The final exam is **due** by 5pm on this day.

Assignments and Grading

I will post more detailed descriptions and a grading rubric for each assignment on Sakai.

Participation (10% of grade)

This class will be focused on discussion of readings and concepts. Therefore, your daily participation is essential for the success of the course. I expect you to come to each class having read the readings ahead of time, and ready to contribute to class discussions and activities.

Periodically, I will also ask that you prepare in advance to informally present on some topic or issue, such as bringing in a current event to discuss with the class.

Reports (30% of grade)

At the end of parts 2, 3, and 4 you will write a report that demonstrates your comprehension of the course materials (3 reports in total). Each report will have 2 objectives: 1) identify and explain a key concept covered in that part and 2) consider how that concept helps us to understand information use in organizations. For instance, for part 2 you might identify and define **personality** as a key concept, and then discuss how personality type impacts an individual's communication and information sharing practices.

Each report should be 2-3 pages (double spaced, Times New Roman 12 pt font, 1" margins).

Group Projects (30% of grade)

You will have 2 group projects throughout the course. For both group projects, you will be members of a business consulting team. I will assign each team a scenario in which an organization is having some information or communication problem. As a consulting team, each group will need to develop a solution to the problem scenario. You will then present this solution to the hypothetical organization.

The product of both group projects will be an in-class presentation.

Final Exam (30% of grade)

The final exam will be a take home exam, consisting of several short answer and mini-essay questions. The exam will be open note and open book. The exam will **not** require you to memorize and repeat back definitions, dates, names, etc., but rather will assess your ability to critically think through the concepts and issues we have discussed throughout the course. I will send out the exam on June 19 by 5pm and the exam will be due by 5pm on June 20. I expect you to spend approximately 2-3 hours working on the exam.

Acknowledgments

This syllabus draws heavily on resources provided by Mohammad Jarrahi and Ron Bergquist. My thanks to both of them for their invaluable assistance in planning this course.