

**University of Kentucky  
School of Information Science (SIS)**

**Information Literacy & Critical Thinking**

**Instructor**

Dr. Kari Benguria

**Office Hours:**

By appointment in my office, Skype, or Zoom

**Contact Information:**

Email:

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**Class Information**

Online and asynchronous

**Course Description**

**COURSE INFORMATION**

Emphasizing critical inquiry and critical thinking through creativity, that is using and manipulating information in nontraditional ways, this course will explore the theories and definitions surrounding the term “information literacy.” Students will put this theory into practice by developing problem-solving skills that allow them to meet information needs throughout their lifetimes. Students will gain a better understanding of how information and knowledge function in society and will discover methods of finding, evaluating, and using different information sources in an effective and ethical manner throughout the semester by engaging in assignments that transform the information learned from the texts into knowledge situated in multiple contexts including text and visual.

**Course Outcomes**

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

1. Describe and apply information & digital literacy in various nontraditional contexts.
2. Comprehend how knowledge is produced in society and gain experience in nontraditional knowledge production.
3. Develop critical thinking skills enabling them to apply, analyze and evaluate sources then synthesizing the information encountered to create new sources.
4. Create appropriate research questions for pertinent information discovery in various situations with the goal of generating knowledge.
5. Determine and access the most appropriate information sources for different contexts.
6. Evaluate information and information sources to meet different information needs.
7. Utilize information processes to solve problems and understand current issues in society.
8. Understand the ethical responsibilities of using information in many different contexts including print and online.

## Required Materials

Becoming a Critical Thinker (8th ed.)  
Vincent Ruggiero, 2015  
Wadsworth Publishing

Other readings available online or through Canvas.

## Technology Requirements

Students may be required to participate in class activities online in addition to other class requirements. Students must have access to Canvas through their UK ID to successfully complete this course. Students may also need access to Google Drive (For instructions on setting up the Google student account, [click here](#).), and access to [Zoom](#) (which they should already have with their link blue user name and password).

Students are not required to have a webcam and microphone, although they may come in handy. [Click here to view](#) UK's Analytics and Technologies Department's minimum requirements for technology for elearning.

## **STUDENT EVALUATION**

### Grading Scale

- 90% – 100% = **A (Exceptional Achievement)**
- 80% – 89% = **B (High Achievement)**
- 70% – 79% = **C (Average Achievement)**
- 60% – 69% = **D (Below Average)**
- 0% – 59% = **E (Failing)**

### Course Assignments

Due dates are indicated on the daily schedule. Unless otherwise notes, assignments are due at the beginning of the first class period of the week. Late work submitted within 24 hours will receive a 10% penalty. Late work submitted within 48 hours will receive a 20% penalty, and late work received within 72 hours will receive 30% off. No late work is accepted after 3 days.

### Submission of Assignments

All assignments must include student's name, instructor, the course, and the date.

When submitting assignments on Canvas, students must follow naming conventions on assignment instructions. Students are responsible for keeping back-up copies of all work since electronic texts can be lost. All assignments must be written in Standard English with correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Assignments are to be completed solely by the individual.

## Group Synthesis

During the semester, students will be asked to offer peer evaluation discussion of assignments produced by others in their groups. Students should offer helpful commentary and analysis of their colleagues' work in an effort to assist other students in refining their products as well as offering new ways to consider the processes.

## Discussion

Students will engage in discussion posts online or face-to-face. The goal is to have students think about and discuss the weekly readings/topics, and students will then engage in discussion.

All class discussions, both in-class and online, should be respectful and intellectually stimulating. Should a problem arise the instructor will take appropriate actions.

## Participation

Students are expected to participate fully in class. Students are expected to (a) read and consider applications of the information *before* class, (b) ask questions and/or make applications in small group and large group class discussions/activities, and (c) work to facilitate classroom interaction. Students are also expected to participate fully in discussions/activities completed in class or through Canvas.

## Course Policies

### Excused Absences

Students need to notify the instructor of absences prior to class when possible. Please refer to the definition of an excused absence in the current edition of *Students Rights and Responsibilities* or on the web at <http://www.uky.edu/StudentAffairs/Code/>.

S.R. 5.2.4.2 defines the following as acceptable reasons for excused absences: (a) serious illness, (b) illness or death of family member, (c) University-related trips, (d) major religious holidays, and (e) other circumstances found to fit "reasonable cause for nonattendance" by the instructor. You will be asked to provide official written documentation for absences.

Excuses for university-sponsored activities must be made *prior* to such absences. Students anticipating an absence for a major religious holiday are responsible for notifying the instructor in writing of anticipated absences due to their observance of such holidays no later than the last day in the semester to add a class. Information regarding dates of major religious holidays may be obtained through the religious liaison at 859-257-2754.

### Verification of Absences

Students may be asked to verify their absences in order for them to be considered excused. Senate Rule 5.2.4.2 states that faculty have the right to request "appropriate verification" when students claim an excused absence because of illness or death in the family. Appropriate notification of absences due to university-related trips is required prior to the absence.

## **Late Work**

Late work submitted within 24 hours will receive a 10% penalty. Late work submitted within 48 hours will receive a 20% penalty, and late work received before 72 hours will receive a 30% penalty. No late work is accepted after 3 days.

## **Plagiarism**

Part II of Student Rights and Responsibilities (6.3.1; online at <http://www.uky.edu/StudentAffairs/Code/part2.html>) states:

All academic work, written or otherwise, submitted by students to their instructors or other academic supervisors, is expected to be the result of their own thought, research, or self-expression. In cases where students feel unsure about a question of plagiarism involving their work, they are obliged to consult their instructors on the matter before submission.

When students submit work purporting to be their own, but which in any way borrows ideas, organization, wording or anything else from another source without appropriate acknowledgment of the fact, the students are guilty of plagiarism.

Plagiarism includes reproducing someone else's work, whether it be published article, chapter of a book, a paper from a friend or some file, or whatever. Plagiarism also includes the practice of employing or allowing another person to alter or revise the work which a student submits as his/her own, whoever that other person may be. Students may discuss assignments among themselves or with an instructor or tutor, but when the actual work is done, it must be done by the student, and the student alone.

When a student's assignment involves research in outside sources or information, the student must carefully acknowledge exactly what, where and how he/she has employed them. If the words of someone else are used, the student must put quotation marks around the passage in question and add an appropriate indication of its origin. Making simple changes while leaving the organization, content and phraseology intact is plagiaristic. However, nothing in these Rules shall apply to those ideas which are so generally and freely circulated as to be a part of the public domain.

Make sure to cite properly in all your assignments. Plagiarized work may be given a zero. Repeat offenses will result in a failing grade for the course.

## **Class Schedule**

Learning does not always happen on schedule, and so changes may be made to meet the needs of the class. The student will be responsible for checking the online syllabus, schedule, and Canvas notifications for any changes or updates before reading or beginning activities.

## **E-mail Policy**

Please allow 24 hours for the instructor to respond to an e-mail during the school week. On weekends, instructors will try to answer e-mails, but may not be able to do so until Monday. Before emailing the instructor with questions, students should read assignment information and the syllabus carefully. Students who have not gotten a response within 24 hours should send a follow-up e-mail or speak with the instructor.

## **Office Hours**

The instructor will be available for meetings based on the office hours printed on the first page of the syllabus. If students cannot make it to the scheduled office hours, they should contact the instructor using the preferred contact method to schedule another time.

## **Reference Librarians**

The reference librarians on the 2nd floor, North Wing of W.T. Young Library can help with research for this class or other classes. Students can visit, call, e-mail, or chat with librarians, unless the assignment requests they do not seek library assistance. See the Libraries' Homepage for more information.

## **Writing Center**

The Writing Center is located in the Hub of the W. T. Young Library, B108B (phone: 859-257-1368). Students can walk in or make an appointment online ([uky.mywconline.com](http://uky.mywconline.com)). The staff can help students identify and correct problems with all aspects of writing as well as work with students on visual design.

## **Academic Ombud**

Dr. Michael Healy, the Academic Ombud will assist you with a variety of issues, including grade disputes. He is in 109 Bradley Hall and his number is 859-257-3737. You can e-mail him at [ombud@uky.edu](mailto:ombud@uky.edu).

## **Disability Resource Center**

If you have a documented disability that requires academic accommodations in this course, please make your request to the University Disability Resource Center. The Center will require current disability documentation. When accommodations are approved, the Center will provide me with a Letter of Accommodation that details the recommended accommodations. Contact the Disability Resource Center, David Beach, Director at 859-257-2754 or [dtbeac1@uky.edu](mailto:dtbeac1@uky.edu).

### **Military Members and Veterans**

UK recognizes the complexities of being a member of the military community and also a student. Members of the military or military veterans or dependents should inform the instructor if they need special accommodations. Drill schedules, calls to active duty, mandatory training exercises, complications with GI Bill disbursement, and other unforeseen military and veteran related developments can complicate academic life. If students are aware of any complications, they should contact the Coordinator of the University of Kentucky Veterans Resource Center at (859) 257-1148 for additional assistance. Visit <http://www.uky.edu/veterans> for more available resources.

### **GENERAL COURSE POLICIES**

Policies concerning academic integrity, excused absences, and academic accommodations due to disability are available online at:

<https://ci.uky.edu/sis/sites/default/files/policies.pdf>

## Assignment Descriptions and Point Values

### **Week 2: Personal introduction (10 points)**

You will prepare and present a brief 1-2 minute video introduction speech that you will post in our discussion forum. Your presentation should include name, major, year in school, and at least one fun fact about you. This will help your instructor and your fellow students get to know you.

### **Week 4: Case studies (50 points)**

Using the readings and materials presented in class, consider whether you are largely a critical thinker, a creative thinker, or both. Then, think of three people in your field and describe what kind of thinker you believe them to be as well. Give examples for your opinions, and write an essay describing each person in four case studies that must be at least 250 words per person.

### **Week 7: Deconstructing a journal article (75 points)**

In at least a 1,000-word essay, critique a journal article in your field that is at least 10 pages long based on the principles described in your readings and in class. Address the questions found on the assignment prompt in Canvas, and provide an APA citation and page numbers to indicate where you found the information.

### **Week 9: Midsemester feedback (5 points)**

You will complete a brief, anonymous survey about the course so that your instructors can address any issues and can adjust for the remainder of the semester.

### **Week 10: Article comparison (40 points)**

Find at least two written pieces of over 500 words or over 3-minute videos from sources on the same topic, and compare them using the principles outlined in your readings and in class. In an at least 500-word essay, compare the information the author shared, argue for why and how the pieces may be biased if at all, and describe how the sources tailored the information to appeal to particular audiences.

### **Week 13: Podcast (50 points)**

In a brief 2-3 minute podcast, discuss a topic from the course that you really liked and would like to learn more about such as fake news, information design, the deep web, media bias, propaganda, etc. Issues you may want to discuss are your topic's value in today's world, what you wish would be different about it, or what you see as its future. You will write a script for these and record the podcast as if it were for a professional outlet.

### **Week 15: Peer review of final paper (10 points)**

After writing a complete draft of your paper, you will review a classmate's paper and will receive feedback about your draft as well.

### **Weeks 16: Field topic paper and presentation (150 points)**

Research a controversial issue (preferably in your field), and in at least a 1,000-word essay, summarize the major sides of the issue as well as your opinion on the topic. Cite at

least three reputable sources in your paper, and at least one of your sources must be a journal article. You will present your findings in a 3-4 minute presentation that will include one infographic you create.

**Online activities (60 points)**

You will participate in a variety of online activities throughout the semester including video and written discussions posts.

**Points possible: 450**



## Course Calendar

### Module 1: Basics of Information Literacy

Week	Focus	Assignment Due Dates and Readings	Online Activity Format
<b>Week 1: Jan 10</b>	Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Review syllabus</b></li> <li>• Ruggiero pp. 1-20</li> <li>• <a href="#">Importance of information literacy</a></li> </ul>	
<b>Week 2: Jan 14</b>	Critical Thinking in the 21st Century	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Video personal introduction due</b></li> <li>• Ruggiero pp. 25-40</li> <li>• <a href="#">Concept of critical thinking</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Why the modern world is bad for our brains</a></li> </ul>	
<b>Week 3: Jan 21</b>	Creative Thinking and Problem Solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Creative approaches to problem solving</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Bloom's taxonomy revised</a></li> </ul>	Written

### Module 2: Building Arguments

Week	Focus	Assignment Due Dates and Readings	Online Activity Format
<b>Week 4: Jan 28</b>	Finding Quality Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Case studies assignment due</b></li> <li>• Ruggiero pp. 47-63</li> <li>• <a href="#">How search engines work</a> Chapters 1, 4, and 5</li> <li>• <a href="#">Deep web sources and info</a></li> </ul>	Video: Add text on screen
<b>Week 5: Feb 4</b>	Evaluating Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">CRAAP Test</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Deconstructing a research article</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Research bias</a></li> </ul>	Written
<b>Week 6: Feb 11</b>	Reasoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ruggiero pp. 103-120</li> <li>• <a href="#">Persuasive reasoning</a></li> </ul>	Video: Add transitions

### Module 3: Assessing Information

Week	Focus	Assignment Due Dates and Readings	Online Activity Format
<b>Week 7: Feb 18</b>	Bias	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Deconstructing a journal article due</b></li> <li>• Ruggiero pp. 168-176</li> <li>• <a href="#">American Historical Association: Propaganda</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Types of media bias</a></li> </ul>	Written
<b>Week 8: Feb 25</b>	Persuasion and Stereotypes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Midsemester feedback due</b></li> <li>• Ruggiero pp. 71-97, 131-137</li> <li>• <a href="#">The role of persuasion in critical thinking</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The new rules of persuasion</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Stereotype threat</a></li> </ul>	Written
<b>Week 9: March 4</b>	Information Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Article comparison due</b></li> <li>• <a href="#">Infographics and data visualization</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The science behind design</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Visual design for everyone</a></li> </ul>	Video: Add split screen

### Module 4: Transforming Information

Week	Focus	Assignment Due Dates and Readings	Online Activity Format
<b>Week 10: March 11</b>	<b>Spring Break</b>		
<b>Week 11: March 18</b>	Storytelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">The psychology of storytelling</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The science behind storytelling</a></li> </ul>	Video: Add active link on page
<b>Week 12: March 25</b>	Critical writing/ Speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Critical essay</a></li> <li>• Ruggiero pp. 137-147</li> </ul>	Written

## Module 5: Sharing Information

Week	Focus	Assignment Due Dates and Readings	Online Activity
<b>Week 13:</b> <b>April 1</b>	Information Ethics/Privacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Podcast due</b></li> <li>• <a href="#">Social networking privacy</a>, 1-4, 7-9</li> <li>• <a href="#">Four ethical issues of the information age</a></li> </ul>	Written
<b>Week 14</b> <b>April 8</b>	Copyright	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">U.S. copyright basics</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Copyright of social media sites</a></li> </ul>	Video: Integrate media clips
<b>Week 15:</b> <b>April 15</b>	Work week and peer review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Peer review of field topic paper due</b></li> </ul>	Written
<b>Week 16:</b> <b>April 29</b>	Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Field topic paper and presentation due</b></li> </ul>	
	Finals Week		