

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

**Information Literacy & Critical Thinking**

**Instructor**

Dr. Troy B. Cooper

**Office Hours:**

MWF 9:00-10:30 a.m. or by appt.

**Contact Information:**

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859.257.9589

**Class Information**

Online

**COURSE INFORMATION**

**Course Description**

This course provides an introduction to the concepts and practices of information literacy. It explores how to effectively and ethically find, evaluate, analyze, and use information resources in academic and everyday-life situations. Emphasizing critical inquiry and critical thinking, 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, accessing, evaluating, and using different information sources in an effective and ethical manner. (Same as IS 200.)

**Course Outcomes**

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

1. Describe and apply information and 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. Utilize information processes to solve problems and understand current issues in society.
5. Understand the ethical responsibilities of using information in many different contexts including print and online.

## Required Materials

All readings available online or through Canvas.

## Technology Requirements

Students will be required to participate in class activities online, and will require the necessary technology to do so. 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 required to have a webcam and microphone. [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)**

### **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.

## Research Subject Pool

The School of Information Science is committed to providing students a broad and comprehensive education. Students in this class are provided the option to participate in one or more research studies for 3 credit points which is equal to 15 points towards the total points in the class (3 percent of your grade). If you are enrolled in multiple courses that participant in the RSP, you must contact the RSP coordinator to make after you have completed the required 3 credit points and the RSP coordinator will ensure that points are prorated across classes. Detailed information about available research studies can be found on the Research Participant Management System website found (<https://uksis.sona-systems.com>). If you have questions about the research or about credit, please contact the researcher for the specific study about which you are inquiring. Participation is voluntary and there are alternative options for credit. Please see the complete description of the procedures for alternative research credit. If you elect to participate in the alternative assignment, you must sign up for this by the midterm. More information about the alternative assignment can be found under the course content tab on the learning management system.

## 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

### Attendance

This class is a community whose success is dependent on everyone's participation. There is a strong correlation between class attendance and grades. Therefore, attendance is vital for students' achievement. Students will only be permitted to make up work missed due to an excused absence.

### 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 will NOT be accepted except in very rare circumstances. Deadlines are clearly outlined on the syllabus, and you will receive reminders in class and on Canvas regarding the due dates of assignments. If you know that you will be absent from class when a particular assignment is due, please let me know prior to the day of your absence so that we can make any necessary arrangements for you to complete the assignment early.

### **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 introduction speech to present in class. 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 6: Deconstructing a journal article (75 points)**

In at least a 800-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 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 11: 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 14: Final video script draft due (10 points)**

You will submit a script of what you will say in your final project video, the two images you selected to analyze, and your completed infographic.

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

You will review a classmate's materials for the final project and will receive feedback about your work as well.

### **Weeks 16: Final project: Image analysis (100 points)**

Compare two infographics that relate to the same topic and analyze the information provided, the visual and structural design, and the audience of each infographic based on the principles discussed in class. Then, create a new infographic that improves on the original infographics. Explain why you made the changes you did, and discuss how you used critical and creative thinking processes to create your infographic. Create a 5- to 8-minute video showing both original infographics as well as your own, and discuss the prompts above. You

must appear on the screen at least at the beginning and end of the video. Then, in a 400-word essay, analyze one other student's video, and explain how you would change the information and design of the infographics the students created. Now that you've seen how other people approach the redesign, if you did your infographic over, what would you do differently and why?

**Ongoing:**

**Research credit participation (15 points)**

Students in this class are provided the option to participate in one or more research studies for 3 credit points which is equal to 15 points towards the total points in the class (3 percent of your grade). Detailed information can be found on page 3 of the syllabus and on the Research Participant Management System website found (<https://uksis.sona-systems.com>).

**Pre-/Post-Test (10 points)**

Each student is required to complete a pre-test at the beginning of the semester and a post-test at the end of the semester for departmental assessment purposes. These will be completed online and you will receive credit for these assignments; your answers will not affect your grade and your instructor will not be aware of your individual responses.

A link and instructions for the pre-test will be sent directly to your university-issued email address on **Wednesday, August 29<sup>th</sup>**. You must complete the assignment by **5:00pm Monday, September 3<sup>rd</sup>**.

A link and instructions for the post-test will be sent directly to your university-issued email address on **Monday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>**. You must complete the assignment by **5:00pm on Friday, December 7<sup>th</sup>**.

**Attendance/Online activities (60 points)**

You will participate in a variety of online activities throughout the semester. Details will be provided in the weekly module.

**Points possible: 400**



## Course Calendar

### Module 1: Basics of Information Literacy

Week	Focus	Due Dates and Readings
<b>Week 1: Aug 23</b>	Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Review syllabus</b></li> <li>• <b>Pre-test due</b></li> <li>• <a href="#">Importance of information literacy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Why the modern world is bad for our brains</a></li> </ul>
<b>Week 2: Aug 28</b>	Critical Thinking in the 21st Century	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Personal introduction due</b></li> <li>• Critical thinking and WISE reading (Canvas)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Concept of critical thinking</a></li> </ul>
<b>Week 3: Sept 4</b>	Creative Thinking and Problem Solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Creative approaches to problem solving</a></li> </ul>

### Module 2: Analyzing Information

Week	Focus	Due Dates and Readings
<b>Week 4: Sept 11</b>	Finding Quality Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Case studies due</b></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>
<b>Week 5: Sept 18</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>
<b>Week 6: Sept 25</b>	Reasoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Journal article analysis due</b></li> <li>• <a href="#">Persuasive reasoning</a></li> </ul>
<b>Week 7: Oct 2</b>	Bias	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Types of media bias</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">American Historical Association: Propaganda</a></li> </ul>

### Module 3: Presenting Ideas

Week	Focus	Readings
<b>Week 8:</b> Oct 9	Information Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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>
<b>Week 9:</b> Oct 16	Persuasion and Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Midsemester feedback due</b></li> <li>• <b>Review your research credits</b></li> <li>• <a href="#">The new rules of persuasion</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The story of propaganda</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The role of persuasion in critical thinking</a></li> </ul>
<b>Week 10:</b> Oct 23	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>
<b>Week 11:</b> Oct 30	Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Podcast due</b></li> <li>• History of ideas case studies (Canvas)</li> </ul>

### Module 4: Transforming Information

Week	Focus	Readings
<b>Week 12:</b> Nov 6	Copyright	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">U.S. copyright basics</a></li> <li>• Copyright and social media (Canvas)</li> </ul>
<b>Week 13:</b> Nov 13	Information ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Four ethical issues of the information age</a></li> </ul>
<b>Week 14:</b> Nov 20	Privacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Final project script due</b></li> <li>• <a href="#">Social networking privacy</a>, 1-4, 7-9</li> </ul>
<b>Week 15:</b> Nov 27	Work week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Peer review of final script due</b></li> </ul>
<b>Week 16:</b> Dec 4	Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Post-test due</b></li> <li>• <b>Final presentation due</b></li> </ul>
	Finals Week	