

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

**IS/ICT 200-205: Information Literacy & Critical Thinking**  
Online

**Instructor:**

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**Office Hours:**

By virtual or phone appointment only

- Email for appointment

Will respond to emails on weekdays  
within 24 hours

**COURSE INFORMATION**

**Course Description**

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

100% Information Literacy Success, 3rd ed.  
Gwenn Wilson, 2015, Cengage Learning

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 in the Assignment Descriptions on pages 7 and 8 of the syllabus. 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 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. The goal is to have students think about and discuss the weekly readings/topics, and students will then engage in discussion.

All class online discussions 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 online classroom interaction. Students are also expected to participate fully in discussions/activities completed in class 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.

Participation statistics will be monitored weekly. Failing to fully participate in the weekly online activities by midnight on Sunday of the week in which they are assigned will result in losing all points for that week, unless the lack of participation occurs during a time the university is closed or during an academic holiday or break.

**Note:** It is *the student's responsibility* to monitor attendance and online class participation. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to ask a classmate what you missed. Do not ask your instructor: "Did I miss anything when I was absent?" They will simply respond, "Yes, you did."

For any emergency situation that arises, **e-mail your instructor** as soon as you know about the situation. Arrangements cannot always be made retroactively for emergency situations.

## 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 30% off. 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 the instructor a follow-up e-mail or speak with the instructor. Please include the class name and section in your email subject.

### **Office Hours**

The instructor will be available for virtual or phone meetings based on the office hours information on the first page of the syllabus. Students should contact the instructor using the preferred contact method (via email) to schedule an appointment.

### **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 (5 points)**

#### **Submit video by midnight on Wednesday, August 31**

Prepare a brief 1-2 minute video introduction of yourself as an unlisted video on YouTube and post the link to your video on the Discussion Board on Canvas by **midnight on Wednesday, August 31**. Your introduction video should include your name, major, year in school, and at least one fun fact about you. Then, comment on at least two other students' videos by **midnight on Sunday, September 4**. This will help your instructor and your fellow students get to know you.

### **Week 4: Case studies (20 points)**

#### **Submit by midnight on Sunday, September 18**

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 at least a brief 150-word case study of each person.

### **Week 5: Website analysis (15 points)**

#### **Submit by midnight on Sunday, September 25**

Use the Wayback machine website (<https://archive.org/web/>) to analyze the changes of one of the companies from a list your instructor will provide. Use the principles illustrated in the Canva readings to write a 200-word essay describing the difference between the sites and hypothesizing why the companies made the changes they did on their sites. Further, explain the impression the company is trying to give by its current design.

### **Week 7: Field keyword search (15 points)**

#### **Submit by midnight on Sunday, October 9**

Enter the same keyword(s) or phrase into at least two different popular search engines. Look at the first results, take screenshots of the first three from each search engine, and explain why those are top hits using the materials in the Moz reading to guide your analysis. Next, use the same keywords in a field-related search engine in a deep web source from the Open Education Database reading, and take a screenshot of the first three results. Paste your screenshots into a Word document. Then, in a 200-word essay on that same document, compare those results with the popular search engine's results, and explain why you got the results you did.

### **Week 8: Midsemester feedback (5 points)**

#### **Submit by midnight on Sunday, October 16**

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

### **Week 9: Deconstructing a journal article (30 points)**

#### **Submit by midnight on Sunday, October 23**

In a 500-word essay, critique a journal article in your field based on the principles described in your readings and in class. This includes but is not limited to the material from the CRAAP

checklist, the clarity of the problem statement, the methodology, and the conclusions. In your opinion, is the article something you would use in a class paper, and why or why not?

**Week 11: Sponsored article search (20 points)**

**Submit by midnight on Sunday, November 6**

Find a written piece of over 500 words or an over 5-minute video from a *reputable* news source, and analyze it using the principles outlined in your readings. In a 250-word essay, argue for why and how it is biased, address who might have sponsored the content, and describe how the source tailored the information to appeal to a particular audience.

**Week 13: Deconstructing an opinion article (30 points)**

**Submit by midnight on Sunday, November 20**

In a 500-word essay, critique an opinion article focused on an issue in your field. Consider the principles addressed in class and in your readings including but not limited to the author's background, tone based on word choice, whether multiple sides of the topic were addressed, and whether the author supported the opinion with facts. Then, describe whether the author has convinced you and why or why not.

**Week 15: Infographic (30 points)**

**Submit by midnight on Sunday, December 4**

Create an infographic related to your field using the techniques described in class and readings. Consider focusing your infographic on the topic with your final project so you have an early start on your research, but it is not required. Submit your infographic as a .jpg file, and additionally, you must include a document listing the sources you used to create the infographic as well as an explanation of why you made the design choices you did. You may work with whichever software or tool you feel most comfortable using.

**Weeks 16-17: Field topic paper and presentation (50 points)**

**Submit by midnight on Sunday, December 11**

Research a controversial issue (preferably in your field), and in a 700-word paper, summarize the major sides of the issue as well as your opinion on the topic. Cite at least three reputable sources, and one must be a journal article. You will present your findings in a brief two-minute online presentation to the class that will include at least one visual.

**Ongoing: Warm-up Activity/Online activities (130 points)**

At the beginning of each week, from Week 2 to Week 14, you will be assigned two brief online activities— a writing, discussion, video, or online group activity, that will serve as your attendance/participation points for the week. Each week is worth 10 points, and your weekly online activities must be completed by midnight on Sunday of the week in which they are assigned (i.e., Week 3 online activities must be completed by midnight on Sunday, September 11; Week 4 online activities must be completed by midnight on Sunday, September 18; etc.)

**Points possible: 350**

## Course Calendar

### Module 1: Basics of Information Literacy

Week	Focus	Due Dates and Readings
<b>Week 1:</b> Aug 24-28	Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Review Syllabus</b></li> <li>• Wilson pp. 1-9</li> <li>• <a href="#">Importance of information literacy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">President Obama's Proclamation on Digital Literacy Month, 2009</a></li> </ul>
<b>Week 2:</b> Aug 29-Sept 4	Critical Thinking in the 21st Century	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Personal introduction due</b></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:</b> Sept 5-Sept 11	Creative Thinking and Problem Solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wilson pp. 9-26</li> <li>• <a href="#">Creative approaches to problem solving</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Bloom's Taxonomy revised</a></li> </ul>
<b>Week 4:</b> Sept 12-Sept 18	Digital Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Case studies assignment due</b></li> <li>• <a href="#">Social media and cognitive overload</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Fonts, colors, and images</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Branding basics</a></li> </ul>

### Module 2: Building Arguments

Week	Focus	Due Dates and Readings
<b>Week 5:</b> Sept 19-Sept 25	Finding Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Website analysis due</b></li> <li>• Wilson pp. 27-44</li> <li>• <a href="#">How search engines work</a></li> <li>• Chapters 1, 4, and 5</li> <li>• <a href="#">Deep web sources and info</a></li> </ul>
<b>Week 6</b> Sept 26-Oct 2	Evaluating Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wilson pp. 108-134</li> <li>• <a href="#">CRAAP Test</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Research bias</a></li> </ul>
<b>Week 7</b> Oct 3-Oct 9	Reasoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Field keyword assignment due</b></li> <li>• <a href="#">Deconstructing a research article</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The thinker's guide to fallacies</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Inductive and deductive reasoning</a></li> </ul>

<b>Week 8</b> Oct 10- Oct 16	Critical Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Midterm Feedback</b></li> <li>• <a href="#">Critical essay</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">UK's formatting tools</a></li> </ul>

### Module 3: Assessing Information

Week	Focus	Readings
<b>Week 9</b> Oct 17- Oct 23	Bias	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Deconstructing a journal article due</b></li> <li>• <a href="#">Media bias and propaganda</a>, pp.2-4, 26-28</li> <li>• <a href="#">Types of media bias</a></li> </ul>
<b>Week 10</b> Oct 24- Oct 30	Information Ethics/Privacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wilson pp. 205-210</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>
<b>Week 11</b> Oct 31- Nov 6	Copyright	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sponsored article search due</b></li> <li>• Wilson pp. 190-198</li> <li>• <a href="#">U.S. copyright basics</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Copyright of social media sites</a></li> </ul>
<b>Week 12</b> Nov 7- Nov 13	Information Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Infographics and visualization</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Backgrounds and layouts</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Visualizing information for advocacy</a></li> </ul>

### Module 4: Transforming Information

Week	Focus	Readings
<b>Week 13</b> Nov 14- Nov 20	Persuasion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Deconstructing an opinion article due</b></li> <li>• <a href="#">The role of persuasion in critical thinking</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The new rules of persuasion</a></li> </ul>
<b>Week 14</b> Nov 21- Nov 27	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 15</b> <b>Nov 28-</b> <b>Dec 4</b>	Work Week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Infographic due</b></li></ul>
<b>Week 16</b> <b>Dec 5-</b> <b>Dec 11</b>	Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Field topic paper and presentation due</b></li></ul>
	Finals Week	