Syllabus for the Course

16:194:612  HUMAN INFORMATION BEHAVIOR

Professor Marija Dalbello
SCILS -- Rutgers University

I. Catalog Description

Precursors to, and characteristics of, human information seeking behavior, individual and social, both within and outside of institutional information systems. Critical examination of the research in human information behavior, that is in interactions between people, the various forms of information, and the situations or contexts in which they interact. Theories, models, and methods used. Seminal authors and works. Relation between such behavior and information system design and relevant technologies.

II. Prerequisites:

16:194:601 Information and Communication Processes
16:194:610 Seminar in Information Studies

III. Course Objectives

• Provide a perspective on the wide range of processes involved in human information behavior

• Undertake an overview of diverse theories and models related to human information behavior, and the context of their evolution

• Outline the problems and issues addressed over time and contemporarily in empirical research, stressing the approaches and methods used

• Discern the contemporary directions, and identify disciplinary and interdisciplinary relationships and practical applications of such research, particularly in design of information systems; and

• Prepare to undertake research in this area

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

• Understand the evolution, directions, and interdisciplinary nature of scholarship in human information behavior

• Analyze critically works and trends in human information behavior research

• Develop their own research project
IV. **Organization of the Course**

Part I – Perspectives on Human Information Behavior

1. Basic Phenomena and processes under study. The concept of information, the relationships between information and human behavior, and the notion of human information behavior. Phenomenology.

2. Problems addressed over time. Disciplinary and interdisciplinary relationships through problems. Role and impact of technology on development of this area and relationship to information system design.

Part II – Theoretical Structures


4. Theories on why people seek information - cognitively based; Anomalous State of Knowledge; Sense making; Classification of information needs; Information poverty.

5. Theories involving broader constructs: social construction; communicative action; diffusion of innovations; ecological theory. Distributed cognition. Reproducing the past - social circulation of memory, culture, experience.

Part III – Information Seeking and Searching

6. Information seeking models; empirical studies on how people seek information.


Part IV – Studies of Human Information Behavior Contexts

9. Human information behavior in science and technology, medicine and health


11. Human information behavior in arts, humanities, and education.

Part V – Human Information Behavior in Everyday Life and Society

13. Characteristics and requirements of information society; Global aspects and information. The Informatics Turn and HIB (Museum, Health, Community, Social Informatics). Emergence of social informatics and role in studies of human information behavior.

V. Major Assignments

REQUIRED TEXTS:


ADDITIONAL TEXTS (as assigned for presentation):


VI. Methods of Assessment

Class Discussion and Critical Summaries 40% of final grade
Presentation 10% of final grade
Research Project Paper 40% of final grade
Research Project Presentations 10% of final grade

VII. Course Readings


Based on syllabus developed by T. Saracevic.
16:194:612 HUMAN INFORMATION BEHAVIOR (3)

Professor Marija Dalbello  
SCILS -- Rutgers University

(732) 932-7500 / 8215  
dalbello@scils.rutgers.edu  
http://scils.rutgers.edu/~dalbello

Office hours: Thursdays 2:30-4:30 (by appointment)

Class time: Mondays, 3:10-5:50  
Rm. 101, SCILS Huntington House (184 College Avenue)

Course website:  
http://scils.rutgers.edu/~dalbello/courses/612/s2008/612s2008home.html

Course electronic list:  
You are automatically subscribed to the listserv with your official Rutgers account. To send a message, address it to: HIB_2008@rams.rutgers.edu. (If you are using another account, please change your email address via the Rutgers directory.)

Textbooks:  
The textbook is available from required texts can be ordered from amazon.com (used) or directly from ASIST (http://store.yahoo.com/infotoday/theorofinfbeh.html). Electronic files of articles are available through Rutgers electronic library. Some of the assigned readings will be distributed by the instructor.

Weekly schedule:

Week 1 Jan. 28  
Introduction to the class  
Overview of course and expectations

Part I – PERSPECTIVES ON HUMAN INFORMATION BEHAVIOR

Week 2 Feb. 4  
Basic phenomena and processes  
Information and human behavior  
Phenomenology

DISCUSSION  
TIB Introduction Ch. 1 & 2  
Budd; McKeehnie et al.; Olsson; Wilson (1999)

Week 3 Feb. 11  
Problems addressed  
Disciplinary / Interdisciplinary Connections
DISCUSSION
TIB Introduction Ch. 3, Theories 16 (Dervin)
Dervin & Nilan; Pettigrew, Fidel & Bruce; Wilson (1994)

Part II – THEORETICAL STRUCTURES

Week 4  Feb. 18  Key theoretical concepts
Cognitive Authority
Individual / Social level

DISCUSSION
TIB Theories 10, 11, 38 (Kuhlthau)
Kuhlthau (1993); Wilson, P.; Talja, Keso & Peitilainen

Week 5  Feb. 25  (Cognitivist) Theories of humans seeking information
Classifying information-related behaviors
Information Poverty

DISCUSSION
TIB Theories 2 (ASK), 21 (Ellis), 19
Belkin (1980; 1982); Byström & Järvelin

Preliminary Research Project Proposals

Week 6  March 3  General theories and approaches
Reproducing the Past

DISCUSSION
TIB Theories 53, 58, 63, 64
Schutz (selections)

Presentations
Hutchins; Bijker or Rogers; Latour; Halbwachs or Urban

Part III – INFORMATION SEEKING AND SEARCHING

Week 7  March 10  Information seeking models and empirical studies

DISCUSSION
TIB Theories 6, 50, 69
Järvelin & Ingwersen; Wilson (1999)

March 17  (no class – Spring recess)
Week 8 March 24 Information searching
Empirical studies in technology contexts

DISCUSSION
TIB Theories 5 (Bates), 35 (Ingwersen), 72
Bates (1989); Kuhlthau (1991); Schacter, Chung & Dorr; Spink

Week 9 March 31 Studies in Human-Computer Interaction
Relevance

DISCUSSION
Vaughan & Dillon; Saracevic
additional readings to be assigned by guest speaker

Part IV – STUDIES OF HUMAN INFORMATION BEHAVIOR CONTEXTS

Week 10 April 7 HIB in Science and Technology, Medicine and Health

DISCUSSION
read four studies of your choice (consult list below)

Project Progress Reports

Week 11 April 14 HIB in professions and government

DISCUSSION
Dilevko; Kuhlthau & Tama; Leckie, Pettigrew & Sylvain

Week 12 April 21 HIB in Arts & Humanities

DISCUSSION
read four studies of your choice (consult list below)

Part V – HUMAN INFORMATION BEHAVIOR IN EVERYDAY LIFE AND SOCIETY

Week 13 April 28 HIB in social contexts
Information and Poverty

DISCUSSION
TIB Theories 59, 60, 62, 55
Agosto & Hughes-Hassell; Chatman; Savolainen; Ross

Week 14 May 5 Information society; Global / Local perspective
The Informatics turn and HIB (Social, Cultural, Museum, Health, etc.)

DISCUSSION
readings to be assigned

Week 15 May 12 Conclusion

Research Projects Due
Project Presentations

Selected Background Readings:

These readings include your weekly assigned reading. Additional titles may be added or substituted as the course progresses. References to the textbook are integrated with the weekly schedule and are not repeated here.

Weekly Assigned Readings:

Part I – PERSPECTIVES ON HUMAN INFORMATION BEHAVIOR

Week 2: Basic Phenomena and Processes; Information and Human Behavior; Phenomenology


Week 3: Problems Addressed; Disciplinary / Interdisciplinary Connections


Part II – THEORETICAL STRUCTURES

Week 4: Key Theoretical Concepts; Cognitive Authority; Individual / Social Levels


Week 5: Cognitivist Theories of Information Seeking; Classifying Information-Related Behaviors; Information Poverty


Week 6: General Theories and Approaches; Reproducing the Past


Presentations:


Part III – INFORMATION SEEKING AND SEARCHING

Week 7: Information Seeking Models and Empirical Studies


March 17 (no class – Spring recess)

Week 8: Empirical Studies in Technology Contexts


Week 9: Studies in Human-Computer Interaction; Relevance


Part IV – STUDIES OF HUMAN INFORMATION BEHAVIOR CONTEXTS

Week 10: HIB in Science and Technology, Medicine and Health


Week 11: HIB in Professions and Government


Week 12: HIB in Arts & Humanities


Part V – HUMAN INFORMATION BEHAVIOR IN EVERYDAY LIFE AND SOCIETY

Week 13: HIB in Social Contexts; Information and Poverty


Week 14: Information Society; Global / Local; The Informatics Turn in HIB

readings to be assigned