Course Profile: History and Foundations of Information Science and Culture

Course Number: LIS 8330

Credits: 3

Prerequisite(s): 12 credit hours or permission of the instructor

Rationale for Inclusion in Curriculum:

In a changing and expanding information environment, students will need to reinvent information design, services, and tools, and to do this they need to understand the history and guiding philosophies of this multidisciplinary field in an historical, cultural, and social context. In order to reinvent and fully take part in this changing and expanding field, students will need to rethink the field through theoretical texts that inhabit, but largely lie beyond the Information Science field, proper, in a culture and politics of information. The purpose of this course is to give the students the historical and theoretical background in 20th century modernity and post modernity that is necessary to imaginatively and critically take part in the information revolution enabling them to engage and intervene in LIS conceptual foundations. This course combines historical texts in (L)IS with historical texts in information culture in Western modernity. This is a seminar course and it will focus upon conceptual problems, not upon techniques of information management.

Learning Outcomes:

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

1. Identify important texts in the history and theoretical foundations of (L)IS and in adjacent fields.
2. Read historical and foundational texts in (L)IS and in adjacent fields.
3. Critically evaluate the foundational literature in (L)IS and adjacent fields.
4. Utilize theoretical concepts in a critical manner.

Content:

The following topics will be covered in this course:

1. European Documentation
2. The cognitive turn in LIS
3. Modern philosophical and social perspectives on information and society
4. Post-War information science and cybernetics
5. Post-modern readings of information and society
6. Contemporary issues

Course Methodology:

Close reading with selections from primary texts. Use of secondary texts and multimedia materials from articles, web sites, etc., where appropriate. This is a seminar course for students who wish to critically engage major historical concepts and events in the field and in information or digital culture. They must be prepared to read, think, and discuss.

Basis for Evaluation of Student performance:

1. Class presentations on selected readings;
2. Substantial final paper.

Text: To Be Determined

Approved: 1/12
Updated: 8/13