

JOUR 302 INFOMANIA - INFORMATION MANAGEMENT - Spring 2016
Class meeting: Tu & Th 1:00-2:15 PM
Stauffer-Flint 206

1. Instructor: Hong T. Vu, Ph.D.
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COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES

This is a course about finding, evaluating, and concisely presenting information. These three elements will serve as the bedrock of anything you do as a journalist or a strategic communication professional.

Credibility is the organizing principle in this course. Your credibility is essential to your success in this major and in your future career. But you are only as credible as your sources. This is why you will spend the semester evaluating the sources you find. The goal is to instill in you a healthy skepticism about the credibility of the information you come across, so that you only choose the most credible sources for the articles, blog posts, reports, or campaigns you produce.

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Understand the forms and purposes of information.
 - Ask questions that help you find and interpret information, and explain it clearly.
 - Find information using libraries, research reports, organizations, databases, regulations, public records, experts and non-experts.
 - Critically evaluate information sources, research data and your own work for credibility, accuracy, completeness and diversity.
 - Develop focused plans for research projects.
 - Use a variety of digital and non-digital tools to research and present information. This class satisfies Goal 1 Outcome 1 of the KU Core: “Upon reaching this goal, students will be able to analyze and evaluate assumptions, claims, evidence, arguments, and forms of expression; select and apply appropriate interpretive tools.”
- PREMISE Think of yourself as a consultant to a news or strategic communications organization (news station, marketing agency, etc.). Your final assignment in this course will be to present your expertise about a topic to this organization, recommending information and sources the organization should pursue when researching your topic, and identifying information and sources it should avoid. Assignments during the semester are designed to teach you to find information about your topic, evaluate its credibility, and effectively present it. Your first task is to decide the topic on which you will become an expert. You need to pick a topic in the first two weeks of class and stick with it for the remainder of the semester.

The topic needs to be one about which you are curious, and one that will hold your attention for almost four months. The first 10 pages of the textbook may help you identify an appropriate topic.

BOOK

Don MacLeod, *How to find out anything: From extreme Google searches to scouring government documents, a guide to uncovering anything about everyone and everything* (New York: Prentice Hall, 2012).

BLACKBOARD

All assignments and readings will be listed on Blackboard. We will also use Blackboard for grades, instructional videos and quizzes.

GRADING

Total points available:	1000 points
Expert Posts:	300 points (50 points each)
News post:	100 points: (10 points each)
Presentations:	100 points (25 points each)
Assignments:	50 points (25 points each)
Class participation & professionalism:	120 points
<u>Final paper</u>	
Introduction of your research paper:	30 points
Final Presentation:	50 points
Final paper:	250 points

ATTENDANCE & PROFESSIONALISM

We meet only twice a week and you are strongly encouraged to attend every class and participate in class discussions. I will randomly take attendance a few times during the semester. How many times you are present (excluding excused absences) will determine your attendance/participation grade. Also, I may choose to award participation points for your significant contribution to in-class discussions or faithful attendance. You start with 20 points, each time there is an unexcused absence or unprofessional occurrence, 10 points will be deducted. If you have 3 unexcused absences you will be dropped from the course.

ASSIGNMENTS

Two assignments are listed on Blackboard in the beginning of the semesters.

BYOD = BRING YOUR OWN DEVICE DAYS

You will notice on Blackboard that some days are designated “BYOD.” This means that on those days, you will want to bring a laptop or a tablet to class because we will be doing work with digital or online sources. Please let me know if you need to borrow a laptop from the Resource Center for those days.

Whenever you have a digital device with you in class (this includes phones), please use it for class work only. I promise to do the same.

EXPERT POSTS

There are six of these assignments throughout the semester. Due dates for these assignments are listed at the end of this syllabus. In-depth instructions for what to write and how to submit these assignments are on Blackboard.

NEWS POSTS

Ten times during the semester you will draw on the news aggregators you set up at the beginning of the semester to summarize news relating to your topic. Your summaries will be brief and insightful, linking readers to the original news stories or other pertinent webpages.

FINAL PRESENTATION

At the end of the semester, you will compile all of the information you collect about your topic into a compelling paper and presentation. For the presentation, you will post it in the Discussion Board and make a short in-class presentation during the final exam timeslot. You have to be here to get credit for the presentation. Please schedule your end-of-semester travel so that it won't conflict with the final presentation.

FINAL PAPER

The final assignment is a complete research paper on the topic you select at the beginning of the semester. Notice that many of the posts and activities are designed to help you do some of the work for this final project. Detailed instruction will be posted on blackboard.

PARTICIPATION

You are expected to actively participate in class discussion. The 100 points awarded to your participation need to be earned. To make it easy for you to understand how you will be evaluated: Each time you participate in a class discussion you will be given 10 points.

MAKE-UP WORK, LATE WORK, EXTRA CREDIT, GRADE CONCERNS

Late work will not be accepted but early work is welcome. **There is no extra credit in this class. If there is, it will be announced and available to every student in the class.** Although grades are not negotiable, I will give every consideration to any concerns you have about an assignment grade, as long as the concern is identified promptly. If you have questions about or dispute a particular grade, this needs to be taken care of within a week of receiving that grade. The only grades that will be discussed at the end of the semester are for assignments you complete at the end of the semester.

COMMUNICATION

I encourage you to communicate with me about the course face-to-face during office hours, or through e-mail. If you choose the later, I will do my best to respond to email messages within 24-36 hours Monday – Friday. Please be mindful of email etiquette. Compose a brief yet informative subject line. Use a greeting, such as “Hello, Dr. Vu,” at the beginning of your message. Write the body of your message using full sentences, proper capitalization and punctuation. Explain your question or concern as completely as possible. Sign your message using your full (first and last) name.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

In this class, and in all journalism classes, honesty and integrity are critical. Any work you do must be original and reflect your own ideas, thoughts, and research. In a work setting, if you choose to violate professional standards, you will be fired. In this class, if you choose to violate the standards for academic integrity, you will fail the course, and you may be expelled from the School of Journalism.

Here is the School’s official policy statement:

The William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications does not tolerate plagiarism, fabrication of evidence and falsification of evidence.

In this course, the penalty for plagiarism, fabrication or falsification is a failing grade for the semester. Additional penalties can include expulsion from the School of Journalism. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, please consult the professor of this course.

The KU University Senate defines plagiarism as “knowingly presenting the work of another as one’s own (i.e., without proper acknowledgment of the source). The sole exception to the requirement of acknowledging sources is when the information or ideas are common knowledge.” The University defines fabrication and falsification as “unauthorized alteration or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.”

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The KU office of Disability Resources coordinates accommodations and services for all students who are eligible. If you have a disability for which you wish to request accommodations and have not contacted DR, please do so as soon as possible. The office is located in 22 Strong Hall; the phone number is 864-2620 (V/TTY).

Information about services can be found at <http://disability.ku.edu>. Please also contact me privately with regard to your needs in this course.

KEY DATES

This is a list of the major assignments and when they are due. Complete information about each assignment is posted on Blackboard. Additional assignments not listed here (e.g., Discussion Board posts, News Posts) are listed on Blackboard.

I reserve the right to modify this syllabus. Any changes will be announced in class and/or on our Blackboard site and become official.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Week 1: This week we get to know each other, talk about credibility and begin figuring out what you will be researching all semester.

Tue, Jan. 19

Introduction
Reading: syllabus

Thurs, Jan. 21

Reading: Posted on BB
Discussion: What is information? Definition, approaches, structure, information literacy, media literacy, information age?
***Due: Noon Fri, Jan. 22 – Assignment 1: About you – via Email

Week 2: This week you finalize your topic idea and we begin evaluating the credibility of information sources.

Tue, Jan. 26

Reading: Chapter 1
Discussion: Research process; Plagiarism
***Due: Noon Tue, Jan 26 - Assignment 2: Topic assumption

Thurs, Jan. 28

Discussion: Individual research topic

Week 3: This week you begin drafting your first Expert Post. We begin talking about understanding your audience and what information they need.

Tue, Feb. 2 - BYOD

Reading: Posted on BB
Discussion: Audience analysis: Getting to know your audience
***Due: Noon, Tue, Feb. 2 - News post 1

Thurs, Feb. 4 - BYOD

Class activity: Identify audience for your research
***Due: Noon, Fri, Jan 29 - Expert post 1

Week 4: This week we talk about search terms and becoming an Extreme Googler.

Tue, Feb. 9

Reading: Chapter. 2 &3
Presentation1: Google-ilicious

Thurs, Feb. 11

Reading: Chapter. 2 &3
Presentation1 (continued): Google-ilicious

Week 5: We discuss the use of academic research

Tue, Feb. 16 - BYOD

Reading: Posted on BB

Discussion: Academic research

***Due: Noon, Tue, Feb. 16 - News post 2

Thurs, Feb. 18 – BYOD

In-class activity: Begin drafting your second expert post

***Due: Noon Friday Feb. 19 – Expert post 2

Week 6: This week we work on government and public record. You begin to draft your encyclopedia entry.

Tue, Feb. 23 - BYOD

Reading: Chapter 9

Discussion: Government & open data

Work in-class: Your encyclopedia entry

***Due: Noon, Tue, Feb. 23 - News post 3

Thurs, Feb. 25 - BYOD - Meet at Watson Library

Reading: Chapter 4

Discussion: Reference materials from online and offline sources

***Due: Noon, Friday Feb. 26 - Encyclopedia or Expert post 3

Week 7: This week we research non-profit organization.

Tue, Mar. 1 - BYOD

Reading: Chapter 6

Discussion: Information and advocacy

***Due: Noon, Tue, Mar. 1 - News post 4

Thurs, Mar. 3

Presentation 2: Non-profit

Week 8: This week we research for-profit organizations.

Tue, Mar. 8 - BYOD

Reading: Chapter 8

Discussion: Identify information on public companies

In-Class activity: You begin searching for information on companies you may use for your research

***Due: Noon, Tue, Mar. 8 - News post 5

Thurs, Mar. 10

Presentation 3: Public companies

Week 9: Spring break – No Class

Week 10: This week and next week we discuss databases & reliability of information

Tue, Mar. 22

Discussion: Searching & using databases

Reading: Posted on BB

***Due: Noon Tue, Mar. 22 - News post 6

Thurs, Mar. 24

Databases for your research

***Due: Noon Friday Mar. 25 - Expert post 4

Week 11: This week we continue discussing reliability of information

Tue, Mar. 29

Reading: Posted on BB

Discussion: fact-checking

***Due: Noon, Tue, Mar. 29 - News post 7

Thurs. Mar. 31 - BYOD

Reading: Posted on BB

Discussion: Mythbusting, What is reliable information? Hoaxes & Lies

***Due: Noon, Fri, Apr.1 - Expert post 5

Week 12: This week we discuss images searching

Tue, Apr. 5 - BYOD

Reading: Posted on BB

Discussion: Beyond words

***Due: Noon, Tue, Apr. 5 - News post 8

Thurs, Apr. 7 - BYOD

Reading: Posted on BB

Discussion: How to lie with pictures and graphics

***Due: Noon Fri Apr. 8 - Introduction of your final research paper

Week 13: This week we discuss ethical behavior and interview

Tue, Apr. 12

Reading: Posted on BB

Discussion: Overview of ethical behavior

***Due: Noon, Tue, Apr. 12 - News post 9

Thurs, Apr. 14

Reading: Posted on BB

Discussion: In depth interviews and ethnography

Week 14: This week we discuss the use of social media

Tue, Apr. 19 - BYOD

Reading: Posted on BB

Discussion: Social media as a tool

***Due: Noon, Tue, Apr. 19 - News post 10

Thurs, Apr. 21.

Individual meetings on final paper

Week 15: This week we continue interview post & presentation

Tue, Apr. 26 - BYOD

Class activity: Drafting your interview post & practicing your interview presentation

***Due: Noon, Wed, Apr. 27 - Interview Post or Expert post 6

Thurs, Apr. 28 - BYOD

Presentation 4 - Interview

Course evaluation

Week 16: Final presentation & Final research paper

Tue, May 3. Final presentation

***Due: Noon Thurs. May 5 - Final paper