Ph.D. Program in Communication, Information and Library Studies

Doctoral Courses – Spring 2014

Full Spring 2014 schedule is at: http://comminfo.rutgers.edu/phd-program/intriguing-course-schedule.html.

Our interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program attracts students from fields such as cultural studies, sociology, history, film and cinema, as well as linguistics, computer science, public health, psychology, and business/management—in courses shared with students with backgrounds in information science, communication, media studies, journalism, and library studies. We offer multiple seminars every semester, almost all of which welcome doctoral students from other programs at Rutgers as well as students at other schools participating in the Inter-University Doctoral Consortium, which allows taking Rutgers courses for credit across the consortium. See more at: http://gsnb.rutgers.edu/consortium.php3.

For more information contact Ph.D. Program Director Marija Dalbello at dalbello@rutgers.edu or Ph.D. Program Administrator Joan Chabrak at joan.chabrak@rutgers.edu.

www.comminfo.rutgers.edu/phd/getIN
Ph.D. Colloquium (16:194:600)
Fridays 1:30 – 3:30 (and some Wednesdays, as announced)
Marija Dalbello
dalbello@rutgers.edu

Description:
Ph.D. Colloquium is a forum for the presentation of research and professional activities by guest speakers, faculty, and students taken during each semester of course work.

List of Ph.D. Colloquia (The Dissertation Series) and other relevant events including the schedule for the Ph.D. Mini Seminars (on selected Fridays) is at: http://comminfo.rutgers.edu/ph-d-program/interaction-meetings/colloquia.html#.UH9z6hi27QM

Qualitative Research Methods (16:194:603)
Tuesdays 3:10 – 5:50
Jenny Mandelbaum
j.mandelbaum@rutgers.edu

Description:
This course introduces students to qualitative research. Reading assignments expose students to various approaches, assumptions, and theoretical foundations in qualitative research, including ethnography, grounded theory, interviewing, ethnomethodology, discourse analysis, and conversation analysis. Hands-on research assignments provide experience with research design, data collection, and the representation, analysis, and interpretation of data collected. Each assignment includes individual and collaborative aspects, with students having the option to work in research teams throughout the semester. Communication, information, and media processes and products, the key phenomena studied by faculty and students at SC&I, are emphasized in readings, discussions, and research.

Course Objectives and Student Outcomes:
• To foster an appreciation of research generally, and of common problems, motives and commitments involved in both quantitative and qualitative research
• To gain familiarity with qualitative research approaches and the theoretical foundations and working assumptions of qualitative research
• To develop the ability to appreciate the value, and to critically evaluate published qualitative research
• To develop the ability to conduct meaningful research using qualitative methods through direct experience
  o Designing qualitative research
  o Collecting data using basic tools of qualitative research
  o Analyzing data in qualitative study
  o Reporting qualitative research
• To understand critical choices and key methodological issues involved in conducting qualitative research and the advantages, appropriateness and limitations of qualitative methods
• To introduce students to examples of research that productively combines quantitative and qualitative approaches
**Interpretive Research Methods (16:194:605)**

Wednesdays 3:10-5:50
Marija Dalbello
dalbello@rutgers.edu

**Description:**
A significant difference between interpretive and traditional qualitative researchers’ approaches lies not in the kind of data they study, but in the underlying assumptions that guide their research. This course will look at how the epistemological and ontological assumptions of interpretive research differ from traditional empirical/analytic research, introducing students to a variety of interpretive methods employed by scholars of media, communication and information. Looking at the historical development and epistemological foundations of such methods, we will discuss what constitutes interpretive methodologies and how they are distinguished from other forms of qualitative research in the social sciences. We will study a range of commonly employed methods such as ethnography, historical methods, the analysis of visual texts, semiotics. Particular attention will be paid to the self-reflexivity of the researcher, ethical concerns, and pragmatic techniques, as we read essays by classic and leading contemporary scholars who employ interpretive methods in their research. Students will not only become familiar with interpretive research traditions and see how they are applied to real life phenomena, but will also learn criteria for evaluating interpretive research. This class is an excellent opportunity for students to discuss, conduct and receive feedback on their research projects and ideas.

**Learning Objectives and Student Outcomes:**
The course is offered in a seminar format, including invited lectures, seminar presentations by students, and seminar discussion. Exploring a range of texts, students will learn about and practice key methods of interpretive analysis and learn criteria for evaluating such research. Students will understand what differentiates interpretive from traditional qualitative methodologies and will develop confidence in utilizing interpretive methodologies in their own scholarship. By the end of the course, students will produce a conference-quality research paper utilizing interpretive methodologies.

**Primary Readings:**
We will use some of these texts in full or excerpts. Additional books, book chapters and journal articles will be assigned.
R. Sokolowski. 2000. *Introduction to Phenomenology* (Cambridge U P)
Human Information Behavior (16:194:612)
Tuesdays 6:20 – 9:00
Chirag Shah
chirags@rutgers.edu

Description:
Precursors to, and characteristics of, human information seeking behavior, individual and social, both within and outside of institutional information systems. Relations between such behavior and information systems design and the relevant technologies. 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.

Spring 2014 focus:
This course will focus upon the relations between information behavior and information systems design. Students will analyze philosophical, cognitive, interpersonal, organizational, social, political and cultural theories and empirical investigations, within the framework of the following topics:

• Understanding why and how humans engage in information behaviors
• Characterizing human information behaviors
• Relating information use to other forms of information behavior
• Relating information behavior to information system design (both social and technical)
• Analyzing existing information systems according to these relations

Specific 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.

Mediated Communication (16:194:633)
Mondays 6:20 – 9:00
Keith Hampton
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Description:
This course provides an overview of recent research on the societal implications of new communication technologies (e.g., mobile phones, video games, social media, etc.). New communication technologies are often regarded as a source of transformative change, responsible for undermining morality, destroying institutions, increasing surveillance and control, and for the decline of community. This course is based around the argument that communication technologies are inherently social networks, linking people, organizations and communities. This subject is heavily weighted towards the evaluation of empirical studies that focus on how recent technological innovations may be changing the way we interact with our environments and those around us. Students will learn to critically examine the impact of new communication technologies on society through in-depth seminars and independent research.
Course Description: This seminar-based course examines the intellectual foundations for librarianship as a discipline, the development of a broadened understanding of pervasive theories and research issues, and the identification and exploration of research literature in librarianship and pertinent allied fields. (Rutgers SCILS Catalog, 2003-2005, p. 50).

This course will focus on classic and contemporary theories in library and information science, as considered in the context of the research process. Emphasis will be placed on the importance of theoretical constructs as the basis for original research in various aspects of the discipline.

Goals: This seminar will offer students:
1. A broad understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of the discipline of librarianship.
2. Familiarity with the historical, contemporary, and anticipated future development of research issues.
3. Opportunities to critically analyze, evaluate, and initiate research in the field.

Objectives: Upon completion of course, students should be able to:
• Demonstrate familiarity with a variety of theoretical approaches in LIS.
• Provide an in-depth description and critique of one or more theoretical approaches in LIS.
• Discuss a variety of philosophical approaches to theory.
• Demonstrate understanding of theory development in LIS and allied fields.
• Demonstrate knowledge of how concerns with theory and method have taken shape.
• Identify a wide variety of the important research fronts in LS and cognate disciplines.

Description:
Today, for the first time in history, computer-mediated culture has become mainstream for a majority of individuals in technologically developed societies. From email to texting, from online gaming to online banking, from YouTube to Hulu, from DoS attacks to Occupy Wall Street Minecraft forums, nearly every traditional aspect of our lives has found a new expression in its digital proxy.

In order to understand the cultural, social, political and economic consequences of this development, we must look to the origins of today’s cyberculture, in the futuristic visions (both dystopian and utopian) that shaped the development of today’s networked technologies. We will trace the genealogy of these visions, as they developed in tandem with the growing digital communications infrastructure over the past three quarters of a century, and evolved into new forms that even the most forward-thinking of visionaries could not have predicted. Ultimately, one can argue that the Internet has both exceeded and fallen short of the hype that surrounded its birth and development, and, by comparing the myth to the reality, we may better understand what aspects of the human condition are likely to persist regardless of technological development.
Class will be conducted as a seminar. Students will be responsible for leading discussions on the readings, and are encouraged to critically engage the readings and class conversations.

Course Objectives:
By the end of the course, students will understand:

- The utopian and dystopian social visions that helped shape today’s communications technologies
- The roots of modern cybertulture, among the hackers and gamers of the ‘70s and ‘80s.
- The historical relationship between Internet technology and business and financial innovation, specifically the dot-com and Web 2.0’s periods of the late ‘90s and mid ‘00s, respectively.
- The political consequences of Internet policy, as an ever greater portion of public and private speech and commerce move on to Internet-based platforms
- The latest developments in online culture and technology, and the new visions that will shape tomorrow’s technological development.

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Media and Culture (16:194:664)
Tuesdays 6:20 – 9:00
Melissa Aronczyk
melissa.aronczyk@rutgers.edu

Description:
This doctoral course examines how culture is made and managed under specific conditions of mediation. We will examine a range of historical, anthropological, sociological and political approaches to relationships between media/mediation and culture. Topics to be addressed include representation and identity formation, styles of evaluation, practices of legitimation, and paradigms of commensurability.

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Media and Politics (16:194:665)
Mondays 10:00 – 12:40
Lauren Feldman
lauren.feldman@rutgers.edu

Catalog description:
Theories and research relating old and new media to political decision-making. Topics include public attitudes and opinion, media policy, interest articulation, political culture, ideology, rhetoric and content analysis, framing, agenda-setting.

Description:
This course will cover research and theory regarding the role of media and communication in the political process, with particular attention to how media help to create or inhibit active, informed and critical citizenship in the United States. We will consider such broad questions as: What role should the media play in a well-functioning democracy, and does our contemporary media system fulfill that role? How are politics covered in the media, and what norms and practices govern this coverage? What is public opinion, how is it constructed, and how does it influence political behavior and decision-making? How do news and entertainment media shape what people know and how they think about politics? How do political actors use media strategically and with what effect on citizens? What are the political implications of our changing media environment? How do the Internet and digital media affect how citizens gather, discuss and make sense of political information; how citizens organize politically; and how citizens conceptualize their role in the democratic process?
Primary Readings:
Readings will include a combination of books, book chapters, and journal articles. Sample readings include:
Baym, 2010, *From Cronkite to Colbert: The Evolution of Broadcast News*
Bennett, Lawrence, and Livingstone, 2007, *When the Press Fails*
Ladd, 2012, *Why Americans Hate the Media and How it Matters*
Levendusky, 2013, *How Partisan Media Polarize America*

Assignments:
Weekly response papers, discussion leadership, end-of-semester research paper.

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**Personalization in Information Systems (16:194:675)**

Wednesdays 11:50 – 2:30
Nick Belkin
belkin@rutgers.edu

Description:
This seminar investigates the reasons for personalizing people's interactions with information and information systems, how personalization of different types is accomplished in different types of information systems for different purposes, the current state of research in personalization, and future directions in personalization. Examples of systems to be discussed include search engines and recommender systems of various types. Students will conduct experiments or observational studies in personalization as the culminating exercise in this course, through examination of existing data, observation of use of personalized systems, or construction and testing of personalization algorithms or systems.

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The following MCIS/MLIS classes are open to doctoral students and cross-listed as Topics classes in the Ph.D. Program:

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Community Health (16:194:670)
Mondays 6:20 – 9:00
Jennifer Warren
jrwarren@rutgers.edu

Description:
This 3 credit-hour course is designed to introduce students to the field community-engaged prevention and methods of inquiry. Students will be invited to apply a multilevel communication approach (e.g., intrapersonal, interpersonal, etc) to understanding community health the conduct of community-based research. All research draws upon a community of participants for which ‘recruitment’ is engagement – usually a means to an end. So not only is this course seeking to understand the role of communication in community engagement to address health, it will also take a critical look at methods of inquiry and their relationship you as a researcher and to community health. In the process this course also takes a special interest in working with underserved communities. Overall the relationship between communication, community engagement, and health is integral to research as well as through enhancing the capacity of communities to ‘do’ health through their involvement in the development of health information interventions and programs, messaging, dissemination, and evaluation. By the end of this course students will have an ecological understanding of the synergy between communication and community engagement in health and research, with an emphasis on health equity promotion. Students will apply this understanding to real world situations. It is possible we may be working with a community partner(s) in this course.

Course Delivery:
This class meets Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6.20 to 9.00 pm. In this seminar style course, it is anticipated that students will actively engage course material in lectures, discussion, role plays, and group activities. All students are perceived as being experts in their own right, having a body of knowledge and experience that can only enhance understanding of the readings and lectures. All viewpoints are valid and welcome. Students will be expected to take ownership over their learning. Details provided in class. We may have one or more guest speakers to bring lived community perspectives to emphasize course content.

Overview of Topic:
- Course and Project Introduction
- Community Health, Ecological Communication & Engagement
- Community-Based Methodology
- Entering the Field: Intrapersonal Communication
- Building Partnerships I: Interpersonal Communication
- Building Partnerships II: Culture & Community-level Communication
- Collaboration & Group Communication and Community Health
- Organizational Communication and Community Health
- Sociopolitical-level Communication and Community Health
- Interventions Development and Community Health
- Implementation/Sustainability and Community Health
- Presentations
- Class Debriefing
Work and Technology (16:194:671)
ONLINE CLASS: meetings by arrangement with instructor
Craig Scott
crscott@rutgers.edu

Description:
This class examines key challenges and opportunities at the intersection of communication technology use and the workplace. Through readings and online discussions we will explore current research about topics such as privacy/surveillance, cyberslacking, virtual collaboration, online training/learning, telework, work-life balance, new media and identity/reputation management, and online dissent/resistance. Special emphasis is given to reviewing organizational and technology policies in these areas—and final project work will focus on creating informed guidelines about one or more of these topics. For masters students, this is an entirely online course—which presents students with additional opportunities and challenges related to the work of learning in a digital environment. Doctoral students taking the class will be expected to meet in person for 1 hour each week in addition to the online work as part of a hybrid learning arrangement.

Key Objectives:
Students completing this course should be able to:

- Name and discuss key articles and authors, as presented in class, addressing work and technology topics such as privacy/surveillance, cyberslacking, virtual collaboration, online training/education, telework, work-life balance, new media and reputation management, and online dissent/resistance.
- Articulate a detailed knowledge of the literature in written form for one specific work and technology topic explored in class.
- Describe positive and negative aspects of existing policies related to work and technology topics, based on existing theory and research about them.
- Write policies based on existing theory and research about one or more of these work and technology topics.

I hope to help you meet these objectives through facilitation of and feedback on the following student activities:

- Written article abstracts and key takeaways for assigned readings
- Online asynchronous discussion based initially on questions I pose related to each unit’s readings
- Literature review paper on a work and technology topic.
- Gathering of organizational policies related to select work and technology issues and exploration of key strengths and weaknesses of each
- Major final project analyzing organizational work and technology policy documents (Ph.D. assignment) or creating work and technology policies (MCIS assignment) based on course insights

Family and Relationship (16:194:672)
Wednesdays 6:20 – 9:00
Jennifer Theiss
jtheiss@rutgers.edu

DESCRIPTION TO BE ADDED
Organizational Leadership (16:194:673)
HYBRID CLASS
Thursdays, 6:20 – 9:00
Brent Ruben
bruben@rutgers.edu

Description:
Leadership is a topic of substantial current interest in academic, corporate, political, health and civic settings. This seminar will examine organizational leadership concepts and practices across a variety of these contexts from both a scholarly and professional perspective. The course will consist of reading and discussion of the scholarly and professional literature on leadership, individual and group projects, and experiential learning activities such as leadership case studies and simulations.