LIS518LE: Community Informatics

Thursday, 4-6 p.m., Central Standard Time (CST), Online

Required on campus session: Monday, March 9, 2015.

Instructor: PhD Candidate Noah Lenstra

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Office hours by appointment. I encourage you to contact me with any questions, concerns, or with other matters related to the course.

Course description

A survey of key concepts in an emerging field that studies how local, historical communities are using information and communications technologies. Covers key principles for work in the non-profit/public sector as people harness new technologies and media as individuals, students, families, community organizations, and so on. Overarching ideas prepare both professionals and researchers to understand and master this environment, whatever their technology background. Especially useful for those interested in public or community libraries, youth services, social work, education, and anyone interested in working with or studying underserved communities. The required course for the 9-credit community informatics certificate.

Texts

All readings are available online in the week in which they are required.

K. Williams, Han S., Yan H., A. Alkalimat, editors. Community Informatics in the US and China: Theory and Research. National Library of China Publishing House, 2012. Available free to read online (reading embedded in course moodle). Textbook can also be purchased at: http://dorrstreet.org/katewill/textbook/.

Other readings will be available online. Look for them week by week on this page below. Readings with asterisks next to them were identified in the Community Informatics Global Literature Review (http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/4347/3737).

Have readings open during course. Annotate readings as you read them.

Grading

You will be graded on your active participation in class making use of the literature, speaking up, leading discussions on articles (30%); your cybernavigating and cyberorganizing fieldwork (30%); and your final reflection paper (40%).

Course structure, assignments, and grading

This course combines seminar, readings/videos/lectures/websites and fieldwork. The weekly two hour seminar calls for active participation by students, bringing questions, experience, and perspective on the readings. The readings/videos/lectures/websites are opportunities to hear from the actual players in community informatics. By listening to their voices we will learn to what extent and how key community institutions and sectors are integrating new technologies into community life, work, and culture. Special emphasis is given to public libraries in the United States of America, but we will also consider cases outside of libraries, and around the world. The fieldwork places you on the front line, learning to teach and support communities in their everyday lives with 1) one-on-one tech help and 2) online information sources of, by and for the local community.

Seminar

1. LEADING DISCUSSION. Each student will lead discussion of THREE readings by identifying three key passages, supplying a drawing/diagram/chart/table/picture about or from the reading that will be used to explain the reading to your classmates, and three discussion questions, all on three slides or less. This exercise has its goal to prepare you to succinctly summarize and communicate theory and research, which you will have to do in your future professional practice. In addition, in groups, students will lead the discussion the week of "February 26 : Community as multi-generational place." Half the class will discuss "Older adults/Senior Citizens" and half the class will discuss "Youth/Young Adults." Sign up for the readings you wish to lead, and the group you wish to join, in the Moodle forum "Leading discussions."

2. LEARNING ACTIVELY. All students are expected to be fully engaged, raising questions and contributing to discussion to demonstrate understanding and contribute to the general progress of the class.

Readings/videos/lectures/websites

1. WEEKLY READING. Every week in this course we will be exposed to new concepts and cases illustrating the field of Community Informatics. Some of the course materials have been created by academics. Others come from information professionals. Still others come from communities themselves. These readings come from all over the world, and report on both cutting-edge developments and on cases more than 40 years old that continue to resonate in 2015. One challenge in this course will be to absorb as much of these course materials as you can. Read/Watch/Explore with a "pencil," that is, mark/record/annotate passages of interest, take notes, make a list of key concepts or

questions or ideas, formulate questions to bring to class. For reading help, which is something everyone in graduate school needs, make use of Paul Edwards, "How to Read a Book." .

2. FINAL REFLECTION PAPER. This 2500 word essay -- due at the end of the course -- requires you to use ideas from at least THREE course readings (and anything else you choose) to reflect on and analyze your experience in the field cyberorganizing and cybernavigating. Include answers to: What did you teach? What did you learn? What/who did you cyberorganize? What were the challenges? The breakthroughs? Make sure I can find your answers to those five questions in your essay. And make sure these reflections are firmly grounded in the course materials utilized in this course. You will be graded on how well you integrate theory and practice in your final reflection paper. Illustrations, for instance photos, are encouraged, just don't use them to cut corners on the word count. Attach as three appendices (these do not count for your word count) 1) your cybernavigating fieldnotes, 2) a description of what you did for cyberorganizing, and 3) a press release about what you and your site accomplished this semester, with accompanying photo if possible. Due by midnight on May 12.

Fieldwork

1. CYBERNAVIGATING. Each student will volunteer as a CyberNavigator at a local institution of your choice [I will help you locate an appropriate institution -- may be a public library, may be elsewhere]. Keep structured field notes on each visit and append those to your final reflection paper. Also see the fieldwork instructions. Plan four hours a week for this and cyberorganizing combined, through the week of April 23. Start cyberorganizing as soon as you can.

2. CYBERORGANIZING. In this course you will learn to be a cyberorganizer. This means leading communities forward into the information age. See the fieldwork instructions for more information. Cyberorganizing will be less structured than cybernavigating. Plan for things not to work out as planned (that is totally fine -- you are learning). You may need to switch your cyberorganizing work as the semester progresses. We will talk more about cyberorganizing and this assignment during class. Plan four hours a week for this and cybernavigating combined, through the week of April 23. Plan to start cyberorganizing either the second or third week of class.

GENERAL NOTE ON FIELDWORK: Fieldwork may be undertaken at your place of employment. However, it can not be done as part of your paid employment, without explicit permission both from the instructor and from your employer. The instructor is available throughout the semester to support your fieldwork. The instructor can also help you locate fieldwork sites. Please email the instructor with any and all questions and concerns. Please also use the "Fieldwork" forum to discuss successes, questions, struggles, and other things that arise during fieldwork.

Grading

You will be graded on your active participation in class (this includes leading discussions, 30%), your cybernavigating and cyberorganizing [fieldwork] (30%), and your final reflection paper (40%).

Grades for fieldwork will be based on your final reflection paper, the appendices to your reflection paper, your incorporation of insights from the field into class discussion, and your participation in the Fieldwork forum on the Moodle. You will not be graded on whether or your cybernavigating and cyberorganizing work "succeeds" or "fails." Rather your grade will be based on evidence of a good-faith effort that you have put the time into fieldwork (four hours a week for cybernavigating and cyberorganizing combined), and that you have done this fieldwork in a thoughtful manner. Throughout the semester I will check in with you to see how fieldwork is progressing.

Grades for the final reflection paper [readings/videos/lectures/websites] will be based: a) On how well you have used the literature from the class to reflect on your fieldwork, b) On how well you have answered the five questions posed to you for shaping your final paper, and c) on the professionalism of your presentation (check spelling, grammar, layout and use a citation style consistently -- you are welcome to use any citation style, as long as you are consistent in your use).

Grades for active participation [seminar] will be based, first, on the days in which you will be responsible to lead class discussion [20% of final grade], and, second, on your regular engagement with the seminar [10% of final grade]. If you are trying to answer discussion questions, pose new questions, and integrate your fieldwork (and other personal experience) into the discussion, you will receive full points for this component of the class.

Questions on grading are always welcome. I encourage you to reach out to me with any concerns or questions.

Readings and Discussion Schedule

January 22. Context. Cybernavigating

Assignment:

Be thinking about where you would like to do your fieldwork. During class we will discuss the logistics of getting started with cybernavigating and cyberorganizing. Do not worry if you feel overwhelmed at this point. That is normal. The course will support your entry into the field.

View:

Michael Wesch, "Information R/evolution." October 7, 2007.

Playing For Change. "Stand By Me." November 6, 2008.

Cgpgrey. "Humans Need Not Apply." August 13, 2014.

Read:

Damian Duffy, John Jennings, Kate Williams. Cybernavigator Stories [comic book]. Website at: http://www.echicago.illinois.edu/stories.html; same content as pdf at http://people.lis.illinois.edu/~katewill/work/29-duffy-jennings-williams-2011-CN-comic-book.pdf

Kate Williams, "Informatics Moments," Library Quarterly, Volume 82 Number 1, January 2012. Pages 47-73.http://people.lis.illinois.edu/~katewill/work/23-williams-2012-informatics-moments.pdf

Think:

What video or other cultural artifact would you add to this collection, to describe more completely this current moment?

January 29: Cyberorganizing

View:

Philip Neustrom "Edit your city: Collaborative media in the 21st century" (video and slides) presentation at eChicago 2012. Access slides at: http://echicago.illinois.edu

Check out: http://localwiki.org/faq and http://cuwiki.net.

Read:

Lih, Andrew. The Wikipedia revolution: how a bunch of nobodies created the world's greatest encyclopedia. Hyperion, 2009. Chapter 5.

Lunenfeld, Peter. The Secret War Between Downloading and Uploading: Tales of the Computer as Culture Machine. MIT Press, 2011. Excerpt.

Shachaf, Pnina. (2010). Social reference: A unifying theory. Library & Information Science Research, 32(1), 66-76.

Lenstra, N. (2014). Cyberorganizing Everyday Heritage in and around Public Libraries: An Exploratory Study in Illinois. Public Library Quarterly, 33(1), 1-22.

February 5: What is community informatics?
Read:

CI in China and the US, Chapter 8: Williams and Durrance, Community Informatics.

Carolyn Anthony, Building Community Bit by Byte. eChicago 2009 [proceedings], Kate Williams, editor. pages 99-107. http://hdl.handle.net/2142/15442 [Search for "Bit by Byte" to jump to Chapter]

CI in China and the US, Chapter 13: Chen. Informatics of Happiness.

Kuriyan, Renee, Isha Ray, and Kentaro Toyama. "Information and communication technologies for development: The bottom of the pyramid model in practice." The Information Society 24.2 (2008): 93-104.

February 12: Community as history

Read:

Fullilove, M. T. (2004). Root shock: how tearing up city neighborhoods hurts America, and what we can do about it. New York: One World/Ballantine Books . Pages 3-46.

CI in China and the US, Chapter 9: Alkalimat and Williams. Social capital and cyberpower. http://people.lis.illinois.edu/~katewill/cyberpower/

*Castro, Luis A., and Victor M. González. "Hometown websites: continuous maintenance of cross-border connections." Proceedings of the fourth international conference on Communities and technologies. ACM, 2009.

Stack, C. B. (1996). Call to home: African Americans reclaim the rural South. Basic Books. [Excerpts]

Explore:

Europeana's World War One site: http://www.europeana1914-1918.eu/en/

You Know You Grew Up in [Place] groups on Facebook -- find one for your hometown, a place you live, or a place you want to learn more about.
Here is one (of many) that exist for Champaign-Urbana:
https://www.facebook.com/groups/urbanachampaign/

February 19: Community as network
CI in China and the US, Chapter 1: Wellman and Leighton. Networks, Neighborhoods and Communities.

Yan Hui 闫慧, Zhou Wenjie 周文杰, Han Shenglong 韩圣龙. Social Capital, Digital Inequality, and a "Glocal" Community Informatics Project in Tianzhu Tibetan Autonomous County, Gansu Province. Library Trends 62(1), pp. 234-260.

*Postill, John. "Localizing the internet beyond communities and networks." New Media & Society 10.3 (2008): 413-431.

February 26 : Community as multi-generational place
Read:

[Half the class read articles about older adults / half read about youth --> we will discuss and compare]

Older adults/Senior Citizens Group

Xie, Bo (2005). Getting older adults online: The experiences of SeniorNet (USA) and OldKids (China). Young technologies in old hands: An international view on senior citizens' utilization of ICT. Copenhagen: DJVF Publishing, 175-204.

Khvorostianov, N., Elias, N., & Nimrod, G. (2012). 'Without it I am nothing': The internet in the lives of older immigrants. New Media & Society, 14(4), 583-599.

Sayago, Sergio, and Josep Blat. "Telling the story of older people e-mailing: An ethnographical study." International Journal of Human-Computer Studies 68.1 (2010): 105-120. [Read the article AND look at the pictures: http://www.tecn.upf.es/~ssayag/TellingOlderPeopleStoryEmailing/]

Youth/Young Adults Group

*Clark, Lynn Schofield. "Challenges of social good in the world of Grand Theft Auto and Barbie: A case study of a community computer center for youth." New Media & Society 5.1 (2003): 95-116.

*North, Sue, Ilana Snyder, and Scott Bulfin. "Digital tastes: social class and young people's technology use." Information, Communication & Society11.7 (2008): 895-911.

Archambault, Julie Soleil. "Breaking up 'because of the phone'and the transformative potential of information in Southern Mozambique." New media & society 13.3 (2011): 444-456.

View:

Susan Fiske & Mike North. "Common stereotypes of people over 50." Over 50 and Out of Work. http://www.overfiftyandoutofwork.com/experts/susan-fiske-mike-north/ Give this video your full attention!

March 9 [ON-CAMPUS LEEP WEEKEND DAY]: Community in the Information Revolution : The digital divide / Dual City / Information City

Morning:

One-on-One Cyber navigating with Champaign-Urbana's Senior Citizens. Off-campus at the Douglass Annex Senior Center, 804 North 5th Street, Champaign, IL 61820 (exactly one mile due north of the Graduate School of Library & Information Science). Also accessible by bus: On the route of the 7Grey East/West. Ample parking also available.
Plan to arrive to the senior center by 9 a.m. for orientation and face-to-face introductions
Cybernavigating starts at 10 a.m., goes until 12 noon
Lunch on your own from 12 noon to 1 p.m.

Afternoon:

Lecture and discussion at Graduate School of Library & Information Science, 501 E. Daniel St., Champaign, IL 61820.

1 - 2 p.m. - Debrief from the morning, and discuss fieldwork
2 - 4 p.m. - Discuss readings

Before On-Campus Day do as much of the following as you are able:

Read:

CI in China and the US, Chapter 19: Yu. The Divided Views of the Information and Digital Divides.

Kate Williams, "Rethinking Digital Divide Research: Datasets and Theoretical Frameworks," pages 109-127 in Main Fronts of Information Science and Information Management: Forum on Information Science and Information Management, Peking University (情报学与信息管理的主战场:北京大学情报学与 信息管理论坛文集, in English and Chinese), Chen Jianlong, Shen Jing, Zhou Qingshan, and Chen Wenguang, editors, Peking University Press, 2011.

*Odendaal, Nancy. "The spaces between: ICT and marginalization in the South African city." Proceedings of the 5th International Conference on Communities and Technologies. ACM, 2011.

CI in China and the US, Chapter 3: Castells. Dual City. / CI in China and the US, Chapter 4: Castells. Grassrooting.

View:

Greg Bruner, Illini Football Video Coordinator, U of I Intercollegiate Athletics. Overcoming digital divides in a college football team, Digital Divide Lecture Series, October 21, 2010. http://go.illinois.edu/digitaldividetalks

 David Keyes, Community Technology Program Manager, City of Seattle Department of Information Technology. Video of November 20, 2014 Information City Lecture Series. http://groups.lis.illinois.edu/cilab/DigitalDivide.html

Explore:

What do we mean by rural/urban, and the spaces in-between?
"Defining the "Rural" in Rural America: The use of different definitions of rural by Federal agencies reflects the multidimensional qualities of rural America." USDA, Economic Research Service. Amber Waves, June 2008.http://ers.usda.gov/amber-waves/2008-june/defining-the-%E2%80%9Crural%E2%80%9D-in-rural-america.aspx

Find what Pew Internet and American Life Project has to say about the digital divide. http://www.pewinternet.org/

http://infocitycu.net/ - InfoCityCU.net and read the reasons for the name change from Digital Divide to Information City lecture series. http://groups.lis.illinois.edu/cilab/DigitalDivide.html

 Odendaal - Spaces Between File

March 12: No Class
Catch up on readings as needed.

March 19: Virtuality: Experiments in online communities
Read:
Rheingold, H. (1993). Introduction, Chapter 1 and 2. In Virtual community: Homesteading on the electronic frontier. Addison-Wesley.

Ludlow, P., and Mark Wallace. (2007).Introduction, Chapter 1 and 18. In The Second Life Herald: The virtual tabloid that witnessed the dawn of the metaverse. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Himanen, P. (2001). Page 4-19 and 139-142. In The Hacker Ethic and the Spirit of the Information Age. New York, NY: Random House.

CI in China and the US, Chapter 5: Lévy. Collective Intelligence.

View:
Project Gutenberg. Panel 3 of "Fifty Years of Public Computing at Illinois." http://50years.lis.illinois.edu

Luis Von Ahn, Massive-scale online collaboration. April 2011.
http://www.ted.com/talks/luis_von_ahn_massive_scale_online_collaboration?language=en

Explore:

Internet Public Library and the earlier Librarian's Index to the Internet (LII),
http://www.ipl.org/div/about/

March 26: No class
Spring break

April 2: Virtuality: Experiments in locally-based online communities
Read:
*Budka, Philipp, Brandi Bell, and Adam Fiser. "MyKnet. org: How Northern Ontario's First Nation Communities Made Themselves At Home On The World Wide Web." The Journal of Community Informatics 5.2 (2009). http://ci-journal.net/index.php/ciej/article/view/568.

Virnoche, M. E. (1998). The Seamless Web and Communications Equity: The Shaping of a Community Network. Science, Technology, & Human Values, 23(2), 199-220.

Rogers, E. M., Collins-Jarvis, L., & Schmitz, J. (1994). The PEN project in Santa Monica: Interactive communication, equality, and political action. Journal of the American Society for Information Science, 45(6), 401-410.

Hiller, H. H., & Franz, T. M. (2004). New ties, old ties and lost ties: the use of the internet in diaspora. New Media & Society, 6(6), 731-752

April 9: Public computing: The place, people, tools
Read:
Jack Linchuan Qiu 邱林川. Cybercafés in China: Community Access beyond Gaming and Tight Government Control. Library Trends 62(1), pp. 121-139.

Roy, Loriene; Bolfing, Trina; and Brzozowski, Bonnie. "Computer Classes for Job Seekers: LIS Students Team with Public Librarians to Extend Public Services." Public Library Quarterly 29, no. 3 (2010): 193–209.

*Julien, Heidi, and Cameron Hoffman. "Information Literacy Training in Canada's Public Libraries." The Library Quarterly 78.1 (2008).

Explore:

The Great Good Place author Ray Oldenburg's site, starting with:
http://www.pps.org/reference/reference-categories/placemaking-tools/

April 16: Public Computing: Lessons about literacy
Read: Finn, P. J. (1999). Page 121-207. In Literacy with an attitude: Educating working-class children in their own self-interest. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Bowen, L. M. (2011). Resisting Age Bias in Digital Literacy Research. College Composition and Communication, 62(4), 586-607.

April 23: Cyberpower: Making a difference
Read:
Williams, K. & Alkalimat, A. Cyberpower. In Pattern Language for Communication Revolution. Doug Schuler, editor. MIT Press.http://www.publicsphereproject.org/patterns/print-pattern.php?begin=25

Pitkin, B. (2006). Community Informatics for Community Development: the "Hope or Hype" Issue Revisited. Pages 77-98 in Networked Neighborhoods, P Purcell, editor. Springer London.

Wei Zhipeng 魏志鹏, Jiang Guodong 蒋国栋, Niu Tuowen 牛托稳, Tim Zou 邹际平, Elaine Dong 董小芬. A Tale of Two Counties: How Two School Libraries in Rural Western China Serve Local Needs. Library Trends 62(1), pp. 205-233.

April 30: Reflections on Fieldwork & Applying Community Informatics
Bring: Highlights of your fieldwork and reflections to share. (Make at least 3 slides before class to present)

May 7: Reading day (No Class)
Final reflection due with attachments by May 12.

Final reflection paper Assignment