University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign
Graduate School of Library and Information Science
LIS 518A Community Informatics Fall 2012
Wednesdays 9-11:50 in the Henderson Room except Thurs Oct 4
Course documents and website https://courses.lis.illinois.edu/

Instruction team
Assistant Professor Kate Williams
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Office hours
Thursdays 10-12 and by appointment.

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 community informatics specialization.

Course structure and assignments
1. SESSIONS:
   a) Wednesdays 9-10:50, lecture and discussion. This goes until 11:50 on August 29, September 5, December 12. Week of October 3, class meets on Thursday October 4 in Illini Union 209.
   b) Weekly 11-11:50 September 12-December 5 except Thanksgiving week, Digital Divide Lecture Series with guest speakers. Twelve students are needed to do INTRODUCTIONS. Those of you who are worried about speaking up in class, or interested in making a connection to a professional (think jobseeking) can sign up for this.
c) Thursday, October 4 9-11:50, Meet with the LEEP section of LIS 518 in Illini Union 209. You are also invited to class lunch that day at the Union Ballroom for $10 each. Lunch is optional but encouraged.

2. LEADING DISCUSSION. Each student will lead discussion of a reading by identifying three key passages and supplying three useful questions, all on one sheet of paper. With 27 readings and 20 students, those of you who are looking for a more structured way to participate in class discussion can sign up more than once.

3. CYBERORGANIZING. The major project of the class this semester is to develop and launch a localwiki for Champaign-Urbana. This is already in the beta stage at http://cuwiki.net. We will plan this together starting week 1. Plan four hours a week for this and cyberorganizing. Also see the assignment instructions.

4. CYBERNAVIGATING. Twice during the semester, each student will volunteer as a CyberNavigator at either Urbana Free Library or Douglass Branch Library. Keep structured field notes on each visit and append those to your final reflection paper. Plan four hours a week for this and cyberorganizing. Also see the assignment instructions.

5. FINAL REFLECTION PAPER. This five page single spaced essay uses ideas from at least three course readings (and anything else you choose) to reflect on and analyze your experience in the field practicing cyberorganizing and cybernavigating. What did you teach? What did you learn? What were the challenges? The breakthroughs? Make sure I can find your answers to those four questions in your essay. Illustrations, for instance photos, are encouraged, just don’t use them to cut corners on the five page length. Attach as two appendices 1) your field notes from CyberNavigating and 2) a description of what you did for cyberorganizing, including an explanation of how your team operated and any division of labor.

6. 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. “Read with a pencil,” that is, mark 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,” in the course reading collection.

Texts
Kate Williams, Han Shenglong, Yan Hui, Abdul Alkalimat, editors. Community Informatics in the US and China: Theory and Research. National Library of China Publishing House, 2012. Available at cost ($20) from instructor; all but two chapters can be located in a book or journal. Other readings will be available online.

Bring readings to class to refer to. Use the affordances of both paper and computer.

Grading
You will be graded on your active participation in class making use of the literature (this includes presenting on articles and for some introducing a speaker; 20%), your cybernavigating and cyberorganizing (60%), and your final reflection paper (20%).
Schedule

**August 29. Introductions/Why community informatics?**
   [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4CV05HyAbM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4CV05HyAbM)
   [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NL1GopyXT_g](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NL1GopyXT_g)
   [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Us-TVg40ExM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Us-TVg40ExM)

**September 5. What is community informatics**
View: Philip Neustrom “Edit your city: Collaborative media in the 21st century” (video and slides) presentation at eChicago 2012. Available at [http://echicago.illinois.edu](http://echicago.illinois.edu) (click on events, find 2012).
Read: *CI in China and the US*, Chapter 8: Williams and Durrance.

**September 12. Community as history**

**September 19. Community as network**

**September 26. Community in inforev 1: the Digital Divide**

**October 4. Community in inforev 2: Manuel Castells**
   *CI in China and the US*, Chapter 4: Castells/Grassrooting.

**October 10. Theories of community in the information society**
   *CI in China and the US*, Chapter 5: Lévy.

**October 17. Virtuality: Local experiments**
   *CI in China and the US*, Chapter 10: Alkalimat/Social Cyberpower

**October 24. Virtuality: Wide area experiments**


**October 31. Public computing: The place**


* CI in China and the US*, Chapter 18: Wang

**November 7. Public computing: Teaching and doing**


**November 14. Cyberpower: Making a difference**


**November 21. No class, Thanksgiving break week**

**November 28. Examining the Illinois model**


**December 5. Applying the model**


Lenstra, Noah. Reading TBD

**December 12. What you learned and why it matters**