



INF1323

THE INFORMATION EXPERIENCE

Syllabus for Fall 2023 by Professor Jenna Hartel

COURSE LOCATIONS AND WEBSITE

Section 1 meets on Mondays, 9:00-12:00 in [Room 140 of Ramsay Wright Laboratories](#) and Section 2 meets Wednesday, 9:00-12:00 in [Room 313 of the Bissell Building](#). (Students should regularly attend the section in which they are registered, but may attend the other section, if necessary.) Please arrive by 8:50 for a 9:00 (sharp) start. The course website for both sections is in Quercus at <https://q.utoronto.ca>.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

INF1323H — The Information Experience focuses upon information’s human dimension. Newcomers to Library and Information Science (and curious learners from other concentrations) will develop sharpened vision to discern “the red thread of information in the social texture of people’s lives” (Bates, 1999). To that end, INF1323 introduces *information behaviour*, the many ways in which human beings interact with information, in particular, the ways in which people seek and utilize information. First, students are introduced to foundational theories, models, and concepts of information and information behaviour. Next, these ideas are situated, and shown to have practical applications, within contexts of long-standing relevance to Library and Information Science. INF1323 has a focus on original research. Participants in the course are taught a qualitative method to conduct information behaviour research, and across the semester enact individual, small-scale, exploratory studies of information behaviour in a topic or population of choice. Overall, the meaning of the course title is twofold: students have their own novel experience of information, and they learn how to discern information-related experiences of others.

COURSE PERSONNEL			
NAME	RESPONSIBILITIES	OFFICE HOURS	CONTACT
Professor JENNA HARTEL (she/her)	ALL	Wednesday 2:30-4:00 (online in Zoom) and by appointment	jenna.hartel@utoronto.ca
Teaching Assistant KELLY MCCONVEY (she/her)	IHI Assignment* General Help and Troubleshooting Quercus Gradebook	Wednesdays 12:30-2:00 (online Zoom)	kelly.mcconvey@mail.utoronto.ca
Teaching Assistant SARAH GRAM (she/her)	IHI Assignment* Giving Thanks to...Assignment	Thursday, 12:00-1:30 (online in Zoom)	sarah.gram@mail.utoronto.ca
Teaching Assistant ASHIQUE THUPPILIKKAT (he/him)	IHI Assignment* Video Festival Worksheet Ticket-Out-the-Doors (TOTD)	Tuesday 1:15-2.45 (online in Zoom)	ashique.thuppilikkat@mail.utoronto.ca

*Early in the semester, students will be assigned a TA to provide guidance on the IHI Assignment.

PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGY AND COURSE CULTURE

As taught by Professor Hartel, this course enacts *contemplative pedagogy*, teaching methods designed to cultivate deepened awareness, concentration and insight. Contemplative pedagogy fosters additional ways of knowing that complement the rational methods of traditional education. Class will usually begin with a short, secular, contemplative practice, and includes an assignment centered upon gratitude. There will be an emphasis on nourishing collegial friendships; to this end, all students are assigned a “Course Buddy.” Creativity will be encouraged through a warm and hospitable environment; playful multimedia (from Professor Hartel’s YouTube channel, [INFIDEOS](#)); embodied learning activities; and a festive approach to topics.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES (CLOs)

By participating in the course, students will be able to:

1. Enact the unique metaperspective of Library and Information Science; that is, to see the “red thread of information in the social texture of people’s lives” (Bates, 1999).
2. Identify seminal theories, models, and concepts of information behaviour; employ their technical vocabularies; and translate the models to today’s information environment.
3. Implement one information behaviour research method, the Information Horizon Interview, to discover, document, analyze, and report information phenomena in a setting of personal interest or concern.
4. Recognize the breadth of the information behaviour literature and specialty; and appreciate its frontiers, diverse perspectives, and minority voices.
5. Understand a sample of contexts with special interest to LIS (e.g. reference services, reader’s advisory) and have an inkling of how to contribute professionally to such settings.
6. Envision a concatenated research career, that is, a path of personal, professional, lifelong learning in the information domain.

RELATING CLOS TO PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

Through a survey of central concepts of Library and Information Science and the information behaviour specialty, students will comprehend “fundamental concepts, theories, and practices of the information disciplines, and will be able to respond to changing information practices and needs of society” (PLO1). When guided to recognize and support emerging and minority voices from the worldwide reaches of the field, students will exercise “economic, cultural, and/or social leadership” (PLO2). Participants in the course will learn how to design and implement an original information behaviour research project, thereby “develop[ing] the ability to contribute through research and publication” to the body of knowledge underlying Information Studies (PLO3). Via the case studies of information-rich settings of relevance to libraries, students will see how research and theory can influence library resources, systems, and services in order to have a positive impact on society (PLO4); and students will “develop an understanding of the application of new technological developments to the preservation and communication of information” (PLO5). The idea of a concatenated research career, that is, the sequential linking of small-scale research projects, will be taught and embraced as a blueprint for lifelong learning (PLO6).

ASSIGNMENTS

HOW ASSIGNMENTS/ACTIVITIES ASSESS ATTAINMENT OF CLOS					
CLOs	Readings and Videos Done Outside of Class	Lectures and In-Class Activities	Giving Thanks to...	Information Horizon Interview	Ticket-Out-the-Door
1.	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦
2.	✦	✦	✦		✦
3.	✦	✦		✦	
4.	✦	✦			✦
5.	✦	✦			✦
6.	✦	✦		✦	✦

MISSED OR LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY

Students are *strongly* encouraged to meet assignment deadlines. Doing so instills good habits for a professional career in which firm deadlines are a constant reality. Yet in the spirit of contemplative pedagogy (which recognizes the vicissitudes of life and avoids a punishing mentality) one, two, or three day extensions are available for assignments 1, 3a and 3b, below. To obtain an extension, email Teaching Assistant Kelly McConvey (kelly.mcconvey@mail.utoronto.ca) in advance so that she can make necessary changes for a late submission within Quercus. Since the two Ticket-Out-the-Door worksheets are unannounced, no extensions are possible. If you will knowingly miss a class or anticipate a late assignment submission, use the [ACORN Absence Declaration Tool](#) and email Teaching Assistant Ashique (ashique.thuppilikkat@mail.utoronto.ca). Be aware that you are only granted one planned absence per semester.

GRADING POLICIES

Please consult the Faculty of Information's resources that will form the basis for grading in the course: [Grade Interpretation Guidelines \(PDF\)](#), [University Assessment and Grading Practices Policy](#) and [Guidelines on the Use of Incomplete \(INC\), Standing Deferred \(SDF\), & Withdrawal \(WDR\)](#).

The Table below is a summary of assignments. Please see the detailed Assignment Handouts for additional instructions on the Information Horizon Interview and Giving Thanks to...assignments. All grades and comments will be returned within three weeks. Students will not receive feedback on assessed material totaling at least 10% of their final grade before the drop deadline. All assignments are graded by points, which translate to the ranges for letter grades per the School of Graduate Studies [Graduate Grade Scale](#).

ASSIGNMENTS TABLE

Component	Value (%)	Due	Description
1. Giving Thanks to...	20%	A Thank You card is submitted in class at Session 4	Compose a sincere letter of gratitude (in about 250 words) to an information behaviour scholar of your choice, artfully presented in a conventional paper thank you card. See the Giving Thanks to...Assignment Handout for details.
2. Information Behaviour Video Festival Quiz	5%	Due to Quercus by Wednesday section October 11, by 6:00 pm	Session 5 is an asynchronous online course (because of Thanksgiving and Professor Hartel is at a conference in Poland). Instructions are provided in Quercus at the Session 5 Introduction and Links page to watch an Information Behaviour Video Festival, and then complete a Quiz in Quercus.
3a. IHI Research Design (Population, context, and research question)	10%	Fri. Oct. 20, by 6:00 pm, via Quercus' Quiz function	Formulate your Research Design (context, population, and research question) for an Information Horizon Interview study. In advance, you may consult with the instructor or Teaching Assistant on topics as necessary. The submission will utilize Quercus' Quiz function. See the IHI Assignment Handout for details.
3b. Information Horizon Interview (Final written report)	40%	Sun. Nov. 19, by 6:00 pm via PDF upload to Quercus	Conduct an empirical research project utilizing the Information Horizon Interview. Assemble your findings into a Final Report; a template will be provided in November. Due via PDF upload to Quercus. See the IHI Assignment Handout for details.
3c. Information Horizon Interview (Cluster performance or video)	15%	Final Performances and Videos due in class at Sessions 11 & 12	Within your Cluster, give a 15-minute Summary Performance of your research experience; or make a 8 minute Video. See the IHI Assignment Handout for details.
4. Ticket-Out-the-Door (TOTD)	10% (5 x 2)	Due on unannounced dates in class	Coming to class is essential in this course. The TOTD assignments reward steady attendance. At two unannounced instances, a worksheet will be distributed that registers your understanding of the topic(s) covered that day. Complete the worksheet and pass it in upon departure from class. If you will knowingly missing a class, use the ACORN Absence Declaration Tool and email Teaching Assistant Ashique (ashique.thuppilikkat@mail.utoronto.ca). Note that you are only granted only one planned absence per semester.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND EVENTS

The table below conveys weekly topical coverage of the course and includes relevant assignment reminders. To prepare for each class, go to its Introduction and Links page in Quercus, where a contextual essay provides background and hyperlinks to assigned readings and videos.

SESSION & DATES	THEMES AND HAPPENINGS
<p>#1 Sept. 11 & 13</p>	<p>Welcome and Course Overview Our first gathering introduces major themes and ideas of the course. The syllabus, schedule, and assignments will be surveyed at a very high level. Everyone will get better acquainted and you'll meet your Course Buddy. The Giving Thanks to...assignment will be launched.</p>
<p>#2 Sept. 18 & 20</p>	<p>The Red Thread of Information Session 2 is about the metaperspective of Information Science, which focuses attention upon "the red thread of information in the social texture of people's lives." We will discuss and practice the metaperspective in small groups. There will be a bonding moment with your Course Buddy. Start your Giving Thanks to...assignment!</p>
<p>#3 Sept. 25 & 27</p>	<p>Information Metatheories Session 3 presents broad idea systems, called metatheories, that operate within all academic fields. You will learn how metatheories generate differing conceptions of information and information behaviour. We will ask, what's <i>your</i> metatheory? Our conversation ends with the principle of intellectual humility. The last section of class will provide additional guidance and next steps on the Information Horizon Interview assignment. Wrap-up your Giving Thanks to...assignment, which is due soon.</p>
<p>#4 Oct. 2 & 4</p>	<p>Introduction to Information Behaviour, Survey of IHI Clusters, and Former Student IHI Panel Session 4 introduces information behaviour through a few of its big ideas and luminaries. The eight clusters of the IHI assignment will be surveyed, since they represent major thematic areas of information behaviour research. A panel of students, from prior offerings of the course, will share their experience of the Information Horizon Interview assignment. The panel is a great source of information and inspiration! Soon after Session 4, go online in Quercus's People area to select an Collaborative Thematic Cluster. The Giving Thanks to...assignment is due in class at Session 4.</p>
<p>#5 Oct. 9 & 11</p>	<p>ASYNCHRONOUS ONLINE CLASS: Information Behaviour Video Festival and Quiz October 9 is Canadian Thanksgiving and Professor Hartel is at a conference in Poland. Class will not meet in person. Instead, Session 5 will be an asynchronous online class in the form of an Information Behaviour Video Festival. To participate, follow the instructions in Quercus at the Session 5 Introduction and Links page; there is also a Quiz to complete via Quercus. If you have not done so already, commit to an IHI Collaborative Thematic Cluster via the People tab in Quercus.</p>

<p>#6 Oct. 16 & 18</p>	<p>Information Horizon Interview Workshop (Attendance Required) Training will be provided to implement the Information Horizon Interview. The session focuses upon research design and implementation and includes: selecting your population, context, and research questions; designing an IHI interview guide; conducting a semi-structured interview; and the drawing process known as diagrammatic elicitation. This class contains activities that get your own IHI research underway. Your IHI Research Design (context, population, and research question) is due on Friday, October 20 by 6:00pm, via Quercus' Quiz function.</p>
<p>#7 Oct. 23 & 25</p>	<p>The Reference Interview, Sense-Making Theory, and Neutral Questions This week marks a shift to informatin behaviour <i>applied</i> within LIS contexts. A longstanding practice in libraries is the reference interview. Session 7 covers its fundamentals with a focus on in-person (not virtual) reference. You will also learn a relevant Sense-Making theory and its questioning strategy. The last hour of class will simulate reference interviews in small groups. Outside of class, conduct IHIs.</p>
<p>#8 Oct. 30 & Nov. 1</p>	<p>Student Information Behaviour; Ethnographic Research in Academic Libraries (with Guest Speakers); and IHI Analysis Tutorial Professor Hartel is at a conference in England. Class will be hosted by TAs Kelly McConvey and Sarah Gram. Session 8 features a landmark study and book on student information behaviour. We will discuss its method, findings, and implications. Academic librarians from Robarts Library (Jess Whyte and Ben Walsh) will share their experience as librarian-researchers. There will be a tutorial on how to analyze and finish your IHI study. This week, conduct interviews and begin to analyze your IHI data.</p>
<p>Nov. 6 - 10</p>	<p>Reading Week (Class Does Not Meet)</p>
<p>#9 Nov. 13 & 15</p>	<p>Pleasure Reading and Reader's Advisory; IHI Cluster Performance and Video Tips A traditional service of libraries is the provision of books (often fiction) for pleasure reading, known as Reader's Advisory. This session introduces the topic and provides a theory and practice for aligning books and readers. Additional guidance and in-class planning time will be provided for your Final Performance and Video. Yip yip!: Your IHI Final Report is due on Sunday, November 19 by 6:00 pm.</p>
<p>#10 Nov. 20 & 22</p>	<p>Information Behaviour in Leisure and Hobbies; Embodied and Psychedelic Information Leisure and hobbies are rich sites of information behaviour. This is a really fun topic and Professor Hartel's specialty. Class introduces a theory of leisure and a socio-cognitive approach to understanding information within hobbies. We will also touch upon embodied information and information creation in the context of a psychedelic mushroom trip. There will be some time, in class, for planning your IHI Cluster Performance or video.</p>
<p>#11 Nov. 27 & 29</p>	<p>Festival of IHI Summary Performances and Videos Your great work in the class will be shared and celebrated as in-person performances and videos.</p>
<p>#12 Dec. 4 & 6</p>	<p>Festival of IHI Summary Performances and Videos; Your Concatenated Research Career; Closing Words Your great work in the class will be shared and celebrated as in-person performances and videos. A vision will be provided of your future – concatenation! – as a researcher and information professional. And, there will be closing words from Professor Hartel.</p>

STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL LAND

This course occurs upon the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

The University of Toronto is committed to equity, human rights and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect where all members of our community can express themselves, engage with each other, and respect one another's differences. U of T does not condone discrimination or harassment against any persons or communities. (See additional EDI resources at the end of the syllabus.)

MORE COURSE AND FACULTY RESOURCES

ACCOMMODATIONS

Students with diverse learning styles and/or accessibility needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me, student services and/or the Accessibility Services Office as soon as possible. Students who believe they require accommodations and are unsure where to begin can speak to an academic advisor in student services for guidance and referrals. Accessibility Services staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals to supportive services and arrange appropriate accommodations. The sooner you let us know your needs, the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course. Once you have obtained an accommodation plan from Accessibility Services, please share your accommodation letter with your instructor and student services.

Students who have already obtained accommodations from the Accessibility Services Office are encouraged to share their letter with their instructor and with student services in the first week of class. Students should discuss potential accommodations in consultation with their Accessibility Advisor and instructor to understand what may be possible and how the instructor wishes to be informed when an accommodation needs to be actioned. It is the student's responsibility to discuss any extension requests, where possible, in advance of course deadlines.

To book an appointment with an Accessibility Advisor, please connect with the Accessibility Services front desk via email at accessibility.services@utoronto.ca or call (416) 978-8060. Consultation appointments are available to discuss any questions about the Accessibility Services registration process and/or potential accommodation support. The on-location Accessibility Advisor at the Faculty of Information is Michael Mercer.

Weekly drop-in appointments are available with Michael for registered students. For more information, visit [Accessibility Services](#) and find his name under the Contacts section.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Please consult the University's site on [Academic Integrity](#). The Faculty of Information has a zero-tolerance policy on plagiarism as defined in section B.I.1.(d) of [the University's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters \(PDF\)](#). You should acquaint yourself with the Code. Please review the material in Cite it Right and if you require further clarification, consult the resource [How Not to Plagiarize \(PDF\)](#). Cite it Right covers relevant parts of the U of T [Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters \(1995\)](#). It is expected that all Faculty of Information students complete the [Cite it Right module and the online quiz](#) prior to the second week of classes of their first term.

WRITING SUPPORT

As stated in the Faculty of Information's Grade Interpretation Guidelines, "work that is not well written and grammatically correct will not generally be considered eligible for a grade in the A range, regardless of its quality in other respects." With this in mind, please make use of the writing support provided to graduate students by the [SGS Graduate Centre for Academic Communication](#). The services are designed to target the needs of both native and non-native speakers and all programs are free. Please consult the current [SGS Workshops Schedule](#) for more information.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION (CONT'D)

The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Unit (EDIU) at the School of Information, in collaboration with U of T community members, works to promote and encourage an equitable and inclusive work and classroom environment, free from discrimination and/or harassment based on any of the code grounds. The EDI Unit is responsible for developing and delivering EDI programs and services, works with all stakeholders, and provides confidential services. Key areas of services include: training and educational opportunities, community building and engagement, systemic change initiatives, providing confidential advice/consultations, provide a variety of [EDI Resources](#) and supports with resolving concerns of discrimination and/or harassment/

Our [Equity Offices](#) play a pivotal role in fulfilling the University of Toronto's commitment to equity and excellence. Unique to our institution, these specialized Equity Offices stand as a testament to our dedication: [Accessibility For Ontarians With Disabilities Act Office \(AODA\)](#), [Anti-Racism & Cultural Diversity Office \(ARCO\)](#), [Family Care Office \(FCO\)](#), [Office of Indigenous Initiatives \(OII\)](#), [Sexual & Gender Diversity Office \(SGDO\)](#), [Sexual Violence Prevention & Support Centre \(SVPSC\)](#).

Related Offices: , [Community Safety Office](#), [First Nations House - UofT Student Life](#), [Wellness – The Division of People Strategy, Equity & Culture](#), and the [Multi-Faith Centre for Spiritual Study & Practice - UofT Student Life](#).

STATEMENT ON COPYRIGHT

Please be advised that the intellectual property rights in the material referred to on this syllabus, and posted on the course site, may belong to the course instructor or other persons. You are not authorized to reproduce or distribute such material, in any form or medium, without the prior consent of the intellectual property owner. Violation of intellectual property rights may be a violation of the law and University of Toronto policies and may entail significant repercussions for the person found to have engaged in such act. If you have any questions regarding your right to use the material in a manner other than as set forth in the syllabus, please speak to your instructor.

IN-CLASS STUDENT RECORDINGS OF CONTENT

Students may not create audio recordings of classes with the exception of those students requiring an accommodation for a disability, who should speak to the instructor prior to beginning to record lectures. Students creating unauthorized audio recording of lectures violate an instructor's intellectual property rights and the Canadian Copyright Act. Students violating this agreement will be subject to disciplinary actions under the Code of Student Conduct.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

All students registered at the University of Toronto are required to conduct themselves in a respectful manner. The Code of Student Conduct applies and will be enforced regardless of the physical location where students are undertaking their studies. For more information, see [Code of Student Conduct \(December 13, 2019\)](#) from The Office of the Governing Council, Secretariat.

DECLARING AN ABSENCE IN ACORN

Students who miss an academic obligation and wish to seek academic consideration in a course may declare an absence using the [ACORN Absence Declaration Tool](#). Students who declare an absence in ACORN should expect to receive reasonable academic consideration from their instructor without the need to present additional supporting documentation. Students can only use the ACORN Absence Declaration Tool once per academic term (e.g., the fall term) for a maximum period of 7 consecutive calendar days.

The ACORN Absence Declaration Tool requires students to select the course(s) they wish to have academic consideration granted, as well as provide the email address(es) to whom their course

syllabus identifies as the contact (e.g., instructor, advisor). A record of the absence is sent to the self-provided email(s) at the time of submission, and a receipt of the absence declaration is also sent to the student's University of Toronto email address.

Submitting an absence declaration does not initiate the process of academic consideration. It is the student's responsibility to arrange for academic consideration by contacting the course instructor using the contact information provided in the syllabus.

Students who have already used one absence declaration in a term will be restricted from declaring any further absences using the ACORN Absence Declaration Tool. Students are required to arrange any further academic consideration directly with their instructor and / or student services advisor. Students may be asked to provide supporting documentation as evidence of their absences such as the University approved verification of illness form (VOI).

