Overview Syllabus

INFO 2131: Information Ecosystems
Course Syllabus Overview

Instructional Team

Julia Dean, Instructor
CONTACT: Canvas Email is the best to reach Julia, but here is email as back up:
julia.arthur@colorado.edu
OFFICE HOURS: After class, and by appointment. Send me your schedule so I can offer times that
work with your class and work schedule when you make a request.

Frida Mudsam, TA
CONTACT: Canvas Email is the best to reach Frida, but here is email back up:
OFFICE HOURS: Before and after class, and by appointment. OFFER FRIDA THE PRE-
SCHEDULED SPREADSHEET OPTION AS WELL.: CHANGE FOR FRIDA'S
https://cuboulder.zoom.us/j/6811381916 ⤴ **(https://cuboulder.zoom.us/j/6811381916)**

Course Time and Location

WHEN: Monday/Wednesday, 3:35 - 4:50 PM
LOCATION: ENVD 120
ATTENDANCE: Required
WHAT TO DO WHEN COVID/ILLNESS STRIKES: For students with COVID-19 or other illness, I
provide a Zoom option so they do not miss class and can get credit. I would much rather you stay
home to protect myself and other students from illness. To enact this option, send a Canvas message
or email to Julia Dean and Frida **in advance for approval**. Students are also limited to how many
times they can invoke this option---three times. For more about COVID-19 and other illness policy,
see below.

https://cuboulder.zoom.us/j/97960634023. ⤴ **(https://cuboulder.zoom.us/j/97960634023)** Passcode:
148053

Course Description

Introduces students to techniques for working with communities, organizations, and institutions in the
transformative use of information. Develops students' ability to listen for (and mediate among)
diverse, discordant voices and values. Employs qualitative research, design explorations, activities,

and small group projects as students examine, navigate, and design for complex interactions across ecosystems.

Learning Objectives

Through a variety of assignments and in-class engagements, students will:

- Develop mastery to see the everyday production activities of human life through the disciplinary lens of information science;
- Become a critical analyst of the social life of data at different scales of human organizing;
- Explore four interacting analytical perspectives to examine and design for data flows at the task and organizational levels;
- Conduct a capstone research project that investigates how an organization manages and uses data using these different perspectives;
- Apply the four analytical perspectives to accord with the matter under study;
- Synthesize findings across stakeholder accounts of data, identifying data flows, frictions, and materialities;
- Characterize organizational data use via textual, visual, and oral modalities;
- Communicate results to research participants and to peers;
- Collaborate in the construction of new knowledge.

Overview of Course Topical Structure

The course will be organized in 5 main parts, after the whole class overview provided in Week 1.

Week 1: Course overview to preview lessons that pervade the course by use of metaphor for information, and by analysis of how people rely on and interact with water.

Weeks 2 and 3: ANALYTICAL PERSPECTIVE 1: Social Worlds Model of Macro, Meso, Micro Levels of Analysis and Influences
How data sources have influences that range from institutional to interpersonal.

Weeks 4 and 5: ANALYTICAL PERSPECTIVE 2: Socially Distributed Cognition
How data traverses physical space, social space and conceptual space at the task level.

Weeks 6, 7, 8, 9: ANALYTICAL PERSPECTIVE 3: Data Journeys
How data traverses through physical space, social space and conceptual space at the organization level.

Weeks 9 and 10: ANALYTICAL PERSPECTIVE 4: Organizing Around Data
How people organize themselves around data (especially in online environments).

Weeks 11-16 + Finals: Capstone Project: Information Work in Organizations.
Students conduct new research on an organization through interviews and observation (as appropriate to the problem), applying the four analytical perspectives learned in this class (as

appropriate to the problem and research data collected), to describe how data is part of the production function of the organization and to make recommendations to improve the organization's data flows.

Link to Weekly Syllabus

The detailed, **weekly syllabus is located here** ⤴ **(https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1_ZrgszMuxrNV6y4052jPvDN1jFjoGESE6wihKgU-ILQ/edit? gid=724890634#gid=724890634)** , and will be the main place to understand the structure of the course.

Reading Texts

There are no required textbooks for this course. All required readings will be made available via *.pdf* files in Canvas. In addition, we will use Hypothesis, an online annotation tool, to support and incentivize individual and collaborative reading to get more out of the usual reading experience. In addition to the readings, there will be a short, in-class quiz the day of or after the reading is due.

Assessment and Evaluation of Course Components (1000 Possible Points Total)

Participation and Mini-Homeworks	Includes attending classes, writing a daily note to help with learning retention and giving feedback to instructor about the course throughout the semester, participating in class exercises, and showing attentiveness in class. (125 points) Mini-Homeworks are small assignments that occur throughout the semester that are designed to solicit your feedback or input, help you along with keeping you on track with your assignments, and provide constructive peer review of assignments. (113 points)	238 points total
Annotated Readings and Quizzes	We will read 6-7 assigned articles using Hypothesis, which is a collaborative annotation tool integrated with Canvas. Students will be asked to respond to prompts within the article (by the instructor) and to add additional annotated content to support their learning. The reading will be worth 13 points. After the readings are complete, a short, in-class quiz will follow to ensure your comprehension of the readings and help the instructor see where potential gaps in understanding are. The quizzes will be worth 14 points.	162 points

Projects 1 and 2	There are two significant projects that occur before the Capstone project: the 1) Social Distributed Cognition Assignment (which is done individually) and the 2) Current Events assignment (which is done in a group), both of which will help you apply aspects of the four analytical perspectives we are learning in this class.	Project 1: 150 points Project 2: 150 points
Capstone Research Project 3	This team project will be conducted over the last 5 weeks of the course (after Spring Break), and will be an opportunity for students to employ the four analytical perspectives they learned in the first 10 weeks to study how an organization uses data as part of what we will come to know as its "production" activity (that is, its purpose as an organization). Teams will conduct data collection that includes interviews, observation and background research as appropriate, present the results in a video format and a visual executive summary format.	300 points

See Canvas for more Assignment details.

Your grades will be entered in Canvas. It is your responsibility to monitor the grades that are recorded there. If you find a discrepancy, you need to let your instructor know *within one week* after the grade is posted. Grades will not be changed except in cases where there was an error in recording, computation, or application of course grading rubrics.

Numerical grades will be converted to letter grades based on the following percentage scale. Final course grades are rounded to the nearest whole number (eg., 93.5 ---> 94, 93.4---->93).

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
94-100	90-93	87-89	83-86	80-82	77-79	73-76	70-72	67-69	63-66	60-62	<60

Late Policy

All assignments are due by the date and time posted. I allow a one hour grace period past that time posted for students to have full credit, but beyond that, no points will be given. In other words, there is no extended "late policy" in this class beyond the one hour grace period; there are instead only deadlines. To earn credit for your work, plan on meeting these deadlines. **You may earn partial credit on assignments by submitting whatever you have finished at the time of the deadline**. For extraordinary circumstances, please contact the instructor.

Participation

Participation is **essential** in this class. It is impossible to pass this course while missing many classes. Furthermore, because the class builds skills as we go, the consequence of missing a lot of classes up front in the hope of pulling it out at the end still leaves students fighting for the grades they hope for. Why put yourself through that when the course is SO much more enjoyable if you just understand what we are doing and why?

It is also relatively straightforward to get a high grade. This is not because the course is easy, but rather if you do the work and pay attention, you will find yourself climbing the ladder I laid out before you, and learning more than you ever thought you could.

Historically, the majority of the students in this class does just this, and climbs that steep ladder inch by inch in a well-paced fashion. This means that students receive a lot of As, and everyone feels extremely rewarded for the experience. Alas, the opposite is also true, meaning that students who don't follow the planned course (this is why it is called a "course" by the way) do really poorly. Final grades tend to be bi-modal.

For all these reasons, and to support best those who do commit to coming to class and doing their projects (including in class), **any students who miss more than 10 class meetings will automatically get an F in the class, as they will not really understand the material in a way that they can then complete it and support others in group projects.** For what it is worth, that is 30% of the semester that would be missed - that is a lot of class time.

I will do my best to make the material engaging and relevant to you as information scientists, and offer a mix of interactive lectures, project sessions, and group activities that discuss cutting edge research and current topics. I will also facilitate guest lectures with renowned instructors both within and outside of our department who can bolster both my knowledge and yours. The rest is up to each person to bring their best learning selves to each meeting.

The last four years have been extraordinarily difficult. I ask that you challenge yourself to use the course time to cast as many of the worries of the world away as possible and invest in yourself so that you can be agents of change in the future. Going to college is such a privilege, and it is a special time in a person's life. To help with structuring your participation, I'll ask you to complete a short "daily note" as you have done in other INFO classes to self-assess how well you participated and offer a takeaway that you learned that day. It is also the place to let me know if you have questions, or if things are unclear and need more coverage. I will use this feedback to help with planning our next class(es).

In short: come to class :)

Classroom Behavior

Students and faculty are responsible for maintaining an appropriate learning environment in all instructional settings, whether in person, remote, or online. Failure to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, marital status, political affiliation, or political philosophy.

For more information, see the **classroom behavior policy (http://www.colorado.edu/policies/student-classroom-and-course-related-behavior)** , the **(https://www.colorado.edu/sccr/student-conduct) Student Code of Conduct (https://www.colorado.edu/sccr/student-conduct)** , and the **(https://www.colorado.edu/oiec/) Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (https://www.colorado.edu/oiec/)** .

Illness and Class Attendance Policy

If you are ill to the point that you cannot come to class, I have a Zoom or video option in place. This allows you to attend class--ideally---while it is happening, as long as you are well enough to do so. I recommend striving for this so you can stay on top of deadlines and course content. If you are too ill to attend via Zoom, then you may watch the course video for credit within 48 hours of missing class. You must arrange this option in advance with Julia and Frida if you plan to take it. Canvas-email them in advance of class as instructed above. **The Zoom and course video re-watch option is only available three times in a semester.** If you are sick more than three times this semester, or have an ongoing emergency/illness, we may coordinate together on referrals to the OIEC office or SSCM office for support. In these cases, please coordinate with Julia. I am happy to help navigate these circumstances with you.

Pledges, Disagreement and Integrity Statements

Julia's Pledge to Students. I pledge to give feedback to students constructively and quickly. I pledge to treat each student with respect. I invite constructive feedback if a student feels that I could improve my instruction or conduct in the classroom.

Student Pledge to Each Other. This course engages deeply with our identities about and practices of scholarship. To not be occasionally anxious about the commitments of scholarship is to not be realistic about what we need to practice and become, collectively and individually. Students (and the instructor!) need to be able to share, if they so choose, their self-perceived strengths and weaknesses, as well as their hopes and fears, with respect to scholarship. This course is a safe place to discuss all matters of scholarship, where confidences must be kept.

Expectations for Class Attendance. I expect students to attend all class meetings, as they are essential places for learning through instructor and peer exchange.

Openness and Disagreement Policy. (adapted from **Prof. Casey Fiesler's statement (https://informationethicspolicy.wordpress.com/about/)** , with her permission and my appreciation). In the classroom, students and instructors need to feel comfortable sharing their opinions and questions openly, even when we disagree. Disagreement is expected, but must be respectful and civil at all times. Students should feel welcome to share thoughts during class discussion without fear of being disparaged for their opinions. Like yourselves, I also have opinions, and I will attempt to surface my own biases when appropriate. These disagreements or differences of opinion will not impact grades, as long as students are respectful. I invite students to meet with me to discuss concerns and ideas about how to make our learning community a positive experience for all.

Academic Integrity. Julia depends upon and is overjoyed when each person brings their best selves to the course. Students are expected to conduct themselves with integrity (see **Honor Code) (https://www.colorado.edu/sccr/honor-code)** . Group projects require each member to pull their own weight, meet milestones, and demonstrate leadership in their own way. Julia will help with course-level project management (by specifying milestones to be met) to alleviate the burden of any one person bearing too much of the project management burden. Students who lean too heavily on teammates to complete projects will see that reflected in their project and final grades so as not to overburden those students who are completing the remaining work to a high standard. **This also relates to use of ChatGPT.** While I think there are plenty of appropriate moments to use ChatGPT, in this course, the use of that resource, or other LLMs, is discouraged. If you are found to use ChatGPT or other AI tools to complete readings/fill out prompts, answer quiz questions, or finish written assignments, appropriate action will be taken depending on the circumstances. Let's not get there!

Your Health and Wellbeing

Success in this—or any—course depends on your personal health and wellbeing. Recognize that stress is an expected part of the college experience, and it often can be compounded by unexpected setbacks or life changes outside the classroom. I encourage you to reframe challenges as *an unavoidable pathway to success*. Reflect on your role in taking care of yourself throughout the term, before the demands of exams and projects reach their peak. Please feel free to reach out to Julia about any difficulty you may be having that impacts your performance in this course or campus life as soon as it occurs and before it becomes too overwhelming. I also strongly encourage you to contact the many other support services on campus that stand ready to assist you:

- **Health and Wellness Services (https://www.colorado.edu/health/)**
- **Counseling and Psychiatric Services (https://www.colorado.edu/counseling/)**
- **Recreation Services (https://www.colorado.edu/recreation/)**
- **Student Support & Case Management (https://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/students-concern/student-support-and-case-management)**
- **Office of Victim Assistance (https://www.colorado.edu/ova/)**
- **Food Assistance (https://www.colorado.edu/volunteer/food-assistance/campus-resources)**

In addition, the University of Colorado Boulder is committed to the well-being of all students. If you are struggling with personal stressors, mental health or substance use concerns that are impacting academic or daily life, please contact **Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS)** **(https://www.colorado.edu/counseling/)** located in C4C or call (303) 492-2277, 24/7.

Free and unlimited telehealth is also available through **Academic Live Care** **(https://www.colorado.edu/health/academiclivecare)** . The **Academic Live Care** **(https://www.colorado.edu/health/academiclivecare)** site also provides information about additional wellness services on campus that are available to students.

Accommodation for Disabilities, Temporary Medical Conditions, and Medical Isolation

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the **Disability** **Services website (https://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/)** . Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or **dsinfo@colorado.edu (mailto:dsinfo@colorado.edu)** for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition, see **Temporary Medical Conditions** **(https://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/students/temporary-medical-conditions)** on the Disability Services website.

If you have a temporary illness, injury or required medical isolation for which you require adjustment, please see Julia's Illness and Class Attendance Policy above.

Preferred Student Names and Pronouns

CU Boulder recognizes that students' legal information doesn't always align with how they identify. Students may update their preferred names and pronouns via the student portal; those preferred names and pronouns are listed on instructors' class rosters. In the absence of such updates, the name that appears on the class roster is the student's legal name.

Honor Code

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the **(https://www.colorado.edu/sccr/honor-code) Honor Code** **(https://www.colorado.edu/sccr/honor-code)** . Violations of the Honor Code may include but are not limited to: plagiarism (including use of paper writing services or technology [such as essay bots]), cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course

instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. Understanding the course's syllabus is a vital part in adhering to the Honor Code.

All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution: **StudentConduct@colorado.edu (mailto:StudentConduct@colorado.edu)** . Students found responsible for violating the **(https://www.colorado.edu/sccr/honor-code) Honor Code (https://www.colorado.edu/sccr/honor-code)** will be assigned resolution outcomes from the Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution as well as be subject to academic sanctions from the faculty member. Visit **Honor Code (https://www.colorado.edu/sccr/honor-code)** for more information on the academic integrity policy.

Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation

CU Boulder is committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. University policy prohibits **protected-class (https://www.colorado.edu/oiec/policies/discrimination-harassment-policy/protected-class-definitions)** discrimination and harassment, sexual misconduct (harassment, exploitation, and assault), intimate partner abuse (dating or domestic violence), stalking, and related retaliation by or against members of our community on- and off-campus. The Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) addresses these concerns, and individuals who have been subjected to misconduct can contact OIEC at 303-492-2127 or email **cureport@colorado.edu (mailto:cureport@colorado.edu)** . Information about university policies, **reporting options (https://www.colorado.edu/oiec/reporting-resolutions/making-report)** , and **support resources (https://www.colorado.edu/oiec/support-resources)** including confidential services can be found on the **OIEC website (http://www.colorado.edu/institutionalequity/)** .

Please know that faculty and graduate instructors must inform OIEC when they are made aware of incidents related to these policies regardless of when or where something occurred. This is to ensure that individuals impacted receive outreach from OIEC about resolution options and support resources. To learn more about reporting and support for a variety of concerns, visit the **(https://www.colorado.edu/dontignoreit/) Don't Ignore It (https://www.colorado.edu/dontignoreit/)** page.

Religious Holidays

Campus policy requires faculty to provide reasonable accommodations for students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. Please communicate the need for a religious accommodation to Professor Palen in a timely manner.

See the **campus policy regarding religious observances (http://www.colorado.edu/policies/observance-religious-holidays-and-absences-classes-andor-exams)** for full details.

A Commitment and Invitation from Our College

CMCI strives to be a community whose excellence depends on diversity, equity, and inclusion. We aim to understand and challenge systems of privilege and disadvantage in higher education, such as those based on class, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and dis/ability. We seek to reach across social and political divides and to make space for voices historically underrepresented in higher education and marginalized in society. In other words, diversity is not just a future reality for which we try to prepare students. It is a priority we want to put into practice here, now, and together, in order to foster places of learning where all members can thrive. Our question for you is, *how are we doing?* Please contact the CMCI diversity team (email **lisa.flores@colorado.edu (mailto:lisa.flores@colorado.edu)** or see **https://www.colorado.edu/cmci/about-college/diversity-equity-and-inclusion/our-team (https://www.colorado.edu/cmci/about-college/diversity-equity-and-inclusion/our-team)**)...

- if you need support or other resources but don't know where to turn
- if any aspect of your educational experience with CMCI does not reflect the commitment expressed here, or if you want to share a positive instance of this commitment in action
- if you have any questions, concerns, or ideas related to diversity

We want to hear from you so that we can do better, and to support you however we can!

Julia has adapted this syllabus from Dr. Leysia Palen and Dr. Amy Voida, which was licensed under a

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