

We acknowledge that we are on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the hən̓q̓əmin̓əm̓ speaking Musqueam people.

iSchool Mission: Through innovative research, education and design, our mission is to enhance humanity's capacity to engage information in effective, creative and diverse ways.

LIBR 561 Information Policy – Course Syllabus (3)

Program: Master of Library and Information Studies

Year: 2021-2022

Course Schedule: Tuesdays 2:00-5:00pm

Location: SWNG [409](#)

Instructor: Michelle Kaczmarek

Office location: N/A

Office hours: Wednesdays 10am–12pm

E-mail address: michelle.kaczmarek@ubc.ca

Learning Management Site: <https://lthub.ubc.ca/guides/canvas/> [aka Canvas]

Course Goal: The goal of this course is to provide students with the expertise needed to locate, interpret, evaluate, adapt and craft policy relating to information and information and communication technology issues. In particular, students will become adept at recognizing the need for different levels of information policy (e.g., a library's privacy policy, a national privacy law, and an international trade treaty).

FNCC specialization: The assignments in this course can serve the requirements of the First Nations Curriculum Concentration (FNCC). If students would like to take this course for FNCC credit, they are invited to contact me to discuss this option.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

1. State in their own terms the relationship between values (ethics) and information policy [2.1, 4.1]
2. Describe the purpose of information policy [2.1, 4.1]
3. Analyze and articulate the relationships between policy, information, and information tools in different contexts [1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 4.1]
4. Provide examples of how political, social, economic, and technological changes have influenced information legislation and regulation [1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1]
5. Demonstrate familiarity with current Canadian information policy issues [1.1, 5.1, 5.3]
6. Describe and compare recent information policy initiatives in other countries [1.1, 5.1, 5.3]
7. Articulate how differences in societal values may translate into conflicting information policies and in turn, how policy tensions may lead to contention in and amongst nations, organizations, and/or individuals [1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 5.1, 5.3]
8. Locate policy and policy review documents, interpret them and identify the implications the policy holds for different stakeholders in a particular context [1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 4.1, 4.2, 5.1]
9. Develop and propose localized policy strategies in response to a contemporary information issue such as freedom of information, information access and distribution, copyright, or privacy [1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 5.1]

Course Topics:

- Ethics & Technology
- Values & Information Policy
- Policy & Stakeholder Analyses
- Privacy
- Anonymity, Pseudonymity & Forgetting
- Censorship, Freedom of Information & Freedom of Expression
- Intellectual Property
- Traditional Knowledge & Contemporary Information Systems
- Information Policy In Information Organizations
- Information Professionals, Action & Advocacy
- Current Issues Relating to Information Policy & Technological Infrastructures: e.g., Right To Repair, Big Data, Artificial Intelligence, Surveillance

Prerequisites: MLIS and Dual MAS/MLIS: Completion of MLIS Core or permission of the iSchool Graduate Advisor. MAS: completion of MAS core and permission of the iSchool Graduate Advisor.

Format of the course: This course will consist of a combination of short lectures (pre-recorded and in-class); in-class discussions; student-directed seminars; student presentations; guest speakers; and online discussion exercises. Participation in reflective and critical discussions of assigned course materials and lectures is required; sharing additional, related material with the class is expected. Attendance in weekly 2-hour in-person classes is a required component of this course.

Due to the highly infectious Omicron variant, it is possible that the instructor of this course will be unable to teach for a period of time. During this period, the instructor will not be able to respond to email or hold office hours. You will be notified if a class is cancelled, and you are asked to keep up with your readings and continue working on your assignments. As regular instruction is paused, students are expected to continue with their readings and working on their assignments. If the instructor has to self-isolate, your class will temporarily be taught online, and you will be provided with the necessary Zoom links. If you become ill as a student or cannot attend class due to self-isolation, please notify your instructor and discuss how you may keep up with your class work. If it concerns a chronic issue, medical documents are needed; in this case a determination needs to be made re concessions.

Required and Recommended Reading: There is no required textbook for this course, however I draw on Bardach & Patashnik, 2015 extensively. Other material from podcasts, books, journals, videos and websites will constitute the rest of the required “readings”. These will be available via the course learning management system (i.e., Canvas) typically through access provided by UBC libraries. Assigned material may shift during the course as the topic areas related to this class are often covered by mainstream media channels. Changes will be noted in Canvas.

The materials for this course were chosen based on their coverage of and perspective on information policy topics. The positions presented are disputable and I count on each student to help find and articulate problematic (and generative) areas in argument, positioning, methodology, findings presented and/or conclusions drawn. Other factors that guide my selection of material for the course are media type, length, novelty, longevity and influence of the author(s) on the field of information studies (or cognate fields).

You are expected to engage with all assigned material thoroughly and critically. I encourage you to:

- Take notes (do not just highlight or underline).
- Put ideas into your own words
- Ask questions of the arguments presented
- Bring these questions to class

Required:

- Listed in Canvas modules (Articles, podcasts, videos, pre-recorded lectures, etc.).

Recommended:

- Bardach, E., & Patashnik, E. M. (2015). *A practical guide for policy analysis: The eightfold path to more effective problem solving* (although the core part of the book is included in all editions). Los Angeles: CQ Press.

Course Assignments

Assignment Name	Due Date	Weight	Graduate Competencies
#1 ONLINE DISCUSSION ACTIVITIES	Weeks 4, 6, 9, 11: Tuesday at 2pm (Canvas)	20%	1.1,1.3,1.4,2.1,4.1, 4.2
#2 SOCIO TECHNICAL “CAUTIONARY TALE” PRESENTATION	TBD (Canvas Sign Up) In-Class Presentation Submit slide deck (Canvas)	20%	1.1,1.3,1.4,2.1,3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 5.1, 5.3
#3 POLICY BRIEFING a. Topic Proposal b. Draft c. Peer Feedback d. Briefing Pitch/Reflection e. Final Submission	a. Feb. 8 at 2pm b. Mar. 22 at 2pm c. Mar. 29 at 2pm d. Apr. 5 at 2pm e. Apr. 12 at 10pm (Canvas)	a. 5% b. 5% c. 5% d. 10% e. 25%	1.1,1.3,1.4,2.1,3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 5.1, 5.3
#4 PARTICIPATION	Throughout the term through class meetings and on Canvas. 1-page reflection due Apr 12 at 10pm (Canvas)	10%	1.1,1.3,1.4,2.1,3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 5.1, 5.3

Course Schedule [week-by-week]:

Topic	Date
1. Introduction to course content, expectations and course learning technology; Ethics & Technology	Jan. 11
2. Values & Information Policy	Jan. 18
3. Policy & Stakeholder Analyses	Jan. 25
4. Intellectual Property: Part 1	Feb. 1
5. Intellectual Property: Part 2	Feb. 8
6. Privacy: Shifting ethical conceptions and changing information tools	Feb 15
! Reading Break !	Feb. 22
7. Anonymity, Pseudonymity & Forgetting	Mar. 1
8. Censorship, Freedom of Information & Freedom of Expression	Mar. 8
9. Traditional Knowledge & Contemporary Information Systems	Mar. 15
10. Information Policy in Information Organizations & Advocacy	Mar. 22
11. Information Policy & the Climate Crisis: Right to Repair	Mar. 29

#1. ONLINE DISCUSSION ACTIVITIES (x4)

DETAILS

Comprehension of key points in the modules and readings will be evaluated through students' participation in mini online discussion activities. Activities will be posted every two weeks in Canvas and students will have two weeks (i.e., until the next activity is posted) to respond to the prompt and engage with their colleagues. Activities will comprise a small task and short written response (e.g., "take a photo of an example of x. Explain your reasoning with reference to the assigned materials").

A strong activity response builds on or challenges arguments presented in the material, calls attention to a problem posed by the material, or extends the material in an interesting way. Imaginative and creative responses are encouraged, providing they are relevant to the topic and meet the other criteria. The dress code for these posts is "smart casual" (colloquial language is fine; uncited material is not).

Activities will be released in weeks: **2, 4, 7, and 9.**

In the two-week time frame of each activity, students are expected to:

- By the end of week 1: Complete the task and post to the activity discussion board (max. 350 words/post).
- By the end of week 2: Respond to at least two of your peers' contributions (max. 200 words/post).

It is expected that each activity and the subsequent discussion should take around 1-2 hours for you to complete.

#2. SOCIO-TECHNICAL CAUTIONARY TALE (IN-CLASS PRESENTATION & CANVAS SLIDE DECK UPLOAD):

Teams of 2-3 students will present on and lead a discussion concerning a "cautionary tale", an information technology implementation or redesign that went poorly, analyzing relevant information policy implications. Use of a slide deck or other supplementary learning material is expected.

DETAILS

A socio-technical cautionary tale presentation will introduce an information technology implementation or redesign that went poorly (approx. 15 minutes) and then move into discussion questions (approx. 15 minutes). Sign up for your presentation date in Canvas. Presentations will take place in our scheduled class time (whether in person or via Zoom). **A representation of your learning material (e.g., slidedeck) needs to be uploaded in Canvas to enable feedback.**

The presentation must include the following—you determine an effective order:

- a) Description of the context (e.g., geographic region, time period)
- b) Implementation story: What happened? Who was affected? Compelling not exhaustive.
- c) What were prominent features of the technology in question?
- d) Who were the direct and indirect stakeholders? (table recommended)
- e) Analysis of failure: Identify value tensions; How policy (legal, social, technical etc.) relates to the failure of the implementation, policy change or technology redesign.
- f) Implications for future implementations: Include explicit implications for policy design (e.g., consider stakeholder's privacy rights)
- g) Discussion questions: Team will facilitate a full class discussion (approx. 15 minutes) through 3-4 discussion questions.

- h) References: Reference primary sources - related legal documents, newspaper articles, journal articles, related case examples. At a minimum, 6-8 citable and reputable sources should be consulted and cited (e.g., journal articles, newspapers, magazines, books).
- i) Provide image source information (i.e., copyright legislation compliant)

Intentionally Dated Examples of Cautionary Tales:

- * Comcast Restricts Certain Types of File Sharing
- * Yahoo! Purchases Flickr, Changes Sign-In Policy
- * User Revolt at Digg Over HD-DVD Code
- * Phorm Tailors Web Advertising to Surfing Patterns
- * Microsoft Introduces Healthvault
- * Verizon Blocks Pro-Choice Text Messages

This assignment was inspired in part by Tim Harford's podcast, *Cautionary Tales*:

<https://timharford.com/articles/cautionarytales/>

#3. POLICY BRIEFING: Students' ability to conduct and write up an analysis of a policy issue related to an emerging or fictional/speculative technology implementation (or redesign) will be evaluated through a policy briefing. The briefing will include sound arguments and justifiable recommendations that illustrate how anticipated ethical, legal, and socio-political problems could be addressed through new or redesigned information policy.

DETAILS

Groups|Teams of two students will select EITHER (a) a new or soon-to-be "improved" information technology OR (b) an imagined information technology from science fiction/speculative literature, TV, or film. Each team will specify a setting for its implementation (e.g., a cultural centre, public library, cooperative, non-profit, archive, or museum) and an audience from their chosen setting who will receive the team's policy briefing on the chosen technology. The goal of the policy briefing is to inform their audience as they prepare to develop or advocate for information policy related to the information technology. You are not required to create the policy itself. The assignment has 5 separate parts (proposal, draft, peer review, presentation, final submission) described below.

Evidence: You may use materials in addition to scholarly articles to bolster your critique (e.g., a section of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, recent statistics).

Resources:

Potential sources for emerging technologies:

- CES. Consumer Technology Association annual trade show.
- Technology and human-computer interaction conference proceedings: CHI, CSCW, IEEE.
- *Wired* magazine and other technology-oriented publications.
- News media – look out for flashy headlines (e.g., "Could this new app transform the way we...?")

Potential sources for speculative/fictional technologies:

- *Black Mirror* (2011–) [TV anthology]
- *Minority Report* (2002) [Film]
- *Ex Machina* (2014) [Film]
- *The Circle* (Dave Eggers, 2013) [Book]; (2017) [Film]
- *Star Trek* (1966 –) [TV series; Film]
- *Ready Player One* (2018) [Film]
- *Klara and the Sun* (Kazuo Ishiguro, 2021) [Book]
- *The Matrix* (1999) [Film]
- *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (Douglas Adams, 1979) [Book]
- *Brave New World* (Aldous Huxley, 1932) [Book]

- 1984 (George Orwell, 1949) [Book]
- Terminator (1984) [Film]
- Blade Runner (1982) [Film]
- Ghost in the Shell (1995) [Film]
- Her (2013) [Film]
- 2001: A Space Odyssey (1968) [Film]
- Metropolis (1927) [Film]
- The Last Question by Isaac Asimov (1959) [short story]
- There Will Come Soft Rains by Ray Bradbury (1950) [short story]
- The Nine Billion Names of God by Arthur C. Clarke (1953) [short story]
- Black Panther (2018) [Film]
- Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind (2004) [Film]
- I, Robot (2004) [Film]
- A Scanner Darkly (2006) [Film]
- Jurassic Park (1993) [Film]
- The Great Simolean Caper by Neal Stephenson (1995) [short story]
- FlashForward. <https://www.flashforwardpod.com/> [Podcast]
- Should This Exist. <https://shouldthisexist.com/> [Podcast]
- The work of Ursula K. Le Guin, Octavia Butler, Donna Haraway. Their work contains fewer examples of the kinds of “high tech” systems that we come to expect of science fiction writing but offer inspiring/valuable lessons in imagining worlds, and the minds, cultures, and societies that make them up. More from Le Guin on technology in sci-fi here: <http://www.ursulaklequinarchive.com/Note-Technology.html>

Please note: Speculative fiction can provide an excellent platform to explore and debate ethical issues related to technology. It can be fascinating, and it can be disturbing. Please be aware that some (but not all) of the content suggested above contains mature themes and graphic content, including scenes of a violent and sexual nature.

Briefing documents are not long. A significant amount of research, thought and formatting will go into this assignment. Aim for clear, concise, and well written. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has a strong guide for preparing policy briefs See section 4.1: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (Ed.). 2011. *Food security: communications toolkit*. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Rome. (pp. 141-169) <http://www.fao.org/docrep/014/i2195e/i2195e03.pdf>

3a. Proposal for Policy Briefing (Upload to Canvas)

With your team member submit a **one-page, single-sided** (~300-500 words) proposal providing:

- a. Context and Technology: Brief description of the proposed context and the information technology of concern
- b. Topic: Articulate the information policy topic(s) you plan to focus on related to your chosen technology
- c. Who: Name the potential audience(s) for your briefing
- d. Feature: What are the particular feature(s) of the tool that you are concerned about?
- e. Scholarly Evidence: At least 4 scholarly references related to the topic
- f. Engage Resources: Review and confirm in writing that you *reviewed* the following briefing resource provided above [Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (Ed.). 2011. *Food security: communications toolkit*. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Rome. (pp. 141-169) <http://www.fao.org/docrep/014/i2195e/i2195e03.pdf>]

3b. Draft of Policy Briefing

One team member will upload their policy briefing draft to Canvas. **5-page limit** (not including references).

1. Describe: Articulate the technology system (i.e. its features) and problems/issues of concern
2. State of Knowledge: Assemble strong evidence (e.g., scholarly articles) related to the issue (e.g., privacy) that your technology foregrounds. Read articles critically. What is the current state of knowledge and what are the value tensions? Are there common themes? Who are the direct stakeholders/indirect stakeholders? What are the implications for policy? Is there contradictory information? Are there gaps in the arguments?
3. Construct alternatives for the creation or adaptation of policy, and technology design/use: What are possible options?
4. Select Criteria: What is worth focusing on?
5. Anticipate Possible Outcomes: Articulate 3-4 options. What might happen?
6. Detail the Tensions and Trade-Offs of implementing or changing policy.
7. Decide: Include suggestions of how this topic might influence the work of your chosen audience/organization including first steps in addressing the issue at hand.
8. Tell Your Story: Include tables, bullets, white space, headings to make it easy for the reader to navigate the document and pull out the highlights. The ideas should be well organized and “flow” for the reader. Use your choice of citation style consistently and accurately throughout.

3c. Peer Feedback of Policy Briefing

Each student will be assigned a draft policy briefing to review. Using peer feedback questions that will be provided in class, you will provide written feedback to help improve your classmates’ work. Strive to make your critiques focused and constructive. In other words, offer possible solutions to issues you identify. Your feedback should be written in a respectful tone and include details which your classmates can take to improve and refine their brief. Do not copy edit, although you may point out that you found spelling/grammar errors.

3d. Policy Briefing Pitch or Reflection

OPTION #1: Pitch

Your team will “present” your briefing to an audience via recorded audio or video (e.g., mock phone call) or live in class.

1. Develop a timed “pitch” of your topic briefing, no more than 5 minutes long.
2. Imagine you call or video chat with the person you want to read your briefing. You have just a small bit of their time. Pitch your work in a way that will compel them to read your briefing.
3. Focus on WHY it is critical that this individual (or their organization, board, school) read your briefing. Do not try to communicate everything in your briefing in 5 minutes.
4. Convey your argument based on compelling evidence.
5. Upload your presentation to Canvas

OPTION #2: Reflection

Individually, answer the following reflection questions either by a) writing responses (no more than 500 words) and posting in discussion area or b) schedule a time to meet with me via Zoom and have a conversation with me about the questions.

Background Questions

1. Topic area:
2. Audience:
3. Why that audience?
4. How would you describe your knowledge of the topic before starting to research the topic for this briefing?

Process Questions

5. Did you have any surprises as you learned more about the topic or your audience? Please share one.
6. Have you changed any ideas/opinions/perspectives you used to have on this topic? Please share one (or reflect on why your ideas didn't change).
7. What the one thing you particularly want people to notice when they look at your briefing?
8. What would you change about your process if you started this assignment over again? (Perhaps something you have seen in your classmates' work or process that you would like to try if you were to write another briefing).
9. What's one thing that you would like to try to improve upon your briefing before turning it in? [optional]

3e. Policy Briefing Final Specifics (Upload to Canvas)

Select a team member to submit your policy briefing final version to Canvas. Use the guidance under 3b. (Draft Policy Briefing) above, topic briefing resources provided, and feedback from your peers to determine the structure and elements of your briefing. **No more than 5 pages (single-spaced) long. References do not count in your five-page limit.**

#4. PARTICIPATION: All students are expected to engage in/with assigned materials, discussions and in-class activities through critical reading, active listening, as well as verbal and written contributions. At the end of term, students will be asked to submit a short self-assessment, reflecting on their participation, which will be taken into consideration in the evaluation of their participation grade.

DETAILS Your ability to articulate ideas and concepts thoughtfully in a variety of communication modes, including oral, written and multimedia will be evaluated through assessing the quality (over quantity) of your contributions to in-person and online discussions. Additionally, your ability to listen carefully to others' contributions to the discussion will be evaluated through visible cues (e.g., nodding, eye contact with speakers, digital devices only used for note taking). If you find yourself talking a lot, step back and provide space for others to join in.

You are expected to engage all assigned readings deeply and critically and to participate thoughtfully in class discussion (written and oral). Any lasting knowledge you walk away with from this course is substantially the result of your interactions with the material and through discussion and engagement with your colleagues.

Students' unique perspectives (ever-evolving and informed and constrained by identity, gender, spirituality, socio-cultural background, etc.) are valued in this course. There is not a single right way to approach the topics we will cover. However, carefully considered ideas supported by compelling evidence are quite different from opinions voiced with hyperbolic bluster (or outright humbuggery).

NOTE: Use of digital devices for social media, gaming, shopping, etc. is usually visible to those around you (even on Zoom) and will negatively affect your participation grade. Despite closely held convictions concerning multi-tasking, research projects repeatedly and convincingly demonstrate that the use of digital interaction devices in the classroom for personal activities detracts from everyone's learning (not just the person using the device). (e.g., Dividing attention in the classroom reduces exam performance: Educational Psychology: Vol 39, No 3.)

Attendance: Attendance is expected for all class meetings. It is not possible to fully participate in the learning for this course without attending the class meetings. If you know that you are going to be absent beforehand please let me know as a courtesy, as your absence will influence class activities.

REFLECTION SUBMISSION: Please submit an approx. one-page (300-600 words) self-assessment of your participation. Use the criteria outlined above to reflect on your own participation during the term and draw on specific examples to justify your assessment (e.g., discussion posts,

contributions in class). If my observation of your participation is notably different from yours, I will discuss it with you individually.

Policies and Resources to Support Student Success: UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious and cultural observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions. Details of the policies and how to access support are available here (<https://senate.ubc.ca/policies-resources-support-student-success>)

Centre for Accessibility: Centre for Accessibility works with the University to create an inclusive living and learning environment in which all students can thrive. The University accommodates students with disabilities who have registered with the Centre for Accessibility unit: [<https://students.ubc.ca/about-student-services/centre-for-accessibility>]. You must register with the Disability Resource Centre to be granted special accommodations for any on-going conditions.

Religious Accommodation: The University accommodates students whose religious obligations conflict with attendance, submitting assignments, or completing scheduled tests and examinations. Please let your instructor know in advance, preferably in the first week of class, if you will require any accommodation on these grounds. Students who plan to be absent for family obligations, or other similar commitments, cannot assume they will be accommodated, and should discuss with the instructor before the course drop date. UBC policy on Religious Holidays: <http://equity.ubc.ca/days-of-significance-calendar/>

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism

The Faculty of Arts considers plagiarism to be the most serious academic offence that a student can commit. Regardless of whether or not it was committed intentionally, plagiarism has serious academic consequences and can result in expulsion from the university. Plagiarism involves the improper use of somebody else's words or ideas in one's work. The UBC policy on Academic Misconduct is available here: <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/Vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,959>.

It is your responsibility to make sure you fully understand what plagiarism is. Many students who think they understand plagiarism do in fact commit what UBC calls "reckless plagiarism." The UBC Learning Commons has a resource page on how to avoid plagiarism, with policies on academic integrity and misconduct found here: [<http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/resource-guides/avoid-plagiarism/>]

If after reading these materials you still are unsure about how to properly use sources in your work, please ask your instructor for clarification.

Your Responsibilities

- You are required to keep up to date with information shared during class and via Canvas
- Read the course syllabus and other available course information with care
- Keep track of due dates!

- Set aside a substantial amount of time for LIBR 561. At UBC the general expectation is that students spend at least **10 hours outside class each week** working on course material for a three-credit course.
- Read news sites to find materials that connect to class topics, and keep on top of assigned readings.
- Communicate effectively and efficiently. Please take time preparing your communications; in particular, review your contributions to the course for tone. Respectful, thoughtful, and considerate discourse is to be the norm in all course communication whether online or in person.

Additional Information:

Drop deadlines for 3-credit courses are:

Last day to withdraw without a W standing: **January 21, 2022**

Last day to withdraw with a W standing (course cannot be dropped after this date): **March 4, 2022**