ÅA Syllabus – Information Behavior I

Fall 2024

Summary and course overview

This course aims to introduce students to the main concepts, theories, and models of information behavior, information practices and information literacies. Thus, the general goal is to acquaint students with the theoretical and critical bases that underlie information behavior from an individual's perspective.

The student is expected to

- show knowledge about and be able to apply different concepts, theories and models of information behavior and information practices from the individual's perspective

-understand how theories and models of information behavior can be applied in practice in digital and hybrid contexts.

-show understanding of different literacies and their applicability from the individual's perspective.

From a more practical and managerial point of view, students should be able to better design and manage the information services provided by organizations to individual consumers.

Teacher

José A. Apolinário **Teixeira** [<jose.teixeira@abo.fi>](mailto:jose.teixeira@abo.fi) <office B232> under supervision of Information Studies head of department Kristina Eriksson-Backa.

The course will also count with the participation of young scholars doing research on information behavior or information literacy, namely Thao Orrensalo and Suellen Cavaleiro. Some of the teaching materials were prepared in previous years by Kristina Eriksson-Backa, Gunilla Widen, Jannica Heinström, Eeva-Liisa Eskola, and Hamed Ahmadinia.

Form of instruction

On-site face-to-face lectures, virtual and hybrid lectures, group discussions (aka round-tables), two individual written assignments (short and long final one) and one collaborative written assignment (short and in groups).

The first four lectures are in-situ and face-to-face and remote participation is only possible in exceptional circumstances (sickness, waiting for residence permit, childcare at home, traveling commitments, etc.). Students failing to attend will be required to deliver extra "compensatory" assignments.

For the fifth lecture, students can choose to attend on-site or online via zoom.

At all lectures, students attending on-site must bring a device with a modern internet browser (personal computer or smartphone).

The last two lectures (sixth and seventh) will happen online via zoom.

Practicalities

- Students should bring a device with a modern Internet Browser (e.g., PC, Tablet, Smarthphone).
- Attendance is recorded at beginning of each lecture. Compensation assignments exist for the ones missing the class.
- There is a Moodle form to report "I ask permission to attend online as I must attend online"

Course format

- Face-to-face discussions (prepare in advance by reading the materials)
- Online discussions (recommend the use of reading logs and study notes)
- Two individual written small assignment
- One collective group written assignment
- Lectures with in-class activities
- One guest lecture from the industry

Grading system

- Lecture participation: 20 points [20%]
- Individual written assignment (pass or fail)
- Group written assignment (pass or fail)
- Final essay: 80 points [80% or 40%]
- Exam [40%] [Students vote at first class if they want an exam or not]

To pass the course 50% of the total points for each part is required.
Grades:
0-49= (Fail); 50-60= (1); 61-70= (2); 71-80= (3); 81-90= (4); 91-100= (5)

Individual written assignment

The individual assignment takes the form of an academic essay (with citations and references). The assignment requires students to read and cite the course materials on the many theories, models, and concepts of information behavior.

Based upon the knowledge gained by lecture participations and reading of the recommended textbook and course materials, the students should:

1. Choose three of the five information behavior concepts:

   - browsing
   - information encountering/serendipity
   - information avoidance
   - information sharing
   - information overload

2. Describe their understanding of the chosen three concepts with examples from their daily life (either your own information behavior or that which you observe in others).

The individual assignment essay should also:
- Follow an academic writing style with in-text citations and references list.

- Be in a concise format with main text in only one page [A4, 12 Times font, regular margins].

- Include a reference list or optional appendixes of visual material (e.g., Figures or Illustrations) that should be on a 2nd page without counting for the one-page limit.

The individual assignment is to be:

- Delivered on Moodle in PDF format. Other formats will not be graded.

- Small MAX 5mb of file size and MAX 2 pages.
- Graded with a Pass or fail (Godkänd/underkänd)
- Delivered by the deadline: October 1st at 23.59

The citing of references generated by an AI chatbot will automatically fail the assignment.

Group written assignment

The group (3-5 students) written assignment also takes the form of an academic essay (with citations and references). The assignment requires students to read and cite the course materials on the many theories, models, and concepts of information seeking behavior.

Students will have the chance to reflect on their own information seeking behavior. They must conduct an interview with someone (a peer) about their information seeking behavior.

The student should ask the interviewed person to describe a situation when he/she sought information about anything needed (any simple query will do). The interviewed person should describe his/her information seeking in detail.

Students should take down notes during the interview, or record the interview using (e.g. by phone) with consent. Interview data is not to be shared with the teacher.

Then students chose one of the most common information behavior models and try to fit the interviewee's description of the information retrieval case into it.

In a reflective style, the written assignment should answer "how does the reported information retrieval/search case fits with the chosen model. The written essay should also:

- Follow an academic writing style with in-text citations and references list.
- Be in a concise format with main text in only two pages [A4, 12 Times font, regular margins].
- Include a reference list or optional appendixes of visual material (e.g., Figures or Illustrations) that should be on a 3rd page without counting for the two-pages limit.

The group written assignment is to be:

- Delivered on Moodle in PDF format. Other formats will be rejected.
- Small MAX 5mb of file size and MAX 2 pages.
- Graded with a Pass or fail (Godkänd/underkänd)
- Delivered by the deadline: October 15th at 23.59

Textbook and course materials

- Title: Looking for information: Examining Research on How People engage with Information.
  Author(s): Given, Lisa M. ; Case, Donald O. ; Willson, Rebekah:
  Edition: 5th ed., 2023
  eBook: Access via Åbo Akademi Library.
  https://abo.finna.fi/Record/abo_electronic_aa.9913681346005972?sid=3089558511
  Publisher: Emerald Publishing Limited
  Printed ed. 2012 or 2016 can also be used.

- Title: Introduction to information behavior
  Author(s): Ford Nigel
  Edition: 2015
  Publisher: Facet
  ISBN: 978-1-85604-850-7

eBook: Access via Åbo Akademi Library
https://abo.finna.fi/Record/abo_electronic_aa.9913505622005972

- Title: Information Literacy and the Digitalisation of the Workplace
  Authors(s) Widén G and Teixeira J
  Edition: 2023
  Publisher: Facet
  ISBN: 9781783305803

Course software

- Moodle for virtual learning environment
- Zoom for remote participation
- Internet browser to participate in digital in-class activities (e.g., mentimeter, GimKIT)

Timing and place

Course to be held 06.09.2023 - 18.10.2023 at ARK-B301 on Wednesdays 10:00 - 11:30. ARK-B301 room is also known as Arken Panorama room. See https://www.abo.fi/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Arkenkarta.pdf for Arken map.

	Time	Place	Mode
I	04.09.2023 12.30 - 14.00	ARK-B301 (40 persons)	On-site
II	11.09.2023 12.30 - 14.00	ARK-B301 (40 persons)	On-site
III	18.09.2023 12.30 - 14.00	ARK-B301 (40 persons)	On-site
IV	25.09.2023 12.30 - 14.00	ARK-B301 (40 persons)	On-site
V	02.10.2023 12.30 - 14.00	ARK-B301 (40 persons)	Hybrid

VI	09.10.2023 12.30 - 14.00	ARK-B301 (40 persons)	On-site
VII	16.10.2023 12.30 - 14.00	ARK-B301 (40 persons)	Online
VIII	23.10.2023 12.30 - 14.00	ARK-B301 (40 persons)	On-site

Course load

The course load corresponds to 5 credits following the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) standard. According to the standard one ECTS is equal to 27 hours of study Individual or group assignment. Therefore, students should achieve the study outcomes by dedicating 27 x 5 = 135 hours (about 5 and a half days) to the course. Most time will be spent by the students by (1) reading before attending the lectures, (2) completing assignments, and (3) writing down the final essay.

Students' activities	Forecasted load (hours)
Getting familiar with the course	2
In classroom lecturing	10.5
Readings for in-class room lectures and activities	28.5
Individual written assignment	15
Group written assignment	15
Final essay	54
Learning different online collaboration tools	10

Course requirements

- Proficiency with Moodle learning system.
- Proficiency with Zoom communication system.
- Proficiency with online collaboration tools (Google Docs or Microsoft 365).
- Familiar with ÅA netiquette https://abofi.sharepoint.com/sites/intra-en-teaching/SitePages/Netiquette-in-Zoom.aspx.
- Familiar with ÅA guidelines for distant participation in face to face teaching https://abofi.sharepoint.com/sites/intra-en-teaching/SitePages/Guidelines-distance-participation.aspx.
- Being able to retrieve the recommended reading materials from the library services provided to students by ÅA.
- Students should bring a personal computing device to the classroom to participate in some digital and hybrid class activities.

Course Policies

Prepare the class

Students are expected to read selected book-chapters or selected articles indicated by the teacher prior to attending are the foundation for the in-class activities.

Attend class

Students are expected to attend all class sessions as listed on the course calendar. Students should contact the teacher via email to get an exception to participate in the course remotely via zoom. All according to the ÅA guidelines for distant participation in face-to-face teaching.

Participate

Students are expected to actively participate in class-room sessions, and group work. Some activities (in online and hybrid lectures) will require the user of a personal computer or mobile device.

Build Rapport

If students have trouble keeping up with assignments or other aspects of the course, they should engage with the teacher as early as possible. Building rapport

and effective relationships are key to becoming an effective professional. Students should be proactive in informing the teacher when difficulties arise during the the course so that a solution can be found and negotiated.

Complete Assignments

All assignments for this course will be submitted electronically through Moodle otherwise instructed. Assignments must be submitted by the given deadline or special permission must be requested from the teacher before the due date. Extensions will not be given except under extreme circumstances.

All discussion assignments must be completed by the assignment due date and time, otherwise they might get their grade negatively affected.

In-class room lectures

Students are required to prepare the lectures by reading chapters of the two working books. The teacher is required to conduct in-class room activities to insure that the students prepared for the lecture. In hybrid or online lectures, some of those activities will require the use of a computer device, therefore student should bring a personal computer, phone or table with an Internet Browser (e.g., Chrome, Firefox, Safari, etc.)

- For **Class 1**, students should get familiar with the contents available on the Moodle course page https://moodle.abo.fi/course/view.php?id=10720. The teacher will present the course syllabus and also seek the students' decision on some negotiable course rules. All in the spirit of *participatory course design*.

  By the end of this lecture, students should be familiar with the way the course works.

- For **Class 2**, devoted to the topic of concepts in information behavior, students should read the following material:

  1) Wilson, T.D. (2000) [Human Information Behavior](). Informing Science 3(2): 49-55
  2) Ford 2015, eBook, printed: chapters 2, 3, 5 pp. 64-70

3) Case & Given 2016, eBook, chapters 1.5, 6.3, 6.5, 6.7 OR Case 2012, printed, chapters 1, 4, 5.2, 5.4, 5.6

By the end of this lecture, students should know: (1) essential concepts of information behavior, (2) distinguish between a concept, a framework, a model, and a theory.

- For **Class 3**, devoted to the topic of concepts in information behavior, students should get aquainted with one of the following theories:

    o Anomalous States of Knowledge (ASK)
    o Berrypicking
    o Everyday Life Information Seeking (ELIS)
    o Information grounds
    o Information poverty and small worlds
    o Sense-making

Then students will be grouped by their theory of interest for group discussion and group presentation.

By the end of this lecture, students should be able to discuss and present an Information Behavior theory of their interest.

- For **Class 4**, devoted to the topics of theories of information behavior, students should read the following material:

Ford 2015: pp. 31 (Belkin's ASK); 62 (Bates' Berrypicking); 123-124 (Fisher's Information grounds); 147-165 (Generally about theories); 151 - 156 (Activity theory); 156 - 165 (Dervin's sense making)

OR

Case & Given 2016: eBook: Chapters: 5.2.2. (Belkin's ASK); 6.5.4 (Knowledge gaps and information poverty) ; 7.2.5 (The Savolainen model); 8.4.1 (Zipf's Principle of Least Effort and Cost-Benefit); 8.5.1. (Constructivism, Activity

Theory, and Sense Making) OR Case 2012: pp. 83-84 (Belkin's ASK); 113-115 (Knowledge gaps and information poverty); 149-151 (Knowledge gaps and information poverty); 175-178 (Zipf's Principle of Least Effort and Cost-Benefit); 188-190 (Constructivism, Activity Theory, and Sense Making).

OR

Bates M (1989). The Design of Browsing and Berrypicking Techniques for the Online Search Interface.

Belkin, N (1980). Anomalous States of Knowledge as a Basis for Information Retrieval. The Canadian Journal of Information Science 5: 133-143.

Chatman EA (1991). Life in a small world: Applicability of gratification theory to information-seeking behavior. JASIST 42(6): 438-449. (may require logging in: https://abo.finna.fi/Record/abo_electronic_aa.9913466652405972)

Fidel, R (2012) Human Information Interaction. An Ecological Approach to Information Behaviour, chapter 3. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012.

Fisher, KE, Naumer CM (2006). Information Grounds. Theoretical Basis and Empirical Findings on Information Flow in Social Settings. A Spink & C Cole. (eds.) New Directions in Human Information Behavior. Springer 2006: 93-111.

Savolainen, R (1995). Everyday Life Information Seeking: Approaching Information Seeking in the Context of "Way of Life". LISR 17(3). 259-294. (or log in to LISR: https://abo.finna.fi/Record/abo_electronic_aa.9913456157405972)

By the end of this lecture, students should be able to discuss many theories of information behavior.

- For **Class 5**, devoted to the application of theories and models, students should see the video prepared by young scholar Thao Orrensalo in advance and read the following materials:

Orrensalo, T. & Nikou, S. (2021). The Impact of Digitalization in Entrepreneurs' Information-Seeking Behaviors: A Systematic Literature Review. ITS Biennial Conference 2021.

Savolainen, R. (2012). Elaborating the motivational attributes of information need and uncertainty. Information Research, 17(2).

Agarwal, N.K. (2015). Towards a definition of serendipity in information behaviour. Information Research, 20(3), paper 675.

Fourie, I (2008). Information needs and information behaviour of patients and their family members in a cancer palliative care setting: an exploratory study of an existential context from different perspectives. Information Research, 13(4) paper 360.

Choo, C. W. (2017). Information Research, 22(3), paper 765.

By the end of this lecture, students should be able to apply theories and models of information for empirical analysis. In addition, they should also be better prepared to craft a Master Thesis with a theoretical background on Information Behaviour.

- For **Class 6**, devoted to concepts of information literacy(ies), studends should read in advance the following materials:

Koltay T (2011). The media and the literacies: media literacy, information literacy, digital literacy. Media, Culture & Society 33(2): 211-221.

Saranto, K., & Hovenga, E. J. (2004). Information literacy—what it is about?: Literature review of the concept and the context. *International Journal of Medical Informatics*, *73*(6), 503-513.

Teixeira J and Karim M (2023), Literature Review: In Search of the Many Meanings of Information Literacy",In Information Literacy and the Digitalisation of the Workplace. London, UK, 6, 2023. , pp. 1-14. Facet Publishing

Eriksson-Backa, K., Hirvonen, N., Enwald, H., & Huvila, I. (2021). Enablers for and barriers to using My Kanta–A focus group study of older adults' perceptions of the National Electronic Health Record in Finland. *Informatics for Health and Social Care*, *46*(4), 399-411.

By the end of this lecture, students should be well acquainted with the concept of information literacies and other related literacies.

- For **Class 7**, count with a guest-lecture from the industry. The topic will be information journeys.

Students should read:

> Tueanrat, Y., Papagiannidis, S., & Alamanos, E. (2021). Going on a journey: A review of the customer journey literature. *Journal of Business Research*, *125*, 336-353.

> Makri, S. (2020). Information informing design: Information science research with implications for the design of digital information environments. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, *71*(11), 1402-1412.

- For **Class 8**, will be devoted to the information behavior and the information literacy of young people

Students should read:

> Teixeira, J. (2023, October). How Students Seek Information in the Context of Fitness and Physical Exercise. In *European Conference on Information Literacy* (pp. 158-167). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.

> Pickard, A. J., Shenton, A. K., & Johnson, A. (2014). Young people and the evaluation of information on the World Wide Web: Principles, practice and beliefs. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*, *46*(1), 3-20.