

VSU MLIS Program
MLIS 7610 Syllabus
Information Policy
Summer 2007

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Office Hours

Because this is a Web-based course, I will post no formal office hours. I can be reached by phone during normal business hours, by wkoehler@valdosta.edu 24-7, and appointments can be made as needed. Phone 229 333 5860. I will make every attempt to respond within 48 hours of receipt of electronic communications.

Technical Requirements

Students must have access to the WWW and WebCT/Vista. In additions, **all students must have and use a VSU e-mail address**. We will address all communications through WebCT or VSU e-mail addresses only.

Purpose

This course is designed to familiarize the student with US national information policy. Its primary focus is on policies that are of primary importance to librarians and other information professionals.

Because US national information policy drives and is driven by international policies, the course will necessarily be focused there as well.

Objectives and Outcomes

In this course students will be exposed to information, information policy, information politics, information technology, and information economics at both the national and international levels. Successful students will be able to:

1. Identify substantive issue areas in information policy, such as privacy, intellectual property, access to information, media deregulation, and national networking initiatives.

2. Understand policies related to the creation, collection, organization, storage, retrieval, repackaging, dissemination, utilization, archiving, management, and destruction of publicly-held information
3. Appreciate who the major stakeholders are in information policy development and implementation. How do stakeholders interact and inter-relate?
4. Understand approaches to public policy – theory and practice – and draw on various disciplinary approaches to public policy analysis
5. Gain familiarity with government documents – electronic and print.
6. Speculate on the interplay between policy, technology, and economic interests on national and global scales.

Required Readings

Sandra Braman. *Change of State: Information, Policy, and Power*. MIT Press, 2007.

June Lester and Wallace Koehler, *Fundamentals of Information Studies*, 2nd ed. Neal-Schuman, 2007. **Chapters 1, 2, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12** are required reading. Other chapters are optional. Note that this text contains extensive references. **Do not** use the first edition of the book. Two new chapters have been added. The chapters assigned to you are available on-line for free.

Richard Rubin, *Foundations of Library and Information Science*, 2ed. Neal-Schuman, 2004. **Chapters 4 and 5**.

Shapiro and Varian, *US Government Information Policy, 1997* Available: <http://www.sims.berkeley.edu/~hal/Papers/policy/policy.html>

Strongly Recommended Resources

Herbert Foerstel, *Refuge of a Scoundral: The Patriot Act in Libraries*. Libraries Unlimited, 2004

Robert Peck, *The First Amendment and Cyberspace*. American Library Association, 2000.

It is assumed that all students are familiar with the policy making process of the US federal government. For those who need a review, the following brief supplementary material from another course is attached.

<http://books.valdosta.edu/mlis/govdoc/GOVDOCS/polysci.htm>

Classes Begin June 6
Classes End July 25
Graduation July 28

Assignments

Formal written assignments: three papers not to exceed ten (10) pages each, 12 pt, 1.5 space, 1 inch margins. Each paper will represent 25% of grade. All written assignments must have at least ten references (not including the assigned text).

On-line discussion each week is required. Discussion represents 25% of grade. A subject will be posted each week to the class list. Be sure to document discussion statements with citations to the literature (at least one reference). Suggestions for possible discussion issues are welcome.

Written Assignment 1: Identify and describe a major stakeholder in US information policy. How does this stakeholder articulate its needs? How is it regulated? How does the stakeholder participate in the policy process? The stakeholder may be corporate, not-for-profit, or government. Examples include public libraries, the FCC, broadcasters using public airways, cable and satellite broadcasters, Internet providers, Webmasters, and so on. **Due June 18.**

Written Assignment 2: What are the major US federal government information policy making bodies? To whom are they responsible and how do they function? **Due July 2.**

Written Assignment 3: Review all on-line discussions. Choose any three of the discussion subjects and elaborate extensively on those issues. **Due July 25.**

Discussion Issues

Document your arguments from the literature

Week ending June 15

In your opinion, what is the most important information provider (think broadly and outside the box) in the US today?

Week ending June 22

How much regulation should government impose on information providers? How? What level of government (federal, state, or local) is most appropriate?

Week ending July 29

How and by whom are libraries regulated? Consider such issues as Internet filtering, selection policies, etc. in public, academic, and special libraries.

Week ending July 6

Has the Internet so changed the “playing field” that effective government regulation is no longer possible? Or, does the Internet so change information creation, processing, and delivery that more vigorous government regulation is needed? This is a very broad and can include discussion on access to patron records by law enforcement through filtering.

Week ending July 13

Is the First Amendment too broadly interpreted by the courts? As a librarian, limits on information access may (or may not) be supportable. Consider filtering, censorship, selection policies, etc.

Week ending July 20

Is the Internet redefining intellectual property rights? If so, how? If so, in what way are those rights changing?

Suggested Supplemental Readings

This is a research oriented course – it includes both reading and writing. The following are suggested as possible *beginning* resources.

Andersen, David F., & Dawes, Sharon S. (1991). *Government information management: A primer and casebook*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Bennett, Tony. (1992). Putting policy into cultural studies. In Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, & Paula Treicher (Eds.), *Cultural studies* (pp. 23-37). NY: Routledge.

Bozeman, Barry, & Bretschneider, Stuart. (1986). Public management information systems: Theory and prescription. *Public Administration Review*, 46, 475-487.

Browne, Mairead. (1997a). The field of information policy: 1. Fundamental concepts. *Journal of Information Science*, 23(4), 261-275.

Browne, Mairead. (1997b). The field of information policy: 2. Redefining the boundaries and methodologies. *Journal of Information Science*, 23(5), 339-351.

Burger, Robert H. (1993). *Information policy: A framework for evaluation and policy research*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

"Caught in the Net." (2001). *The Economist*, 358(8214), 26 [2001 March 24-30]

Chartrand, Robert. (1986). Legislating information policy. *Bulletin of the American Society for Information Science*, 12(5), 10.

- Doty, Philip. (1998). Why study information policy? *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science*, 39(1), 58-64.
- Easton, David. (1965). *A systems analysis of political life*. NY: Wiley
- Eisenschitz, Tamara S. (1993). *Information transfer policy: Issues of control and access*. London: Library Association Publishing
- Foerstel, Herbert (2004). *Refuge of a Scoundral: The Patriot Act in Libraries*. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.
- Hayes, Robert M. (Ed.). (1985). Introduction. *Libraries and the information economy of California* (pp. 1-49). Los Angeles, CA: University of California at Los Angeles.
- Heim, Kathleen. (1986). National information policy and a mandate for oversight by the information professions. *Government Publications Review*, 13(1), 21-37.
- Hernon, Peter. (1994). Information life cycle: Its place in the management of U.S. government information resources. *Government Information Quarterly*, 11(2), 143-170.
- Hernon, Peter, & McClure, Charles R. (1991). United States information policies. In Wendy Schipper and M. Cunningham (Eds.), *National and international information policies* (pp. 3-48). Philadelphia, PA: National Federation of Abstracting and Information Services.
- Mason, Marilyn Gell. (1983). *The federal role in library and information services*. White Plains, NY: Knowledge Industry Publications.
- Overman, E. Sam, & Cahill, Anthony G. (1990). *Information policy: A study of values in the policy process*. *Policy Studies Review*, 9(4), 803-818.
- Rowlands, Ian. (1996). Understanding information policy: Concepts, frameworks and research tools. *Journal of Information Science*, 22(1), 13-25.
- Russell, Carrie (2004). *Complete Copyright: An Everyday Guide for Librarians*. Chicago: ALA OITP.
- Stevens, John M., & McGowan, Robert P. (1985). *Information systems and public management*. NY: Praeger.
- Trauth, Eileen M. (1986). An integrative approach to information policy research. *Telecommunications Policy*, 10(1), 41-50.
- Weingarten, F. W. (1989). Federal information policy development: The Congressional perspective. In Charles R. McClure, Peter Hernon, & Harold

Relyea (Eds.), *United States government information policies: Views and perspectives* (pp. 77-99). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Grades

Individual assignment weights are provided above. Final grades will be assigned as follows:

A – 91-100

B – 81-90

C – 71-80

D – 60-70

F – 0-69

University Policy

Please become aware of and be guided by these VSU policies.

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