

**SYLLABUS**  
**Doctoral Seminar**  
**Theoretical / Intellectual Traditions in Information Studies (LIS 291A)**  
**Department of Information Studies**  
**Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, UCLA**

**Prof. Leah A. Lievrouw**  
**Fall 2006 / Monday 1:00 – 3:50 pm**

**Office Hours: Wednesday 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. or by appointment**  
**216 GSE&IS Building / Phone 5-1840 / Email llievrou@ucla.edu**  
**Class Website: <http://courses.gseis.ucla.edu>**

**Course Description**

Information Studies may be unique among academic disciplines. Because the phenomenon of information itself is so complex – both its manifestations, and the social, cultural, technological and institutional formations associated with it – Information Studies today is the product of multiple epistemic and intellectual traditions, each with different professional roots and alliances, different assumptions about the nature of reality and of knowledge, different objects of study, and different methods for inquiry and research. In this seminar, students are introduced to the main philosophical traditions, or epistemes, of research and scholarship that currently inform inquiry in Information Studies.

**Objectives**

As a result of instruction in this course, students will be able to:

- a) Define epistemology and describe its role in information studies research and scholarship
- b) Compare and contrast the ontological and epistemological foundations of the humanities, the sciences, and engineering/systems design, and their respective influences on information studies
- c) Discuss information as a concept and an object of study
- d) Outline the main philosophical and theoretical debates that have influenced the disciplinary evolution of library and information science towards information studies
- e) Describe and critique emerging philosophical developments in information studies, including social epistemology and philosophy of information

**Requirements**

Readings/Discussions. The course is taught in seminar form. Students are expected to make cogent and prepared contributions to class discussions. Students are expected to come to class having read the materials assigned for each class meeting, as listed below under "Weekly Topics and Readings." *Please note that there are required readings for the first class meeting on October 2.*

Required Readings. The required readings are listed below under “Weekly Topics and Readings” and will be available via the course website for download, or through the UCLA Libraries. Additional “Recommended” readings may be posted on the website.

Students are also encouraged to purchase their own copies of two books that are excerpted for the course:

Ron Day, *The Modern Invention of Information* (Southern Illinois University Press, 2001)  
Yvonne Sherratt, *Continental Philosophy of Social Science* (Cambridge University Press, 2006)

Assignments. Students will be required to write a two-part term paper (annotated bibliography and literature review) based on the work of a prominent information studies scholar. Details and due dates will be available on the course website and discussed in class. Students are required to choose and follow a standard stylebook for doctoral-level research papers (e.g., APA, MLA, Chicago Manual of Style, IEEE) to prepare their assignments.

### **Course Policies**

Grading Formula. Grading for the course is based on the following formula: 50% for the quality of the student's preparation for, and participation in, the seminar; 20% for the annotated bibliography and 30% for the literature review (50% total for the term paper assignment).

Students with Disabilities. Students with a documented disability who wish to discuss academic accommodations should contact the Office for Students with Disabilities at (310) 825-1501. They should also notify the instructor about any disability issues at the start of the quarter so that appropriate accommodations can be arranged and coordinated with the OSD well in advance of course assignments and due dates.

Website Policy. The course website is password-protected and intended for the exclusive instructional use of students enrolled in IS 291A, the instructor, and guests as permitted by the instructor. Students should not give access to the site or course materials to others without the express permission of the instructor.

### **Weekly Topics and Readings**

**October 2**

#### **Introduction: Epistemes in Research and Scholarship**

Anderson, J.A. (1996). The nature of the phenomenal world. In *Communication Theory: Epistemological Foundations*, pp. 13-46. New York: Guilford.

Audi, R. (1998). Introduction. In *Epistemology: A Contemporary Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge*, pp. 1-10. London and New York: Routledge.

Dick, A.L. (1999). Epistemological positions and library and information science. *Library Quarterly* 69(3), 305-323.

#### **Recommended:**

Bruner, J. (1979 [1961]). The act of discovery. In *On Knowing: Essays for the Left Hand*, pp. 81-96. Cambridge, MA and London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. (Reprinted from *Harvard Educational Review* 31(1), 1961, 21-32.)

**October 9**

**Naturalist Epistemes: The Sciences and Engineering/Systems**

Gillies, D. (1993). *Philosophy of Science in the 20th Century: Four Central Themes*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Chapter 1, Some Historical Background: Inductivism, Russell and the Cambridge School, the Vienna Circle and Popper, pp. 3-25.

Chapter 2, Popper's Critique of Inductivism. His Theory of Conjectures and Refutations (or Falsificationism), pp. 26-53.

Kuhn, T.S. (1970). Postscript – 1969. In *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (2nd ed.). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 174-210.

Bloor, D. (1991). Knowledge and social imagery: A case study. In *Knowledge and Social Imagery* (2nd ed.), pp. 55-83. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Brookes, B.C. (1980). The foundations of information science, Part I: Philosophical aspects. *Journal of Information Science* 2: 125-133.

Davies, R. (1989, December). The creation of new knowledge by information retrieval and classification. *Journal of Documentation*, 45(4), 273-301.

**Recommended:**

Popper, K.R. (1968). Epistemology without a knowing subject. In *Proceedings of the Third International Conference for Logic, Methodology and Philosophy of Science* (Amsterdam, August 25-September 2, 1967), B. van Rootselaar and J.F. Staal (Eds.), pp. 333-373. Amsterdam: North-Holland.

Ellis, D. (1992). Paradigms and proto-paradigms in information retrieval research. In *Conceptions of Library and Information Science: Historical, Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives*, P. Vakkari and B. Cronin (Eds.), pp. 165-186. London: Taylor Graham.

**October 16**

**The Interpretive Turn:  
Phenomenological, Hermeneutic, Constructivist Approaches**

Sherratt, Y. (2006). *Continental Philosophy of Social Science: Hermeneutics, Genealogy and Critical Theory from Greece to the Twenty-First Century*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.

Introduction to Part I, The tradition of hermeneutics, pp. 17-22.

German philosophical hermeneutics: Phenomenology and existentialism, pp. 74-84.

Continental philosophical hermeneutics post war, pp. 85-118.

Cornelius, I. (1996). *Meaning and Method in Information Studies*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Chapter 5, Interpretation in library and information studies, pp. 85-96.

Chapter 6, Objections to the interpretive position, pp. 97-120.

Budd, J.M. (1995). An epistemological foundation for library and information science. *Library Quarterly* 65(3): 295-318.

**Recommended:**

Rabinow, P. and Sullivan, W.M. (1987). The interpretive turn: A second look. In P. Rabinow and W.M. Sullivan (Eds.), *Interpretive Social Science: A Reader*, pp. 1-30. Berkeley: University of California Press.

**October 23                      Social Epistemology and Information Studies**

Shera, J.H. and Egan, M.E. (1952). Foundations of a theory of bibliography. *Library Quarterly* 22(2), April: 125-137.

Fuller, S. (1996). Recent work in social epistemology. *American Philosophical Quarterly* 33(2), April: 149-166.

Schmitt, F.F. (1994). Socializing epistemology: An introduction through two sample issues. In F.F. Schmitt (Ed.), *Socializing Epistemology: The Social Dimensions of Knowledge*, pp. 1-27. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Fallis, D. (2006). Social epistemology and information science. *Annual Review of Information Science & Technology (ARIST)*, 40, 475-519.

**Recommended:**

Kitcher, P. (1994). Contrasting conceptions of social epistemology. In F.F. Schmitt (Ed.), *Socializing Epistemology: The Social Dimensions of Knowledge*, pp. 111-134. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Floridi, L. (2002). On defining library and information science as applied philosophy of information. *Social Epistemology*, 16(1), 37-49.

**October 30                      Humanist Epistemes / Historical Studies**

Mink, L.O. (1966). The autonomy of historical understanding. *History and Theory*, 5(1), 24-47.

White, H. (1987). The question of narrative in contemporary historical theory. In *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*, pp. 26-57. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Fischer, D.H. (1970). Introduction. In *Historians' Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought*, pp. xv-xxii. New York: Harper & Row.

MacRaid, D.M. and Taylor, A. (2004). *Social Theory and Social History*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Introduction, pp. 1-8

Chapter 1, "Cinderella gets her prince? The development of social history," pp. 9-32.

Black, A. (2006). Information history. *Annual Review of Information Science & Technology (ARIST)*, 40, 441-473.

**Recommended:**

Rayward, W.B. (1998). The history and historiography of information science: Some reflections. In T. Bellardo Hahn and M. Buckland (Eds.), *Historical Studies in Information Science*, pp. 7-21. ASIS Monograph Series. Medford, NJ: Information Today, for the American Society for Information Science.

**November 6**                    **NO CLASS MEETING / Prof. Lievrouw at ASIST**  
**ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES DUE online by midnight**

**November 13**                **Introduction to Critical Theory**

Sherratt, Y. (2006). *Continental Philosophy of Social Science: Hermeneutics, Genealogy and Critical Theory from Greece to the Twenty-First Century*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.

Part III: Critical theory, pp. 175-221.

Bronner, S.E. (2002). *Of Critical Theory and its Theorists* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: Routledge.  
Chapter 2, Sketching the lineage: The critical method and the idealist tradition,  
pp. 11-38.

Collins, R. (1985). *Three Sociological Traditions*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chapter 1, The conflict tradition, pp. 47-118.

**Recommended:**

Calhoun, C. (1995). *Critical Social Theory: Culture, History and the Challenge of Difference*. Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

Introduction, pp. 1-12.

Rethinking critical theory, pp. 13-54.

Held, D. (1980). Introduction. In *Introduction to Critical Theory: Horkheimer to Habermas*, pp. 13-26. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

**November 20**                **Critical Theory in Information Studies**

Day, R.E. (2001). *The Modern Invention of Information: Discourse, History and Power*. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press.

Introduction, pp. 1-6.

Chapter 5, Heidegger and Benjamin: The metaphysics and fetish of information,  
pp. 91-113.

Chapter 6, Conclusion: 'Information' and the role of critical theory, pp. 114-120.

Budd, J.M. (2001). Instances of ideology in discursive practice: Implications for library and information science. *Library Quarterly*, 71(4), October, 498-517.

Harris, M.H. (1986). The dialectics of defeat: Antinomies in research in library and information science. *Library Trends*, 34, Winter, 515-531.

**November 27                    Theories and Methods**

Anderson, J.A. (1996). The relationship between theory and method. In *Communication Theory: Epistemological Foundations*, pp. 157-185. New York: Guilford.

Sanday, P.R. (1983). The ethnographic paradigm(s). In J. Van Maanen (Ed.), *Qualitative Methodology*, pp. 19-36. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Lather, P. (1986). Research as praxis. *Harvard Educational Review*, 56(3), August, 257-277.

Comstock, D.E. (1994, 1982). A method for critical research. In M. Martin and L.C. McIntyre (Eds.), *Readings in the philosophy of social science*, pp. 625-639. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. (Reprinted from E. Bredo and W. Feinberg [Eds.], *Knowledge and values in social and educational research*, pp. 370-390. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.)

**December 4                    Crisis or Pluralism?**

Latour, B. (1993). Crisis. In *We Have Never Been Modern*, pp. 1-12. Translated by C. Porter. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Available: <http://www.faculty.english.ttu.edu/clarke/neocybernetics/WeHaveNeverBeenModern,chapter1.htm>

Latour, B. (2004). Why has critique run out of steam? From matters of fact to matters of concern. *Critical Inquiry*, Winter, 225-248.

Kerr, D.H. (1984). *Barriers to Integrity: Modern Modes of Knowledge Utilization*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.  
Chapter 5, "In search of integrity," pp. 77-105.

Capurro, R. (1992). What is information science for? A philosophical reflection. In *Conceptions of Library and Information Science: Historical, Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives*, P. Vakkari and B. Cronin (Eds.), pp. 82-96. London: Taylor Graham.

Warner, J. (2001). Whither information science?/! *Library Quarterly*, 71(2), April, 243-255.

**EXAM WEEK: Final Term Papers due by midnight, December 11**