

RARITAN VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE ACADEMIC COURSE OUTLINE

INFO 101 - Information Seeking in Today's World

I. Basic Course Information

A. Course Number and Title: INFO 101 Information Seeking in Today's World

B. New or Modified Course: Modified

C. Date of Proposal: Semester: Spring Year: 2025

D. Effective Term: Spring 2026

E. Sponsoring Department: Library

F. Semester Credit Hours: 1

G. Weekly Contact Hours: 2 Lecture: 2
Laboratory: 0
Out of class student work per week: 4

H. Prerequisites/Corequisites: None

I. Laboratory Fees: None

II. Catalog Description

This course is designed to prepare students for information seeking at the college level. Students will examine the information landscape and the role of technology in delivering information in a variety of formats. By learning effective search techniques, appropriate attribution of sources, and the ethical use of information, students will become savvy consumers and producers of information in both academic and social situations. Students will be encouraged to think about the creation and context of information and how the use of certain technologies to present or distribute different types of information affects its value, credibility, and usefulness. At the end of the course, students will be equipped to discover, evaluate and use information sources for a variety of purposes and across disciplines.

III. Statement of Course Need

- A. College students in the digital age need to be equipped to encounter, question, and evaluate the vast amounts of information that confront them on a daily basis, and to seek out information sources that provide alternative viewpoints in order to think critically about facts, opinion, news, research, persuasion and other types of information. This course supplements the basics of information literacy that students receive in English Composition I and II by furthering their understanding of the information creation process and how context influences the creation, presentation, and interpretation of information. By learning effective search and information retrieval strategies for the open web, popular internet search engines, social media, and multi-disciplinary library databases, students will examine the vast information landscape and their responsibility as consumers and producers of a wide variety of information sources. The course also provides students with a deeper understanding of concepts that are often only covered on the surface in discipline-specific courses by taking a broad look at the nature of information exchange and scholarly communication. For example, while a social science course may teach students how to use APA citation format in a research paper, this course will explain more generally how citation formats function as a scholarly communication tool in different disciplines, thus deepening students' understanding of how and why information is shared in different settings and why attention to the conventions of a discipline matters. Particular attention will be paid to the ethical use of both technology and information in the broader context of academic and scholarly integrity.
- B. This course is not discipline-specific and so will be valuable to students across a wide range of programs. It complements programs that require Computer Literacy, Media Literacy and Technology, or Technological Literacy across the Social Sciences by focusing less on technology and more substantially on the information literacy threshold concepts identified in [*ACRL's Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*](#). The course is also appropriate in programs for which technological competency is embedded in required major courses but a foundation of information literacy would be valuable elsewhere in the curriculum.
- C. This course generally transfers as a free elective, dependent on the transfer institution.

IV. Place of Course in College Curriculum

- A. Free Elective
- B. This course serves as a General Education course in Technological Competency
- C. To see course transferability: a) for New Jersey schools, go to the NJ Transfer website, www.njtransfer.org; b) for all other colleges and universities, go to the individual websites.

V. Outline of Course Content

A. Information creation and context

1. The lifecycle of information and its effect on source creation
 - a. Format versus type of information
 - b. Effect of delivery method and format on how information is interpreted
 - c. Social impact of information in different contexts and at different times in the information lifecycle
2. Contextual nature of authority
 - a. Scholarly and “acknowledged” authority
 - b. Authority derived from societal or cultural position, special experience
 - c. Marginalized voices and authority
 - d. Recognizing appropriate authority for an information need
3. Publishers and publication context
 - a. Identifying and evaluating publisher as distinct from author/creator
 - b. Impact of publication venue, style and context on message

B. Information seeking strategies

1. Information discovery and retrieval systems
 - a. Internet search engines and generative AI
 - b. Library databases
 - c. Social media and informal information or communication platforms
2. Lateral reading
 - a. Verifying information and finding evidence to support claims
 - b. Seeking alternative viewpoints
 - c. Going upstream and downstream to contextualize a source

C. Information use

1. Commodification of information
 - a. Privacy and online activity
 - b. Proprietary versus open access information systems
2. Communicating information
 - a. Synthesizing ideas from multiple perspectives and sources
 - b. Ethical use of information – attribution vs. citation
 - c. Considering audience when determining format for communicating information

VI. A. Course Learning Outcomes:

At the completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Describe how an information source's creation process affects the way its message is perceived by various audiences. (GE-IL)
2. Evaluate an information source's creator, publisher and context in relation to one's information need. (GE-IL, *)
3. Apply appropriate information seeking strategies across a variety of information tools and platforms. (GE-4, IL)
4. Synthesize ideas from multiple sources and a range of perspectives.
5. Communicate findings or conclusions from information seeking to a specific audience using appropriate technology. (GE-1, GE-4)
6. Understand how one's online activity and the commodification of personal information affect the information one encounters.

B. Assessment Instruments

1. research project (required)
2. search/reflection journal (required)
3. discussion forums (required)
4. social annotation
5. quizzes

VII. Grade Determinants

- a. research project
- b. search/reflection journal
- c. discussion forums

This course may include the following modes of teaching:

- A. asynchronous text and video content
- B. discussion forums
- C. small-group work
- D. computer-assisted instruction
- E. student video presentations
- F. student collaboration
- G. independent research

VIII. Texts and Materials

- a. Open educational resources available through Canvas and library website

(Please Note: The course outline is intended only as a guide to course content and resources. Do not purchase textbooks based on this outline. The RVCC Bookstore is the sole resource for the most up-to-date information about textbooks.)

IX. Resources

What specific or unusual resources (such as library, computer, or laboratory resources) does the College presently have that will be necessary for the course? What additional resources will be needed? List the resources.

- a. library databases

X. Check One: ☐Honors Course ☐Honors Options ☒N/A