

INF 3001: Research Colloquium
Fall-Winter 2025-2026
Meets every two weeks from Sept – April.

Instructor: Matt Ratto
Office Hours: By appointment
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Land Acknowledgement Statement

I (we) wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years, it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the wide range of research within the field of Information being carried out within the Faculty. The course is organized around a series of talks that include two faculty members speaking about common research interests, often from different disciplinary perspectives. These talks provide students with an overview of the diversity of scholarship in the faculty, including the multiple disciplines and subfields in which we operate. Students' individual understandings and interests are at the center of the course pedagogy. As such, the course will be heavily discussion and event-based. The main objective of this course is to assist students in understanding the overall shape of the field of Information and to begin to discover their own personal place within it.

Course Learning Objectives

CLO#1: Overview and reflect on current scholarship within the faculty and different models for developing and maintaining research agendas.

CLO#2: Develop insights regarding the relationship between their planned research and the Field of Information;

CLO#3: Communicate complex interdisciplinary perspectives and

Relationship of Course Objectives to Program Learning Outcomes

The overview and reflection on faculty scholarship (CLO#1) assists students in developing insight in relation to **PLO#1 - Depth and Breadth of Knowledge** and **PLO#6 - Awareness and Limits of Knowledge**. Developing insights regarding the field of Information (CLO#2) is consistent with **PLO#4 – Professional Capacity/Autonomy**. In discussion, debate, and through presentation and writing students learn to communicate complex interdisciplinary perspectives (CLO#3), accomplishing **PLO#5 – Level of Communication skills**.

Readings

Each week, readings by presenting faculty members and other materials as determined by the instructor (initial materials listed below.) It is expected that students come to class having read these materials and are prepared to engage in discussions.

Assessment

Assessment is based upon participation in class and in cross-talks (20%), in-class presentation (10%), faculty report (20%), and a final essay (50%). Students receive a letter grade.

Assignment	Due	%	CLO#
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Participation	Bi-Weekly	20	1,3
In-class presentation	-	10	1,3
Faculty Report	-	20	2,3
Information Field Essay	End	50	2,3

Cross-talk series: The course is organized around a series of talks that include two faculty members speaking about common research interests, often from different disciplinary perspectives. These talks are scheduled during class time from 11-12 on most Mondays (see schedule below.) These talks will provide students with an overview of the diversity of scholarship in the faculty.

Participation: Students are expected to read the assigned readings before each class and attend all cross-talks (scheduled during course hours.) Evaluation is based on active participation in classroom and cross-talk discussions (10 pts), and on bi-weekly completion of the 'elevator pitch' personal research description (10 pts).

Presentation: Each week, two students will deliver a 10 minute presentation on one of the faculty members presenting that day. Students will pick their preferred week on the first day of class. These presentations must end with a proposed question to the faculty member. These will serve as the opening questions for the faculty presentations later that day. This assignment is assessed credit/ no credit.

Faculty report: Following the 10 min presentation, students will produce a written report on their selected faculty member. This report will be roughly 1000 words in length, and should include the following sections: 1) educational biography of the faculty member including disciplines and institutions for undergraduate and graduate degrees, postdoctoral, faculty or other positions held prior to joining the faculty, the year they were appointed, and their current status. 2) a timeline of research topics since and including dissertation research, with specific attention to any changing disciplinary affiliations and publication venues. 3) a reasoned argument on how their research has evolved pointing to connections in themes, methods, and theories. This assignment receives a letter grade.

Information field essay: Essays should be roughly 2,000 words in length, reflect the individual interests of the student, and work to contextualize the class presentations in relation to the students' own work. They should demonstrate strong evidence of original thinking, contain an original and sophisticated thesis, good organization (i.e. coherent, easy to follow the thread of an argument), capacity to analyze and synthesize, superior grasp of subject matter with sound critical evaluations, and evidence of extensive knowledge base. A thesis is an argument or claim with which one can reasonably disagree. This assignment is "due" on the last day of class, but students can submit it any time before that date. I will always read drafts and provide constructive feedback, anytime. This assignment receives a letter grade.

"Late" Assignments

This syllabus provides a suggested timeline for your final assignment, but I am more than happy to make reasonable accommodation for any reason.

Email Policy

Email inquiries about the course material are welcome. Messages should be composed carefully and professionally, including proper salutation, and should include the student's full name. The subject line should include the course number and section (if more than one). Emails should be concise and state the purpose of the inquiry in the first sentence. I prefer emails to my

primary email address: matt.ratto@utoronto.ca I won't check the Quercus Inbox. Please do not contact me through Quercus. My goal is to respond to email within two business days. Please send me a reminder email after two business days.

Grading Policies

Please consult the Faculty of Information's resources that will form the basis for grading in the course:

1. Grade Interpretation Guidelines (PDF)
2. University Assessment and Grading Practices Policy
3. Guidelines on the Use of Incomplete (INC), Standing Deferred (SDF), & Withdrawal (WDR).

Health and Wellness

The Faculty of Information has a Wellness Counsellor & Coordinator available to its students. Appointments are available Monday-Friday during the academic year. **Contact Health & Wellness, 416-978-8030 ext. 5, to book an appointment with a Wellness Counsellor or for questions about the counselling service.** Students can request that they would like to meet with the "iSchool Counsellor" to access counselling on campus.

Students can also choose to see a counsellor during the academic year and over the summer at the **Health & Wellness Centre, located at 700 Bay St.**, during its hours of operation. Numerous additional health, wellness and counselling services are offered through the University of Toronto's Health and Wellness Centre.

You can access free mental health and wellbeing services at Health & Wellness such as same day counselling, brief counselling, medical care, skill-building workshops and drop-in peer support. You can also meet with a Wellness Navigation Advisor who can connect you with other campus and community services and support. **Call the mental health clinic at 416-978-8030 ext. 5 to book an appointment or learn more at uoft.me/mentalhealthcare.**

The Health & Wellness Centre's Medical Services Clinic provides a wide range of medical services for U of T students. These services include routine health care services, such as sexual and reproductive health counselling, allergy care, nutrition consultation, and support with many other health concerns. **Call the medical services clinic at 416-978-8030 ext. 2 to schedule an appointment or explore services online.**

Accessibility Services and Accommodations

All students, including anyone with diverse learning styles and/or accessibility needs, are welcome in the Faculty of Information. If you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please let your instructor, Student Services and/or the Accessibility Services Office know as soon as possible. Students who are unsure where to begin can speak to an Academic Advisor in Student Services for guidance and referrals at inquire.ischool@utoronto.ca. The Accessibility Services website also has comprehensive information on its main page about the registration process, including an instructional video and FAQs.

Accessibility Services staff are available by appointment and/or drop-in to discuss and assess specific needs, provide referrals to supportive services, and arrange appropriate accommodations. The sooner you let us know your needs, the quicker we can assist you in removing barriers to accessing your education more equitably. Once you have obtained an accommodation plan from Accessibility Services, please share your Letter of Accommodation with your instructors and Student Services.

Students who have already obtained accommodations from the Accessibility Services Office are encouraged to share their letter with their instructors and with student services in the first week of class (or as soon as possible). Students should discuss potential accommodations in consultation with their Accessibility Advisor and instructor to understand what may be possible, and how the instructor wishes to be informed when an accommodation needs to be actioned. It is the student's responsibility to discuss any extension requests, where possible, in advance of course deadlines.

To book an appointment with an Accessibility Advisor, please connect with the Accessibility Services front desk via email at accessibility.services@utoronto.ca or call (416) 978-8060. Consultation appointments with Accessibility Services staff are available to discuss any questions about the Accessibility Services registration process and/or potential accommodation support.

Academic integrity

Please consult the University's site on Academic Integrity. The Faculty of Information has a zero-tolerance policy on plagiarism as defined in section B.I.1.(d) of the University's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (PDF). You should acquaint yourself with the Code. Please review the material in Cite it Right and if you require further clarification, consult the resource How Not to Plagiarize (PDF).

Cite it Right covers relevant parts of the U of T Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (1995). It is expected that all Faculty of Information students complete the Cite it Right module and the online quiz prior to the second week of classes of their first term.

Writing Support

As stated in the Faculty of Information's Grade Interpretation Guidelines, "work that is not well written and grammatically correct will not generally be considered eligible for a grade in the A range, regardless of its quality in other respects." With this in mind, please make use of the writing support provided to graduate students by the SGS Graduate Centre for Academic Communication. The services are designed to target the needs of both native and non-native speakers and all programs are free. Please consult the current SGS Workshops Schedule for more information.

Declaring an Absence in ACORN

Students who miss an academic obligation and wish to seek academic consideration in a course may declare an absence using the ACORN Absence Declaration Tool. Students who declare an absence in ACORN should expect to receive reasonable academic consideration from their instructor without the need to present additional supporting documentation. Students can only use the ACORN Absence Declaration Tool once per academic term (e.g., the fall term) for a maximum period of 7 consecutive calendar days.

The ACORN Absence Declaration Tool requires students to select the course(s) they wish to have academic consideration granted, as well as provide the email address(es) to whom their course syllabus identifies as the contact (e.g., instructor, advisor). A record of the absence is sent to the self-provided email(s) at the time of submission, and a receipt of the absence declaration is also sent to the student's University of Toronto email address.

Submitting an absence declaration does not initiate the process of academic consideration. It is the student's responsibility to arrange for academic consideration by contacting the course instructor using the contact information provided in the syllabus.

Students who have already used one absence declaration in a term will be restricted from declaring any further absences using the ACORN Absence Declaration Tool. Students are required to arrange any further academic consideration directly with their instructor and / or student services advisor. Students may be asked to provide supporting documentation as evidence of their absences such as the University approved verification of illness form (VOI).

Academic Dates & Deadlines

Conflicts with religious observances should be brought to the attention of the course instructor and the Office of the Registrar and Student Services no later than the second week of classes. For more information, please see the Policy on Scheduling of Classes and Examinations and Other Accommodations for Religious Observances.