

PhD in Information Studies – Goals

The goals of the PhD Program in Information Studies are

- to produce highly qualified graduates for careers in research, teaching, and leadership in the field;
- to contribute to the development of theory in the field of information studies and to the body of knowledge on which theory and practice are based, both through original and scholarly dissertations and faculty research;
- to stimulate a scholarly interest in research within the information community in Canada and throughout the world.

Doctoral study in the fields of information studies is concerned with both theoretical and applied scholarship. In the disciplines of information studies, there are many areas of human experience to analyze, bodies of descriptive and factual data to gather, and conceptual schemes to formulate and test. The Faculty of Information's doctoral program leads to a degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). The objective of this research degree is to prepare graduates to assume leadership roles in information and knowledge-based environments, in both the academic and professional contexts.

Fields of study include:

Archives & Records Management

The Archives & Records Management concentration explores the multiple perspectives that inform documentary practices over time, drawing on diverse foundation disciplines, including: management theories and diplomatics for organizational records; archival science in arrangement and description; appraisal theories and practices in relation to both organizational and personal archives; preservation principles and strategies for paper and digital records; and the history of records and recordkeeping.

This field concentrates on the social, institutional, technological and personal practices affecting the creation, use, selection, and preservation of recorded information.

Topics include:

- Theories and methods for capturing, classifying, managing, appraising, and preserving authentic records in all media
- Properties of archives and records to serve business, accountability, and historical needs of public and private organizations and persons
- Digital preservation concepts and strategies
- Changing perspectives and social contexts
- Evidence law and regimes of privacy and access
- Intellectual property rights management
- The role of archival appraisal in society

Critical Information Studies

The Critical Information Studies specialization involves critical analyses of the social, technical, political, legal, economic, and cultural assumptions and implications of information systems of all types. As is increasingly recognized, socio-technical information systems—which involve the collection, organization, management, preservation, and use of information—are constructed and deployed within complex social and political contexts. This field brings to bear qualitative and quantitative techniques from social sciences and humanities to analyze the design, development, deployment, and use of such systems.

Topics include:

- Privacy, security, open and inclusive access, and intellectual freedom
- Intellectual property and information rights
- Integrity, authority, and authenticity
- Political economy
- Risk, use, and context
- Social equity, justice, and inclusion

Cultural Heritage

The material and intangible manifestations, institutions and formations, norms, ideas, and practices of heritage define a multidisciplinary field of inquiry that touches upon important issues of cultural memory, representation, identity, and ethics in our globalized, and increasingly technologically-mediated, world. Heritage practices in museums, art galleries, archives and heritage sites are connected with evolving curatorial and interpretative approaches, contested notions of cultural identity, and new forms of learning and experience. Heritage work in the global and multicultural context raises issues of social responsibility, environmental and cultural sustainability, and sociocultural development. Finally, digital heritage introduces new challenges with regard to the constitution of the cultural record and its long-term preservation, curation and use, and new opportunities for communication, interaction and engagement.

Research in the field of heritage may be based on diverse disciplinary approaches, including archaeology, anthropology, history, history of art, visual studies, sociology of art and culture, science and technology studies, cultural studies, and communication studies.

Topics include:

- Material culture theory
- Memory, collective memory and commemoration
- Post-colonial, post-socialist and contested heritage
- Indigenous knowledge and material heritage
- Animal studies and photography
- Food studies, fashion studies and everyday cultures
- Cultural property, public access and protection of collections
- Post-colonial approaches to collections management
- Exhibition practice, history and curation

- Digital heritage curation, ontologies and practices

Information Systems, Media & Design

The innovative and imaginative design and use of media and information systems, particularly as they underpin the digital revolution, are approached from a humanistic angle. This field combines critical analysis with a strong emphasis on design, including technical systems design, and the full context of their deployment and use. The field emphasizes the design perspective on information and systems, based on fundamental values and foundations that cover the full iSchool curriculum.

Topics include:

- Fundamental issues of systems analysis, design, and implementation, architecture, data representation and organization, and information processes
- Technologies used to organize and manage information within design and systems contexts
- Effects of choice of information systems on the growth and development of institutions and society
- Critical perspectives and methods for acknowledging and encompassing cultural and social differences
- Design perspectives for stability, sustainability, conservation, preservation, and tradition
- Digital systems and support for a wide spectrum of media, and diverse forms of interaction and engagement

Knowledge Management & Information Management

This field examines the concepts, tools, and practices that enable the systematic, imaginative, and responsible management of information in an organization or community. The goal is to promote social learning and innovation, and to provide groups and individuals with the information they need in order to perform their work and to engage in self-development.

Topics include:

- Theoretical frameworks that integrate the creation, sharing, and use of information and knowledge
- The effective use of information to support decision making
- Knowledge access management, including metadata-enabled search and resource discovery
- Strategic modeling of goals and dependencies for knowledge management
- The design of information systems as platforms for creating and sharing knowledge

Library & Information Science

Humanistic perspectives on and approaches to the study of information services are considered against a backdrop of fundamental social change and global transition.

Topics include:

- The information life cycle, including creation, organization, management, dissemination, and preservation
- The range of information intensive and service-oriented institutions, including public, academic, governmental, health sciences, and corporate libraries
- The social, economic, political, and technological forces that affect information processes, practices, policies, and professionals

Philosophy of Information

This field explores the foundational concepts, general principles, and shared theories applicable to information practices of all types. Fundamental epistemological and ontological techniques are brought to bear to design, examine, and assess general information architectures, classifications, organizations, and practices of use.

Topics include:

- Theoretical conceptions of information
- Organization and representation of knowledge
- Context dependence and independence
- Formal and informal record keeping
- Fundamental principles of documentation
- Orality, literacy, and visuality
- Analogue and digital media
- Epistemology and ontology
- Ethics, values, and political commitments

PhD in Information Studies – Student Learning Outcomes

1. Depth and Breadth of Knowledge

A thorough understanding of a substantial body of knowledge that is at the forefront of information studies.

2. Research and Scholarship

- a. The ability to conceptualize, design, and implement research that generates new knowledge, applications, and understanding at the forefront of information studies;
- b. The ability to make informed judgments on complex and emerging issues in information studies, which may require the creation of innovative methodologies;
- c. The ability to produce original research, or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, and to merit publication in diverse scholarly and practitioner venues.

3. Level of Application of Knowledge

The capacity to: i) undertake pure and/or applied research at an advanced level in information studies; and ii) contribute to the development of academic or professional skills, techniques, tools, practices, ideas, theories, approaches, and/or materials in information studies.

4. Professional Capacity/Autonomy

- a. The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility, maintenance of high ethical standards, and largely autonomous initiative in complex situations;
- b. The intellectual independence to be academically and professionally engaged and current with emerging information issues;
- c. The ethical behavior consistent with academic integrity and the use of appropriate guidelines, procedures and appropriate methodologies for responsible conduct of research; and
- d. The ability to evaluate the broader implications of applying knowledge to particular information contexts.

5. Level of Communication Skills

The ability to communicate complex and/or ambiguous ideas, social and policy issues, and conclusions clearly and effectively for academic, professional and community audiences.

6. Awareness and Limits of Knowledge

An appreciation of the limitations of one's own work in information studies, and of the complexity of knowledge, and of the potential contributions of other interpretations, methods, and disciplines in information studies.