

## INLS 690-Information Services in a Diverse Society

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## SYLLABUS

### COURSE OVERVIEW

The purpose of this course is to prepare students to work as Information and Library Science (ILS) professionals in today's increasingly diverse society. Students will develop a theoretical base in critical race theory (CRT) and other cross-disciplinary theories and conceptual frameworks, while they explore issues relevant to working as a LIS professional with populations that have historically experienced challenges and marginalization in the United States. In particular, the course will consider how issues related to class, race, gender, culture, language, and sexuality operate in and exert an influence on the provision of information services. It is expected that at the conclusion of this course, you have a more comprehensive and complex understanding of the intersectionality of sociocultural factors to use to both analyze and conduct research and to develop programs and services, involving issues of social justice, equity, identity, and diversity in LIS.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course seeks:

- To introduce students to the societal issues facing communities engaged with LIS institutions.
- To introduce students to the concepts of diversity, cultural competency, power, privilege, and intersectionality and to identify ways in which each presents opportunities and challenges for the different information professions and the communities they serve.
- To familiarize students with the theory and implementation of Critical Race Theory and its offshoots as it relates to information services and community building.
- To provide students with the opportunity to identify, address, and reflect upon the information needs and practices of underserved and marginalized groups in the United States, as well as the power inequities involved in information work.
- To provide students with the opportunity to develop racial and cultural identity on a personal level and understand it on a societal level.
- To examine critically the role of professional activism and social justice within different information fields.

### TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

As instructors, we believe that effective learning happens in a community of learners which prioritizes exchange, inquiry, reflection, creation, and growth. This type of learning requires an environment which

stretches beyond the classroom into the community. It is the responsibility of institutions of higher education to learn, certainly, but also to create and share research based resources. Inquiry-focused learning is more effectively achieved in a dynamic environment where there are opportunities for interactive study and application of theory to real practice. We use some of the following strategies to foster this type of learning:

- Class discussions of varying formats and structures
- Assignments which require application of theory to real world problems
- Demonstration of knowledge and understanding through the creation of real world products
- Instruction that moves from the “What?” and “How?” to the “Why” and “So What”

## **COURSE MATERIALS**

### *Required Books*

Cooke, Nicole. (2016). *Information Services to Diverse Populations: Developing Culturally Competent Library Professionals*. Libraries Unlimited. (can order electronically; has been ordered by SILS library to put on reserve)

### *Additional Materials*

- Articles & book chapters on reserve and in Sakai
- Multimedia Resources
- Web Resources

## **ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

### **Assignment 1: Critical Reflections (25%)**

Working effectively with diverse populations demands critical reflection on one's own position and the complex interactions between different aspects of identity. As Nicole Cooke (2016) explains, critical self-reflection leads to a readiness to engage with cultural competence. By critically examining our own value system we situate ourselves in regards to our own intersectionality, privilege, and marginality. “Only then can the circumstances of others be understood and fully appreciated.”

This assignment has two components, each submitted at different points in the course. In the first component you will write your personal cultural autobiography (due February 20th; See directions below). In the second component, you will write a post-class reflection (due May 9<sup>th</sup> by 7pm; See directions below).

### **Cultural Autobiography Directions:** (Due February 20th by beginning of class)

This personal narrative will explore your own personal history, including the formation of your identity, beliefs, perspectives and values. Who we are as individuals, dramatically affects how we interact with others and will affect our work with diverse communities. The purpose of this assignment is to heighten your awareness of your identity as a step in better understanding members of your organization and community who come from different backgrounds. One of the assumptions underlying this assignment is that things don't simply happen to us, we are active in interpreting and assigning meaning to experiences in our lives. These experiences in turn influence the way we see the world and what we value.

Your autobiography should reveal your experiences with issues related to race, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, language, religion, sexual orientation, gender identification, ability or disability, etc. in your past and explain the current journey you are on given what you are reading and learning in this course. I have

included two sample autobiographies from the book *Courageous Conversations about Race in Sakai* for you to read if you'd like.

While you may certainly write a traditional essay, this cultural autobiography may take any form. Do not hesitate to use your arts, technology and personal skills creatively to tell your story. Your product should be the equivalent of a 5-6 page (**single-spaced**) essay.

We are the only ones who will read/view your autobiography but we will discuss aspects of them in class. Please share with us *only what you feel comfortable sharing*.

In addition to the issues we discuss in class, you may wish to consider the following questions as you write your cultural autobiography: [I do not expect you to answer each of these questions – they are meant to help you think broadly about your life experiences.]

1. How do you define yourself in terms of race, ethnic or national origin?
2. How do you describe the socioeconomic status of your family and the role it played in shaping your life?
3. What is the primary language spoken in your home? What role do languages play in your life today?
4. How might you describe your views regarding the importance or purpose of education?
5. What customs or traditions are important to you? To your family? To your community?
6. What value does faith, religion or spirituality hold in your family?
7. How do you describe your views of racial, ethnic or national origin to people of differing backgrounds than you? How do you describe your sexual orientation? People of a sexual orientation different from you?
8. How do you describe your mental and physical abilities and the role they play/have played in shaping your life?
9. How would you describe the gender roles in your family? How do you describe your gender identity?
10. How might you describe your world-view (e.g., purpose of life)?
11. What should people know about who you are to understand why you talk, think, speak, act the way you do?
12. How was culture transmitted to you?

**Post-class Critical Reflection:** (due May 9<sup>th</sup> by 7pm; See directions below).

For this component of this assignment, we would like you to write a post-script to the cultural autobiography you submitted on March 6<sup>th</sup>. As noted above, one of the assumptions underlying this assignment is that things don't simply happen to us, we are active in interpreting and assigning meaning to experiences in our lives. These experiences – including this course - in turn influence the way we see the world and what we value. We have discussed and explored many issues this semester. I would like you to now take time to reflect, as Nicole Cooke does in the final chapter of *Information Services to Diverse Populations: Developing Culturally Competent Library Professionals*, on what you have learned (both about yourself and about theory/practice) and how it has changed your perceptions of working with/for diverse, often marginalized, communities as an ILS professional. As with the autobiography itself, you can write a traditional essay, but your reflection may take any form. Do not hesitate to use your arts, technology and personal skills creatively to tell your story. Your product should be the equivalent of a 2-3 page (**single-spaced**) essay.

### **Assignment 2: SILS Symposium for Social Good (50%)**

Discussing diversity issues in academic isolation will become an echo chamber if you don't have a place

to actively apply your learning. For that reason, students in INLS 584 (Information Ethics – graduate level), 384 (Information and Computer Ethics – undergraduate level), INLS 690-197 (Information Services in a Diverse Society), and INLS 739 (Information Services for Specific Populations) will collaborate to host the SILS Symposium for Social Good on Friday April 21, from 9 am – 12 noon. Each student will be expected to make a scholarly contribution to this event, either in the form of a panel or poster presentation about an ethical issue or social problem related to information science. Presentations should be of professional quality. Members of the SILS community, including faculty, current students, and alumni, will be invited to attend.

**The symposium will be held on a Friday morning. Any student who is unable to arrange to be available for the symposium should consult the instructor for specific instructions regarding additional assignment requirements. Grade adjustments/make-up assignments will not be made based on failure to communicate and plan appropriately.**

**Content:** Panels should include a presentation component and a question-answer/interactive-audience component. Posters should include an online poster (using PDF, Sway, ArcMap, or another embeddable online presentation format), a video component in which you discuss the poster, and an in-person discussion component. Preliminary research and outlines for all presentations will be due on March 27.

While there are many ways to present your work (and we will discuss some of them during class), panels and posters should do the following, at a minimum:

1. Address a specific, population that has historically experienced challenges and marginalization in the United States or a current social justice issue that you believe libraries should respond to
2. Outline relevant inequities and social justice issues
3. Identify the stakeholders involved
4. Outline possible courses of action
5. Suggest implications of courses of action

**Group participation/selection:** Panels will comprise 4 group members each. Poster groups will comprise 3 group members each. Students may elect to form groups with students from any of the participating classes (INLS 584, 384, 690-197, and 739) who might be interested in collaborating on a topic. You are responsible for ensuring that your collaboration is fruitful, and that your presentation fulfills the assignment as given in this course.

**Time:** Students are expected to attend the entire 3-hour symposium session. Approximately one hour should be spent presenting, and the other two hours should be spent attending other students' presentations. The final portion of this project – reflection on the symposium – should address your own presentation experience as well as your experiences interacting with other students' work. Panel presentations will be 45 minutes long, and should include an interactive or audience discussion component. Poster presentations will be 3 hours total, with each group member responsible for one hour of physical attendance at the poster (while the other two members engage with other students' presentations).

**Deliverables:**

1. Proposals (Open February 10 – Close/Due February 23): Proposals should be related to the general topic of Information for Social Good, and should address social justice issues related to information and library science broadly. Proposals from INLS 690 students should focus on a population that has historically experienced challenges and marginalization in the United States or a current social justice issue that you believe libraries should respond to. Proposals from combined class groups must address the topic requirements from each class.

Format: Proposals should take the form of a presentation or poster abstract (300-500 words) describing the issues to be addressed by the symposium presentation or poster. Submissions should include the following metadata:

- Full names, email addresses, and class (584, 384, 690, or 793) for each group member.
- Selected presentation type (poster or presentation).
- Title of the poster or presentation.
- Full abstract for the poster or presentation (300-500 words).
- Short abstract (50-100 words) for use on the symposium website.

Each group member must submit a copy of the proposal document by the due date.

Presentation and poster slots will be filled on a first come, first serve basis. Course instructors reserve the right to reject or modify proposals in consultation with students.

2. Symposium outline/preliminary research (Due March 27): Students must submit an outline of the presentation content (not just a plan for what you will talk about, but the actual information you will use to construct your presentation). While this does not have to be polished, it should be well-organized into topic areas, or headings that are indicative of the conceptual organization of your presentation. This should include a 15-20 item bibliography, and should cover the content areas described in "Content" above.
3. Symposium Participation (April 21, 2017, 9 am-12 noon): Students will participate in the symposium, and attend at least two other student presentations.
4. Post Symposium Reflection (April 24): Students will write a 500-word reflection on their participation in the symposium. The reflection should include an evaluation of their own work and presentation experience, and a summary and evaluation of two peer groups' presentations.

### **Assignment 3: Class Participation (25%)**

Items that will contribute to your class participation grade include:

1. Completion of all reading prior to coming to class.
2. Reflective journaling: You will be asked to journal each week about the course readings and the class discussions. The journals will be private to only you and me. The journal entries should be printed and brought to class. Use the attached journaling template.
3. In Class Participation: This seminar is a discussion-based course. Students are expected to complete all readings, to think through the issues raised in the readings, and to articulate thoughts on the materials in class. Clearly, you need to attend class to participate in the discussions. Attendance will be taken every week, with absences being excused in cases of illness, religious observances, and other reasons in line with university policies, or if the university is closed due to inclement weather. *In order to receive an excused absence, the instructor should be notified in advance of the class meeting.*

**Grading and Due Dates**

Assignment	Weight	Due Date
Critical Reflections	25%	Component 1: February 20 Component 2: May 9
Symposium	50%	Will take place on April 21 ** NOTE: this is a Friday; make arrangements now to be able to participate
Course Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completing Readings</li> <li>• Reflective Journaling</li> <li>• Active Engagement in Class Discussions</li> </ul>	25%	Ongoing

**GRADING SCALE**

H	(95-100) “clear excellence”, above and beyond what is required
P	(85-90) all requirements satisfied at entirely acceptable level
L	(70-79) low passing
F	(<70) failed

**CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT**

Our overarching goal is to build a professional community in which an exchange of ideas and opinions is respected and welcome. Discussions should be professionally conducted and should be based on course readings and critical thinking. Because the course is founded on a critical sociocultural framework, the material will include diverse perspectives, not necessarily aligning with traditional or dominant views. The purpose is to expand the parameters of your thinking. Additionally, issues related to diversity, cultural competence, and social justice may involve strongly held beliefs and may include current political and social controversies. At times, the discussion might be uncomfortable. Remember – your classmates (and the instructors) may have different perspectives on issues than you, but they still deserve your respect.

As another aspect of respect in the classroom environment, turn off or mute all phones and other communication devices during each class session. If you use your laptop or mobile device in the classroom, limit the usage to course-related reasons (i.e., taking notes or looking up resources).

**UNIVERSITY HONOR SYSTEM**

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has had a student-administered honor system and judicial

system for over 100 years. Because academic honesty and the development and nurturing of trust and trustworthiness are important to all of us as individuals, and are encouraged and promoted by the honor system, this is a most significant University tradition. More information is available at <http://www.unc.edu/depts/honor/honor.html>. The system is the responsibility of students and is regulated and governed by them, but faculty share the responsibility and readily commit to its ideals. If students in this class have questions about their responsibility under the honor code, please bring them to me or consult with the Office of the Dean of Students. The web site identified above contains all policies and procedures pertaining to the student honor system. We encourage your full participation and observance of this important aspect of the University.

### **SILS DIVERSITY STATEMENT**

In support of the University's diversity goals and the mission of the School of Information and Library Science, SILS embraces diversity as an ethical and societal value. We broadly define diversity to include race, gender, national origin, ethnicity, religion, social class, age, sexual orientation and physical and learning ability. As an academic community committed to preparing our graduates to be leaders in an increasingly multicultural and global society we strive to:

- Ensure inclusive leadership, policies and practices;
- Integrate diversity into the curriculum and research;
- Foster a mutually respectful intellectual environment in which diverse opinions are valued;
- Recruit traditionally underrepresented groups of students, faculty and staff; and
- Participate in outreach to underserved groups in the State.

The statement represents a commitment of resources to the development and maintenance of an academic environment that is open, representative, reflective and committed to the concepts of equity and fairness.

### **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

“The Department of Disability Services (DDS), a part of the Division of Student Affairs, works with departments throughout the University to assure that the programs and facilities of the University are accessible to every student in the University community. Additionally, DDS provides reasonable accommodations so students with disabilities who are otherwise qualified may, as independently as possible, meet the demands of University life.” Visit their website at <http://disabilityservices.unc.edu/> for more information.

**JOURNALING TEMPLATE**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

<b>READING REFLECTION – To be completed before class</b>	Date
What stood out for me in the readings:	
Some connections I am making:	
One or two questions I have now and would like to discuss in class:	

<b>REFLECTIONS</b>	Date
<p>How I would sketch the ideas discussed in the readings:</p>	
<p>Some possible applications to my life as an ILS professional:</p>	
<p><b>POST CLASS REFLECTIONS [TO BE COMPLETED AT THE END OF EACH CLASS]</b></p>	