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, and challenge or problematize conceptions of what it means to be neutral or value-free from multiple perspectives: societal, professional, and personal.
- 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 an instructor, I 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. I 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. (on reserve in SILS library)

Delgado, R. , & Stefancic, J. (2017). *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction.* NYU Press. (available online through UNC Libraries)

Additional Materials
- Articles & book chapters on reserve, in Sakai, and available from UNC libraries
- Multimedia Resources
- Web Resources

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Assignment 1: Critical Reflections (20%)

Working effectively with diverse communities, 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 a positionality paper (due February 26th; See directions below). In the second component, you will write a post-class reflection (due April 23rd; See directions below).

Positionality Statement Directions: (Due January 29th by beginning of class) **(10%)**

This short paper (2-3 papers single-spaced) asks you to understand your own relationship to the topic of this course. The purpose of this assignment is to heighten your awareness of your positionality 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.

In this paper, please answer this question: What are your experiences with the topics to be covered in this course? Think about (1) your own personal history with issues related to race, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, language, religion, sexual orientation, gender identification, and/or ability or

disability in your past; and 2) how these experiences impact the current journey you are on.

Post-class Critical Reflection: (due April 23; See directions below). **(10%)**

For this component of this assignment, I would like you to write a short paper (2-3 page single-spaced) paper in which you reflect on the course – essentially you will be writing a post-script to the positionality statement you submitted on January 29th. 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.

Assignment 2: SILS Symposium for Social Good (40%)

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 690-197 (Information Services in a Diverse Society) and INLS 384 (Information and Computer Ethics – undergraduate level), will host the 2nd SILS Symposium for Social Good on Friday April 13th, from 9 am – 12 noon. Each student in INLS 690 will be expected to make a scholarly contribution to this event, in the form of a panel about a social justice 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. Undergraduate students will prepare posters about ethical issues impacting ILS.

The symposium will be held on Friday, April 13th from 9:00-12:00. 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: Panel presentations will be 45 minutes long, and should include an interactive or audience discussion component. Preliminary research and outlines for all presentations will be due on March 26.

While there are many ways to present your work, panels 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 3 group members each. 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, including the undergraduate poster session. 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.

Deliverables:
1. Proposals (Open February 19 – Close/Due March 5): 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 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.

2. Format: Proposals should take the form of a presentation abstract (300-500 words) describing the issues to be addressed by the symposium presentation. Submissions should include the following metadata:
   - Full names, email addresses, for each group member.
   - Title of the presentation.
   - Full abstract for the presentation (300-500 words).
   - Short abstract (50-100 words) for use on the symposium website.

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

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

3. Symposium outline/preliminary research (Due March 26): 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.

4. Symposium Participation (April 13, 2018, 9 am-12 noon): Students will participate in the symposium, and attend at least two other student presentations, including the undergraduate poster session.

5. Post Symposium Reflection (April 16): 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 (40%)

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. *Weekly "Hot Topics":* Each week we will discuss some of the current events and media moments that have occurred in the last week in regards to the topics of the course. CRT has a commitment to praxis and making theory applicable to the real world and communities, so this is a chance to apply CRT lenses to an analysis of current events. As class is beginning each week, students can write topics on the board for discussion.

4. 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	20%	Component 1: January 29 Component 2: April 23
Symposium	40%	Will take place on April 13 ** NOTE: this is a Friday; make arrangements now to be able to participate
Course Participation • Completing Readings • Reflective Journaling • Weekly Hot Topics • Active Engagement in Class Discussions	40%	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

NAMES AND PRONOUNS:

If you go by a different name or gender pronoun than the one under which you are officially enrolled, please inform me. Students are expected to respectfully refer to each other by preferred names and pronouns during class discussions.

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 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 instructor) 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_____

READING REFLECTION – To be completed before class   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:

REFLECTIONS	Date
How I would sketch the ideas discussed in the readings:	
Some possible applications to my life as an ILS professional:	