

INLS 690-322: The Art and Science of Readers' Advisory

Fall 2023

Time: Wednesdays, 5:45-8:30pm

Room: [Manning 001](#)

Method of instruction: on-campus & in-person

Instructor: Gillian Speace

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## Course Design and Approach

Course description: This course offers an introduction to readers' advisory, incorporating both traditional approaches and technological solutions to the challenge of helping readers find books. Students will learn best practices for providing effective readers' advisory service to patrons in a variety of contexts and become familiar with specialized RA resources and tools. (from <https://sils.unc.edu/courses/special-topics>)

At its most basic, readers' advisory is about matching readers and the narratives they want or need. Diana Trixier Herald (of *Genreflecting* fame) defines it as “the act of putting people together with the books they love,” while readers' advisory expert Joyce Saricks notes that “successful readers' advisory service is one in which knowledgeable, nonjudgmental staff help fiction readers with their reading needs.”

This course balances theory and practice with the goal of preparing you to provide effective readers' advisory service while also introducing you to the vibrant professional community of RA practitioners, of which you will become a member. This emphasis on joining and shaping a community of practice is not incidental – while everyone receives an individual grade based on their contributions, our success will be achieved collectively. Much of our work in this class will involve working together, collaboratively, to solve problems.

We'll work outward, starting with the basics and gradually widening our scope to examine the contexts in which RA happens.

## Books and Readings

### Required:

Orr, C. (2014). *Crash course in readers' advisory*. Libraries Unlimited.

### Recommended:

If you are of a mind to assemble a personal library of readers' advisory-focused texts, the following books are a great place to start; familiarity with these will serve you well as all of them are written by experts in the field.

Moyer, J., & Stover, K. (2010). *The readers' advisory handbook*. ALA Editions

Herald, D.T. (2019). *Genreflecting: A guide to popular reading interests* (8th ed.). Libraries Unlimited.

Wyatt, N., & Saricks, J.G. (2019). *The readers' advisory guide to genre fiction*. ALA Editions.

## **Class Policies**

These are the policies of the class.

### **Attendance**

You are strongly encouraged to attend class. Not only does your attendance factor into your participation grade, but much of the learning for this course will take place through in-class discussions and hands-on group activities. If you are not present, you will miss out.

That being said, there may be occasions when you cannot attend class due to illness, travel, or other personal circumstances. If you must miss a class, make sure to review the class material and catch up.

If you know in advance that you will have to miss a session, please notify the instructor one week prior to that class.

[View the university's policy on approved absences.](#)

**Please communicate with your instructor about absences both planned and unplanned!**

### **Participation**

Class participation is an important part of this course. All students are expected to attend class sessions, complete assignments and in-class exercises, and participate in the online discussion forum for this class.

I take attendance at the beginning of each class session! Repeated tardiness or missed classes will lower your participation grade: you cannot participate in discussions and in-class exercises if you are not present.

Assigned readings should be done before the class for which they are assigned so you can ask questions and participate in discussions. You are responsible for understanding the content of all the readings, even if we don't discuss them in class.

If there is something you don't understand, ask a question! If you don't want to ask during class or if something comes out outside of class time, post it to the online class discussion, see me before class, or contact me by email.

As noted above, participation counts towards your final grade, but there are many ways to participate, including full class discussions, small group discussions, in-class exercises, discussion board posts, our in-class writing workshop, and our last-session book club meeting.

You are encouraged and expected to be an active participant both in class and online. Similarly, you are expected to be an active participant in your project teams.

Participation is not just about talking; facilitating discussions to make sure everyone has a chance to participate is also important.

Quality of contributions is more important than sheer quantity.

## **Assignments**

You will have assignments!

Assignments are due at 11:59pm Eastern Time on the date that they are due unless otherwise specified.

Assignments are to be submitted via Canvas.

Late assignments will be penalized 10% for each day late, up to a maximum of three days. A "day" here refers to a 24- hour period, or fraction thereof, after the due date. For example, a late assignment turned in 25 hours late will be penalized as two days late. No assignments will be accepted if more than 72 hours (3 days) late.

Exceptions due to special circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis. When deemed appropriate, limited extensions may be granted. However, be sure to inform the instructor **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE** should you require a special accommodation. If a problem is known about in advance, then let me know before it occurs. Exceptions are much less likely to be provided if requests for accommodation are not made in a timely fashion.

Advice: Start early and don't be shy about asking questions! Many assignments may turn out to be more time consuming than expected. I suggest that you start working on assignments as soon as they are assigned. This way, you'll have time to ask questions and complete your assignment before the due date.

## **Office Hours**

Good question! I don't have an office but am happy to chat with you! We can meet before or after class; if doesn't work we can zoom. Please contact me via email if you'd like to meet.

## **Honor Code**

All students are expected to follow [UNC's Honor Code](#).

## **Grading**

Your grade for this course will be determined by a combination of class participation and assignments. The approximate contributions of these elements to your grade are as follows:

Participation: 20%

Resource evaluation assignment: 5%

Form-Based RA assignment: 20%

Live RA chat practice: 15%

Lost Books assignment: 5%

Book Group: 15%

Reading Log/Reading Challenge Project: 20%

## **Campus Resources and Services**

UNC wants you to succeed!

### **Accessibility Resources and Services (ARS)**

“Accessibility Resources & Service ("ARS") works with all students including undergraduate and graduate students, full-time and part-time students, students following continuing education courses or who may be auditing, and program applicants.”

Visit [the ARS website](#) for information on requesting accommodations.

This process can take time, so if you require short-term accommodations please let your instructor know and we can figure something out.

### **Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)**

Available to anyone who pays the student health fee, CAPS offers a wide range of services pertaining to mental health and wellness. In their own words, “Any concern is a good concern to bring to CAPS.”

[More information on CAPS](#)

## **Title IX**

Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community.

[UNC Title IX info](#)

## **The Writing Center**

“The Writing Center is an instructional service that provides writing assistance for students, faculty, and staff. We offer both face-to-face and online consultations, as well as a collection of online resources for writers and educators.”

[Writing Center website](#)

## **The Learning Center**

“The Learning Center is an instructional service that provides academic support for UNC-Chapel Hill students. We offer both face-to-face and online coaching, as well as a collection of online resources for students and educators.”

[Learning Center website](#)