INLS 735—Youth Services in a Diverse Society
Fall 2023 | Fridays, 9:05-11:50 |Manning 014

(This course was originally designed in collaboration with Katy J. Vance, MLS, 2011)

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"…one of the fundamental tasks of educators is to make sure that the future points the way to a more socially just world a world in which critique and possibility- in conjunction with the values of reason, freedom, and equality – function to alter the ground upon which life is lived." - Henry Giroux

TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE TIME OF COVID-19
I am excited to teach and learn with you in this course, and grateful that we can do our teaching and learning in person. However, I want to assure you that my first priority is your well-being, physically and mentally. Since COVID-19 began in the Spring of 2020, we have found ourselves dealing with unexpected challenges, whether to our health, the health of people we care about or care for, childcare, or more. This semester, we may find our course once again interrupted or modified in ways that we cannot anticipate. If you experience any challenges that affect your work in this course, please communicate to me as soon as possible. I don't need to know details, though you may share as much as you want. I only need to know that you need to discuss alternative arrangements to help you get the most from this course. And if you are experiencing challenges more generally, I am happy to serve as a point of contact to connect you with the resources you need.

The catalog description for INLS 735 states that the course contains a service-learning component. Due to the stress COVID-19 and other economic, political, and social circumstances have placed on local school and public library systems, we will not be engaging in service learning this term.

Finally, because we will be learning together in a community, let's do our best to take care of the community. I will be wearing a mask in the classroom. Although university policy states that we are "mask optional" (except in medical settings on campus), I encourage all of you to wear a mask as a way of practicing community care. By wearing a mask, you will be protecting those of us with compromised immune systems, those of us unable to receive the second booster, those of us with family members who are unable to get vaccinated, those of us caring for vulnerable family members, and those of us who want to avoid re/infection. If you are experiencing any symptoms or believe you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, let me know as soon as possible and stay home. I'm happy to make other arrangements for you.

PREREQUISITES FOR THIS COURSE (Adapted from Fleming, Crystal M. *How to be Less Stupid About Race*, Boston: Beacon Press, 2018.)

1. Critical thinking – the ability to challenge what you think may be common sense; to ask questions and seek empirical evidence
2. Reflexivity – the ability to look at your own experiences, beliefs, and behaviors
3. Compassion – for others and for yourself
4. Willingness to experience and sit with discomfort

CREATING A MUTUALLY RESPECTFUL AND ANTI-OPPRESSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The issues we will be discussing in this class will often involve strongly held beliefs and may include current political and social controversies. Our overarching goal is to build a professional community in which an exchange of ideas and opinions is respected and welcome. All our discussions will be professionally conducted, respectful, and empathetic. To create a Brave Space for us to learn, we will adopt the following community agreements.

Community Agreements

1. We agree to take care ourselves, the space, and the community.

2. We agree to struggle against racism, sizeism, transphobia, classicism, sexism, ableism, and other forms of oppression, and the ways we internalize myths and misinformation about our own identities and the identities of other people.

3. We know that no space can be completely "safe," and we agree to work together towards harm reduction, centering those most affected by injustice in the room even if it means centering ourselves. We will use the concepts of "calling out" or "calling in" to bring attention to when individuals or with marginalized identities in our class are experiencing harm, such as bias or discrimination. [Both concepts are explained in detail in this document from Harvard.]

4. We agree to sit with the discomfort that comes with having conversations about race, gender, identity, etc. We agree to try our best not to shame ourselves for the vulnerability that these kinds of conversations require.

5. We agree to value the viewpoints of other people that do not challenge or conflict with our right to exist or change, or that conflict with another's right to exist.

6. We agree that it's okay to have feelings. It's okay to feel uncomfortable when discussing complex topics about boundaries, accountability, personal relationships, organizational relationships, justice, and care.

Adapted from: Hodge & McCallister;
Shea & Jess (2021)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

COURSE OVERVIEW
The purpose of this course is to prepare students to work as youth services librarians 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 diverse and marginalized populations.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
Prepares the student to:
- Become well versed in the theory and implementation of Critical Race Theory as it relates to education, librarianship, and community building
- Utilize cross-disciplinary theories and conceptual frameworks which provide insight into library services
- Develop racial and cultural identity on a personal level and understand it on a societal level
- Progress towards cultural competence and humility
- Develop a deeper understanding of how marginalized populations experience the world, specifically schools, libraries, and communities
- Determine the needs of marginalized youth related to information access and literacy development, and develop and deliver services responding to those needs
- Recognize common themes and concerns of youth across different marginalized populations

REQUIRED TEXTS

All readings are available online (open access publications, websites, videos, etc.) or as PDFs in Sakai

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ASSESSMENT

Assessment for this course will be qualitative in nature as opposed to quantitative. While you will get a grade at the end of the term, as required by the University, instead of assigning points or grades to individual assignments, I will be providing feedback in the form of questions and comments that engage your work rather than simply evaluate it. My intention is to help you focus on *learning* and *understanding* rather than compliance to a prescribed notion of excellence. My goal is to encourage you to engage in deeper thinking, be creative, and take risks.

You will also be reflecting critically on your own work during the semester – completing a mid-term and final reflection in which you will discuss your learning/understandings, the elements of the course that excite you as well as challenge you, and *your* assessment of your work (what are you proud of, what would you change, what questions do you have, and so forth).

I realize this process may cause anxiety for some of you, so please see me at any point to talk about your progress to date. If you are worried about your grade, the best strategy is to join the class discussions, do the reading, and complete the assignments.
*Note: Final Grades for this course will be H/P/L/F for graduate students.

THE WORK OF THE COURSE

***Note: This is a reading intensive course. **Doing the readings for each week is critical**. Except for the book study and presentation assignment (see below), all the assignments ask you to engage in self-reflection (on your positionality pre and post class and on the weekly readings). These assignments are designed not to be time consuming, but to provide you with an opportunity to take a breath, think deeply about the topic, and be prepared to participate in our class discussions.

#1: Positionality Statement (Due February 3)
As an LIS professional, it is important for you to continuously assess your personal and professional development, challenge your strengths and weaknesses, and reflect on your social, cultural, and political influences on your ability to learn, teach, and lead. This short paper (2-3 papers single-spaced) asks you to understand your own relationship to the topics 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. You will speak from personal experiences, such as interactions with family and friends, education and work experiences, and traditions, and discuss how your worldview influences your approach to librarianship. As such, you may want to take an autobiographical approach to this paper. These papers will be confidential; only viewed by the instructor.

#2: Post-class Critical Reflection (Due by 5pm on May 1 – Exam day for this class)
For 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 February 3rd. 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, 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 a LIS professional. These papers will be confidential; only viewed by the instructor.

#3: Reflective journaling (Due at the end of class Weeks 2-9)
You will be asked to journal during weeks 2-9 about the course readings and the class discussions. The journals will be private to you and me. The journal entries should be printed and brought to class. You will use the journaling template provided in Sakai.

Note: This assignment is not included as a way for me to hold you accountable for the readings (you are all adults; I trust you will come prepared for class each week). Instead, journal writing is useful in facilitating the depth of processing new information because we slow down the processing process

when we write. Writing research demonstrates that we connect the "hand, eye, brain" in one movement (Emig, 1984). And the use of journal writing makes possible the construction of meaning, investigation and enlarging of reality—feats that are difficult to achieve without writing (Yinger & Clark, 1981). Journal writing is not academic writing. Instead, journal writing is personal, expressive, and informal. It is closest to our processes of perception (Berthoff, 1978).

In short, journal writing:
- personalizes the learning process.
- deepens the learning process (elaboration, association, connections).
- forces us to make understandings concrete.
- gives us a record of our progress.
- grounds us in time and space.
- develops higher order thinking and creativity.

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Berthoff, A. (1978). *Forming, Thinking, Writing*. Rochelle Park, NJ: Hayden Book Co.
Emig, J. (1984). *The Web of Meaning*. Upper Montclair, NJ: Boynton/Cook Publishers.
Ying, R. & Clark, C. (1981, July). *Reflective Journal practice: Theory and practice*. Occasional
        Paper no. 50. East Lansing, MI: The Institute for Research on Teaching.

#4: Book Study and Presentation (See class schedule for due dates)
Much of the research about supporting youth who are marginalized in the U.S. continues to be done in the field of education. As a professional librarian you will want to explore that literature, in addition to the literature in our field, throughout your career. For this assignment, students will work in groups to read and analyze one of the following books written by an educator for educators.

1. [Cultivating Genius: An Equity Framework for Culturally and Historically Responsive Literacy](), *Gholdy* E*. Muhammad (Scholastic, 2020)*
2. [*Identity Affirming Classroom: Spaces that Center Humanity*](), by Erica Buchanan-Rivera (Routledge, 2022)
3. [*Literacy is Liberation: Working Toward Justice Through Culturally Relevant Teaching*](), by Kimberly N. Parker (ASCD, 2022)
4. [*Not Light, But Fire: How to Lead Meaningful Conversations About Race in the Classroom*](), Matthew R. Kay (Stenhouse, 2018)
5. [*Social Studies for a Better World :An Anti-Oppressive Approach for Elementary Educators*](), Noreen Naseem Rodriguez and Katy Swalwell (Norton, 2021)
6. [*Teaching, Affirming, and Recognizing Trans* and Gender Creative Youth*](), mj Miller, ed. (Palgrave/MacMillan, 2016 - Open Access Book) OR [Reading the Rainbow: LGBTQ Inclusive Literacy Instruction in the Elementary School](), Caitlin L. Ryan & Jill M. Hermann-Wilmarth (Teachers College Press, 2018).
7. [*Textured Teaching: A Framework for Culturally Sustaining Practices*]()**,** by Lorena Escoto German (Heinemann, 2021)

This assignment has two components – a digital resource and a presentation.

Digital Resource
The digital resource should be designed for library staff who work with youth in public and school libraries. The resource must:
1. summarize the recurring themes, key messages, and important concepts explored in the book,

2. provide concrete ways library staff who work with youth can incorporate those themes, messages, or concepts into their work.

As a group, you may choose the format for this resource. Possibilities include: a google doc, website, infographic, digital booklet, zine, etc. Feel free to be creative.

Presentation

Each group will be given **30 minutes** (see schedule for dates) to:

1. Briefly discuss the recurring themes, key messages, and important concepts found in the text. (5-10 min.)
2. Share concrete ways library staff can incorporate those themes, messages, and concepts into their work (15-20 min).
3. Answer questions. (5 min.)

#4 – Self Reflection

Twice during the term (at the mid-point and at the end) you will be asked to complete a self-reflection. The reflection will include questions such as "What have you learned that you are most excited about? What challenges have you encountered? Talk about the work you've done for the class so far." You will also be asked to give yourself a grade. (Note: While I prefer to give everyone the grade they give themselves, I reserve the right to change grades as appropriate.) Note: the self-assessment will be conducted using a Google Form.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

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.

Counseling and Psychological Services at UNC

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff at UNC are available to provide mental health services to students. Visit their website at: https://caps.unc.edu/ to learn about their services or to schedule an appointment. For severe or potentially life-threatening medical or mental health emergencies, *call 911, go to a local hospital emergency room, or call campus police at 919-962-8100.*

Title IX and the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)

"Title IX and the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) are two of the federal laws that are focused on providing safe, inclusive, and welcoming learning and work environments on campus. Title IX prohibits sex discrimination and sexual harassment. Sexual assault and sexual violence are forms of sexual or gender-based harassment that are prohibited by Title IX. VAWA also requires Universities to address sexual violence, interpersonal violence, and stalking."

For more information:

- View a **Quick Reference Guide** for a step by step approach about how to get help in emergency situations for incidents of sexual and gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault or sexual violence, interpersonal (relationship) violence, and stalking.

- View a **Comprehensive Resource Guide** that provides more detailed information about how to get help following an incident of sexual and gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault or sexual violence, interpersonal (relationship) violence, and stalking.

Basic Needs Security
Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Office of the Dean of Students for support (https://odos.unc.edu/). SILS provides a food pantry with some limited supplies for students in the Student Lounge in SILS.

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.
- 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.

Observance of Religious or Spiritual Holidays/Events
If you need to miss class to observe a religious or spiritual holiday/event, please submit the dates of your absence to me in writing by the end of the second full week of classes. You will be permitted to make up work within a mutually agreed-upon time.

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.

Campus Resources, Centers, and Caucuses
The University provides a few resources for students. To learn more, visit this libguide:
https://guides.lib.unc.edu/campusresources