

University of Iowa School of Library and Information Science
Cultural Foundations 021:101
Fall 2007

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Required Texts

- 1) Matthew Battles, *Library: An Unquiet History*. New York: WW Norton, 2003.
- 2) *College Students' Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources: A Report to the OCLC Membership*. Dublin, Ohio: OCLC Online Computer Library Center, Inc., 2006.
- 3) Susan Patron, *The Higher Power of Lucky*. New York: Atheneum, 2007.
- 4) Louise Robbins, *The Dismissal of Miss Ruth Brown: Civil Rights, Censorship, and the American Library*. Tulsa: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000.
- 5) Some required readings are on reserve in the carrels near SLIS faculty offices, while others are available online. You will need regular access to both print and electronic resources provided by the UI libraries to complete assignments for this course. **Note: If full citations are given for readings, first means of access should be online via a title search in the InfoHawk catalog.**

Course Description

Cultural Foundations introduces the roles of libraries and information agencies in society, looking at the profession's early years, its present, and at projections about the future. It surveys major contemporary concerns, including information policy, professional ethics, literacy, diversity, technology, and pedagogy. User perceptions of libraries and related information environments are also studied.

Course Objectives

The aim of this course is to expose students to information and ideas that form a context for understanding professional issues in library and information science, which may vary according to the type of LIS work one chooses to pursue. The intent is to provide tools and catalysts for thinking about librarianship, informed by the field's history, culture, and ethics. In preparation for the sorts of advocacy and communication activities that are inherent in contemporary professional life, students are asked to demonstrate their learning through in-class dialogue and written assignments. Accordingly, students should work toward the following objectives in this course:

- 1) Gaining vocabulary to support one's learning in the curriculum and communication in post-degree employment;
- 2) Understanding historical and foundational issues, ideas, and questions regarding professional work and scholarly research in library and information science;

- 3) Developing familiarity with resources which can support one's continued learning and professional development in library and information science;
- 4) Analyzing ongoing professional concerns, supported by research and critical reflection, in order to evaluate and to discuss issues with members of the profession, the public, and the various providers of funding for library activities; and
- 5) Articulating critical and empirically grounded insights regarding existing challenges and developing issues in the information professions.

Core Questions

This course asks you to read about the profession and professional concerns, such as library users (or non-users), technologies, and collections. Implicitly or explicitly, these readings demonstrate attitudes and values about the field's past, present, and future activities. Your reflection on the readings and participation in class discussions should be evaluative, recognizing recurring themes and ongoing debates. You should be developing your own ideas about these matters, as well as the ability to support your position with reference to others' ideas and further sources of evidence. This may involve thinking about the type of library or information environment in which you intend to work. Some questions to consider as you prepare for each class include the following:

- 1) What does the writer mean by *library*? What type of library is being discussed? What implications for service and use follow from that understanding?
- 2) Who is the library user? An emerging question in LIS research concerns "the library in the life of the user" as opposed to "the user in the life of the library." Further, libraries often refer to their users in different ways – as patrons, clients, customers, students, or readers or the underserved. It is also useful, at times, to differentiate between the individual user and the community of users. How is the library user understood by this author? What is the relationship between the user and the library? Between the user and the community?
- 3) What is the relationship between the library and the larger culture or environment in which it operates?
- 4) What does this author tell us about past or present work in the information professions? What does it suggest about the future of the professions? What issues or concerns will you deal with as a librarian, and why? How might the past shape your thoughts about the current professional environment?

General Expectations and Guidelines

1. Learning depends on mutual respect. The attitudes and actions you exhibit in class become part of the evaluation of your class participation. Let the conventions of the reference interview be your guide: if you wouldn't do it while interacting with a library user, you probably shouldn't do it in class either. Because this course depends on discussion, in traditional and mediated settings, active preparation and purposeful attendance support your own learning and to contribute to that of others.
2. If you cannot attend class, notify me in advance. You should expect to obtain notes from a member of the class to help cover what you missed. I reserve the right to offer make-up work only in the event of documented, excused absences for which advance notice is given.

4. In your out-of-class work, select and follow an appropriate style sheet or citation manual consistently, including conventions for citation of research, editing, and so on. You may consult the *Chicago Manual of Style*, *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing* or *APA Publication Manual* for guidance on all matters related to academic writing. You will be expected to use standard conventions of academic writing for this course, such as introductions, thesis statements, paragraphing, and conclusions. You may also find the following checklist useful in preparing assignments for submission: http://www.indiana.edu/~rterrell/i_FlightCheck.html.
5. Please be aware that the School of Library and Information Science, in accord with the University, deals with academic and personal misconduct such as plagiarism according to the procedures in the Code of Student Life.
6. Students are expected and encouraged to ask questions about their work in this course. If you feel something is unclear, please ask for clarification before work is due. I am more than happy to work with you in advance of deadlines to make sure you do the best work you can. A separate sheet offers guidance about the types of learning you should seek to demonstrate through your assignments.
6. Incompletes will not be awarded except under extraordinary circumstances. Any request for an extension – whether for an individual assignment or for the course – must be made in advance of the due date or the last class meeting.
7. Students requiring accommodation due to medical conditions or learning disabilities should meet with me as soon as possible after the first class meeting. Accommodations will be made in accordance with university policies and procedures which require that students needing accommodations work with Student Disability Services (<http://www.uiowa.edu/%7Eeds/index.html>).
8. Points are aggregated to determine final grades. These points are converted to a letter-grade on the following 1000-point scale: A=940+, A-=900-939, B+=870-899, B=840-869, B-=800-839, and so on. Generally, B's are awarded to work that meets expectations for this course, while A's are reserved for work exceeding expectations.
9. The instructor reserves the right to make, with notice, necessary adjustments in the calendar and content.
10. All assignments must be completed to pass this course.

Course Components and Assignments

- *Participation* in discussion and active involvement with course content is integral to your own learning experience and that of others in the class. At the same time, this category may include short writing assignments, quizzes, and related activities. In this class you will read a great deal about the profession, and you are expected to share your thoughts and to reflect on what others have to say about this material as a means of finding your place in the professional world.
- *Librarian Interview* describes how your interactions with an assigned Iowa librarian help to develop, confirm, question, or even challenge your ideas about working in the profession.

- *Conference Report* requires attendance at a professional conference to assess its value or importance, thereby demonstrating your ability to develop a conference report for a professional context.
- *Professional Resource Overview* involves gaining understanding of an assigned resource that can support your work in the field. You will prepare an outline and make a short presentation to the class that explains a particular resource.
- “*Casting Off*” *Essay* asks you to research a theme or phenomenon from one of the assigned readings in greater depth, discussing how librarians today should engage this matter in their working lives. You’ll be asked to post your topic in an online forum. An informal sharing of ideas will take place during the last class meeting.

Assignments and Point Distribution

Participation	150
Interview assignment	200
Professional resource	150
Conference report	200
<u>Final essay</u>	<u>300</u>
<i>Total Points</i>	<i>1000</i>

Course Outline, Readings, and Assignment Due Dates

Framing Library & Information Science: History, Theory and Professionalism

8/29: Introduction to the course; professional history, issues, and terminology; fill out background/interest cards; ICON overview

9/5: Libraries as institutions: collection, canon, and censorship; librarian interviewees assigned and interview protocols discussed

- *Read: Battles, Ch. 1-4*
- Professional Resources: American Library Association, its divisions (5), and *American Libraries* magazine

9/12: Libraries as institutions: structures and issues in modern information access

- *Read: Battles, Ch. 5-7*
- Professional Resource: International Federation of Library Associations

9/19: Librarianship as a profession: enduring issues in practice and scholarship

- *Read: Asheim’s “Not Censorship”; selections from LJ’s 1990 “Classics” including Dana, Stevenson, Rawlinson, Greenaway, and Nelson, pp. 67-75 and 77-85; Hermenze, “The Classics Will Circulate,” LJ, Nov., 15, 1981, pp. 2191-95;*
- *Read also Wiegand, Wayne A. “Tunnel Vision and Blind Spots: What the Past Tells us about the Present, Reflections on the Twentieth-Century History of American Librarianship.” Library Quarterly (January 1999) p. 1-27.*
- Professional Resources: Iowa Library Association; Iowa State Library

9/26: Contemporary library professionals: exemplars and emerging challenges

Guest speaker: Jacqueline Snider of ACT

- *Read: LJ Movers & Shakers 2007*
- Professional Resources: Banned Books Week and SLA
- *Due: Librarian interview*

Considering the User

10/3: Selected historical, theoretical and contemporary perspectives on the user

- *Read: Radford & Radford, (2001), "Libraries, Librarians, and the Discourse of Fear, The Library Quarterly, 71(3), 299-329; Woolf, selections from A Room of One's Own; Long Overdue: A Fresh Look at Public and Leadership Attitudes About Libraries in the 21st Century available at http://www.lff.org/long_overdue061306.html*
- Professional resources: *The Whole Library Handbook* and *American Library Directory*

10/10: Asynchronous online discussion via ICON in lieu of face-to-face class session on users' perceptions of libraries as reported by OCLC study, connecting with other readings

- *Read: College Students' Perceptions of Libraries & Information Sources (OCLC)*
- *Due: a substantive posting on issues, ideas, &/ or facts of note resulting from the evening's reading, completed by 10/13/07; follow up by reading others' posts and responding to at least one before the next class session*
- *Note: this session coincides with the Iowa Library Association annual meeting*

10/17: Contemporary users, continued

- *Read: Andrew Abbott, "The University Library," The University of Chicago (May 2006); available at <http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/about/abbott-report.pdf>.*
- Professional resources: *Computers in Libraries* and related conferences; Current Cites listserv; OCLC; WebJunction

LIS Ethics: Freedom to Read and Other Aspects of Professional Values

10/24: Modern librarianship, intellectual freedom, and community diversity: a case study

- *Read: Dismissal of Miss Ruth Brown*
- Professional resources: *Library Journal*, Library Literature and LISA databases
- *Due: conference report*

10/31: Contemporary librarianship and children's right to read: a case study; guest speaker Mary Jo Langhorne on school librarianship; meet at City High School library (to be confirmed)

- *Read: Higher Power of Lucky (Patron/Phelan); "My Scrotum Week" blog entries at <http://medinger.wordpress.com/2007/02/23/my-scrotum-week/>; Bosman, "With One Word, Children's Book Sets Off Uproar," NYT 2/18/07 available online*

- *Read also: Donelson, "Shoddy & Pernicious Books and Youthful Purity: Literary & Moral Censorship, Then & Now" Library Quarterly 52.1: 4-19.*
- *View: Goldberg's June '07 interview with Patron available at <http://alfocus.ala.org/videos/susan-patron-interview>*
- *Professional resources: Intellectual Freedom Manual, 7th ed.; ALA's Office of Intellectual Freedom; School Library Journal*

11/7: Copyright and other library-centered intellectual property/policy issues; guest speaker Patricia Katopol on social aspects of information policy

- *Read: Library Bill of Rights at <http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/statementspols/statementsif/librarybillrights.htm>; Brad Templeton, "10 Big Myths About Copyright Explained" at <http://www.templetons.com/brad/copymyths.html>*
- *Professional resources: Institute of Museum and Library Services; ASIST; Library of Congress; LibraryLaw.com at <http://www.librarylaw.com/>*

Looking Around, Looking Ahead

11/14: Change in libraries; guest speaker Greg Cotton on technical services librarianship (to be confirmed)

- *Read: Keller, Reich & Herkovic -- What is a Library Anymore, Anyway? available at http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue8_5/keller/index.html; Uzanne – The End of Books available at <http://lucy.ukc.ac.uk/Uzanne/> ****Note: further context at <http://www.hidden-knowledge.com/titles/contesbib/>; Van Ordel & Born -- "Journals in the Time of Google"***
- *Librarian resource: selected scholarly publications that may include Library Quarterly, Libraries & the Cultural Record, Journal of Documentation Journal of Government Information, Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*
- *Due: online posting of research topics due via ICON before start of class, with partner's responses to topic postings due via ICON no later than week's end*

11/21: Thanksgiving Recess/no class meeting

11/28: Image of the librarian/libraries and librarians in popular culture; guest speaker, Miriam Sweeney on librarianship in Second Life

- *Read: "What's Harry Potter Doing in the Library?" from IASL Proceedings; "Professional Reading? Or the Case of Librarian Detectives in Mystery Fiction" from Indiana Libraries; Unshelved at <http://www.unshelved.com/> (there is a primer for new readers at <http://www.unshelved.com/primer.aspx>)*
- *Professional resources: selected LIS blogs (3)*

12/5: Informal discussion of findings and perspectives on research

- *Professional Resources: Library Job Postings on the Internet at www.libraryjobpostings.org/ and ALA's JobList*
- *Due: "Casting Off" essay*