

University of Iowa School of Library and Information Science
Public Libraries
Fall 2007

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Required Texts

- 1) John Buschman, *Dismantling the Public Sphere*. New York: WW Norton, 2003.
- 2) Timothy B. Tyson, *Blood Done Sign My Name*. New York: Crown Books, 2004.
- 3) Students should sign on to the general Iowa libraries electronic discussion list at <http://lists.silo.lib.ia.us/mailman/listinfo/iowalib>. Some access to a strong daily newspaper would also be beneficial.
- 4) Many 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 library resources provided by the UI libraries to complete assignments for this course.

Course Description

Public Libraries examines the historical development of public libraries and the public library movement, particularly in the United States; current and continuing issues in public library management and policy making, such as intellectual freedom and the various constituencies served; reader's advisory services and genres of popular materials for adults.

Course Objectives

This seminar encourages students to consider a range of historical, contemporary, and critical perceptions of public libraries. Major scholarship and recent professional publications are used to reveal changing concepts of the American public library over time. Accordingly, students should work toward the following objectives in this course:

- 1) Understanding historical issues and leaders that guided the formation of American public libraries;
- 2) Critically assessing current trends in and frameworks of public library philosophy and activities;
- 3) Recognizing core issues, constituencies, and services of interest in the practice of contemporary public librarianship; and
- 4) Articulating critical and empirically grounded insights regarding existing challenges and developing issues in the field.

Core Questions

This course asks you to read about the history of public librarianship, including its early social movement origins and its current institutional practices. 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 as well as descriptive. 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 is meant by *public library*? What implications for service and use follow from that understanding?
- 2) What aspects of the origins of the public libraries endure? Why? How have public libraries changed? How do continuity and change shape contemporary public library services? What values inform these elements of practice, and why?
- 3) What does each author tell us about past or present work in public libraries? What does it suggest or imply about the future of public libraries? What issues or concerns will emerge in your work as a librarian? How will you respond to these challenges?

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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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. This category includes sharing recent news of interest and relevance to public libraries. In this class you will read a great deal, and you are expected to share your thoughts and to reflect on what others have to say about this material.
- *Seminar Pre-Writings* identify and describe your questions and reactions to assigned readings in preparation for class discussion. These one-page writings, due each class period for which readings have been assigned, will be assessed on a check, check-plus, check-minus system. Their purpose is to help foster meaningful and sustained dialogue on public library issues.
- *Mid-Term Examination* is an out-of-class essay that demonstrates your understanding of the more historically and theoretically oriented issues covered in the initial part of the course.
- *Seminar Facilitation* involves gaining a richer understanding of a topic in the second half of the term in order to provide information and facilitate discussion of the issue during the designated class session. This involves both preparing an annotated bibliography and helping to guide and elicit comments during the class meeting.
- *Reflections on Community Reading* explains your assessment of the local One Community, One Book events with reference to assigned readings, guest speakers' lectures and comments, and any of the associated events that you are able to attend.

- *Research Essay* asks you to write independently on a specific issue or theme related to a course topic. The essay you prepare should demonstrate a contextualized understanding of that topic as it pertains to American public libraries. An informal sharing of issues will take place during the last class meeting.

Assignments and Point Distribution

Participation	150
Pre-Writings	150
Mid-Term	150
Seminar Facilitation	150
Community Reflection	100
<u>Research essay</u>	<u>300</u>
<i>Total Points</i>	<i>1000</i>

Course Outline, Readings, and Assignment Due Dates

Origins of the American Public Library

8/28: Introduction to the course; sign up for seminar facilitation topics/dates; considering dimensions of contemporary public librarianship; tour of ICPL (2nd half of class)

9/4: History of public libraries in the United States; early leaders and social movement contexts for librarianship; preview Buschman readings

9/11: Carnegie libraries, philanthropy, and library funding

- Buschman, Chapter 4 –Library Funding and Information Capitalism
- Stielow & Corsaro, “The Carnegie Question and the Public Library Movement in Progressive Era New York,” *Carnegie Denied: Communities Rejecting Carnegie Library Construction Grants, 1898-1925* (ed. Martin). Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, pp. 35-51.

9/18: Libraries as agencies of culture; gender in public library history

- Augst, “American Libraries and Agencies of Culture,” *Libraries and Agencies of Culture* (eds. Augst and Wiegand)/*American Studies* 42.3 (Fall 2001): 5-22.
- Eddy, “‘We have Become Too Tender-Hearted’: The Language of Gender in the Public Library, 1880-1920,” *Libraries and Agencies of Culture* (eds. Augst and Wiegand)/*American Studies* 42.3 (Fall 2001): 155-172.

9/25: Later developments in public library history

- Becker, “More than Pleasant Luxuries,” *Books & Libraries in American Society During World War II: Weapons in the War of Ideas*. (Routledge: New York, 2005), pp. 7-29.

- Becker, “‘Avoid Frightening the Librarian’: Implementing the Policy Statement,” *Books & Libraries in American Society During World War II: Weapons in the War of Ideas*. (Routledge: New York, 2005), pp. 99-125.
- Leigh Estabrook, “Public Libraries And Civil Liberties: A Profession Divided.” White paper posted at Library Research Center. Available at <http://lrc.lis.uiuc.edu/web/PLCL.html>

Contemporary Issues, Constituencies and Services

10/2*: The role of public libraries and the idea of the public sphere

- Buschman Chapters 1, 3

10/9: *Mid-term exam via ICON*

10/16: Library users, library customers

- Buschman, Chapter 6
- Higgs, “Clashing Philosophies,” *Bloomington Alternative* at <http://www.bloomingtonalternative.com/articles/2007/06/20/8404>

10/23: Library facilities

- Buschman, Chapter 5
- Fialkoff, “Design in a Day,” *Library by Design/Supplement to Library Journal* (Spring 2007), p. 1, 4-5.
- Magnani & Romeo, “Six Tips to Surviving Library Construction,” *Library by Design/Supplement to Library Journal* (Spring 2007), p. 14-15.

10/30: Reader’s Advisory in the Public Library; Genreflecting vs. Booklust; guest lecturer Joan Bessman Taylor on community reading groups and events

- Nancy Pearl’s Book Lust wiki at <http://booklust.wetpaint.com/>
- *Genreflecting* chapter TBA
- Donelson, “Shoddy & Pernicious Books and Youthful Purity: Literary & Moral Censorship, Then & Now” *Library Quarterly* 52.1: 4-19.

11/6: One Community, One Book; Johnson County 2007; guest speakers Joan Nashelsky, MLS, and Pat Schnack, both of the UI Center for Human Rights

- *Blood Done Sign My Name*
- UI HRC Discussion Questions at http://www.uiowa.edu/~uichr/conferences/OCOB_07.html
- Public Programs Office, “One Book, One Community: Planning Your Community-Wide Read,” Chicago: American Library Association, 2003. Available at <http://www.ala.org/template.cfm?Section=ppo>

11/13: The future of public libraries; advocacy

- Buschman, Chapter 9
- Office for Literacy & Outreach Service, “The Small but Powerful Guide to Winning Big Support for Your Rural Library,” Chicago: ALA, 2006.
- ALA’s public libraries advocacy site at www.ilovelibraries.org

11/20: Thanksgiving Recess/no class meeting

11/27: Individual meetings on research and writing (scheduled by appointment)

12/4: Informal presentation and discussion of research findings; *research essay due*

*September 29 – October 6 is Banned Books Week