LIS 592: Intellectual Freedom and Social Responsibility in Librarianship

Course Outline

Winter 2016

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Office hours: By appointment

Calendar Description: Examines the central concepts of intellectual freedom and social responsibility and the range of related issues impacting different types of libraries.

Course Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- analyze, evaluate, and articulate the complexities of intellectual freedom and of social responsibility as multi-dimensional and contested concepts;
- consider theoretical frameworks for examining the library as part of a larger network of cultural production, regulation and ideology and the roles that intellectual freedom and social responsibility play therein;
- analyze how the library and information studies discourse on intellectual freedom and social responsibility interplay with other discourses such as cultural studies, education, philosophy, political science, law, communication technologies, publishing, business, reading research, and so on;
- contextualize the ethos of intellectual freedom and social responsibility in professional discourse in terms of when it emerged, how it evolved, and where it is heading;
- critically evaluate professional issues and core values related to intellectual freedom and social responsibility from various standpoints (e.g., public, school, academic, government, corporate, personal, professional, child, youth, adult, class, race, gender, gender identity, cultural, and literary canons);
- identify and discuss issues, trends, theories, practices, challenges, opportunities, threats, history, research, and key resources from the standpoint of intellectual freedom and social responsibility in Canadian (and other) libraries;
- identify and discuss library association rhetoric (e.g., position statements) on and related to intellectual freedom and social responsibility;
- communicate effectively policy positions on intellectual freedom and social responsibility, through written and other means;
- understand Canadian library and information professionals' roles in promoting and advocating for intellectual freedom and social responsibility.
Measurable Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs):

- After critical reading and reflection in intellectual freedom and social responsibility in librarianship and related literature, students will articulate the complexities of intellectual freedom and of social responsibility as multi-dimensional and contested concepts through required regular participation in a discussion forum.
- After examination of intellectual freedom and social responsibility in librarianship and related literature, in tandem with required course exercises, students will critically analyze trends, theories, practices, challenges, opportunities, threats, history, research, and key resources from the standpoint of intellectual freedom and social responsibility in Canadian (and other) libraries in a series of written critical reflections.
- After drawing upon library association rhetoric and related position statements related to intellectual freedom and social responsibility in librarianship, students will communicate effectively policy positions on intellectual freedom and social responsibility through a written position statement critique.
- After exposure to diverse media coverage and cases studies of intellectual freedom and social responsibility in librarianship, in specific settings and sectors, in tandem with individual research, students will understand Canadian library and information professionals’ roles in promoting and advocating for intellectual freedom and social responsibility on a contemporary issue through a major paper and accompanying shared resource guide.

Content: The course examines the central ethic of intellectual freedom and social responsibility in librarianship and the wide range of issues impacting different types of libraries. Attention is given to the history, research, policy, and resources on these topics within a framework of fundamental questions about the theory and practice of cultural production, access, and regulation in relation to professional and institutional roles.

Methods: Seminar style teaching and learning with heavy emphasis on reading and discussions, as well as a series of activities designed to help students apply theory to practice.

Course Relationships: Pre-requisite: LIS 501.

Required Texts: There is no textbook for this course. There will be a variety of required online readings throughout the semester. In accordance with copyright, some of these resources are publicly accessible; others are accessible through University of Alberta library databases. Students will identify core monographs, reports, journals, articles, websites, legislation, and other resources relevant to intellectual freedom and social responsibility, with special reference to Canadian contexts. They will also sign on to several international listservs to monitor global hot topics and recurring themes. Students will locate and share key resources on topics selected for individual assignments.

Assignments and Weighting:

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<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion Forum Participation</td>
<td>20% (5 x 4% each)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflection Papers on Media Coverage</td>
<td>24% (2 X 12% each) Due Jan. 17 &amp; Jan. 31</td>
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Position Statement Critique  26% Due March 6
Term Paper & Resource Guide  30% Due April 3 & April 8

School of Library and Information Studies Grading Statement: Grades reflect professional judgements of student achievement made by instructors. These judgements are based on a combination of absolute achievement and relative performance in class. The instructor should mark in terms of raw scores, rank the assignments in order of merit, and with due attention to the verbal descriptions of the various grades, assign an appropriate final letter grade.

Academic Integrity: The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.

Inclusive Language and Equity: The Faculty of Education is committed to providing an environment of respect for all people within the university community and to educating faculty, staff, and students in developing teaching and learning contexts that are welcoming to all. The Faculty recommends that students and staff use inclusive language to create a classroom atmosphere in which students’ experiences and views are treated with equal respect and value in relation to their gender, racial background, sexual orientation and ethnic background. Students who require accommodations in this course due to a disability affecting mobility, vision, hearing, learning, or mental or physical health are advised to discuss their needs with Specialized Support and Disability Services.

Recording of Lectures: Recording of lectures is permitted only with the prior written consent of the professor or if recording is part of an approved accommodation plan.

Policy about course outlines can be found in Section 23.4(2) of the University Calendar.