

LIBR 539M (3): LGBTQ Materials for Children and Young Adults

PRE-REQUISITES:

MLIS Students: Completion of MLIS Core

MAS Students: Completion of MAS core plus permission of the iSchool Graduate Advisor

MASLIS Students: Either completion of the MLIS Core, or Completion of MAS cor plus permission of the iSchool Graduate Advisor

GOAL:

The goal of this course is to provide students with an understanding of issues at play in library services related to LGBTQ+ materials and services. While some students may have been exposed to LGBTQ+ materials in other survey courses (e.g., LIBR 520, 526), this course will focus on a specific subset of those materials for children and young adults. Students will be introduced to a breadth of literature and other materials (audiobooks, movie adaptations, digital media) available in various reading levels that contain LGBTQ+ themes and/or characters. In addition, students will be introduced to various concerns and means of addressing book challenges, freedom of information, and collections policies, as well as best practices for working with LGBTQ patrons in a respectful and open manner.

OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

- Recognize and describe the various gender and sexual identities that exist in the LGBTQ+ spectrum. [1.1]
- Synthesize and apply existing scholarship to analyze intersections of LGBTQ+ identities, including the social construction of adolescence and childhood. [4.1]
- Identify and evaluate existing materials for and about LGBTQ+ children and youth in order to identify and assess diverse literary representations. [1.1, 1.2]
- Communicate effectively about LGBTQ+ materials and gain a better understanding of respectful and inclusive language to use when engaging with LGBTQ+ patrons. [1.1, 2.1]
- Discuss the role of LGBTQ+ materials within a community-centred philosophy of librarianship. [1.3, 1.4]
- Identify, select and use critical evaluation tools related to LGBTQ+ children's and young adult literature. [1.1, 1.2]
- Articulate the basics of intellectual freedom, including assessing particular situations and appraising choices based on the Library Bill of Rights and library policy. [1.4, 5.2]
- Demonstrate critical literacy skills by analyzing YA and children's materials, including recognizing historical and current trends in publishing. [4.1]
- Select and summarize existing young adult and children's literature, as well as producing promotional materials, including book talks, dramatic readings, posters, and brochures. [2.1, 2.2, 3.1]
- Engage in guided discussions with colleagues to envision and anticipate diverse

responses to LGBTQ+ literature and materials in terms of practice and policy.
[5.1, 5.2]

CONTENT:

- Module 1: Critical and theoretical knowledge
 - Gender studies in relation to literary analysis and critique
 - Exploring, specifically, inclusion of an expanding number of gender identities in media and literature for children and teens
 - Sexuality studies in relation to literary analysis and critique
 - Examining the changing depictions of sexual identities and greater overall inclusion in media and literature for children and teens
 - How literary analysis can help to deepen understanding of not only what exists in LGBTQ+ children's and YA literature, but also how it can impact young readers
- Module 2: LGBTQ+ Children's Literature
 - Development and progress of sexual and diversity in books for children
 - How do we measure "progress" in relation to LGBTQ+ representation?
 - Books with themes that can be understood as LGBTQ+ through a queer/trans lens
 - How does reading queerly differ from explicit inclusion of LGBTQ+ characters and themes in literature?
- Module 3: LGBTQ+ Young Adult Literature
 - Development and progress of sexual diversity in YA books
 - Development and progress of gender diversity in YA books
 - Books with themes that can be understood as LGBTQ+ through a queer/trans lens
 - #OwnVoices literature for young adults (strategic essentialism can benefit teen readers in ensuring that LGBTQ+ characters *and* authors exist.)
- Module 4: Interacting with LGBTQ+ Patrons
 - Examining what it means to exist as gay/lesbian/trans/etc in various communities and geographic locations
 - Exploring what makes it necessary to understand pronouns and other terminology when recommending or discussing literature with child, teen, or adult patrons
 - Making the library an inclusive and welcoming space for trans and non-binary patrons as well as diverse family structures

DRAFT READING LIST:

Module 1

- Bittner, R., C. Stamper, and J. Ingrey. "Queer and Trans-Themed Books for Young Readers: A Critical Review." *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 37.6. (2016): 948-964.

- Tyson, Lois. "Feminist Criticism." *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide* (3rd Ed.) (2015), 79-114.
- Tyson, Lois. "Lesbian, Gay, and Queer Criticism." *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide* (3rd Ed.) (2015), 302-326.
- Tauches, Kimberly. "Transgendering: Challenging the 'Normal.'" *Introduction to the New Sexuality Studies* (2nd Ed.) (2011), 134-139.
- Marinucci, Mimi. *Feminism is Queer: The Intimate Connection Between Queer and Feminist Theory*, Zed Books, 2010.

Module 2

- Naidoo, J.C. *Rainbow Family Collections: Selecting and Using Children's Books with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Content*, Libraries Unlimited, 2012.
- Assorted picturebooks such as:
 - *Otter and Odder* (James Howe & Chris Raschka)
 - *10,000 Dresses* (Marcus Ewert & Rex Ray)
 - *Worm Loves Worm* (J.J. Austrian & Mike Curato)
 - *Heather Has Two Mommies* (Leslea Newman & Diana Souza)
 - *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress* (Christine Baldacchino & Isabelle Malenfant)
 - *This Day in June* (Gayle E. Pitman & Kristyna Litten)

Module 3

- Crisp, T. "The Trouble with *Rainbow Boys*," in *Over the Rainbow: Queer Children's and Young Adult Literature*, University of Michigan Press, 2011.
- Jenkins, C., & Cart, M. *Representing the Rainbow in Young Adult Literature: LGBTQ+ Content since 1969*, Rowman & Littlefield, 2018.
- Bittner, R. "(Im)Possibility and (In)Visibility: Arguing Against 'Just Happens to Be' in Young Adult Literature," *Queer Studies in Media and Popular Culture*
- Cart, M., & Jenkins, C. *Top 250 LGBTQ Books for Teens: Coming Out, Being Out, and the Search for Community*. Huron Street Press, 2015.
- Assorted YA novels such as:
 - *Every Day* (David Levithan)
 - *They Both Die at the End* (Adam Silvera)
 - *We Are the Ants* (Shaun David Hutchinson)
 - *Ramona Blue* (Julie Murphy)
 - *Boy Robot* (Simon Curtis)
 - *Proxy* (Alex London)
 - *We Are Okay* (Nina LaCour)
 - *Some Assembly Required* (Arin Andrews)
 - *Rethinking Normal* (Katie Rain Hill)
 - *Kind of an Epic Love Story* (Kheryn Callender)
 - *Spinning* (Tillie Walden)

- *Openly Straight* (Bill Konigsberg)
- *Birthday* (Meredith Russo)
- *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* (Emily Danforth)
- *Radio Silence* (Alice Oseman)
- *None of the Above* (I.W. Gregorio)
- *Queens of Geek* (Jen Wilde)
- *Juliet Takes a Breath* (Gabby Rivera)
- *Boy Meets Boy* (David Levithan)

Module 4

- American Library Association. (2010). “Access to library resources and services regardless of sex, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation.” Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/policymanual/updatedpolicymanual/section2/53intellfreedom>
- Loverich, P., & Degnan, D. (1999). “Out on the shelves? not really: Gay, lesbian, bisexual books in short supply,” *Library Journal*, 124.11, 55.
- *Out Behind the Desk: Workplace Issues for LGBTQ Librarians*, edited by Tracy Nectoux. Library Juice Press, 2011.

STATEMENT ON THE NATURE OF THE ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment Name	Weight	Graduate Competencies
Professionalism and class participation	10%	1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 4.1, 5.1
<p>Critical Reviews</p> <p><i>Students are expected to read and evaluate YA literature and other media (audiobooks, movie adaptations, etc) with a critical eye throughout the semester. This assignment will give students to opportunity to not only practice reading with greater depth and breadth, but will cultivate an ability to review in a professional capacity. They will submit 5 critical reviews (250 words) from a variety of readings throughout the semester.</i></p>	25%	1.4, 2.1
<p>Book Talks and Reports</p> <p><i>Students will participate in reading circles with two other classmates (groups of three). Each reading circle will be comprised of different students reading different books. Books read in the circle can count toward the critical reviews. Each person in the book circle will give a compelling and informative book talk meant to entice readers (teens specifically) to either purchase or take the book out from a library.</i></p> <p><i>Each book talk will be discussed with the other two members of the circle for constructive purposes, to improve over time. A copy of the evaluation reports along with the text of the book</i></p>	15%	2.1

<p><i>talk will be submitted to the instructor for grading.</i></p>		
<p>Marketing / Publicity</p> <p><i>Students will be expected to create a resource for patrons that emphasizes and markets the work of LGBTQ+ authors. The resource can be aimed at teens, parents of young children, or be geared to a specific event (i.e. Pride.) The resource can be a book list, series of posters, or a something else entirely. A short 1-2 page justification for decisions made will accompany the assignment, in order to show the process and highlight what knowledge from the course was used and considered.</i></p> <p><i>(Depending on access, this assignment may include an experiential learning component in conjunction with a library or community partner)</i></p>	<p>20%</p>	<p>1.1, 1.2</p>
<p>Book Challenge Project</p> <p><i>Students will be required to find an instance of a book being banned or challenged for LGBTQ content (it may be challenged for additional reasons). In consultation with the ALA's Library Bill of Rights and resources available through the ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom, students will be required to write a short paper (4-5 pages) that includes: a summary of the original challenge; an evaluation of the decision (whether it was kept on shelves, removed, etc.), referencing the affected library's collections development policies; and an exploration of the impacts the decision may have (positive or negative) on the community and LGBTQ individuals. Students will need to choose a type of library (Public, School, Academic) and research various policies in place to determine what decision would best address the concerns brought forward by the complainant.</i></p>	<p>30%</p>	<p>1.1, 1.2, 1.4</p>

Additional Reading

- American Library Association. (2005). Labels and rating systems: An interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/labelingrating>
- Symons, A. K. & Freeman, J. (2015, June), Serving everyone: Welcoming the LGBT community. *American Libraries*, 30. Retrieved from <http://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2015/06/24/serving-everyone/>
- Young, C. (2015). ALA President Courtney Young releases statement regarding Indiana's new Religious Freedom Restoration Act. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2015/03/alapresident-courtney-young-releases-statementregarding-indiana-s-new>