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 UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN



SI 643: Professional Practice in Libraries and Information Centers

Winter 2009—3 credits

Prof. Joan C. Durrance

Course Description

SI 643 prepares students for need-based, user-centered professional practice in a variety of information environments in a period of change. The emphasis in SI 643 is on professional practice occurring both in institutional settings (including public, academic, special, and school libraries and information centers) and directly between information professionals and their clientele.

Professional practice consists of a variety of functions and practices that increase people's access to information and knowledge. It is based both on an understanding of user information constructs and on knowledge of information systems and services.

Martha Kyrillidou, Director of the Association for Research's Statistics and Service Quality Program in 2002 wrote: "The need to create the new library, to reinvent or reconceptualize, is real and many are engaged in trying to do just that. Possible models to emulate are available by looking either backward, learning from the historical perspective, or looking forward, learning from newly gained insights into the operation of future libraries." Kyrillidou. "From input and output, etc." JAL, 2002 (v.28), pp 42-46.

Louise Blalock, Director of Hartford Public Library, believes that "today's challenge is to *reinvent the library* to respond to community needs and aspirations, and yet to retain the core values of intellectual freedom, free and equitable access, and trust and mutual respect. The social change we are experiencing is as powerful as the technological change, and equally a driving force in the need to reinvent ourselves. *How do we do that? By getting as close to the community as we can, paying attention to what they say, and participating in community organizations: listening, learning, linking.*"

SI 643 GOALS & OBJECTIVES

SI 643 asks "What is the core of professional practice? What are the roles and problems undertaken by librarians as information professionals? How can professional practice effectively build on theoretical frameworks, best practice examples, & relevant research? What is the influence of librarians' ethics and values?"

- In the process we will look at the *approaches and strategies designed to increase access to information and knowledge.*
- We will identify librarians' *knowledge domains and required competencies.*
- We will discuss *challenges faced by these information professionals* who practice in physical and virtual environments.
- Explore *the issues and problems encountered by information professionals* who seek to increase access to information.
- Consider *factors that influence professional practice.*
- Explore professional practice 1) *across different environments* and 2) *considering a variety of uses of information*, becoming familiar with a range of strategies that can be used to increase people's access to information in a period of change.

- *Gain skills in communicating professionally.*
- *Consider the influence of ethics and values on professional practice.*

Course Methods:

- Lectures, discussion of strategies and approaches. Written and oral presentation of ideas.
- Required readings and participation in class discussion,
- Leadership of class discussions.
- Student papers and presentations.

SI 643 uses a C-Tools site for course assignments. Most course articles are in digital form. Some SI 643 resources are on reserve through University Course Reserves.

COURSE POLICIES

Academic Integrity Policy

Unless otherwise specified in an assignment, all submitted work must be your own, original work. Any excerpts from the work of others must be clearly identified as a quotation, and a proper citation provided. Any violation of the School's policy on Academic and Professional Integrity (see the Master's and Doctoral Student Handbooks) will result in severe penalties, ranging from failing an assignment or failing the course, to being expelled from the program administered at the discretion of the instructor and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know at your earliest convenience. Some aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities, or the way the course is taught may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make me aware of your needs, we can work SI student services and with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). I will treat any information you provide as private and confidential.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Comment Papers (CP) & Participation

20%

Engagement with course readings is an essential component of this class. *Active, relevant participation* in all class discussions will be based on preparation that involves reading, developing comment papers (CP) (submitted weekly on *all* assigned articles), and engaging in meaningful discussion of these articles. Each week before class you will turn in a one page comment paper that draws from each assigned article on Assignments in CTools. Submit it in the appropriate CP heading under Assignments. Be sure to include your name and indicate at the top of the assignment the week and a brief citation for each reading. (e.g., Bates (1999); Borgman (2003 & 2008). Each week I will randomly check these comment papers and will periodically comment on this aspect of your work.

2. Discussion leader responsibility

15%

Each student in 643 will have **one** opportunity to lead a discussion group of 5 of your fellow 643 students for 50 minutes on your leadership day. Sign up for this leadership responsibility on the first day of class if possible by printing your name and your email address clearly on the sign-up sheet. Discussion leader responsibilities begin Jan 15.

This requirement is closely tied to the CP and participation assignment above. You need to be thoroughly familiar with the articles and focus the discussion on the topic of the day. I have developed a very basic question for each week. You will need to flesh out the question that appears on the schedule. I will be glad to meet with each week's discussion leaders during my office hours the Thursday before your session.

On the day of your discussion, you should come prepared with a plan for the discussion including questions. Remember you are not just discussing the articles, but rather you are discussing the larger topic. The articles are the basis for discussing the larger topic. You may wish to select a related article to share with your group. It is possible to discuss student professional experiences, but I don't want that to dominate the discussion. When we return to the large group I will ask discussion leaders to share some insights from the small group discussion.

Turn in your regular CP the week you lead. In addition, please write me a brief report on the insights from the discussion. Include a proper citation to the additional article you chose and indicate its relationship to the topic. Include a list of those in your discussion group. Your leadership paper is due by the following Thursday.

3. Job Analysis and Competencies Paper: DUE JAN 29 20%

This paper should be based on **an examination of job ads, relevant articles, websites, and appropriate competency statements.** It is an initial look at the problems librarians undertake as information professionals.

- Compare ads for comparable positions in several different libraries or information environments. The aim of this assignment is to identify the knowledge, skills, attitudes need by various kinds of librarians. **Thus it is essential to: Choose jobs that require experience (rather than entry level positions). Do not choose entry level jobs. Do not choose library director positions since we are looking for domain expertise.**
- Examine at least **four detailed ads** for a particular type of job (such as an information literacy librarian in a college library, outreach librarian in a public library, medical informationist, school library media specialist, etc.) in such journals as *Library Journal* or one of the library job websites. Include the job ads as an appendix to your paper. Ads can be found in a variety of places, including major journals and online sites (such as ALA's).
- To give you a sense of the job area you are exploring: **read at least 3 articles** that touch on: a) this particular environment, b) the professionals who work in it and the problems they seek to solve as well as the knowledge, skills needed to do this job. Incorporate your reading into the paper, the bibliography, and the class discussion.
- Incorporate, as appropriate, any relevant professional association or other competency statement that has been developed for this job type. Most can be found with a Google search.

Armed with knowledge from the ads, the background articles, and other relevant background material , *write an analysis of the job area.* This relatively short paper

(3-5 pages single spaced) is due Jan 29. We will discuss it in class. This report should include:

- the *problems* this particular type of information professional focuses on (e.g., specific focus of the job), looking at the kinds of activities that the librarian would be likely to carry out;
- relevant information about the *clientele or constituency*
- the *demands and expectations* of this particular information environment including job conditions and salary.

- Address the *knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes* needed for this job. Indicate the *competencies* needed for this type of job incorporating the job ads and appropriate articles, providing support from ads, competency statements, etc.. Is there agreement and/or disjunct between what the ads say they want and the relevant competency statement(s)?
- Discuss the *values* implicitly or explicitly expressed in the job ads and the articles.
- Cite your resources, e.g., articles, websites, ads etc. used in your research in the text. Include a resource list. *Include copies of the ads as an appendix to your report.*

Bring a paper copy to class as the basis for class discussion. Turn in a paper copy at the end of class after our discussion. Deposit a copy on the JOB ANALYSIS PAPER Folder on the C-Tools site. Title of file should be: yourname_JOB

4. UNOBTRUSIVE OBSERVATIONS DUE and discussed Mar 5 20%

Do this assignment with a partner from the class and submit a joint report with both your names on it. I will introduce the assignment Feb 19. If you would like to start working on it before then, follow the instructions below.

ASSIGNMENT OVERVIEW:

The Willingness to Return studies (of which this is one) differ from earlier unobtrusive observation studies of reference interactions in which researchers asked questions of librarians that they knew the answers to in an effort to determine accuracy rates. We, on the other hand, identify factors associated with people's willingness to return to a librarian at another time with another question.

This assignment consists of two "secret shopper" unobtrusive observations of a reference interaction in a library or archive for each partner—1) an in-person observation and 2) an "observation" of an e-reference interaction. This will involve each of you acting both as a questioner and an observer. The questioner prepares the question to be asked and the observer stands (or sits) close enough to watch what is going on and take notes on the interaction. Since the observer has been observing the interaction and taking notes, (s)he should take the lead in filling out the appropriate instrument associated with the observation—in conjunction with the questioner. Immediately following the observation you should allow time to compare notes on the interaction and fill out the unobtrusive observation instruments.

OBSERVATION BASICS: *These observations should be conducted in an environment where you are not known.* Don't tell the staff that it is a class assignment to observe them since we don't want to incorporate a "Hawthorne effect."

CONFIDENTIALITY: We do not seek to embarrass anyone or trip anyone up. Our aim is to look across interactions. Therefore, it is important to maintain confidentiality. Do NOT identify the specific location or a specific staff member.

CHOOSING A QUESTION: *Do not ask a question with a simple fact-based answer.* It is important that you choose a *question for each observation that you really need answered or a problem that you need solved with information.*

THE INSTRUMENTS: The instruments you use were developed by JCD with some questions and the checklist borrowed or adapted from Catherine Ross and her associates at the University of Western Ontario. Become familiar with the instruments before you do the observations. The unobtrusive observation materials are clearly marked and are included in the resources folder on the CTools site. They are marked E-REFERENCE and IN-PERSON REFERENCE. You will need both instruments.

THE OBSERVATION ITSELF: Your SI partner will observe you when you ask your question and vice-versa. If you choose to have a proxy (a family member or friend) ask a question then you can be the observer. Always allow the questioner to be in charge while you accompany that person, observing and recording all actions. Your combined paper is based on the *completed instruments* for each interaction. Thus comments on the instruments help you (and me) understand what happened and why. Please complete the instruments IMMEDIATELY after the interaction by going to a place where you will be undisturbed for this important activity.

ANALYZING THE DATA: Compare notes on all interactions. Understand your findings by analyzing the data (both the numerical data on the scales, the comments on the instruments, and the other data from the observation—what was said, body language, etc). It is important to compare notes on all the observations and talk about what you have found before you write it up.

ANALYTICAL PAPER: Provide a short (3-4) page single-spaced analytical paper. Describe but do not identify the specific library or archive or staff member. Comment on key success-failure factors. Compare interactions. Your paper is based on your analysis of the instruments and your discussion of what happened in each observation and why. Relate observation experience components to course readings and relevant articles. Include the instruments that you filled out as well as a short bibliography as appendices (see below).

For e-reference observation include transcripts/email. *Include the data collection instruments as appendices with your analytical paper in digital format. Appendix 1 is the in-person instrument for one of you; Appendix 2 the in-person instrument for the other. Appendix 3 is the e-reference instrument (and transcripts/email) for one of you; Appendix 4 is the e-reference instrument (and transcripts/email) for the other.*

Submit your paper to the UNOBTRUSIVE OBSERVATION folder in ASSIGNMENTS on the C-Tools site. Title of file should be: yournames_OBS (Smith_Brown_OBS). Don't give me 2 copies. Choose who will submit the paper. The other person will submit a note to the assignment folder (UNOB OBS) that indicates that your partner (give his/her name) has submitted your paper).

This is an analytical, reflective paper that addresses a professional practice challenge, problem or issue arising from this class. Clearly state the challenge, problem, and/or issue you are addressing in the opening paragraph. *Submit a title and a draft of your opening paragraph on March 19.*

Use headings to set off different topics. This paper requires well-considered arguments. The paper should be based on a well-conducted, relevant, literature review and include a strong analysis and synthesis of the literature, and be well organized. Length: approx six pp. Complete bibliographic citations in a bibliography are required. Paper will be accompanied by a 5 minute oral presentation of highlights *and a handout* that in some way distills your findings. DUE April 3. Turn in your paper on the C-Tools ASSIGNMENTS SYNTHESIS PAPER folder. Title of file should be: yourname_SYNPA

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

Wk	Date	Topic	Assignments
Wk1	Jan 8	<p>Overview of SI 643. "What is the core of professional practice? Conceptual Frame. Knowledge domains. Intro to competencies and professional practice. Changing LIS education.</p> <p>Assignments: Each week students are expected to read and be prepared to discuss all articles in TOPIC column.</p>	<p>Sign-up for leadership sessions.</p> <p>Read next week's assignments:</p>
Wk2	Jan 15	<p>A Changing Information Profession</p> <p>Readings: Bates (1999); ALA State (2008) (skim); Core Values (skim) http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/oif/statements/pols/corevaluesstatement/corevalues.cfm</p> <p>What problems do librarians as information professionals undertake? What is the state of America's libraries? What are some issues facing librarians?</p>	<p>DISC 1</p> <p>Bates ALA State (2008) ALA Core values</p>
Wk3	Jan22	<p>NO CLASS JCD @ ALISE Conference</p>	
Wk4	Jan 29	<p>Education for a Changing Profession</p> <p>Readings: Marcum (2003), Durrance (2004), Markey (2004); McKinney (2006) Take a look at the iSchools website: http://www.ischools.org/index.php/site/about/</p> <p>What knowledge/ skills do librarians need and how do they gain them?</p>	<p>DISC 2</p> <p><i>Marcum Markey Durrance</i></p> <p><i>DUE & Discuss: Job Analysis & Competencies Paper:</i></p>
Wk 5	Feb 5	<p>Libraries as "Information Use" Environments</p> <p>Readings: Taylor (1991) (JCD will introduce); Lewis (2007), Dalrymple (2003); Neuman (2003)</p> <p>How can an understanding of the concept of different information environments help librarians?</p>	<p>DISC 3</p> <p><i>Dalrymple Newman Lewis</i></p>

Wk 6	Feb 12	<p>Librarians and their Clientele Readings: JCD will introduce Fisher et al 2004); Kuhlthau (2009); Walter (2003); Borgman (2003,2008); Yakel (2004);</p> <p>How can librarians more effectively anticipate the information needs and uses of their clientele (and of those who may need their services but don't use them)?</p>	<p>DISC 4 <i>Kuhlthau Borgman Yakel Walter</i></p>
Wk 7	Feb 19	<p>Services, Strategies, & Approaches to increasing access to information. Focus on: In-person and electronic reference.</p> <p>JCD introduces reference interview assignment.</p> <p>Readings:Durrance (1989); Nardi/O'Day (1999); Radford & Connaway (2007);</p>	<p>DISC 5 Prepare to conduct unobtrusive observation due 3.5.09</p> <p>Durrance; Nardi & O'Day; Radford & Connaway</p>
	Feb 26	WINTER BREAK NO CLASSES	
Wk 8	Mar 5	<p>Unobtrusive Observation; Short Communication Skills Workshop Readings: Ross et al How effectively do librarians communicate?</p>	<p>Unobtrusive Observation Paper; <i>Workshop participation.</i></p> <p>Ross et al</p>
Wk 9	Mar 12	<p>Evidence-Based Practice</p> <p>Readings: Giuse et al (2005; Kronenfeld et al (2007); Brophy (2007; Cullen (2004);</p> <p>How do libraries & librarians help? What differences do they make?</p>	<p>DISC 6 Giuse et al Kronenfeld et al Brophy Cullen</p>
Wk 10	Mar 19	<p>Information literacy & Instruction.</p> <p>Readings: Ward (JAL 2006); Bruce (2002); Harris (2008)</p> <p>How can/do librarians foster information literacy? To what end?</p>	<p>DISC 7</p> <p>Bruce Ward Harris</p>

Wk 11	Mar 26	<p>External Strategies: Collaboration; Building Credibility & Relationships</p> <p>Readings: Florance et al (2002); JCD will introduce Durrance et al (2006); Williams & Zald (1999); Urban Libraries Council (ULC) (2006) & ICMA Mgt Perspective (2007)</p> <p>What are the implications of focusing on relationship building?</p>	<p>DISC 8 Florance et al; Williams & Zald; Both ULC & ICMA;</p>
Wk 12	Apr 2	<p>Ethics and Values. SYNTHESIS</p> <p>First Amendment. Become familiar with first amendment basics for librarians: http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/oif/basics/firstamendment.cfm</p> <p>Ethics Statement & Interpretations http://www.ala.org/ala/issuesadvocacy/proethics/index.cfm</p> <p>Rubin (2000) Ch 10</p> <p>SYNTHESIS, PART 1 Professional practice wrap-up. Bringing it all together. How can you best prepare to design the professional practice of 2020?</p>	<p>1. First Amendment Basics</p> <p>2. Ethics</p>
Wk 13	Apr 9	<p>SYNTHESIS, PART 2 Formal course presentations.</p>	<p>Due: Final Paper</p>
Wk 14	Apr 16	<p>Formal course presentations.</p>	

1/6/09