IRLS563 Readers' Advisory Services in Public Libraries

Updated Mon, 08/24/2009 - 19:00

COURSE NAME, NUMBER AND PREREQUISITES:

Readers' Advisory Services in Public Libraries.

IRLS563 Section 001

This course is an elective course for the SIRLS Masters degree. [Prerequisite: IRLS 504 or consent of the instructor.]

Please note that this syllabus is under construction.

Instructor: Jennifer Hendzlik

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to readers' advisory work in a public library setting. The emphasis of the course will be on genre fiction including mystery, romance, science fiction, Christian, western, horror and fantasy. We will also explore the lesser genres of adventure, suspense, historical, literary, chick-lit and graphic novels. Non-fiction readers' advisory will also be addressed. We will explore readers' advisory tools, the readers' advisory interview, and the appeal factor of books as well as different marketing tools that can be used to promote fiction in the library. This is a discussion-oriented course and will be reading intensive.

The first two weeks of the class will be the most intensive of the course. A lot of information that lays the foundation of readers' advisory services will be presented to you and will be essential to your success. The class is structured differently than most readers' advisory courses and I hope you will grow to understand why as the semester takes shape. While the historical background, appeal factors, readers' advisory interview and talking about books are very important to the field of readers' advisory-it is hard to fully comprehend and put to use these components if you have a small hold on the genres. Without a solid understanding of each genre and what makes that genre appealing to readers-you will be more lost than found with your patron. Simply put, to know a genre, you must read a genre. There is no getting around this fact.

With this concept in mind, the bulk of the class will be focused on the various fiction genres and one week of non-fiction readers' advisory. With each genre we will incorporate the elements from the first two weeks into the discussion. With theory and practical experience, you should have the tools needed to begin your journey with readers' advisory services.

If you have any questions, please contact me. It is easier to work on a solution to a problem when it gets started rather than when it may be too late to help. I am here to provide a positive learning experience and I am pretty laid back. However, it is your responsibility to let me know what you need. Without your input, I have no way of knowing what is happening with you. I will do my best to keep the class informed and updated of any changes in the class schedule well in advance.

In an effort to keep everyone focused on the topic at hand, I generally do not post all assignments well in advance. I will post lectures the Sunday before the week of the discussion. The lecture notes will include the assigned reading from the textbooks.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Our course objectives for the semester are as follows:

- to introduce students to readers' advisory in a public library setting.
• to introduce students to sources available in readers' advisory services.
• to introduce students to the practice and art of the readers' advisory interview.
• to provide students the training and practical experience needed to talk about books to patrons, including book discussions and book talks.
• to provide a basic overview of the most popular genres of fiction.
• to understand the role of non-fiction readers' advisory in the public library.
• to gain knowledge and understanding of the role fiction plays in a public library setting including marketing and programming.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS:

Textbooks:


Saricks, Joyce. *Readers' Advisory Services in the Public Library*. 3rd edition. ALA, 2005. (Optional) * This text is not required but I highly recommend its purchase for students who are focusing on public library careers.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weeks</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1:</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 25</td>
<td>1. Introductions</td>
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<td>2. History of Readers' Advisory Services</td>
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<td>3. Readers' Advisory Resources</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Introduce self to class</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Book discussion title selection to me by 9.2</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Evaluation of RA resource due 9.2</td>
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<td>• Discussion</td>
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<td>Week 2:</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 2</td>
<td>1. Appeal factors</td>
<td>• Interview skits due 9.7</td>
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<td>2. Readers' Advisory Interview</td>
<td>• Appeal practice annotation due 9.7</td>
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<td>3. Speed Reading</td>
<td>• Speed reading exercise</td>
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<td>• Discussion</td>
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<td>Week 3:</td>
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<td>September 8</td>
<td>1. The Mystery Genre</td>
<td>• Genre study due 9.14</td>
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<td>• Discussion</td>
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<td>Week 4:</td>
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<td>September 15</td>
<td>1. The Western Genre</td>
<td>• Genre study due 9.28</td>
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<td>• Discussion</td>
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<td>Week 5:</td>
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<td>September 22</td>
<td>1. The Romance Genre</td>
<td>• Genre discussion due 10.5</td>
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<td>• Discussion</td>
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<td>Week 6:</td>
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<td>September 29</td>
<td>1. The Science Fiction Genre</td>
<td>• Genre study due 10.12</td>
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<td>• Discussion</td>
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<td>Week 7:</td>
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<td>October 6</td>
<td>1. The Fantasy Genre</td>
<td>• Genre study due 10.12</td>
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<td>• Discussion</td>
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### Assignments

**1. Evaluation of a Readers' Advisory Resource: (20 pts) Due September 2nd.** Using the guidelines for evaluating reference materials and readers' advisory materials, each student will evaluate a print or database readers' advisory resource and provide a 2-page evaluation of the book or database.

**2. Interview Skits: (10 pts) Due September 7th.** The best way to learn how to conduct an RA interview is to get a lot of practice at it. I will have skits posted in which each of you will be assigned an example to evaluate.

**3. Appeal Practice Annotation: (10 pts) Due September 7th.** This annotation is to use the book you chose as a favorite.
for the class. For each appeal characteristic answer the questions outline in the annotation form about your book. Really give thought to the reasons you like the book when you are answering the questions. When you have completed the annotation, post on the discussion board you annotation. This should help you better understand explaining a book by its appeal characteristics.

4. Genre Studies: (10 pts for each genre) Due by the end of each week, but the earlier you can post, the better for our discussions. In order to know a genre, you must read a genre. For each genre we discuss I will require the following:
   - Read at least one book in the genre and turn in an annotation. (Annotation guidelines will be provided)
   - Evaluate one article or website that is dedicated to the genre in discussion. Special consideration should be given to trends in the field. I expect website reviews to be exemplery examples of readers' advisory resources.
   - Participate in active/critical discussion with the rest of the class about the different characteristics and appeal of the genre. You should also be thinking of different ways the genre can be promoted in the library.

5. Midterm Library Visit/Evaluation: (100 pts) Due October 19th. With a better understanding of the RA interview, I am sending you on an adventure to test your local library's reference staff. Scripts will be provided for you to follow. You will need to record everything from staff reactions to your request to steps taken to help you in your search. More details will be provided. A 3-5 page paper outlining the experience will be turned in and discussed.

6. Fiction Participation: (10 pts) For the duration of the semester, each of you will join the fiction_l listserv. I recommend subscribing to the digest format for ease of management. Subscription information is available at: http://www.webrary.org/RS/flmenu.html At least once during the semester, post a readers' advisory question to the group and share your experience with the class.

7. Book Discussion (30 pts) Due by December 7th. Feedback & evaluation by December 10th. While most book discussions happen face to face, we are going to have book discussion virtually. Due to the size of the class, you will be broken into 3 different groups that will read 3 different titles. Titles will be assigned the first week of class with the actual discussion being done during week fifteen. Criteria for evaluation will be provided. The three title choices are:
   1. Peace Like a River by Leif Enger
   2. Water for Elephants by Sara Gruen
   3. Peony in Love by Lisa See

Each book should be easily available at your local library and used bookstores. If you have trouble finding a copy of your assigned book, please let me know and I will get you a copy.

8. Final Project: (100 pts) Due December 7th. Feedback & evaluation of peer projects due by 12.10. Each student will select a genre to focus on. The student must create a website for fellow librarians to help learn about the genre. I will leave the choice of genre up to you, BUT if the class does not choose all the genres, I reserve the right to assign certain genres for a better representation. The site does not have to be fancy; it just needs to be a one-stop resource to learn about the genre. The website should include:
   - Definition, characteristics and appeal of the genre.
   - The most popular sub genres and their definitions. Examples of authors and/or titles important.
   - Annotated bibliography of reference resources that can be used to learn more information about the genre. Should include both book resources and articles.
   - Annotated bibliography of websites that pertain to the genre.
   - Include book annotations of titles read over the semester. I would prefer that they include titles you have read, but I will accept 5 books that you have "speed read". You should include at least 10 annotations.

9. Class Participation: (5 pts each week) You will be expected to fully participate in all class discussions and activities, demonstrating a knowledge and application of relevant readings and topics. On D2L it is expected for you to contribute to relevant postings each week. But relevant I mean a thoughtful response to a question or posting your own topic of discussion. Simply responding that you agree will not be counted towards your participation grade.

COURSE, SCHOOL, AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES:

Academic Code of Integrity
Students are expected to abide by The University of Arizona Code of Academic Integrity. 'The guiding principle of academic integrity is that a student's submitted work must be the student's own.' If you have any questions regarding what is acceptable practice under this Code, please ask an Instructor.

Accommodating Disabilities

The University has a Disability Resource Center. If you anticipate the need for reasonable accommodations to meet the requirements of this course, you must register with the Disability Resource Center and request that the DRC send me, the Instructor, official notification of your accommodation needs as soon as possible. Please plan to meet with me by appointment or during office hours to discuss accommodations and how my course requirements and activities may impact your ability to fully participate.

Assignment Policies

- **How to submit your assignments:** Assignments should be turned in to the assignment drop box on D2L. Some assignments will be posted in the discussion forum for class discussion. Details will be provided with each assignment's guidelines. Please include your name on every item you turn in. I will return assignments to you if requested.
- **Assignment due dates:** Assignments are due no later than midnight of the assigned due date. Students are expected to stay on top of their coursework and complete the course as scheduled.
- **Writing style:** My preferred writing style is the APA format. However, if you are more familiar with a different style, feel free to use it. I expect that no matter what the style is your assignment will be correct in format and free of grammatical and typographical errors. Graduate quality of writing is expected.
- **Late Policy:** I do not accept late work. Exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis with consideration to emergency situations that cannot be planned for or avoided. Personal responsibility is essential to a successful academic and professional career. That said, I cannot help you unless you communicate with me. Got a problem? Let's talk about it.

**Incompletes**

The current Catalog reads

The grade of I may be awarded only at the end of a term, when all but a minor portion of the course work has been satisfactorily completed. The grade of I is not to be awarded in place of a failing grade or when the student is expected to repeat the course; in such a case, a grade other than I must be assigned. Students should make arrangements with the instructor to receive an incomplete grade before the end of the term ...

If the incomplete is not removed by the instructor within one year the I grade will revert to a failing grade.

**GRADING:**

Grades will be posted as quickly as possible for the student. Grades will be posted in the grades section of D2L. Feedback will be provided especially in relation to areas that need improvement. My feedback is intended as a learning process to improve future work.

**Grading Breakdown:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of readers' advisory resource</td>
<td>20 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview skits</td>
<td>10 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeal practice annotation</td>
<td>10 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genre studies (10 pts for each genre)</td>
<td>110 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm library visit/evaluation</td>
<td>100 points</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Fiction_l participation | 10 points
Book discussion | 30 points
Final project | 100 points
Participation (5 pts per week) | 80 points

**Total Points:** 470 points

**Grading Scale:**

A 90-100%
B 80-89%
C 70-79%
D 60-69%
F 59 and below

**INSTRUCTOR NAME AND CONTACT ADDRESSES:**

Jennifer Hendzlik. D2L email is always the easiest way to contact me. I do have a "day job" that takes up the majority of my days. You can always reach me unofficially at jenniferh@thelibrary.org or at 417-883-5366 ext 268 (work) 417-753-4148 (home). Feel free to call me at work, just please be understanding that my day job includes meetings, staff management, vendors, salesmen etc...

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**Navigation**

- Browse Site
- For Authors

**Courses**

- Syllabi
  - Fall 11
  - Summer 2011
  - Spring 11
  - Fall 10
  - Summer 10
  - Winter 10-11
  - Spring 10
  - Winter 09 10
  - Fall 09
Summer 09
Spring 09
Winter 08 09
Fall 08
- IRLS506-001 Research Methods
- IRLS506-011 Research Methods
- IRLS515-001/010 Organization of Information
- IRLS515-011 Information Organization
- IRLS520-001 Ethics for Library and Information Professionals
- IRLS520-010 Ethics for Library and Information Professionals
- IRLS521 Children’s and Young Adult Literature in a Multicultural Society
- IRLS524
- IRLS532-001 Online Searching
- IRLS532-010 Online Searching
- IRLS550 Information Environments from Hispanic and Native American Perspectives
- IRLS560
- IRLS561 Academic Libraries Practice and Administration
- IRLS563 Readers' Advisory Services in Public Libraries
- IRLS571 - 001/010
- IRLS572-010 Government Information
- IRLS573-010 Information Technology in Libraries
- IRLS575-791 User Interface and Web Site Design
- IRLS588 Issues in Indigenous Information Services
- IRLS608 Planning and Evaluation of Libraries and Information Centers
- IRLS622-010 Information Quality
- IRLS675 Advanced Digital Collections
- IRLS688: Books and Society: From the Late Middle Ages to Early Cyberspace

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- for Students (92)
- for Faculty (28)
- for Alums (24)
- for Staff (17)
for Prospective Students (7)
more...

Course
- IRLS417 (2)
- IRLS418 (1)
- IRLS432 (1)
- IRLS470 (2)
- IRLS488 (6)
more...

People
- Adjunct Faculty (152)
- Faculty (150)
- Staff (17)
- Friends (6)

Semester
- Fall 11 (29)
- Summer 11 (27)
- Spring 11 (30)
- Winter 10 11 (1)
- Fall 10 (20)
more...

Task
- Choosing Courses (27)
- Advising (5)
- Applying (5)
- Registering (2)
- Submitting Final Paperwork (2)
more...

Topic
- Index (33)
- Masters (33)
- Research (20)
- Knowledge River (16)
- News (14)
more...

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