

Syllabus

Department: Division of Library and Information Science

Course Number and Title: LIS 322: Library Services for the Unhoused

Bulletin Description

This course will empower students to provide unhoused library stakeholders with intentionally curated spaces that are accessible and nondiscriminatory. With a humanity-centered approach, students will boldly confront biases and stereotypes; helping to transform the way the unhoused community is served.

Credit: 3 semester hours.

Course Description

The objective of this course is to use an empathetic lens, as we explore the domestic and global unhoused community in the context of traditional and nontraditional library services. We will discover library and community partnerships and collaborators who have helped change lives for generations of the unheard and unseen. With the emergence of PBLs (Project-Based Learning), not to be confused with BBLs, we will lean into creative ways to support our community members who are unhoused and living in poverty. We will be intentional about gaining knowledge as it relates to adopting tools that assist us with exploring content, organization, library space/usage (i.e. interior design, architecture), as well as the evaluation of programming and learning outcomes.

Prerequisite(s): None

Co-requisite(s): None

Course Objectives

As outcomes of the course, students will/will be able to:

Explore a breathing definition of houselessness and poverty. Researching best practices to serve this audience, while combating book apartheid and creating sustainable programming and partnerships that will help change lives. Specifically, you will:

1. describe and explain a wide range of sources on the theory and practice of library services for the unhoused and those experiencing poverty.
2. gain an understanding of local and national library services for the unhoused, while examining programming, collaborations and budget and budgetary constraints.
3. develop a deep respect and empathy for populations who have too often called the streets home and experience poverty.
4. gain an understanding of the sources, policies, technologies, and systems that support access, retrieval, evaluation, and management of information central to audience.

5. be able to demonstrate proficiency in retrieving and analyzing information from general reference sources (print and digital), including designing basic search strategies for the unhoused and those experiencing poverty.

Program Goals and Outcomes

The course contributes towards satisfying MS LIS program goal 5 and 7.

Program Goal 5: Research and Evidence-Based Practice

Objective: development of the ability to discover, interpret, and generate research that supports the library, the profession, and/or personal professional development.

This goal is primarily concerned with the ability to discover, engage with, and synthesize existing research from the field in order to align relevant findings with one's own professional development and/or institutional needs. The focus is on cultivating research skills demonstrating the application of research methods, and an understanding of methods of data analysis and application of research tools. Relevant findings should also align with one's own professional development and/or institutional needs. Library professionals, regardless of their specific title and/or role, should also:

1. a) Understand how professional and cultural values may influence research at any stage as well as the barriers that impact access to research
2. b) Recognize the ethical and appropriate application of key research methods, techniques, and designs in the field, including the generation, analysis, evaluation, and presentation of data, and the utilization of research tools
3. c) Understand the tension between research and its application to professional practice
4. d) Understand the importance of engaging in the research foundations and scholarly communications that will enable continued professional development, knowledge, and sharing

Artifacts selected to demonstrate competency in this area should focus on issues/skills related to the research and evidence-based practice in any of the varying capacities discussed above, while demonstrating an understanding of the ethical and appropriate application of key research methods, techniques, and designs to practice - regardless of one's area of specialization.

Program Goal 7: Social Justice

Definition: The ALA Core Competencies (2021) define social justice as both a process and a goal that includes the knowledge and skills necessary for library professionals to create library collections, services, programs, as well as the management of facilities and personnel, which foster equitable access to, and participation of, all people to utilize the library.

Objectives: to facilitate an understanding of past and current inequities within libraries and foster the capacity to address issues of oppression, privilege, and power within our libraries and between the library and its community.

This goal is concerned with issues regarding social justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism that professionals often face in libraries. Satisfying this goal requires an understanding of one's own

cultural identity, including positionality related to power, privilege, and oppression, and an awareness of how that influences the ways in which they interact within the community and among decision makers. This also includes the ability to recognize, challenge, and change practices, services, and programs that have traditionally replicated dominant as well as marginalized systems. Other actionable behaviors that support competency in this area, which library professionals, regardless of their specific title/role, should aim to accomplish:

1. a) Work toward an organizational climate that encourages, supports, assesses, and rewards work that promotes social justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion
2. b) Incorporate social justice and inclusion through outreach and partnership with diverse groups and communities in order to expand inclusive collections, staff, programs, and services
3. c) Equitably distributing library staff, collections, and facility resources among all user groups
4. d) Seeking ongoing professional development opportunities to raise awareness and develop strategies that address issues of power, privilege, and oppression

Artifacts selected to demonstrate competency in this area should focus on the actionable behaviors and issues relating to social justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism in the field, as described above - regardless of one's area of specialization.

Units of Instruction

Unit	Title
1	Research APA Citation
2	Let's Define...what does houselessness and poverty in America and Globally look like?
3	Equity, Access, Ethics and Discrimination
4	Non-traditional Library & Literary Services
5	Etiquette & Ethics
6	Library Programming "On and Off" the Streets
7	Community Partnerships and Collaborators
8	Final Project, Evaluation, and Conclusion

Learning Activities

Students engage in an engaging learning experience with the instructor and peers through the course site in Canvas. Assignments consist of the creation of a LibGuide for Unhoused Library Audience, and creating a Podcast Episode, App OR Video. You have often heard that knowledge is power... I would say that *Access and Applied Knowledge* is power. **Having access to resources that live outside of a PDF grants audiences an opportunity to access these resources outside of the operating hours of the library.** Students will create a LibGuide, for their local community, using a minimum of 50 resources. This LibGuide will house resources for the unhoused (i.e. housing, food, hygiene, education, employment). This breathable document will provide endless opportunities for those who may need it.

Too often people fear what they don't know. I want you to create a podcast episode, an app or video that **outlines what homelessness and poverty are**. Students will speak about how the library can serve this audience through incredible resources, partnerships, and services. This Public Service Announcement (PSA) will address stigmas but more importantly, grant listeners and viewers an opportunity to learn how literary spaces are serving our most vulnerable populations. I would love it if students chose to focus on their local communities.

Assessment

1. Course-Level Assessment
 - a) The discussions, research/reflection journal, and individual exercises are designed to reinforce one or more of the course objectives.
 - b) The LibGuide for Unhoused Library Audiences leans into DLIS Program Goals, 5: Research and Evidence-Based Practice and 7: Social Justice. Although it may not be clear how the Ancestor's Biography addresses objective 3 - Gain confidence and experience in conducting a reference interview specific to genealogy research and resources, it should be noted that students rely heavily on their family history interview to initiate their research and often incorporate it into their Ancestor's Biography. That interview with a family member requires all the skills need to conduct a genealogy reference interview.
2. Program-Level Assessment. The MS LIS program is reviewed every seven years for continued accreditation by the American Library Association's (ALA) Committee on Accreditation. The program's most recent accreditation was in the Fall 2018 term. As part of this accreditation process, all students, faculty, alumni, and employers participate in periodic assessments, providing feedback for improving the MS LIS program. The two assessments below apply to every course in the program.
 - a) Faculty-Selected Assessment. Over a four-year period, each course in the MS LIS program is assessed by the instructor to determine how well students are learning the program goal/s related to the course. For each course, faculty select one or more artifacts (e.g. assignment, exam, or semester project) as a representative measure of student learning of the related program goal/s. At the end of the course, the faculty member completes a course artifact assessment form describing the class' performance on the artifact, and any course revisions prescribed as a result. Sample artifacts with their respective reviews are included as well.

In LIS 271 Library Services for the Unhoused, The LibGuide for Unhoused Library Audiences assignment, leans into DLIS Program Goals, 5: Research and Evidence-Based Practice and 7: Social Justice. Students must research a diverse range of content, relating to resources that highlight community needs, by using a humanity-centered needs-based community assessment approach. The goal is to ensure accessibility, while recognizing ethical research methods, analysis, evaluation, and usage of research tools. Students will incorporate social justice and inclusion throughout their research, threading it with anti-racist methods and approaches to research. At the end of the course, students would've gained an

understanding of local and national library services for the unhoused, while developing a deep understanding, respect and empathy for unhoused communities.

- b) Student-Selected Assessment. The end-of-program assessment is an e-portfolio consisting of student-selected artifacts (assignments, discussion posts, projects, etc.) from their courses as evidence of satisfying each of the eight goals of the MS LIS program. For each program goal, students write a reflection which describes the relationship of the artifact to the respective goal and their learning from the artifact.

In LIS 271 Library Services for the Unhoused, The LibGuide for Unhoused Library Audiences assignment and the Create a Podcast Episode both are suggested as the course artifact, if students decide to use their work in this course as evidence to satisfy the related program goals (5 and 7). This is due in part because of the Project-Based Learning (PBL) component of the assignments and the course objective and program goals that are infused into the assignments.

Grading Scheme

The course grade will be determined from the following activities. The percent in parentheses is activities percent of the overall course grade.

- a) Participation/Discussion Posts (55%)
- b) LibGuide for Unhoused (local) (15%)
- c) Create a Podcast Episode, App OR, Video- How the Library Can Serve the Unhoused and Those Experiencing Poverty (30%)

Bibliography

*Additional readings will be provided in the Discussion Board Posts--

Abramson, Ilene. "A haven for homeless kids: L.A.'s public library program attracts children in need. (What Works)." *School Library Journal*, vol. 49, no. 1, Jan. 2003, pp. 41+. *Gale Academic OneFile Select*, link.gale.com/apps/doc/A96555253/EAIM?u=dclib_main&sid=bookmark-EAIM&xid=24fe8620.

[American Library Association \(ALA\) | Social Responsibilities Round Table](#)[Links to an external site.](#)

de Bradley, Ann Aviles. "Educational Rights of Homeless Children and Youth." *American Educational History Journal*, vol. 35, no. 1/2, Mar. 2008, pp. 261–77. *EBSCOhost*, research.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=6b710053-f9d8-3725-ad1f-f18a6248f6ad.

Dowd, Ryan J. "The Librarian's Guide to HOMELESSNESS: Advice for managers and leaders from the director of a shelter." *American Libraries*, vol. 49, no. 6, June 2018, pp. 54+. *Gale Academic OneFile Select*, link.gale.com/apps/doc/A542242597/EAIM?u=dclib_main&sid=bookmark-EAIM&xid=2a2f96f9.

"Downtown library opens as temporary homeless shelter." *Spokesman-Review* [Spokane, WA], 30 Mar. 2020, p. NA. *Gale General OneFile*, link.gale.com/apps/doc/A618978449/ITOF?u=dclib_main&sid=bookmark-ITOF&xid=01d2c1ab.

Hill, Rebecca A. "Almost home: public libraries support homeless teens with offerings from drop-in card games to supplemental educational services." *School Library Journal*, vol. 62, no. 2, Feb. 2016,

pp. 26+. *Gale Academic OneFile*

Select, link.gale.com/apps/doc/A442780408/EAIM?u=dclib_main&sid=bookmark-EAIM&xid=bf8b5baa.

[IFLA Guidelines for Library Services to People Experiencing HomelessnessLinks to an external site.](#)

"The Las Vegas-Clark County Library District launched the Cell Phone Lending Program, a pilot initiative to give low-income residents and those experiencing homelessness access to smartphones." *Information Today*, vol. 39, no. 5, June 2022, p. 27. *Gale Academic OneFile Select*, link.gale.com/apps/doc/A704948668/EAIM?u=dclib_main&sid=bookmark-EAIM&xid=b4ba8e63.

"Libraries increasingly offering services to ease plight of the homeless." *USA Today*, 14 June 2007, p. 02A. *Gale General OneFile*, link.gale.com/apps/doc/A164974261/ITOF?u=dclib_main&sid=bookmark-ITOF&xid=74fd4a61.

"LIBRARIES NEW CHAPTER: HELP FOR THE HOMELESS; Full-time staffer at Minneapolis Central Library helps find tools, housing and resources." *Star Tribune* [Minneapolis, MN], 23 Mar. 2017, p. 1B. *Gale General OneFile*, link.gale.com/apps/doc/A486812069/ITOF?u=dclib_main&sid=bookmark-ITOF&xid=41cce8e8.

"Library cuts hurt us all, but they hit homeless people the hardest; I ran book groups in housing shelters that gave participants a voice. Now these vital services are being swept away." *Guardian* [London, England], 7 Apr. 2018. *Gale General OneFile*, link.gale.com/apps/doc/A533757453/ITOF?u=dclib_main&sid=bookmark-ITOF&xid=d01b2467.

[Not Just Books: DC School Librarian Creates a Sanctuary for StudentsLinks to an external site.](#)

[This Local Librarian is Serving His Community by Serving up Food and LiteratureLinks to an external site.](#)

Instructional Time Requirements: 150 hours for 3 credits (10 hours per week for our 15 week semester)

Asynchronous Lecture

Assigned weekly reading

Weekly assignments (individual and group)

Active participation in online discussions

Research for semester-long projects (projects)

Presentations (online)

Academic Service-Learning projects (where appropriate)