IST 618 Public Libraries (3)

Instructor: Barbara Nichols Randall
Email: bnicholsrandall@albany.edu
Voice & Text Mail: (518) 331-8382
Fax: (518) 935-9007
Office hours: By appointment

**Description:** This course focuses on current issues, practices and trends in public library organizations, planning, and service delivery. Topics include levels of governance in public libraries; the role of state charters, systems, and trustees; public, technical and administrative services; and professional development, including career paths, continuing education, and compensation.

**Course Design:**
The course will consist of lectures, assigned readings, class presentations, group discussions, case studies and/or site visit observations.

**Goal:**
To familiarize students with the role of the public library in American Society including the history, concepts, philosophy, politics and ethics of public library service.

**Objectives:**
- To understand the roles of public libraries in the United States
- To become familiar with the organizations that support public libraries
- To understand the core values and professional ethics of public librarianship
- To understand the relationship between library staff, lay leadership and volunteers in identifying and providing community information and programmatic needs
- To understand career possibilities in public libraries

**Texts:**


OCLC. *Perceptions of libraries, 2010: context and community.* (Dublin, Ohio: OCLC, 2011.)

Optional text (available at Mary Jane Books):

**Class requirements:**
All students will have access to an Internet enabled computer and a printer.  
All students will have an email account.  
All classes will be attended and students will arrive on time.  
All assignments will be handed in, checked for accuracy and typed.  

**Student Performance Evaluation**  
Grade will be determined by:  
- Quizzes 20%  
- Attendance 10%  
- Class article presentation 20%  
- Class Blog report 10%  
- Mid-term 10%  
- Term Project 30%  

**GRADE SCALE USED:**  
100-95 A  
90-94 A-  
86-89 B+  
81-85 B  
76-80 B-  
75-71 C+  
70-66 C  
65-61 D  
60 or lower F  

**Academic Integrity:** All students are expected to adhere to the tenets of academic integrity for graduate students. These are found at: http://www.albany.edu/gradstudies/academics/a4.shtml  

**Attendance:** Class attendance is mandatory. Each class attended is worth 1 point.  
10 points is the maximum earned = 10% of grade.  

**Homework:** Reading assigned material is mandatory. There will be homework assigned for class discussion/small group use. The questions answered in the homework will help you prepare your final project.  

**Quizzes:** Quizzes will be based on class discussions and reading. There will be 2 quizzes -- each are worth 10 points.  

**Midterm:** The midterm will be a take home exam. You will receive and article to read and be asked to write a two page presentation about the topic as if you were the director of your assigned library. Your newest Library Trustee has heard about the ALA Diversity Research Grant done by John Pruitt in Wisconsin. S/he has asked that you address the Board as to whether your library should or should not become involved in allowing such programming. You can choose to direct your presentation focusing one of the following ways of addressing the idea: 1) Diversity of Programming 2) the role of Book Clubs in the Public Library or 3) the use of library meeting rooms by community organizations. Remember to use provable facts and statistics when presenting your argument. Cite your sources appropriately. 10 points = 10% of grade.
Class Article Presentation:
Students will present their topic to the class (from list provided). Each presentation should be based on the article/topic assigned. Written materials should include 1) an outline of the article, 2) a bibliography of articles, web-sites, professional contacts used to expand upon the topic and 3) a brief summary of what the student learned from the experience. Each presentation should be no more than 20 minutes long or less than ten minutes long. 20 points = 20% of grade
Article presentation (how it will be graded):
Clearly presented the article topic. 5 pts
Kept within the recommended time frame. 3 pts
Additional resources were appropriate. 5 pts
Generated class discussion. 2 pts
Written materials (outline etc.) handed in. 5 pts

Class Blog Presentation:
Students will describe the blog they have been assigned. The presentation should include information about the blogger(s), the authority they bring to the posts, the connection to the profession and public libraries in particular. In addition the student should be prepared to recommend or discourage others from following the blog. 10 points = 10% of grade

Term Project:
Public Library profile report – Use your assigned public library. Investigate all of the areas covered in class. Most of the questions can be answered through your library’s website. Additional sources of information maybe found on your community’s webpages. Library statistical information can be found for each library in the state at http://connect.informata.com/

Bibliostat Connect provides New York data back to 1991 from the Annual Report for Public and Association Libraries and the latest data from the Federal State Cooperative System (FSCS) and the Public Library Data Service (PLDS) for all public libraries in the nation. (Requires IE 5.0 or greater; may work with Opera; will NOT work with Netscape or Mozilla Firefox)

Use new york as the User ID and pals as the Password.

For more information, see Bibliostat Connect: Easy Online Access to Public Library Statistics from Your State Library (also available as a printable brochure in .PDF format).

This is a comparative database so for purposes of our class use the Liverpool Public Library as your comparision Library.

Knowledge of your library will be a resource for our weekly class discussions. Include the answers to the list of additional questions below:

Term Project Questions:
Give an overview of the Library include type of library, population served, annual budget & mission statement.
What traditional services are offered?
What electronic services are offered?
What outreach services are offered?
What specialized services are offered?
What innovative or unique services are offered?
What virtual services are offered?
How busy is the library? Circulation? Visits? Computer use?
What networks does the library participate in?
Does the library have written policies? How many? What for?
What is the source of funding? Do they have a Friends group? A Foundation? If yes, what do the groups fund?
How does the library communicate with the community? Are there connections to the local news media? Does the local newspaper carry program information about the library?
Does the library have community meeting rooms?
Does the library accept ALA’s Freedom to Read & Freedom to View statements?
How many staff members? Librarians? Clerks?
How many Trustees? Elected? Appointed?
Does the library have a plan of service or strategic plan for the future?