Course Syllabus
Fall 2013

S672: Seminar on Literature for Youth
Informational Reading and Nonfiction Materials Focus
Indiana University Purdue University at Indianapolis
Library and Information Science

Instructor Information

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Course Overview

Boring, lifeless nonfiction books are out! Engaging, visually-rich informational reading is in! While youth may read informational books for pleasure, nonfiction works can also be used to explore ideas, gain insights, broaden perspectives, and build knowledge. In this course, you’ll learn to spice up the youth nonfiction section of a school or public library.

Informational reading and nonfiction works play a key role in the new Common Core State Standards (CCSS). This emphasis is generating new demands for both school and public libraries as well as opportunities for collection development and collaboration. This course will explore a wide range of informational texts. In addition, it will examine issues related to selecting quality, complex texts, addressing the needs of reluctant readers, and engaging young people in stimulating reading experiences.

From graphic biographies and histories to plant and animal field guides, libraries are full of engaging nonfiction for children and young adults. By pairing popular fiction with nonfiction books, identifying clusters of related works, introducing graphic novel-style nonfiction to reluctant readers, and tying engaging nonfiction works to online tools and ebook resources, librarians can attract new readers and promote essential 21st century skills.

In addition, this course explores ways that readers’ advisory services can be used to connect nonfiction titles with readers through both direct and indirect means. Finally, nonfiction reading is fun! This course provides opportunities to read and analyze a wide range of nonfiction books for youth.
The introduction of the Common Core State Standards emphasis on informational reading makes this a particularly timely topic for school and public librarians alike. Come join the fun!

Course Description

This three-credit graduate course is an advanced seminar focusing on informational reading and nonfiction materials for youth. This course will expand your thinking about the essential role of nonfiction in the children’s and young adult school and public library collections.

The course will be taught entirely online including web-based readings and resources, threaded discussions, plus online presentations and activities.

Choices allow graduate students with varied backgrounds and interests to select activities that meet their professional needs. Each student will have the opportunity to examine a personal or professional area of interest within the informational reading and nonfiction literature focus.

Course Assumptions

The following entry skills are required for this course:

- Demonstrate technology skills including use of productivity tools (i.e., word processing, spreadsheet, presentation), web development tools, social media, and utilities (i.e., downloading drivers and plugins).
- Identify, select, access, and evaluate information found on the Internet and in the library.
- Use Oncourse for forums and information sharing.

This course makes the assumption that you are able to work independently. There are no required face-to-face meetings. There are no required synchronous online meetings. However, feel free to e-mail or arrange a chat with your instructor at any time.

Course Objectives

The students will be able to:

- Trace the past, present, and future of nonfiction for youth.
- Identify and select quality nonfiction works for youth.
- Apply principles of collection development to nonfiction youth collections.
- Design pairings of fiction and nonfiction works and book clusters for youth.
- Read and analyze the range of nonfiction for youth.
- Discuss trends in graphic nonfiction for youth.
• Identify characteristics of nonfiction that appeal to reluctant readers.

• Create pathfinders that connect nonfiction books with online tools and resources.

• Connect the school and public library nonfiction collection to the Common Core State Standards.

• Apply strategies for readers’ advisory to nonfiction collections.

The instructor will:

  • encourage critical and creative thinking related to literature for youth.
  • convey examples of theory, techniques, and models relevant to literature for youth.
  • judge student performance fairly in accordance with the SLIS grading policy and the expectations for the assignments outlined in this syllabus.

Course Materials

The course content will be accessed through a series of web pages. In addition to readings and presentation materials, the pages also contain reflective questions and individual exercises to reinforce key concepts.

Required

The required readings will be connected online. The course materials will be available at http://eduscapes.com/nonfiction

Optional


Course Assignments and Assessments

The learning objectives will be assessed through a series of activities and a final project. Course assignments are intended to help students apply the course materials.

The course requirements will be addressed within the online guide.

The course contains eight LitBits Assignments worth 10 points each and a Final Project worth 20 points.
Each LitBits Assignment involves using the Oncourse forum to post an activity and reply to the work of a peer. For each assignment, students choose ONE of the options that best fits their professional goals.

**LitBit 1: Informational Reading for Youth**

1.1. Trace the History
1.2. Structure and Approaches to Nonfiction
1.3. Analyze and Compare the Best of the Best

**LitBit 2: Collection Development and the Core Curriculum**

2.1. Nonfiction Collection Analysis
2.2. Core Curriculum Standards Focus
2.3. Curriculum Connections and Collaborations

**LitBit 3: Picture Books, Narratives, and Read-Aloud Nonfiction**

3.1. Informational Picture Books
3.2. Narrative Nonfiction
3.3. Read-Aloud Nonfiction

**LitBit 4: Reluctant Readers and Graphic Nonfiction**

4.1. Reluctant Readers
4.2. Graphic novel-style nonfiction
4.3. Visually-rich informational reading

**LitBit 5: Literary Nonfiction, Biographies, and Humanities**

5.1. Literary nonfiction and biography analysis
5.2. Social topics analysis
5.3. Humanities analysis

**LitBit 6: Pairing and Clusters in History, Geography, STEM**

6.1. Fiction-nonfiction pairing
6.2. Concept clusters and literature circles
6.3. Pathfinders
**LitBit 7: Series, Reference, and Nontraditional Approaches**

6.1. Series nonfiction analysis
6.2. Reference reading analysis
6.3. Adult nonfiction for teens analysis
6.4. Nontraditional formats analysis

**LitBit 8: Readers’ Advisory, Marketing, and Technology**

8.1. Readers’ advisory for nonfiction
8.2. Marketing and programming for nonfiction
8.3. Technology connections

**Final Project**

Each student will design a final project based on their professional needs. Guidelines and a checklist will be provided.
Course Grades

The points awarded for each activity are indicated on the Course Requirements. High expectations have been set for this course. Please notice that outstanding achievement will require careful attention to course criteria and exceptional quality in course assignments.

Final grades are based on the following range within the total 100 points possible:

A 98-100
A- 95-97
B+ 92-94
B 89-91
B- 86-88
C 80-85
D 75-79
F below 74

The meaning of the letter grades follows the SLIS Grading Policy:

**A:** Outstanding achievement. Student performance demonstrates full command of the course materials and evinces a high level of originality and/or creativity that far surpasses course expectations. The grade of A+ is not granted in SLIS, except in very exceptional cases.

**A-:** Excellent achievement. Student performance demonstrates thorough knowledge of the course materials and exceeds course expectations by completing all requirements in a superior manner.

**B+:** Very good work. Student performance demonstrates above-average comprehension of the course materials and exceeds course expectations on all tasks defined in the course syllabus.

**B:** Good work. Student performance meets designated course expectations, demonstrates understanding of the course materials, and has performed at an acceptable level.

**B-:** Marginal work. Student performance demonstrates incomplete understanding of course materials.

**C+, C, C-:** Unsatisfactory work and inadequate understanding of course materials.

**D+, D, D-:** Unacceptable work; course work completed at this level will not count toward the MLS degree.

**F:** Failing. May result in an overall grade point average below 3.0 and possible removal from the program.
Late and Incomplete Work

Students may request an assignment extension due to personal or professional emergencies. These requests must be made prior to the due date. Extensions beyond a couple days will result in lose of points.

A final grade of "I" or "Incomplete" will NOT be given except in extreme situations. Please let me know if you're having difficulty completing the requirements of this course.

Student Academic Conduct

There is extensive documentation and discussion of the issue of academic honesty in the IUPUI Student Code of Conduct.

Students should be sure to read the Student Code of Conduct. The Academic Handbook states that faculty members have the responsibility of fostering the "intellectual honesty as well as the intellectual development of students.... The faculty member should explain clearly the meaning of cheating and plagiarism as they apply to the course... Should the faculty member detect signs of plagiarism or cheating, it is his or her most serious obligation to investigate these thoroughly, to take appropriate action with respect to the grades of students, and in any event to report the matter to the Dean of Students. The necessity to report every case of cheating, whether or not further action is desirable, arises particularly because of the possibility that this is not the student’s first offense, or that other offenses may follow it. Equity also demands that a uniform reporting practice be enforced; otherwise, some students will be penalized while others guilty of the same actions will go free.” (p. 172). For more information, go to http://www.iupui.edu/code

Student Accommodations for Disability

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities.

Students needing accommodations because of disability must register with Adaptive Educational Services and complete the appropriate form before accommodations will be given. The AES office is located in Taylor Hall Room 127, 815 W Michigan St Indianapolis, IN 46202 and may be reached by phone 317/274-3241 or 317/278-2052 TTD/TTY; by fax 317/274-2051; or by email aes@iupui.edu

For more information, go to http://diversity.iupui.edu/aes/
Course Content Overview

Week 1
**Informational Reading for Youth**: Past and present
- Informational texts defined
- Structure and approaches to nonfiction writing (i.e., explanatory, narrative)
- History and trends in nonfiction for youth
- The importance of nonfiction for youth

Week 2
**Collection Development and Pop Culture**: Tattoos to reality TV
- Youth reading preferences, motivation, and reading research
- Nonfiction analysis
- Selection tools for nonfiction
- Book awards and the “best of the best”
- Issues in selection
- Nonfiction authors
- Nonfiction publishers

Week 3
**Common Core State Standards for School & Public Libraries**
- Informational reading and the standards
- Information inquiry and the standards
- Implications for school and public libraries
- Collaboration and leadership

Week 4
**Emergent and Novice Readers**
- Informational picture books: alphabet to counting books
- Fact, fiction, and narrative nonfiction
- Read-aloud nonfiction
Week 5
**Reluctant Readers**
- How-to books: drawing, cookbooks, games, magic, and Lego mania
- Thinking books: brain teasers, riddles, secret codes, puzzles, illusions
- Levels of truth books: folklore, mythology, dragons, wizards, ghosts, aliens

Week 6
**Graphic Nonfiction**
- Graphic novel-style nonfiction: biographies, histories, sciences
- Visually-rich books: illustrations, photos, infographics, charts, graphs
- Photobooks and scrapbooks

Week 7
**Literary Nonfiction**
- Literature (800s)
- Biography and genealogy (920s)
- Social topics (abuse, addiction, bullying, dating, death, divorce)

Week 8
**Humanities Collection (100s, 200s, 300s, 400s, 700s)**
- Arts, crafts, and hobbies
- Fitness and sports
- Music, dance, and theatre
- Holidays and festivals
- Philosophy, religious, and social studies
- Language

Week 9
**History and Geography Collection (900s)**
- Prehistoric people
- Explorers and pirates
- American history
- Western history
Eastern history

Geography and travel

Week 10

**Science, Technology, Engineering, Math (STEM) Collection (500-600s)**

- Air, earth, and space science (i.e., weather, disaster, astronomy, aerospace)
- Physical science (i.e., physics, chemistry, energy)
- Earth science and paleontology (i.e., geosciences, dinosaurs)
- Life science (i.e., botany, biology, human biology, animal science, environmental)
- Medical science (i.e., healthcare, medicine, optics, biofields)
- Technology (i.e., computers, robotics, cybersecurity, nanotechnology, family life)
- Engineering (i.e., automotive, construction, electrical, industrial, civil, invention)
- Mathematics (i.e., financial, statistics, probability, business)

Week 11

**Pairings and Clusters**

- Fiction-Nonfiction Pairings: magic treehouse to sports adventures
- Concept Clusters
- Literature Circles
- Pathfinders

Week 12

**Series and Reference**

- Series nonfiction: field guides to states reports
- Reference: atlas, almanacs, and college guides

Week 13

**Nontraditional Approaches and Formats**

- Adult nonfiction for teens
- Teen versions of adult books
- Nontraditional nonfiction formats: popups to kits
- Information inquiry, youth research, and informational reading
Week 14

**Connecting with Youth**

- Readers’ advisory for nonfiction: fashion to survival guides
- Marketing nonfiction: beyond ghosts, aliens, and magic books
- Book clubs: biographies to bigfoot
- Public library programming: cooking contests to dinosaur digs

Week 15

**Technology Connections**

- Transmedia: connecting books, multimedia, websites, and social media
- Audiobooks: informational reading to language learning
- Informational video: documentaries to how-tos
- Digital documents: historical speeches to science reports
- Databases: periodicals (i.e., Cobblestone, Muse)
Course Resources

These are NOT required readings. Instead they provide the foundations for the course. References are made to many of these materials in the online readings.


Baxter, Kathleen (June 1, 2005). The young and the parentless. School Library Journal, 51(6), 33.


Cappiello, Mary Ann & Dawes, Ericka Thulin (2012). Teaching with Text Sets. Shell Education.


Gear, Adrienne (2008). *Nonfiction Reading Power: Teaching Students How to Think While They Read all Kinds of Information*. Pembroke Publishers. Preview Available:  
http://books.google.com/books?id=mwa00a6HC9IC


Hill, Rebecca (February 2013). Narrative nonfiction for STEM. Teacher Librarian, 40(3), 31-35.


Hill, Rebecca (February 2011). Common core curriculum and complex text. Teacher Librarian, 38(3).


Lee, Alice (2010). A way of understanding the world of science informational books. The
**Reading Teacher,** 63(5), 424-428.


Low, Alyson (November 2, 2012). All the world’s a stage. **School Library Journal,** 61-64.

Mallett, Maragaret (2010). **Choosing and Using Fiction and Nonfiction 3-11.** Routledge. Preview Available: [http://books.google.com/books?id=I4ToKLITiNkC](http://books.google.com/books?id=I4ToKLITiNkC)


Mikeska, Jamie N. (2010). **Towards a more complex view of genre.** ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.


Morris, Rebecca J. (June 1, 2012). Find where you fit in the common core, or the time I forgot about librarians and reading. **Teacher Librarian,** 39(5), 8-12.


Vent, Cheryl T. & Ray, Julie A. (April 2007). There is more to reading than fiction! Enticing elementary students to read nonfiction books. *Teacher Librarian*, 34(4), 42-44.


Willey, Paula (November 2, 2012). Make it, do it and read all about it. *School Library*


