

Promoting Multicultural Librarianship Through Inquiry-based Learning

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For over 15 years an elective graduate course in Multicultural Librarianship has been successfully taught by two faculty members in the University of Oklahoma's School of Library and Information Studies. The course has been taken not only by Oklahoma resident students but also by commuter students from Arkansas and Missouri. This poster presentation highlighted both student extension of classroom learning into practice and the instructional approach of the course

I. BACKGROUND

For over 15 years an elective graduate course in *Multicultural Librarianship* has been successfully taught by two faculty members in the University of Oklahoma's School of Library and Information Studies (OU SLIS). The course has been taken not only by Oklahoma resident students but also by commuter students from Arkansas and Missouri. The course was initiated by Dr. Lotsee Patterson, teacher, author, speaker, and advocate for equitable library services for American Indians. She is now Faculty Emerita, University of Oklahoma School of Library and Information Studies.

Always offered as an elective, currently the only pre-requisite is the introductory course required of all graduate students in the program.

Incorporating principles of inquiry-base learning, the course activities and requirements encourage student engagement with the course content to move beyond the walls of the classroom. These include selection, viewing, and review of popular movies, individual field reports about visits to libraries, bookstores, and the Internet, an individual visit to an exhibit, museum, special collection, etc. or attendance at a performance, festival, etc., and a capstone project proposed by the student and that the student will implement into practice (which requires individual consultation with the instructor as part of the design).

Student self-selection and self-initiated questions are a critical part of these activities and are also an important component of traditional writing assignments in the course, such as book reports and periodical article and other reading reports.

II. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

Awareness of and sensitivity to multicultural heritages; diverse information needs of multiethnic populations; information needs assessment and analysis; program and service planning.

III. OBJECTIVES OF COURSE

The objectives of the course are to provide students with opportunities to acquire knowledge and develop skills necessary to:

Understand the library's role in a multicultural, multiethnic, multilingual society.

Design and implement effective information services for diverse groups served by libraries.

Upon successful completion of the course, the student will be able to:

- A. Demonstrate an awareness of four major ethnic groups in relation to their history and culture in the United States, and
- B. Demonstrate an awareness of their roles in today's society, and
- C. Demonstrate an awareness of the changing role of libraries in a pluralistic society, and
- D. Demonstrate the professional skills necessary to function effectively in multicultural, multiethnic environments by acquiring a knowledge of the information needs of these populations, and
- E. Identify, locate, and evaluate multicultural resources to meet identified information needs of multiethnic populations, and
- F. Apply sound principles of librarianship to multicultural needs in resources and services.

IV. SAMPLE STUDENT PROJECTS ON EXHIBIT FOR POSTER SESSION

A Chicano/a Literature Webliography – by Sarah Van Gundy

Different Cultures, Different Sports [Program] – by Jackie Slater

Hispanic Literature for Children: A Selected Bibliography of Titles Available in the Ruth Hale Barker Middle School Library Collection – by Virginia Davis

Proposal for Sherman Alexie Program at the Norman Public Library – by Jeff Fennema

Teaching About Indians from the American Indian Perspective – by Teresa Runnels

Web site for TCCL Asian American Festival – by Eve Tang