University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee School of Information Studies  
L&I Sci-691 Special Topics in Information Science:  
GLBTQ Literature for Young Adults  
1 credit (online) – February 13th – March 17th, 2012 (5 weeks)

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Office Hours: Monday afternoons (and any time, by appointment)

COURSE DESCRIPTION: An examination of literature and other library materials for young adults, specifically literature which addresses the issues of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning teens and families. The emphasis of the course will be on current resources and techniques for reading guidance, reference and collection development.  
Prerequisite: Junior Standing

OBJECTIVES:  
1. To read widely and critically GLBTQ books intended for and/or of interest to young adults.  
2. To understand the information needs of GLBTQ teens, their families and friends.  
3. To explore issues related to intellectual freedom and access to GLBTQ information for children and youth in libraries.

Any students with special needs should contact the instructor as soon as possible.

METHODS:  
The primary method of instruction will be class discussion. This means that your active participation is at the heart of our interaction. Please read all of the required books and articles carefully so that your postings are thoughtful and well-supported. You will be expected to post at least four times each week to the discussion forum. You will be responding to the readings, and also to your classmates’ posts.

Each week’s discussion will be open on Monday morning. Please make your contributions to our discussion during the assigned week, ending Sunday at midnight, for full credit. Posts made after the specified discussion week will not be eligible for credit. The discussion will remain open for the duration of the course, but hopefully, postings during subsequent weeks will be minimal.
Posts should be succinct and to the point, thoughtful and careful. I'll be writing a discussion starter or otherwise providing you with questions or observations at the beginning of each week. Do not post before I have opened the forum with this discussion starter. Please use these as a jumping off place for your discussion but don't feel limited by them. You are encouraged to share your thoughts and insight on each of our books, referring to supplemental readings as appropriate.

I will inform you of any additions or changes to the syllabus or other things I need to share on the Welcome page, so please be sure to take a look at that page each time you sign in.

**Rubric for Assessment of Discussion Posts**

Note: I will assess your posts each week, and this assessment will amount to 50% of your grade in this course. Ten points may be earned each week in the discussion; the other 50 points will be earned in your publicity project (15 points.) and in your final project (25 points. for the written paper & 10 points for the presentation to the class).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A-Level Participation</th>
<th>B-Level Participation</th>
<th>C-Level Participation</th>
<th>D-Level Participation</th>
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<td><strong>Responds to discussion questions thoroughly and succinctly, adding insight and extended information.</strong> Cites classmates, engages classmates in dialogue that adds synthesis, clarification and significant dimension to discussion. Participates steadily throughout the week.</td>
<td><strong>Responds fully to all discussion questions. Comments are mostly well supported and show above average thought. Supports and engages classmates. Participates a few times during the session.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Partially responds to discussion questions. Comments show some thought. Sometimes acknowledges classmates and engages in dialogue. Participates with posts during just one day of the week-long session.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Rarely responds to discussion questions. Comments show little thought. Posts are isolated from class dialogue. Lack of regular, thoughtful participation, with minimal logins to the discussion forum.</strong></td>
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COURSE OUTLINE:

Week one, beginning February 13th: Course introduction.
Introduction to the course, overview of syllabus, review of assignments and readings, course website. Discussion of our first 2 books – a GLBTQ title for younger teen readers, plus discussion of a unique new GLBTQ/fantasy title.

Read:

Required books:
• Totally Joe by James Howe (2005)
• Ash by Malinda Lo (2009)

Also required, but these are picture books for children – 5 minute reads. If you can’t find them in a local library, that’s fine – you don’t have to purchase them. Be sure to tell us that you couldn’t find them, though since that will be good fuel for our discussion:
• And Tango Makes Three by Richardson & Parnell (2005)
• Uncle Bobby’s Wedding by Sarah Brannen (2008)

Week two, beginning February 20th: Bibliography
Students will be provided with background on some of the groundbreaking titles in young adult GLBTQ literature with lecture based on the course bibliographies. Selection of an author or a theme from these lists for the final project will be due at the end of the week.

Read:

Browse: Course Bibliography, plus Martin & Murdock book lists
Required books:
• Annie on my Mind by Nancy Garden (1982)
• Naomi and Ely’s No Kiss List by Rachel Cohn and David Levithan (2007)

Week three, beginning February 27th: Understanding the struggle of the gay character in society
Some books for teens feature gay characters but do not focus on their sexuality. Rather, these titles treat the teen’s homosexuality as just one aspect of his or her complex character.

Read:


Required books:

- *Fun Home* by Alison Bechdel (2007)
- *Geography Club* by Brent Hartinger (2003)

Due Friday, March 2nd: Publicity Project (see instructions below)

Also, you will be signing up for an author or theme for your final project this week. I will provide a sign-up sheet. I hope that within each group, there will be no repeated authors or themes so that the class presentations are unique and meaningful.

**Week four, beginning March 5th: B,T,Q**

Most of the titles we’ll read and discuss in this course concern the issues of gay and lesbian teens and families. This week, we’ll focus on the other three categories: bisexual, transgender, and questioning.

Read:


View: Posted segment of video, *Middle Sexes: Redefining He and She*

Required books:

- *My Heartbeat* by Garret Freymann-Weyr (2002) OR *Pink* by Lili Wilkinson (2011); final choice to be determined

**Week five, beginning March 12th: Gaining acceptance and belonging**

Read:


Also Read: Selections from Adam Mastoon’s *The Shared Heart* (will be posted on D2L).
Required books (these need not be read cover to cover – get your hands on them, read parts, and be prepared to discuss strengths/weaknesses and generally the promotion of non-fiction GLBTQ materials):

- Gay America by Linas Alsenas (2008)

Due: Final Project (see information below)

All articles and other short selections will be posted on the content page of the D2L website. You may obtain the required books from your local library or bookstore. Most of these titles should be widely available. There are 10 required books, plus an additional book or two of your choice to be selected from the bibliography provided. (FYI - Many of the novels are short; some may be read in not much more than a couple of hours.)

Publicity Project (15 points):
In this course, we will read about and discuss the fact that teens that need information on gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender issues are often hesitant to ask the librarian for these materials. For this reason, we must be pro-active in our efforts to let teens know that these materials are available to them.
I would like each of you to create a publicity or marketing “thing” that can be used to let the teens in your library know about your GLBTQ collection and resources. You may be as creative as you would like. Here are a few ideas, but your creativity is encouraged, so feel free to think beyond these choices:

- A well-designed bookmark that features some titles or authors (fiction, non-fiction, with annotations or jacket art?)
- A brochure or flyer that does the same
- A small poster that could be mounted in the fiction section of your library
- A webpage that publicizes these titles
- A video (YouTube?)
- A series of booktalk scripts that you could use with, for example, a meeting of the Gay Straight Alliance at your school or library, or included in any booktalking program for teens
- Other????

Again, your creativity is encouraged. You will be uploading the file to the dropbox, and I would like to be able to open it, so stick with Microsoft Office software to create your publicity item. If you choose to create an online project (such as a YouTube video or webpage), you may just submit the link.
This project is due at the end of the Friday, March 2\textsuperscript{nd}, by 5 PM.

**Final Project**
(25 points for the written paper; 10 points for the presentation):

Using the course bibliographies, especially the more limited Martin & Murdock lists, provided on the D2L site and reviewed during the 2\textsuperscript{nd} week of class, each student will select an author of GLBTQ literature OR a theme within the broad category of GLBTQ literature for young adults. (A sign-up sheet will be provided with suggested authors.) Research the author and read at least one of his/her works included on the bibliography. This is a two part assignment (undergraduates – presentation not required):

1. Write a 4 or 5 page paper, summarizing the contributions to the literature made by the author, the critical reception of his/her work including but not limited to the novel you read, and your assessment of the author’s work. If you have chosen to explore a theme (gay parents, transgender teens, non-fiction, etc.), your final paper will instead be organized with an introduction to the theme then description of some of the most important titles/resources on this theme. A brief history of literature & resources on this theme would also be appropriate. Feel free to draw comparisons to our required readings, particularly in terms of intended audience. Your paper must include a works cited page in MLA style. If you are unfamiliar with this citation style, I recommend the Diana Hacker site: [http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc](http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc). Even easier are the free website EasyBib ([http://www.easybib.com](http://www.easybib.com)) which formats your citations for you, plus the RefWorks database available through the UWM libraries. The Hacker site will provide instruction on in-text citation as well as MLA works cited format. Your written paper is due to the dropbox by 5 PM on Friday, March 16\textsuperscript{th}, and will be worth 25 points. (Note: Undergraduates are expected to write just 3 to 4 pages.)

2. During the final week of class, I will create a discussion forum to which I would like you to post a presentation to the class on your author/theme. I would like you to use Voicethread ([http://www.voicethread.com](http://www.voicethread.com)) to create a brief oral presentation supported by a few Powerpoint slides or other visuals. I will provide you with a tutorial on using this free online tool, although it’s pretty self-explanatory. A computer microphone is required (the phone and typing options don’t offer enough time for a good recording), but most laptops have them built in or they may be purchased inexpensively. You’ll need to sign up for a free Voicethread account, and then you’ll be able to save a short presentation to the website.
You will be copying the URL of your presentation into a post in the discussion forum.

Here are the main points you should include in your presentation, but don’t be limited by these. If, for example, the author/book you choose has been challenged in a school or library, you might want to include that information as well.

- Introduce the author and his/her work OR the theme you explored in your reading and research. Include a brief plot summary of the book(s) you read (no spoilers please!). A mention of other works by the author can be appropriate as well.
- Give a summary of critical response to the author’s book(s), citing published review sources (supplemented by Amazon or other reader reviews, especially teen reviewers, if you wish); mention awards if any. For those of you approaching this assignment from a thematic perspective, highlighting the progression of the literature from an early work on the topic to a more recent or most well-regarded book might be a good approach.
- Provide your analysis and opinion about the author or theme. Feel free to offer comparisons to other books we’ve read.

Your goal with this oral/visual product will be to provide your classmates with an informative little presentation on an author and his/her work in the area of GLBTQ literature for teen audiences OR an exploration of important titles or resources on your chosen theme. Your presentation may be as short as 5 minutes, and I would say should not exceed 10 minutes in length – whatever it takes to adequately inform the class about the material. I don’t mean this presentation to be very time-consuming for you – remember that on-site students can’t re-start their presentation if they stumble over a word or think of something else to add. I’d like this to replicate that on-site, conversational experience, so don’t write out a full script to read – just relax and tell us about your book/author. And try to keep it between 5 and 10 minutes if you can.

A signup sheet will be made available the third week of class, allowing each student to select a unique author or theme. Since D2L does not have a sign-up function, you’ll be “signing up” by stating your research topic in the discussion forum. The other members of your group will be able to see what or who has already been claimed and will be able to select accordingly.

Summary of assignments:
Completion of assigned readings & discussion 50%
Publicity project 15%

11/17/2011
Final project - Written paper 25%
Final project – Voicethread presentation to the class on D2L 10%

Grading Scale:

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<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>96-100</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91-95.99</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87-90.99</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84-86.99</td>
<td>B</td>
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<td>80-83.99</td>
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<td>60-63.99</td>
<td>D-</td>
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<td>Below 60</td>
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UWM Academic Policies may be found here: [http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SLIS/resources/academic_policy.html](http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SLIS/resources/academic_policy.html)

Undergraduates: You do not need to complete the publicity project, and your final paper may be just 3 to 4 pages in length, and no final presentation is required. All other course requirements remain as stated in the syllabus.