

INFS 691 ACADEMIC LIBRARIANSHIP SYLLABUS

Time: Mondays 2:35 – 5:25
Dates: January 6 – April 7
Room: EDUC 624

INSTRUCTOR

Prof. Rebekah (Becky) Willson
rebekah.willson@mcgill.ca

Office hours: Mondays 1:00-2:00 (<https://calendly.com/rebekah-willson>) or by appointment

DESCRIPTION AND CONTENT

This class will cover the field of academic librarianship, including the history of the field, how academic libraries work, and the context of higher education in which they exist. The class will also explore the new and traditional roles, responsibilities, and services of academic librarians, which is a rapidly changing and expanding workplace.

While this class covers topics important to academic librarianship, other courses provide more detail on specific topics that are central to the work of academic librarians. Students interested in academic librarianship should look at the courses available but are strongly encouraged to take *INFS 679 Information Literacy* and *INFS 615 Reference and Information Services* (which covers reference and collections).

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this course, students should:

- Be able to describe the history of and current trends in academic librarianship
- Understand how academic libraries work within the context of higher education
- Be able to articulate the services provided by academic libraries
- Understand various roles and responsibilities of academic librarians
- Understand the information needs and preferences of academic library users and apply this knowledge to designing academic library services
- Be able to create a plan for specific services for specific patron groups
- Be able to create and deliver a presentation to a group
- Have the understanding to be reflective practitioners, including being able to describe and analyse their work, as well as reflect on what their future professional practice
- Have practical skills and knowledge for working in an academic library setting

CLASS PARTICIPATION

The course is based on **active** contribution and participation of students. Students are expected to contribute to their groups and participate in the class discussions and activities.

STATEMENT ON GENERATIVE AI

An important part of education is actively engaging with course materials, integrating new learning into previous understanding, as well as applying learning in new situations. An important part of demonstrating this learning and application is undertaking the assignments. Therefore, **generative AI (such as ChatGPT) cannot be used to write assignments or to contribute to their development in significant ways.** However, similar to talking with others about the course work, generative AI can be used as a tool to help generate ideas, clarify what you have written (e.g., structure or grammar), etc.

Attribution is important. **In all assignments you do need to include a brief statement about how you used generative AI (or did not use it).**

READINGS

Required texts:

There are no mandatory texts for this class. Weekly assigned readings are freely available through McGill University Library. (Please see the class schedule for the readings.)

Recommended texts:

Evans, G. E., Greenwell, S., & Alire, C. A. (2018). *Academic librarianship* (Second). ALA Neal-Schuman.
<https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/1015274842>

Gilman, T. (Ed.) (2017). *Academic librarianship today*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
<https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/968913780>

EVALUATION

Evaluation is based on four assignments, in addition to class activities.

1. User Group Profile (Individual) (20%) – due January 24

- Sign up for one of 9 user groups. Then, using academic sources, explore your user group including: 1) information needs, 2) information-seeking behaviours, 3) source preferences, 4) library and technology use, and 5) any other relevant areas.
- From the literature, create a profile that describes how your user group interacts with academic information and academic libraries. The profile should be 1000-1500 words and the literature must be cited; at least 12 peer-reviewed sources should be used.

User Groups		
STEM undergrads	Social Science undergrads	Humanities undergrads
STEM grad students	Social Science grad students	Humanities grad students
STEM faculty	Social Science faculty	Humanities faculty

2. Outreach Services for User Groups (Groups) (30%) – materials due February 14; presentations in class February 17

- Groups will plan outreach services geared to the user group from Assignment 1. You may be more specific about your user group, if you wish.
- Using a LibGuide, create a tab that briefly outlines the user group profile (i.e., discuss 4-6 of the most important things you found for Assignment 1).
- Create an internal plan (for librarians) that details how the outreach will take place.
- Create promotional material for the user group on the second tab of the LibGuide, that details what the outreach entails.
- Groups will write a report of 1500-2000 words, explaining their choices. At least 10 peer-reviewed sources should be used.
- Each group will present their profile and outreach service to the class (~5 minutes)

3. New Service Proposal (Individuals, Pairs, or Groups) (30%) – materials due March 14

- Students will decide on a new service or a new way to offer a “traditional” service to implement in an academic library. Students can work by themselves, in pairs, or in groups.
- Students will put together a service proposal that makes a case for why the new service should be implemented including why the service should be offered, potential benefits, costs, practical considerations for implementing, plans for implementing and evaluating.
- Students will write a report of explaining their choices and reflecting on the process. (The word count and number of sources depends on the number of students in a group.)

4. Job Talk (Individual) (10%) – materials and presentation due April 7 (in class or online)

- Students will select an area of academic librarianship they have interested in and an academic library. Keeping those in mind, they will create a 5-minute job talk that demonstrates their understanding of their selected topic, the library, and that makes a case for their suitability to work in the library. PowerPoint slides (or equivalent) should be used.
- Students can choose to present in class or pre-record their job talk.
- Students will write a reflection of 500-750 words, explaining their choices and reflecting on the process. At least 2 peer-reviewed sources should be used.

5. Activities (Individual) (10%) – various dates

- There will be five activities throughout the term, including job shadowing a librarian at McGill Libraries
- Activities are varied and may include brief reflections, discussions posts, worksheets, etc.
- Each activity is worth 1%, with the exception of job shadowing, which will be worth 6%
- Students will be informed of the activity at the beginning of the week

LATE POLICY

For Assignment 1 (User Group Profile), Assignment 2 (Outreach Services) and Assignment 3 (New Service Proposal) there is a **No Questions Asked 2-Day Extension**, which will extend the due date by 48 hours. There is one caveat – you must **email me before the deadline** to inform me you are taking the 2-day extension. (There is no need to explain why you want it or wait for my response, you automatically get it but the request must be made in writing.) Assignments handed in after the extension deadline will be considered late.

For all group assignments and class activities, 5% will be deducted for each 24-hour period the assignment is late after the due date.

Assignments will not be accepted more than 2 weeks after the due date, unless arranged prior to the due date.

EMAIL

Email

When emailing the instructor, **please include the course code (INFS 691) in the subject line.** I will get back to you within 24 hours Monday to Friday. If, in the unlikely case you have not heard back from within this timeframe, please prompt me.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Students Needing Accommodations

As the instructor of this course, I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and [Student Accessibility and Achievement](#) (formerly the Office for Students with Disabilities) 514-398-6009.

CLASS CONDUCT AND MCGILL POLICY STATEMENTS

In line with McGill's Policy on E-Mail Communication with Students, any official McGill email sent to students will be addressed to their McGill UEA (Uniform E-Mail Address). It is the student's responsibility to ensure that time-critical e-mail is accessed, read and acted upon in a timely fashion. The E-Mail Policy applies to all McGill students and to all McGill employees, who manage official communications with students.

Class Conduct

This class follows McGill University policies, procedures and guidelines (<https://www.mcgill.ca/secretariat/policies-and-regulations>). Class participation is a valued aspect of this course. Discussions on class-related materials and business, whether they take place in the classroom or online via the discussion board on myCourses, should be conducted in a **respectful manner**, reflective of the School and the University policies, procedures and guidelines.

- Be considerate of your classmates by arriving to class sessions and group meetings *on time*.
- Be an active and respectful participant in discussions.
- Be prepared for class by completing the assignments and readings.

Academic Integrity

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see [McGill's guide to academic honesty](#) for more information).

Instructor-generated course materials (e.g., handouts, notes, summaries, exam questions, etc.) are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor. Note that infringements of copyright can be subject to follow up by the University under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures. No audio or video recording is allowed in class without the explicit permission of the instructor.

For assignments, reports, presentations, or whenever the words or ideas of others are used, *sources must be properly quoted and cited*.

Language of Submission

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded. This does not apply to courses in which acquiring proficiency in a language is one of the objectives.

Assessment

The [University Student Assessment Policy](#) exists to ensure fair and equitable academic assessment for all students and to protect students from excessive workloads. All students and instructors are encouraged to review this Policy, which addresses multiple aspects and methods of student assessment, e.g. the timing of evaluation due dates and weighting of final examinations.

Extraordinary Circumstances

In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the control of McGill University, assessment tasks in a course are subject to change, provided students are sent adequate and timely communications regarding the change.

Students are encouraged to review student supports and services offered by the Office of the Dean of Students (including Student Rights and Responsibilities) <https://www.mcgill.ca/deanofstudents/>.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

McGill is located on unceded lands which have traditionally served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst diverse Indigenous Peoples. The Kanien'kehá:ka, a founding nation of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the Anishinabeg are recognized as the traditional stewards of the lands and waters on which Tiohtià:ke (Montréal) is located.

I recognise myself as a settler and this land acknowledgement is not only a way to pay homage to those who were here before us but my commitment to work toward decolonisation.

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 School of Information Studies – Winter 2025
 McGill University