

LIS 9160 Anti-Racism in Library and Information Science
MLIS Program, Faculty of Information & Media Studies, Western University
Summer 2022
Senate Outline

1. Course Information

Tuesdays 9:00 – 11:50 am

FNB 2230

Enrollment in this course is restricted to graduate students in the MLIS program

Prerequisites: LIS 9001, 9003, and 9005 (pre/co-requisite)

2. Instructor Information

Course Instructor: Amber Matthews

Email: amatthe4@uwo.ca

Office Hours: By appointment in person or via Zoom

3. Course Description

An introduction to anti-racism and racial social justice in library and information science. In this course, students will develop an understanding of historical and contemporary approaches to race in LIS along with key individual and collective strategies to advance equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization.

4. Course Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of readings, assignments, and class participation, students will be able to:

- Identify and contextualize potential forms of racism in library and information organizations and in broader Canadian society through a foundational understanding of concepts related to anti-racism including privilege, power, intersectionality, microaggressions, and bias.
- Assess the impact of racial bias and discrimination on individuals and communities in library and information organizations and gain knowledge of best practices to address systemic barriers to support the development of equitable and responsive library and information services.
- Appropriately identify and respond to the unique information and service needs of equity-deserving groups by developing a contextual understanding of cultural competence.
- Identify, research, and present theoretical and professional issues related to anti-racism and EDID in library and information organizations.

- Appropriately develop and lead initiatives and advocate with and for equity-deserving groups in library and information organizations.

5. Course Expectations

Participation and preparation will be critical to success in the course. Students will be required to come prepared by having completed weekly readings and activities assigned in the course. Anti-oppression and anti-racism work begins from the principle that the relationship between the participants and the object of study is neither neutral nor unproblematic. Rather, our unique subjectivities and varied access to privilege informs our perspective and understanding of institutions, interpersonal relationships, and wider society. This necessitates a reflective approach that enables us to account for and reflect upon our varied and different situatedness.

Given the scale and importance of growing social movement to address racial injustices in LIS and broader society in general, it is hoped that students will approach this course with an open mind and understanding of the strong need for the library community to actively engage in racial justice to address cultural, social, and political biases. Advocating for a *truly* inclusive approach that recognizes that racism is a serious form of exclusion and must be taken seriously by all members of the library community, this class has adopted a collaborative model of community partnership with local groups undertaking anti-racist action in librarianship. Through these partnerships, students have a unique opportunity to engage with communities facing racial discrimination and work together to address and solve real-world problems. As we do this work, we learn, grow, and create together – leaving a lasting impact on librarianship.

6. Course Materials

All required readings are available electronically through the course OWL site.

7. Method of Evaluation

Preparation and participation (20%)

Preparation and participation will be assessed based on overall contribution to class discussions (10%) and preparation of a brief online responses once for the class (10%). These posts are an opportunity to explore topics and ideas from the class readings, group projects, or assigned readings. Posts should be in the range of 200 to 400 words and posted to our OWL course site.

Short Reflection Paper (15%)

Students will respond and reflect on a reading(s) of their choice from the introductory weeks of the course. These readings will provide an introduction the topics covered in the semester and allow students to critically reflect on race and subjectivity in ways that are meaningful to them.

Case Study Project (20%)

The case study projects are group projects developed in collaboration with the We Are Here Now Black Community Centre to support the Black Community Public Library in London, Ontario. Project descriptions will be shared and assigned during the first two weeks of class.

Annotated bibliography (20%)

Group project to prepare a list of resources for their peers and the broader community that respond to identified issues or trends found in the case study project.

Self-Reflective Journal OR Creative project (25%)

Weekly prompts will be provided from *Be Anti-Racist: A Journal for Awareness, Reflection, and Action* by Ibram X. Kendi (2020). A minimum of five (5) journal prompts will be completed throughout the term. The outcome of this assignment could take a variety of forms (i.e., podcast, series of b/vlog posts, narrative, etc.) and aims to provide an opportunity to engage with self-reflection and critique as core element of anti-oppressive work and practice.

8. Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Format
1	May 10	Introduction to class	Class Discussion
2	May 17	Brief history of race and racial justice in the context of LIS	Class Discussion Group Activity
3	May 24	**Offsite Visit** Black Community Public Library	Library Tour and introduction to case study projects
4	May 31	Critical inquiries into whiteness	Class Discussion Group Activity
5	June 7	Cultural competence for library and information professionals	Class Discussion Group Activity
6	June 14	Intersectional librarianship and learning from the experience of racialized library professionals	Class Discussion Group Activity
7	June 21	Anti-racism in academic libraires	Class Discussion Group Activity
MLIS RESEARCH WEEK			
8	July 5	Anti-racism in public Libraires	Class Discussion Group Activity
9	July 12	Anti-racism in archives and special libraries	Class Discussion Group Activity
10	July 19	Anti-racism in information management and organizations	Class Discussion Group Activity
11	July 26	Beyond Black History Month – Racial justice activism and movements	Class Discussion Guest Speaker

		Guest Speaker: Justine Turner, Emancipation Day London	
12	Aug 2	Envisioning anti-racist library and information practices in the future	Class Discussion Group Activity
13	Aug 9	Course wrap-up	Class Discussion Project colloquia

Weekly topics will be explored through scholarly and professional resources that may include academic publications, library-specific and other professional communications, and various multi-modal resources. A strong emphasis will be placed on materials by members of equity-deserving groups. Students are encouraged to share resources with the group on the OWL site.

9. Academic Integrity

Scholastic offences are taken seriously, and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf.

10. Health/Wellness Services

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

11. Accessible Education Western (AEW)

Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program.

Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are strongly encouraged to register with Accessible Education Western (AEW), a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both AEW and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction.