School of Library and Information Science  
University of Kentucky  

LIS 645 201 Public Libraries – Fall Semester 2009
Dates of Semester: August 26 – December 18
Course to be Conducted Online

Instructor: Dennis Carrigan    e-mail: carrigan@uky.edu

Course Syllabus

Classroom sessions: LIS645 201 is an online course and includes no classroom sessions. However, I invite a student who would like to discuss the course with me to make an appointment for that purpose. (See contact information.)

Contact information: I prefer that you contact me via e-mail; my address is carrigan@uky.edu. If you wish to meet with me, I require a prior appointment, and you should use e-mail to make the appointment. My office phone number is 859.257.3316 and address is 317 Little Fine Arts Library building. The School’s general phone number is 859.257.3317 and address is 320 Little Fine Arts Library building. I do not have office hours as such, because I am in my office most of the time, Monday-Friday 7:00 am - 4:00 pm. My virtual office hours are Monday-Friday 8:00am-4:00 pm, with the exception of those weekdays on which UK classes do not meet, e.g., Labor Day, Thanksgiving break. My goal is to respond to student communications sent to me via e-mail within two hours of receipt of the e-mail or arriving at my office.

Course Format: This is an online “lecture” course in which I encourage discussion via Blackboard. There are no classroom sessions. I taught LIS 645 a number of times in classroom format prior to teaching it online. In the classroom format, I lectured from notes. For the online format, I converted my notes to sentences and paragraphs, which I make available. I think of it as making available to students the notes they would take during a lecture in a classroom.

Course Requirements1
You will need access to a Wintel computer with a broadband Internet connection. Required software includes a reasonably current copy of Office Professional that includes Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Access. Note that all UK students are eligible for a one time free download of Office from the UK download site (https://download.uky.edu); you can get help with this process from the UK helpdesk. You currently should also use the Firefox browser with BlackBoard to access all our course materials. If you use Internet Explorer, you should be sure to have the latest version (ver 8), but note that there were problems with IE after the upgrade to BB9 last semester, so Firefox is still recommended. We make extensive use of Flash audio/visual materials, so you will also need the Flash media player configured for Firefox. If you are using IE and have problems with our Flash content, you will have to switch to Firefox.

Blackboard
We will use the Blackboard course management system to facilitate the class. Please visit http://www.uky.edu/Blackboard/ to learn about this system and the login requirements. You should be automatically added to the Blackboard roll; if this goes as expected, you will not have to sign up manually for the course. BlackBoard help is available online through the BlackBoard wiki website (http://wiki.uky.edu/Blackboard/Wiki%20Pages/Home.aspx), and from the UK helpdesk (859.257.1300). The helpdesk is also able to assist with all general computing issues (file download, browser updates, etc.)

Email
It is vital that we can depend on effective email communication. Unfortunately, many personal email accounts can run into problems with the UK mail spam filtering system. For instance, some services like hotmail have been blocked at various times from receiving UK mail. Therefore, I ask that you consider using your University of Kentucky Exchange mail account for all course related activities. If you choose not to use UK email you will be responsible to ensure there are no communication failures that may result from that choice. Regardless of your choice about email, it will be our primary one-to-one communication channel and I expect you to check your email frequently (ideally at least once a day).

1 Material “Course Requirements” through “Email” provided by Professor Joe Miller.
Distance Learning Library Services: At UK, students in online courses have available Distance Learning Library Services. The link to DLLS is: (http://www.uky.edu/Libraries/DLLS) Here is some of the information at that site:
Phone: (859) 257-0500, ext. 2171; 2nd Phone: (800) 828-0439; Fax: (859) 257-0505
E-mail: dllservice@email.uky.edu; Location: 2-2, north wing, William T. Young Library 0456
Distance Learning Librarian: Carla Cantagallo

Course Description: The course description reads: LIS645 PUBLIC LIBRARIES.
Examines historical development of the public library and its roles in society. Topics considered include the environment of public libraries; organization and management; information needs of client groups; information resources and services provided to clients; and trends and developments in public libraries.

Course Objective: I have several overlapping objectives for the course: (i) to provide the student with an introduction to and overview of the public library, instilling in her an appreciation for what a fine and valuable institution it is and developing in him an awareness of the challenges the public library faces and the array of services it offers; (ii) to convert the course description, above, to an actual, semester-long, course of study; and (iii) to present the body of knowledge that encompasses the answer to the question, What should the student know about public libraries at the end of the course?

Course Overview: We will discuss the inception and evolution of the public library, significant developments and issues in its history, the context within which the public library competes for resources, and the challenges the public library faces and the services it offers today. There is disagreement about which public library qualifies as the first such institution in the US, but there can be no disagreement that Boston Public Library, founded in 1848, qualifies as a true public library on the basis of today's criteria. Thus, even if we use the date the Boston Public Library was founded as the birth of the public library, the institution has been around for more than a century-and-a-half. The history of the public library has been characterized by major developments alternating with periods of quiet evolution. We will examine the major developments, but I will emphasize what I believe to be the key to the success of the public library, its evolution as the nation has evolved. An important feature of public libraries' evolution has been services that respond to the needs of a diverse society – diverse not only in such ways as gender, ethnicity, and country of origin, but also in the services people turn to public libraries for: book-readers, video-viewers, family history-searchers, job-seekers, Internet-users, home-schoolers, and more – and throughout the course I will emphasize that evolution and those services.


Additional Readings: In the class schedule, below, I include readings in addition to the McCook text, and in selecting additional readings I face a considerable challenge – keeping the number reasonable, when so much has been written about the public library. Additional readings not marked supplemental are required and can be expected to show up in the form of questions on the exams. The required readings are articles and essays, some of which were not published recently. For instance, Mike Harris’ essay was published in 1973. I include certain older articles and essays because I believe they deserve to be read and discussed in this class. Most of the articles and essays are available through University of Kentucky Libraries full-text online journals databases. Others of the additional readings are supplemental and listed that way. I include them for the student whose interest in the subject leads her/him to want to read more.

Examinations: There will be three examinations, two short-answer and one essay. The short-answer exams will occur at the middle and end of the semester and will be timed. The second short-answer exam will emphasize material introduced subsequent to the first short-answer exam but very likely will have questions from the first part of the course. The essay exam will be late in the semester. I will provide the topic, and the essay will be due two weeks later. Dates for the three exams are in the class schedule, below. The three exams will weigh equally in course grade.

Grading: The three exams will weigh equally in course grade. I will grade the essay exams comparatively. At the end of the course I will convert the points earned on the three exams to course grade on the basis of:
90% and above = A
80% to 90% = B
70% to 80% = C
below 70% = E
I assign the grade of I (incomplete) only when I am convinced the student’s circumstances warrant it.
**Class Schedule**

**Week 1 August 26:** This is a short week due to the semester’s starting on Wednesday. There are two assigned readings this week, and both are things I have written and make available. I intend for them to be read in this order: Introduction and Overview; Forerunners to the Public Library.

**Week 2 August 31:** Public library defined; number of public libraries in the US, total and by population served; contrasting views of the public library today

**McCook chapter 1:** The Landscape of Public Libraries at the Beginning of the Twenty-First Century (1-12)


The authors of the following essays present dramatically different views of the public library:


**Week 3 September 7:** History of the public library in the US (I): from the “first” public library through 1876; the important precedent of school district libraries (McCook pp. 18-20); the public library as a “public good” (McCook pp. 16, 49, 115); state enabling legislation; the education role; the watershed year, 1876

**McCook chapter 2:** Brahmins, Bequests, and Determined Women: The Beginnings to 1918 (13-60)

*Upon the Objects to be Attained by the Establishment of a Public Library: Report of the Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston, 1852* (this valuable document is in the public domain, and I have a version whose format, to include table of contents, I believe makes it better for use in the course and that I will make available).

Michael Harris, “The Purpose of the American Public Library: A Revisionist Interpretation of History,” *Library Journal* September 15, 1973, 2509-2514 (due to age of the article, it is not available via UK Libraries online full-text e-journals. I will make my notes on the article available).


**Week 4 September 14:** History of the public library in the US (II): 1876 through World War I; Carnegie’s contribution

William F Poole, “Some Popular Objections to Public Libraries,” *Library Journal* July 1993, S5-S6 (originally published in November 1876);

Dennis Carrigan, “Andrew Carnegie and the Carnegie Library Program”;

Joseph C Rizzo, “Preserving the Past by Looking into the Future,” *American Libraries* April 2006, 58-60 (the Carnegie legacy);

Dennis Carrigan, “The American Public Library during World War I.”


---

Week 5 September 21: History of the public library in the US (III): end of World War I to the present; Enlarged Program; Smith-Towner Bill; Public Library Inquiry; “evolution of the public library message” (McCook pp. 70-75) (Although the syllabus entry reads “end of World War I to the present,” this is just an introduction to that topic, which will be elaborated throughout the rest of the course.)

McCook chapter 3: Public Library Growth and Values: 1918-2004 (61-82)
Douglas Raber, “Everything Old Is New Again,” American Libraries September 1999, 52-54 (on The Public Library Inquiry)


Week 6 September 28: Efforts to measure performance/define success: from national standards to local determination; from inputs to outcomes via outputs; from Standards for Public Libraries (1933) to New Planning for Results (2001)

McCook chapter 4: Statistics, Standards, Planning, and Results (83-106)


Week 7 October 5: Public library and the competition for resources (I): funding; e-rate, “referenda”; the public library and politics (today’s economic climate makes the competition for resources especially challenging and the public library’s skill in the local political process all the more important)

McCook chapter 5: Organization, Law, Funding, and Politics (107-134)

3 Thomas Hennen is a public librarian who devised a method for rating public libraries and who, beginning in 1999, has published a series of articles on Hennen’s American Public Library Ratings. Hennen’s American Public Library Ratings has a Web site: http://www.haplr-index.com/ (accessed February 4, 2009)
**Week 8 October 12:** Public library and the competition for resources (II): marketing; return on investment; stimulus to investment

Eleanor Jo Rodger, “What’s a Library Worth?” *American Libraries*, September 2007, 58-60 (the public library and its “host system,” an especially good discussion in only two pages);

Alison Circle and Kerry Biermen, "The House Brand," *Library Journal*, June 15, 2009, 32-34 (Columbus Metropolitan Library, OH, and the importance of “brand” in a marketing plan);

Helen Ruth Fleming, “Library CPR: Savvy Marketing Can Save Your Library,” *Library Journal* September 15, 1993, 32-35 (an excellent article about how one public library developed and implemented a marketing program);

Glen E Holt, Donald Elliott, & Amonia Moore, “Placing a Value on Public Library Services,” *Public Libraries* March/April 1999, 98-108 (on the St Louis Public Library Services Valuation Study);


“OH Study: PLs Worth Fourfold,” *Library Journal* January 2007, 18. (“Library services at nine library systems in southwest Ohio are valued at nearly four times the dollars spent on them….”).


**Week 9 October 19:** first exam (I will make the exam available not later than Wednesday, October 21.)

(Monday, October 19, is the midpoint of the semester.)

**Week 10 October 26:** Delivering service (I): a labor-intensive organization; public library and the digital divide (Digital divide is an example of a topic to be addressed in the course that has multiple entries in the McCook index, to several chapters. Because of this, where I place the topic in the syllabus is somewhat arbitrary.)

**McCook chapter 6:** Administration and Staffing (135-162)

Normal Oder, “MLS: Hire Ground?” *Library Journal*, June 1, 2009, 44-46 (tight budgets and their effect on staffing decisions);

Barbara Hoffert, “Who’s Selecting Now?” *Library Journal*, September 1, 2007, 40-43 (tight budgets as incentives to outsource what many consider to be a core function)

**McCook chapter 7:** Structure and Infrastructure (163-182)5


Brian Kenny, “After Seattle,” *Library Journal* August 2005, 34-37 (Seattle Public Library’s central library, which opened in May 2004 to rave architectural reviews, is referred to as “the first 21st-century library”)


ALA, E-Rate and Universal Service http://www.ala.org/ala/washoff/WOissues/techinttele/erate/erate.htm


**Week 11 November 2:** Delivering service (II): audiences served; the public library and the public sphere

**McCook chapter 8:** Adult Services (183-210)

**McCook chapter 9:** Youth Services (211-240)


---

4 http://www.bibliotheksportal.de/fileadmin/0themen/Management/dokumente/WorthTheirWeight.pdf (August 2, 2009)


6 In 1992 *Library Journal* introduced the annual Gale/Library Journal Library of the Year award, and in 2005 the magazine introduced the annual Best Small Library in America award. The articles in both series are useful in this course because each article takes a careful look at a single library. The articles in the series appear in the same issue each year, February 1 for Best Small Library and June 15 for Best Library. I have resisted the temptation to include a large number of the articles in the readings, but collectively the articles are a window on public library services.

Supplemental: Jill Lepore, “The Lion and the Mouse,” The New Yorker, July 21, 2008, 66-73. If magazine articles had subtitles, the subtitle for this article would be “The battle that reshaped children's literature.” The author discusses, among other things (especially E B White’s Stuart Little), the early days of public libraries, the initial lack of interest in serving children, and the eventual introduction of children’s services. Because children’s services are such a vital part of the public library today, it’s hard to imagine a time when that was not the case.

Week 12 November 9: Associations and organizations; American Library Association; Public Library Association; OCLC; state library agencies; consortia; the public library in the broader arena
McCork chapter 10: Connections (241-264)
Cathy De Rosa, et al, From Awareness to Funding: A Study of Library Support in America (Dublin, OH: OCLC, 2008) http://www.oclc.org/reports/funding/default.htm The report is more than 200 pages, and I’ve not located an “executive summary.” However, I believe a person in this course should be familiar with the report. The link takes you to a page where you have the option of downloading the complete report or the introduction and individual chapters. I hope you will read introduction, chapter 1 (From awareness to funding), chapter 7 (Conclusion), and perhaps dip into other chapters. Chapter 2 Who are the library’s financial supporters? is nearly half of the report.

Week 13 November 16: Public library as place, as community center, as cultural center, as commons; the notion of “third places”;
McCork chapter 12: Twenty-First Century Trends in Public Librarianship (293-306)
Fran Silverman, “Much Loved Libraries, Now Much Used,” The New York Times, November 11, 2007 (“... libraries in the area … are being rebuilt or renovated, and, in the process, recast.”); John A Berry III, “The Library Haines Built,” Library Journal February 1, 2005, 38-41 (article also in week 11) (“The big room and even the whole library can be rented for wedding receptions and other festivities. The Haines Homecoming Dance is held there as well.”); Brian Kenny, “After Seattle,” Library Journal August 2005, 34-37 (article also in week 10) (The author says that in the Central Library’s Living Room Seattle Public Library “created a center for its community.”);


Monday, November 23: essay exam distributed

Week 14 November 23: No assignments; Thanksgiving is November 26.

Week 15 November 30: Public library and the digital revolution

Monday, December 7: essay exam due
**Week 16 December 7:** Public library and a diverse society
For the public library, society is diverse not only in such ways as gender, ethnicity, and country of origin, but also in the services people turn to public libraries for: book-readers, video-viewers, family history-searchers, job-seekers, Internet-users, home-schoolers, and more. The challenge is to keep the number of readings reasonable; here are some:


**Week 17 December 14:** final exam (I will distribute the exam not later than Tuesday, December 15.)

Semester ends Friday, December 18.