



LIBR 545: Adult Popular Reading and Media Interests

Lecture 1: Welcome and Course Orientation



Fiona Hunt – Hi!
(Me in Scotland)

Welcome to this course! I am looking forward to teaching you this semester. The topic is highly enjoyable, and for me, gets to the root of why I became a librarian in the first place – a love of reading. I’m sure that many of you have similar thoughts when it comes to readers’ advisory. Readers’ advisory (RA) is hands down one of the most enjoyable parts of working in libraries. Imagine the following scenario: You are approached at the information desk by a reader, and they ask the most wonderful of all questions: “Can you recommend a good book?” which immediately transports you into spasms of enthusiasm about your latest read. Naturally, it’s more complicated than that, as perhaps when you think “good book” you envision Jane Austen, while your patron sees the latest bodice ripper. Or vice versa. Love me a good bodice ripper. And this is why readers’ advisory is more of an art than a science. How do we get into the mind of a reader whose tastes are so completely different from our own? This is one of the issues we will be discussing in this course, and we will look at techniques to deal with such situations.

One of the methods we’ll be using is simply to do a lot of reading. Maybe you are already an avid reader. This is helpful, though it’s possible that when you examine your reading habits more closely, you’ll find that your reading experience is limited



Gauntlet

to one or two genres. My goal in this course is to help you explore what’s out there and to identify at least one book you could recommend in each of the most popular genres. I am throwing down the gauntlet and challenging you to try books you would never dream of choosing for yourself. There was a book club in Vancouver called the “Book Club for Masochists” and this is precisely what they did. Each month, they deliberately chose a book that they thought they were going to hate, the purpose being to expand their horizons and make themselves better readers’ advisors. Here is the link to their podcast if anyone is interested:

<https://bookclub4m.libsyn.com/>. It’s difficult to find information about the book club itself, though The

StoryGraph has some challenges issued by them. *(I’m unclear if the book club itself still runs. If anyone does any investigation and finds the answer, please let me know.)*



Jane Austen



Bodice Ripper

Course Structure

I have designed the course so that we have alternating lessons: One week we will look at issues in RA, and the next week we will look at a particular genre or genres and your homework will be to choose a book from that genre and read it. Thus, you will have two weeks to complete your novel reading in some of the genres. Because of the number of genres, however, this plan breaks down at week 5 and from week 6 onwards, we’ll

be examining a new genre every week. I am flexible in my expectations of how much you can read in a given week, and please feel free to email me if the pace is becoming too much for you. I realize that many of you are holding down jobs and/or have other responsibilities besides this course.

Also, while I have planned the course to introduce a genre and then have students read from that genre, I realize that life doesn't always work that way, and you may not keep pace with or follow the same order as the course. So, don't feel pressured to stick to this order or pacing. There is leeway. Please ask me if you have any questions about proceeding through the course.

About Fiona

A little about me, for your information: I graduated from UBC with my MLIS in 1996. I worked in Vancouver for 4 years, at various libraries around the Lower Mainland, both public and academic, and then in 2000, I got a job in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in the capital city, Abu Dhabi, at a women's university called Zayed University (ZU).



Abu Dhabi

Information Literacy Librarian, developing the information literacy program at the university, and teaching information literacy classes. Then, for my last 7 years (I was there for 15

years in total) I moved over to the Academic Advising Department to teach two first year courses in student skill development and career exploration, both of which contained a heavy dose of information literacy. I also acted as Academic Advisor to about 200 students per

semester. I loved my time in the UAE, meeting people from all over the world, and travelling to my heart's content, and I really loved my job because I am passionate about teaching and working with students, but after 15 years, the heat was finally getting to me and I decided to come home. Since arriving back here in 2015, I worked to get back into the full time job market, which in Vancouver is highly competitive. I'm currently employed full time at Langara College in the Library and Information Technology program, where I am program chair and an instructor, and I



Zayed University

teach two courses here at UBC, in the MLIS program, both of which positions I thoroughly enjoy.



UAE



Abu Dhabi

My teaching style is student-centred and flexible. Please always feel free to ask me questions and I'm happy to meet with students in person or on Zoom. I will also be holding optional Zoom

meetings, probably every second or third week, where you are also welcome to bring questions. My priorities for this course are for it to be engaging, useful and above all, to develop your skills as readers' advisors. To that end, I have thought carefully about the assignments and the activities I'm asking you to do, and all of them are practical and relevant to the workplace. I will ask for your feedback at around week 4 or 5, to see if there are any issues that need addressing, but feel free to send feedback any time.

Also, in case you are in any doubt about how to address me, please call me Fiona.

Course communication and asking questions

We will be using the discussion board on Canvas for activities/interaction and communication throughout the semester. Find it by clicking on “Discussions” on the left hand menu.

I have set up the discussion board to include a general forum for questions, titled “Questions,” which is pinned to the top of the Discussion Board page in Canvas. Everyone can see and contribute to this forum, so feel free to ask your peers questions and to answer your peers’ questions if you wish. I will oversee and make sure that all information shared is accurate, and I will answer any questions asked there. You can also email me, and that is how I will communicate with all of you as well, so please be sure to check your email regularly. Please note that the absolute BEST way to get in touch with me if you need a timely response is through Canvas email.

There is another discussion forum pinned to the top of the Discussion Board page, called “RA discoveries you want to share.” This is a place where you can post anything that you are excited about, that you think might interest your peers. It might be a blog devoted to RA, or a podcast that features a specific sub-genre. Whatever you find that you think others would benefit from can be shared here. This forum is intended to make up for the fact that we are an online class, and the kinds of sharing that normally take place face to face do not happen when we’re online. So, use these forums to connect with your classmates and share useful information.

Other Discussion Forums in the “Pinned” section at the top of the Discussion Board:

- What we’re reading

This forum is totally optional and is for sharing any books you’re reading that you just can’t wait to gush about. Or, perhaps you want to vent. This is separate from the appeal factors paragraphs we’ll be doing later, where you need to be neutral and where you won’t be critiquing the books you’re describing. In the “What we’re reading” forum, you can be spontaneous and talk about books however the spirit moves you. If you prefer to use the course Wiki for sharing what you’re reading, that’s also fine:

https://wiki.ubc.ca/Main_Page/LIBR545.

- Let’s Connect.... – I added this forum in response to student feedback that they found it a little isolating to study online. If you would like to use this forum to connect with other students for course-related, or simply social interactions, please do.
- Share your A1 – optional
- Share your Genre Guides (Option A) – optional
- Share your RA Program Proposal (Option B) – optional
- Share your Book Talk/Trailers (Option C) – optional

The above four forums are all optional and have been added to the course in response to student feedback. Students said they’d love to see what their classmates have done for their assignments, so I have created these forums where you can post your work and see your peers’ work also. Please feel free to give each other positive feedback in these forums. If the student asks for constructive feedback, by all means provide it, but if not, please stick to positives only, telling your peers what you like about their work.

Course Organization/Orientation

See also the screencast course orientation video in the folder on Canvas with the course syllabus and schedule

- I will release new content each week on **Mondays at 7am**.
- The course is divided into weekly modules. To get to this content, click on “Modules” on the left menu bar in Canvas.
- On this page, you’ll see the **Course Syllabus and Schedule and Course Orientation** at the top of the Modules page.
- Under that, you’ll see the **Zoom Sessions and Wiki** folder which will give you
 - The bi-weekly Zoom schedule for the semester (once I’ve processed your availability from the When2Meet poll), and
 - The link to the **class wiki**, where you can add the books you’re reading through the semester and we’ll end up with a class list to take away with us.
- Under that are the **weekly modules** containing the lectures and other weekly content
 - Each weekly module will contain the **Start Here** document, a **Lecture**, any **Readings** that are required for the week, and any videos or podcasts that I want you to watch/listen to. The Course Schedule labels each reading as required or optional. Be sure to check the Course Schedule if you are ever in doubt. Optional readings are truly optional, so please don’t feel pressured to read them if you’re struggling with time or they don’t interest you.
- Assignments:
 - To find **assignment instructions**, go to the “Assignments” link on the left side of the screen. This page is organized so that the submission folders (including instructions) are at the top, and there is a separate section at the bottom, with assignment instructions, rubrics and sample assignments from past semesters. Please let me know if you’re having any difficulty finding things.
 - To **submit assignments**, go to the “Assignments” page, and you’ll see “Assignment Submissions” at the top, followed by “Participation Grade Submissions”. Click on the assignment you want to hand in, and then on “Start Assignment” and you’ll see a place to upload your file or files.

My preferences for your submitted work:

- As a general rule, **I prefer fewer files over more files**. Where possible, if you can put everything into **one document** – all your appendices and other materials – I prefer that as it makes it easier when I’m grading. Thank you in advance.
- Similarly, I find that **Word docs** are easier to edit when I’m giving you feedback, rather than PDFs. If you must convert to PDF, go ahead and do so, but if the submission will be just as effective as a Word doc, please consider leaving it in that format. Or, you could submit your file in both the PDF and Word versions. If you don’t use Word, no problem, just convert to PDF.

What you will do each week:

Here are the steps I recommend you take each week as you navigate through the course:

1. Start with the **Start Here document** for the week – This will help you stay on track and tell you what to do each week, as well as what the upcoming due dates are.
2. Read the **“Checking In” announcement** each week.
 - As mentioned, I will release content each week on **Mondays at 7am**. I will also post a weekly “Checking in” announcement. Please be sure to read those announcements as they contain

useful information for you each week and it's my way to give you any new, up to date information, especially if you can't come to the optional Zoom sessions.

- You will also be directed to read the **Checking In** announcement by the Start Here document each week.

3. Check the **Course Schedule**

- Download the Course Schedule and have it handy as you will use it throughout the semester.
- Check it each week to make sure that you're aware of the readings, activities and due dates for the current week.
- It's also a good idea to scan ahead to see what's coming up in the near future.
- The Course Schedule is the "brain" of the course and contains all the due dates. If there are any discrepancies between the Course Schedule and what's on Canvas, go with the Course Schedule. Please also let me know if you find any such discrepancies so I can fix them.
- I have included all due dates for the course within the table structure of the schedule, but also at the end of the document, listed in chronological order. This should help you see at a glance what is due when.

NB: If I make updates to the Course Schedule (rare but sometimes happens), I will update the date at the end of the document, and alert students through Canvas that there is a newer version of this document. Please download the new version if that happens. Looking at the "Updated..." date at the end of the document will let you know if you have the most recent version.

4. Read the week's **lecture** (mandatory).

- This is content that I have written. If you find that you're struggling to keep up with the readings, make sure that you **at least read the lecture each week**, at a minimum.

5. Do the course **readings** outlined in the Course Schedule.

- The course readings are heavier towards the beginning of the course, and they peter off as we near the end. There will usually be required readings each week, clearly labelled as such, as well as optional readings, also clearly labelled. As mentioned, you do not need to read the optional readings. I have shared them in case you have the time/interest, but if you have enough on your plate, you can skip them.
- There will also be **extra resources** sometimes, and those are usually book lists, to help you choose a novel to read that week. Again, they are optional.
- About the reading workload: I recognize that the reading load is significant in this course. It calms down around Week 6, but the first few weeks are packed as the course aims to give you all the background information you need.
 - As the readings will never be tested, it's ultimately up to you how much reading you do. Also, you can pace the reading out more slowly if that works better for you. Naturally, the more you read, the more information you'll potentially have to apply to course assignments and activities and to take with you into your future RA work, but you can still get a lot out of the course without reading everything.
 - I've included **notes** under many of the readings in the Course Schedule, with information designed to help you decide what you want to read. Also, note that when we're looking at genres, a lot of those readings are largely book lists, which makes them less dense.

If you are finding the reading load difficult, my main requirement is that you **read all the weekly lectures** so that I know everyone has that baseline. If you'd like help strategizing about the readings, please get in touch.

6. Do the **Review Quiz** for each week to test your understanding.
 - These review quizzes are ungraded and optional and are meant to help you see what you've retained/understood from the week's material.

Course textbook

The text is indicated in the syllabus. Details for finding the text in the UBC library are included in the syllabus. However, if you do want to purchase it, it's available in various retail locations online. If you are willing to purchase it used, you can get it through abebooks.com and other used book online sellers. Be sure to check the book's condition before purchasing if you go with a used bookstore online, as they can arrive with writing all over the pages, and also ensure that the vendor will ship to Canada. The text is also available in most public libraries, if you want to use it that way, however note that it is often non-circulating and part of the "professional collection" for use by library staff. If you want to purchase the 7th edition, that is fine. The book recommendations will be less up to date but the other information is okay.

Note that I have also listed some other recommended texts and these are very similar to the textbook. They will have slightly different book/author lists so it might be useful to check them out, but no need to purchase them.

One text that is not required for you to purchase, but from which I've chosen a number of readings, is Saricks, J. G. (2005). *Readers' advisory service in the public library* (3rd ed). American Library Association. It's an excellent resource despite its age. UBC Library has this title as an e-book, so you can refer to it online if you prefer not to purchase it. See the Course Syllabus for the link.

Assignments

Please note that all assignments, unless specified otherwise, are due at midnight (11:59pm) on the due date, and should be submitted through Canvas. As you will see from the syllabus, there are three assignments in this course, and a participation grade, which is comprised of various activities I will be asking you to do over the span of the course.

Participation

See Canvas "Assignments" for full Participation Parts 1-3 instructions.

- A) The first component of the participation grade is contributing to the **discussion board**. I will ask you to contribute to the discussion board several times through the semester. These postings will be highly practical and help you both to build your RA arsenal of tools and titles to recommend, as well as practice new skills. I encourage you to contribute regularly to the discussion forums. The information gleaned will be an invaluable resource for you.
 - I have also asked you in the When2Meet poll about the best days/times for meeting on Zoom, if people are interested. It will be entirely optional and will not count towards your participation grade. However, it will allow us to meet up in a more interactive environment, and share our reading discoveries with each other. In addition to allowing you some social interaction, it will also enable you to practice your RA skills.

- B) Secondly, you'll be taking part in a **readers' advisory interaction**. I will put you into groups of three and you will take turns being the reader and the RA professional, with one person observing, and you will give each other feedback on your RA interviews. I am envisioning your doing this in person, if possible, which is why I'm asking you to share your general location with me. I'll put you into groups with people who live in your vicinity as much as is possible. This will simulate the experience you're most likely to have when you're out doing RA work. If, however, it's more convenient for your group to meet online, using Zoom or similar, that is also fine. If you know in advance that you prefer to do it online for scheduling or other reasons, just let me know and I'll put you in an online group. You can tell me your location is "online". The activity works both ways, so either is okay. Note that the assessment for this activity is a reflection that you'll write about the experience – you will never be graded on the interaction itself.
- C) Thirdly, you will keep track of your novel reading using a **reading diary**. You'll use the reading diary to record your thoughts/impressions, notes, anything that you want to remember about a particular book, including its genre, style, characters, etc. Through using the reading diary, you will build a professional tool to help you when faced with RA questions at the info desk. I have already shared the instructions and templates for this activity in my pre-course email, but these documents are also available on Canvas.

Assignment 1

Annotated bibliography. This is a standard element in a graduate level course. I want you to dip into the theory and the library literature on this topic, but I don't necessarily want to spend a huge amount of weekly course time on theory as I want to get into the genres and the more practical aspects of the course, so this assignment is designed to familiarize you with some aspect of the theory around RA and/or what is being discussed in the literature.

Assignments 2 and 3

For Assignments 2 and 3, I am going to give you three assignment options, and you will choose **two** of them. I don't mind which two you choose – they are all beneficial. I want you to have the chance to choose the assignments that appeal to you most and that you think will be most useful to you in your professional life. They are listed below as Options A, B and C. The full instructions for the assignments are in the Assignments folder on Canvas. Note that for Assignments 2 and 3, one is due in **Week 8** and the other is due in **Week 12** via Canvas. You decide which you'll do first and which you'll do second.

Option A:

Genre/Theme Guide. Public librarians spend a great deal of time packaging information for readers, so that even if they don't approach the info desk, they may stumble across this information and it may help them to discover a new favourite book. There are various ways that libraries do this and one is through the creation of a genre or theme guide. You will be making a genre/theme guide that highlights the characteristics of the genre or theme, and then lists classic and more modern titles in that genre/theme. We will look at some examples, so you'll understand what you're aiming for.

Option B:

Design a Readers' Advisory Program or Service. Choose a library and design an RA program or service for the community that uses that library. Have fun with this and be as creative as you like! The more innovative the better! You will be digging into the library literature and doing online research on what's out there before you design your own program or service. You can base it on one that already exists, or come up with your own, but it must be designed to meet the needs of your chosen library's userbase, or a portion thereof. Note that this is a bigger and fairly detailed assignment, and you can do

it in a pair or group of 3 if you would like to. Please let me know once you've got your pair or group formed and/or if you would like help connecting with someone in the class to work with.

Option C:

Create a recorded book talk or book trailer, "selling" your book to potential readers. This is another task that librarians who provide RA service are required to undertake. The idea behind a book talk is to present the book in a positive light, including your own enthusiastic response. Get your readers excited to read the book! For a book trailer, it's similar to a movie trailer. The idea is to reflect the mood and experience of the book, highlighting the appeal factors using a multi-sensory approach – visuals, music, text, etc. Again, the end goal is to pique the interest of the reader and get them to give the book a try. To help you with this assignment, I offer a tutorial on using Canva to create a book trailer, and there are resources online that you will find helpful.

Course Orientation:

I have created a video orienting you to the course, for those who prefer that method of learning. It's in "Modules" on Canvas, with the Course Syllabus and Schedule documents.

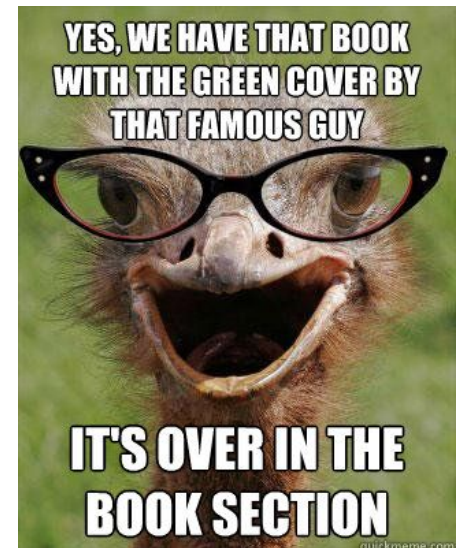
This week's content

This week, because it's the first lecture and it's rather long, I am going to rely on the readings to fill you in on the introductory information about readers' advisory. The readings answer questions such as "What is Readers' Advisory?" "How long has it been around for?" "What's a genre?" "Why do readers read?" etc.

If, after reading the readings, you have questions that have not been answered, please ask me and I'll be happy to assist.

Starting with Week 2, the lecture portion will include my contribution to the week's content and it will include much less of the "orientation" type information included here. It will typically be 7-10 pages long, but sometimes the lectures are longer. There are lots of book lists with images, however, as I include book covers to entice you to read the titles I suggest, which makes the lectures during "genre" weeks less dense.

Once again, welcome to the course and I look forward to an active and interesting semester with you!



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