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LIBR 2516: Readers' Advisory Services

Special Topics Course

“Can you recommend a good book?”

LIBR 2516: Readers' Advisory Services

Special Topics Course

- Readers' Advisory (RA) philosophy
- RA interview
- Genres/Themes
- NoveList database
- Read books for pleasure!
 - Fiction
 - Nonfiction
 - Manga
 - Graphic novels
 - Short stories
 - etc.
- Like a book club

Audiobooks
welcome!



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Course outcomes

Upon completing the course, you will be able to:

1. practice acceptance of and support for the varied reading interests of adults
2. interview a reader to determine their reading/viewing/listening interests
3. make recommendations for pleasure reading/viewing/listening in a number of genres/subject areas
4. create a genre/theme guide
5. design a readers' advisory program
6. create a book trailer or book talk on a specific title
7. concisely summarize a book's appeal factors in writing and orally
8. demonstrate understanding of the philosophy behind readers' advisory

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Participation: RA Triad Discussion Board Participation	15%
Midterm quiz	15%
Assignment 1: Genre/Theme Guide	20%
Assignment 2: Program Proposal	20%
Assignment 3: Book Talk or Book Trailer	20%
Assignment 4: Reading Diary	10%
Total	100%

Optional Weekly/Biweekly Zoom Sessions – Share what we're reading and practice our new skills

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> BOOK . GENRE = CYBER PUNK

A FUTURISTIC CAPITALIST DYSTOPIA APPLY NOW!

...to the terrible future. Sink into the muck of a world ruined by advanced technology and greed, and struggle against your fellow man to

SURVIVE.

> CLASSICS . BOOK . LIST =

WHY CHOOSE US?

Cyberpunk is a subset of the sci-fi genre, with one key difference. Everything sucks.

The incredible technological advancements are made intentionally insecure for later access. Corporations openly support governments, all powerful as they are, to their knees. The common man is reduced to a cog in a machine.

In this gritty backdrop, the characters shine. Living life between a rock and a hard place leads to a life filled with interesting dilemmas. To have survive in this world you will have to be cold and cunning, or both (higher and quicker) than ever.

OUR PLATFORM

Trans-humanist elements, such as body modification, virtual reality, and digital consciousness are common to all walks of life, from the corporate worker to the underground rebel.

Relative morality is the only constant in these worlds. There's no right answer, just one good enough to get you to tomorrow. Readers are invited to provide their best answers to the questions that these characters face.

Bandung together is one of the few ways to survive. Companies and clubs make for modern tribes, and a trusted friend is a precious resource...for most. For others, there's always a price.

NEUROMANCER

A thriller by William Gibson, his 1984 started what came to be known as "Cyberpunk". Gern's previous job as a legendary hacker left his abilities crippled. The cure that his latest employer offered will kill him, if he can't complete a deal with his new boss.

I HAVE NO MOUTH, AND I MUST SCREAM

A psychological thriller by Hartman Hanson, grimace as "AIM", the AI that killed the rest of humanity a century ago carries out it's cruel revenge by terrorizing the last survivors.

DO ANDROIDS DREAM OF ELECTRIC SHEEP?

Written by Philip K. Dick, settle down for a noir mystery following Rick Deckard on his next assignment as a bounty hunter, identifying and "retiring" all R's misquoting as humans.

AKIRA

A manga by Katsuhiro Otomo, Akira follows the young Tetsuo's life as a motorcycle racer and psychic revolutionary against the oppressive governments of Neo-Tokyo, who are experimenting on an extremely powerful Esper known as "Akira".

SCIENCE FICTION GENRE GUIDE

Works of science fiction create speculative worlds based on science and technology that may or may not exist yet. These stories take place in a range of settings and timelines and rely on scientific details, elaborate worlds, and creative jargon to conjure up an atmosphere outside of today's reality. This genre can explore many different themes such as space, time travel, alternate history, apocalyptic or dystopian futures, hard science, and cyberpunk or steampunk.

Space Operas

These works are often epic world-building adventure stories set in outer space on planets or spaceships. Titles focus on story, and typically involve some type of battle between the forces of good and evil. They are often part of a longer series.

Dune by Frank Herbert (1965)

One of the most famous sci-fi novels of all time follows Paul Atreides' journey through an epic interstellar power struggle for control of the planet Arrakis, home to a powerful "spice" that wields the power of space travel and enhanced mental capabilities. This is the first of six books in the series.

The Expanse Series by James S.A. Corey (2011-2021)

Beginning with Leviathan Wakes (2011), this nine-book series takes place in a colonized solar system where growing conflicts between the nations of Earth, Mars, and the Outer Planets explore issues of class systems, technology, terrorism, and military superpowers. While the books feature narratives from several different characters, many of the storylines are centered around the exploits of the blended crew on a salvaged gunship, the Rocinante.

Hard Science

In these titles elements of real science and math are central to the plot, presenting plenty of technical details and scientific accuracy. Hard Science works are often reads that can be challenging and that explore the consequences of future-science.

The Martian by Andy Weir (2012)

When astronaut Mark Watney is left stranded alone on Mars, he must rely on his knowledge of engineering and botany to survive. Struggling against damaged machinery and the harsh environments, Weir creates a gripping story based on plausible and practical scientific technologies.

Beggars in Spain by Nancy Kress (1993)

This book follows Leisha Camden, the first person to be genetically modified for sleeplessness which also has the added benefits of higher productivity and intelligence. While a deepening social divide grows between the "sleepers" and the "sleepless," Kress explores issues of ethics and the emerging technologies in bioengineering.

Cyberpunk/Steampunk

Cyberpunk titles often have a dark tone and a gritty atmosphere that question social divisions and feature robotics or Artificial Intelligence. Steampunk titles typically offer a more fantastical setting where 19th Century steam power and other advanced technologies often mix with elements of fantasy & mystery.

Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? by Philip K. Dick (1968)

In a bleak future ravaged by war, realistic human androids created as companions have been banned from Earth. Rick Deckard, bounty hunter, tracks down indistinguishable rogue androids that have escaped and now must be "retired."

The Strange Affair of Spring-Heeled Jack by Mark Hodder (2010)

In an alternate 1880s London where steam-powered technologies and genetic modification are the ruling sciences, adventurer Sir Richard Burton and poet Algernon Swinburn are enlisted to investigate the savage attacks of a mythical figure as they begin to suspect they may be living in a world that should not exist.

Classic Must Read

Award Winner

Made into a Film/TV Series

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Lesbian Historical Fiction

A GENRE GUIDE

Lesbian historical fiction is a thematic subgenre of historical fiction. In this guide, historical fiction is defined as works set at least 60 years ago and written from an author's research, not their personal experience (Johnson, 86). Historical fiction may appeal to you if you are interested in immersing yourself in the daily life of those in the past, and wish you could time travel to explore ideas, aesthetics, and experiences that may no longer exist today (87).

This guide focuses on realistic stories involving a main character who is a woman pursuing a romantic and/or sexual relationship with other women in a historical setting.

KEY:

- Physical book available
- Audiobook available
- Book available
- Screen Adaptation
- Canadian Author
- Queer Character
- Intersectionality
- Post-War Setting
- Historical Setting

	The Ballad of Jacquette Delahaye by Briony Cameron (2024)	
Jacquette Delahaye is a woman of colour whose rise to power is one of the few purported female pirate captains to sail the Caribbean. As Jacquette navigates her new life of piracy, she must take charge and make decisions that will save or doom her crew and possibly threaten the forbidden love story that will shape the course of history.		
	Beyond the Pale by Elana Dykewomon (1997)	
Chava Meyer and Gutke Gurvich flee Russia after the 1903 Kishinev Pogrom and make their way to New York City. As both women find their respective female partners and join the labour movement, the two must rebuild when tragedy strikes. Dykewomon has illuminated life New York's turn-of-the-century Lower East Side, with its teeming crowds, sweetshops, and fervent political action.		
	The Confessions of Frannie Langton by Sara Collins (2019)	
Awaiting her trial for murder, Frannie recounts her childhood as a slave and the later painful wanderings of scientific experimentation, prostitution, and addiction. Powerfully portraying the horrors of slavery and the injustices of 19th-century British society, this novel is a gothic, suspenseful, and gritty courtroom drama.		
	Curiosities by Anne Fleming (2024)	
Framed by five purported archival documents, <i>Curiosities</i> begins with two small children, Joan and Thomasina, the only survivors of their 17th-century village's plague. After the two are separated, they reconnect years later, though their love is quickly mistaken for witchcraft. Written by local Vancouver author Anne Fleming, this experimental tale of gender, love, and the role of archival documentation will delight those looking for a startlingly accurate look at 17th-century queer identity.		

Romance

What is it?

Romance is characterized by the main focus of the story being the romantic relationship between the two main characters. The ending of the story must also be optimistic and emotionally satisfying—the happily ever after (HEA).

Romance stories tend to be emotionally driven, allowing the reader to connect with the characters, but plot-wise they can vary. Some stories are fun and quick romps set in contemporary times, some are dark and twisting with emotional anguish, and some feature no humans whatsoever set in far off galaxies.

Romance novels are often referred to as "trashy" or not concerning the real world, but that is untrue. Yes, you can be swept into a fantasy, and who doesn't love a little escapism, but romance novels often deal with major real-world issues like divorce, abuse, and health issues. Romance is a very broad genre, and readers have many nooks and crannies to explore.

Available as Audiobook Screen Adaptation Award Winner

Classic

Founding books in the development and-of the genre.

Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen (1813)

Witty and romantic, "Pride and Prejudice" follows Elizabeth Bennet and her four sisters as they enter the marriage market to keep the Bennet estate within the family, exploring themes of class, love, and societal expectations through the tumultuous relationship between Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy in early 19th-century England.

"Bodice Ripper"

Term coined to reference late 20th century steamy romance written to mimic the style of classic English romance novels but with sexual situations and dramatic plotlines.

The Lord of Scoundrels by Loretta Chase (1995)

After arriving in Paris to pull her brother out of yet another perilous situation, Jessica Trent faces off with the wild Marquess of Dain, who simultaneously infuriates and attracts her. This novel is an amusing and steamy page-turner.

Contemporary

Funny Story by Emily Henry (2024)

Daphne has not only just broken up with her boyfriend, who she was living with his best friend happens to be marrying her. This poignant and charmingly elegant dispenses both wisdom, and the setting well-rounded main characters draw readers in.

Take a Hint by Dani Brown (2024)

Take a Hint by Dani Brown (2024)

Zaf and Dani may flirt but they are fundamentally different. However, when a video of Dani from an elevator goes viral, she decides to capitalize on the fame by faking a relationship. Things stop feeling fake and their passion intensifies. This is a banter-filled, steamy, and engaging story perfect for lovers of British romantic comedies.

SPACE OPERA

A SCIENCE FICTION SUBGENRE

Space (as in Outer) & Opera (as in Soap)

- Space operas are a type of science fiction known for their epic stories and dramatic conflict in outer-space.
- The name Space Opera refers to soap opera television shows known for their melodramatic drama.
- Space Opera novels are enjoying a resurgence thanks to blockbuster movies like Dune, Star Wars and Star Trek.

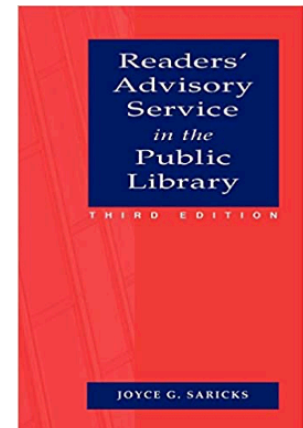
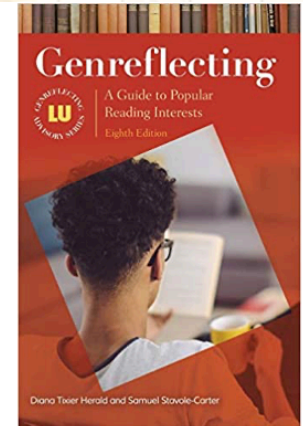
- Large-scale space adventure
- Intergalactic conflict
- Speculative worlds, lifeforms & technology
- Large cast of characters, including alien life
- Fast-paced with lots of plot twists
- Romantic elements
- Explore the universe, contact aliens, colonize space
- Suspenseful sagas

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Required:

- Herald, D. T. & Stavole-Carter, S. (2019). *Genreflecting: A guide to popular reading interests* (8th edition). Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited.
 - NB: This text is available through the Langara library as a print book. Call number: PS 374 P63 R67 2019
 - I will be making certain chapters available on Brightspace for those who cannot purchase it or go to Langara to use it.
- Selected chapters from Saricks, J. G. (2005). *Readers' advisory service in the public library* (3rd ed). Chicago: American Library Association.
 - NB: This book is available as an ebook through the Langara library <https://twist.langara.ca/record=b1876371~S1>. It's an excellent resource if you feel inclined to purchase it, but you should be able to use it online if you prefer.
- Additional readings, viewings and audio materials to be assigned in Brightspace in the weekly course modules.



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Why this course?

- Helpful for public or school library positions and possibly academic as well
- Practicum host feedback often recommends students take a readers' advisory course for their future development
- Practical and hands on
 - You will get practice providing RA service, and creating resources that libraries produce to encourage people to read
 - Activities and assignments are all things you would do on the job
- Read for pleasure as part of a course
- Fun 😊

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Questions?

