COURSE PERSPECTIVE:

Stewart Brand, American author and futurist, states the following in his book HOW BUILDINGS LEARN: “A library doesn’t need windows. A library is a window.”

If so, then one needs to ask: What size window? Is it open or closed? What view does it offer?

Patrick Williams, Associate Professor of Library Science at Rosary College, presents another view of the library—this time the public library—in THE AMERICAN PUBLIC LIBRARY AND THE PROBLEM OF PURPOSE. He contends: For almost 150 years the public library community has struggled with the problem of finding the right place for the library. Finding the right place means, first of all, developing an idea of purpose that identifies a distinctive and valuable contribution that the library can reasonably be expected to make with the resources that society can reasonably be expected to provide.

This course, then, is about opening a window on the continuing “problem of purpose” of the American public library. It is about the necessity to refocus, to rethink, and to retool this vital social entity.

Within this context a series of issues pertaining to the public library is examined; its history and development; its current status; its changing customer base; and staffing challenges. In addition, the course focuses on collection development, technology, funding, marketing, evaluation, and construction.
Topics will be addressed on both the theoretical and the practical basis. How does a public library compete—now that it has lost its monopolistic advantage? How does it respond to the many other entities that have entered its franchise area?

The “bias” of this course is that the public library is caught between two powerful systems: democracy and capitalism. Democracy provides the rationale for the public library; capitalism the financial resources. These forces are often in conflict with one another, creating unique and challenging dilemmas for the public library—and the public librarian.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY:

My role is to present you with the issues connected to and the challenges facing the public library. Your role is to understand, to discuss, and to question each and every issue and challenge. You are expected to attend every class meeting, complete the assignments on time, read the materials assigned, and participate actively in class room discussion.

TEXTS:

There is no text, but students will be expected to read primary source documents, i.e., various studies and policy statements re public libraries, and a wide variety of articles. Copies of all required readings will be provided by the instructor.

EVALUATION:

The final grade will be determined in the following manner:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term Examination</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Examination</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Analysis</td>
<td>33%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief that Elvis Lives</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The examinations are open-book, take-home exams.

* Book Analysis—A paper of significant length (10-12 pages) that analyzes a work pertaining to issues (or an issue) affecting the public library. The title may be about a demographic issue, a financial issue, etc. It may NOT be about the public library. The paper is due at the last class meeting.
ADMINISTRATIVE/PROCEDURAL ISSUES

Class Attendance: I do not record attendance but ask that you inform me in advance if you will be absent. You are responsible for acquiring any handouts, etc., distributed during a missed class.

Timely Submission of Assignments: Assignments are due as indicated on the syllabus.

ADA Accommodation: Students with disabilities requiring accommodation under Federal regulations must present a written accommodation request to the instructor by the second class meeting. It is strongly recommended that the student contact the Office of Disability Support Services, Suite 207, Pryzbyla Center (202-319-5211; email cua-disabilityservices@cua.edu, web http://disabilitysupport.cua.edu/). This is the University office responsible for disability accommodation and services, and its staff can answer questions about services and requirements regarding documentation. Special accommodations or other arrangements cannot be made without documentation approved by this office.

Academic Honesty: You’ll find Academic Affairs policies on “Academic Dishonesty” and on “Unethical Practices” in the University Policies and Procedures web page at http://policies.cua.edu/. You are held responsible for adhering to these policies. Incidences of academic dishonesty, defined by the University as “failure to observe rules of fairness in taking exams or writing papers, plagiarism, fabrication, and cheating” will result in a grade of F (0 points) on the project or exam in question and will be reported to the Dean for possible further action (including failure in the course). Talk with your instructor if you have questions about what is involved in such offenses. Plagiarism, which includes “(1) intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one’s own in any academic exercise; (2) failure to attribute any of the following: quotations, paraphrases, or borrowed information from print sources or websites; (3) buying completed papers from others to use as one’s own work,” will not be tolerated. For more on what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it, see the guide on the Purdue Online Writing Lab web site at http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_plagiar.html.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASS NO.</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5/14</td>
<td>Overview and Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>5/16</td>
<td>History of the Public Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5/21</td>
<td>Current Status of the Public Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5/23</td>
<td>Changed and Changing Customer Base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5/28</td>
<td>MEMORIAL DAY--NO CLASS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5/30</td>
<td>MID-TERM--NO CLASS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6/04</td>
<td>Collections and Content Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>6/06</td>
<td>Marketing/ Funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>6/11</td>
<td>Accountability/Relevance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>6/13</td>
<td>Buildings/Service/Delivery Options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>6/18</td>
<td>Staffing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>6/20</td>
<td>Future(s) of the Public Library</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Suggested (just that!) Book Analysis Titles


Suggested (just that!) Book Analysis Titles


