

## **Interdisciplinary Studies Major Proposal: Libraries and Society**

**Emily Connery, Class of 2024**

This proposal contains three major components. The first describes the overall goal of the major, the learning goals of the major, and the justification for this interdisciplinary studies major over any other pre-existing major. The second identifies courses that will constitute the major. The third outlines what the capstone experience will include and what form the final presentation will take.

### **1) Goal and Justification:**

The title of this major is Libraries and Society. The major aims to combine the studies of sociology and library science to produce a more complete major than either subject individually. The sociology discipline will be overseen by committee member Dr. Stacey Schwartzkopf and the library science discipline by committee member and capstone experience professor Britt Anne Murphy. The capstone experience will include a presentation in the form of a poster, detailed in the capstone section of this proposal.

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#### **Learning Goals:**

- The student will demonstrate the ability to integrate concepts and critical thinking approaches from two academic disciplines.
- The student will create written, oral, visual, or multimedia materials that demonstrate the ability to present and analyze evidence.
- The student will learn and reflect on the history and social issues surrounding access to library materials by minority groups and how intellectual freedom, library collection development policies, and library professional ethics in particular shape that access.
- The student will understand issues and practices concerning metadata and controlled vocabulary used in cataloging standards for children and young adult materials.

Library science is unique in its pivotal role in serving communities. With the proliferation of information, public libraries serve as bastions of knowledge, providing access to diverse resources and fostering literacy. Moreover, by nurturing a culture of lifelong learning and community engagement, public libraries supported by trained professionals enhance social cohesion and adhesion and empower individuals to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world. By preparing to curate collections, leverage digital resources, and design inclusive programming, a libraries and society major will equip me to uphold the mission of public libraries and ensure equitable access to resources for all members of society.

I have been deeply interested in libraries for many years now. I job shadowed at the Thompson branch of the Central Arkansas Library System in high school, I completed an internship at the Dee Brown branch of the Central Arkansas Library System in the summer of 2021, and worked part-time at the Conway branch of the Faulkner-Van Buren Regional Library System for a year. As we have no library science major, I have engaged this interest by taking an independent study and completing an internship course focused on libraries. These were coded as sociology courses because they were overseen by my advisor (the chair of the sociology department), and I had hoped to use them as electives for my sociology major at the time. Library science is distinct from sociology, but the two disciplines pair extremely well to construct a more complete and robust theoretical framework by which I can serve the goals of both fields. The interdisciplinary major will allow me to complete the capstone with a library faculty member, learning about the theory and practice of library science with a policy focus, something that no one in the sociology department can provide. This will also allow me to graduate with a degree reflecting my enduring interest in librarianship that will benefit me as I move toward my career.

## 2) Courses:

Seven courses on society and culture:

Introduction to Cultural Anthropology (ANTH-100)

Introduction to Sociology (SOCI-110)

Visual Anthropology (ANTH-250)

Race and Ethnicity (SOCI-270)

Society, Culture, and History (SOCI-317)

Picturing Society: Readings in Sociological Thought (social theory course) (SOCI-365)

Sociological Research Methods (social methodology course) (SOCI-335)

Four courses on library and information science:

CALS Dee Brown Library Internship (SOCI-498)

Sociology of Libraries Independent Study (SOCI-499)

Statistics (library methodology course) (PSYC-290)

Libraries and Society Capstone (library science theory course) (LBST-499)

(to be completed spring of 2024)

### 3) Capstone:

The Capstone Course (LBST-499) will serve as a W2 credit and will involve the creation of a collection development policy for a public library setting with attention to curating and cataloging young adult titles. Using literature from library science and sociology, I will research the theoretical background to developing young adult collections that reflect the needs of a community while keeping the principles of intellectual freedom intact. To fulfill the W2 credit requirements, I will engage in regular reflective writing assignments and a policy paper. I will examine the theory and method of cataloging collections to enhance access, especially for the LGBTQ community. The process and research underlying the young adult collection development policy will result in a 5-7 page policy paper and the creation of a poster, which will be the culmination of the capstone. This capstone paper will involve scaffolded revision and writing feedback drawing on the disciplines of sociology and library science. I will present the poster at the end of the semester to the Hendrix and local library communities, with the intention of presenting at a future Arkansas Library Association conference. The course grade will be determined by the completion of weekly discussions, frequent reflection, and the final projects.

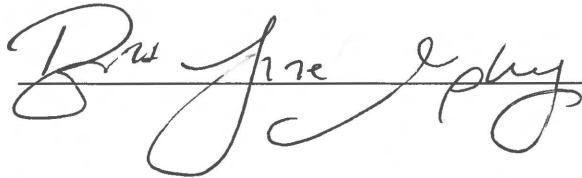
Dr. Stacey Schwartzkopf



2/5/2024

date

Prof. Britt Anne Murphy:



2/5/2024

date