LIB Course Designator Proposal
OSU Libraries & Press

To: Sarah Williams, Curriculum Coordinator; Gary Beach, Curriculum Coordinator
From: Anne-Marie Deitering & Cheryl Middleton, OSU Libraries & Press
Date: 23 May 2014
Re: LIB Course designator for Library courses

Justification

In an increasingly digital world, the ability to find, evaluate, organize, curate, preserve, and use information effectively is crucial. The OSU Learning Goals for Graduates clearly reflect this fact:

2. Critical Thinking: As an OSU graduate, you will evaluate and synthesize information from multiple sources and perspectives to make informed decisions and solve problems...

6. Communication: As an OSU graduate, you will be able to present and evaluate information...

While these skills have always been important, our digital world means that many of the traditional gatekeepers that have controlled access to knowledge and information are gone. Where we used to rely on experts to help us navigate information systems – from booking flights to searching scholarly databases – now, we must know how to do these things independently.

In this context, it is important that information science be reflected in OSU's curriculum. Working as guest lecturers in classes, and offering independent workshops, OSU teaching librarians and archivists already reach approximately ten thousand students every year. There is no doubt that students benefit from these interactions: they learn skills they need to be successful on specific assignments and in some cases make progress towards departmental learning outcomes. Increasingly, though, it is becoming obvious that this model has significant limitations:

- This model depends on the awareness and motivation of individual faculty members (or individual departments). Students who are not enrolled in courses with a faculty member who recognizes the need for research instruction do not receive it.
- Teaching as guest lecturers means that lessons and learning modules are necessarily tied to specific course assignments. In this context, foundational information skills and concepts are frequently skipped.
- Librarians have tried to address gaps with out-of-class workshops, but there are two barriers to success: students must be motivated to attend without receiving course
credit; students may attend one workshop but not others, making it impossible to scaffold learning.

- Students across disciplines would benefit from courses such as primary source skills or data management. Offering these separately as courses in several departments is inefficient and overly complex.
- The Libraries, Press, and Archives are frequently approached by students looking for experiential learning opportunities such as internships. Without the opportunity to offer course credit for these experiences, we unnecessarily limit the pool of students who can take advantage of them.

The OSU Libraries and Press Strategic Plan 2012-2017 establishes this as a goal: *we will provide educational offerings that improve critical thinking, scholarly communication, data management and engagement with the research enterprise.* To do this, OSU Libraries & Press needs a course designator.

**Purpose**

1. **What academic programs, including majors, certificates, options and minors will be served by courses within the designator?**

None. The Libraries are not proposing a new program at this time. The designator would allow us to meet targeted needs and offer experiential education opportunities.

**Proposed courses**

Note: This list is based on existing courses for which we know there is demand and courses currently in development. Following a needs assessment, we expect to identify additional courses that might be offered.

100- or 200-level courses:

- Research Skills for Academic Success in the Humanities**
- Research Skills for Academic Success in the Sciences
- Research with Primary Sources **

300- or 400-level courses:

- Research methods: Oral History
- Information Skills for Professional Success in [Business, Agriculture, etc.]***
- Information Management
- Exploring Digital Humanities*

500- level courses.

- Research Data Management.*
- Data Visualization
- Systematic Evidence-Based Reviews
Additional courses:

- LIB 199. Special Topics.
- LIB 402. Independent Study.
- LIB 405. Reading and Conference
- LIB 410. Internship

*Proposal currently under development
**Revision of existing librarian/archivist-taught courses
***Focus determined by partnerships, demand and needs assessment

2. **In what ways do the general area and scope of the content constitute a coherent body of knowledge?**

Information science is defined as “concerned with that body of knowledge relating to the origination, collection, organization, storage, retrieval, interpretation, transmission, transformation and utilization of information.”\(^1\) This definition covers a lot of ground and it is clear that these processes are not the sole purview of any one discipline.

However, as Marcia Bates points out, information science examines these processes through a particular lens – focusing on “the features that matter to the organization and retrieval of it, rather than in terms of mastering its content.”\(^2\) It is this lens that adds coherence to offerings that may on their surface seem disparate. As students must know how to retrieve, organize, repackage and preserve information for themselves, this perspective is essential, and it is frequently missing from their current learning experiences which focus, for obvious reasons, on the mastery of content.

3. **Is the proposed usage of the designator consistent with practice at OSU and other institutions? Give examples.**

Yes, the proposed usage is consistent with practice at other OUS institutions. OSU is currently one of only two OUS institutions that does not have a library-related course designator. OIT is the other. All of the institutions use LIB as the designator, with one exception (SOU).

While every library except for OIT has a library-focused course designator, none of them use the designator to define a program.\(^3\) Instead, they are all used as ours would

---


\(^3\) Portland State University does have a Library Media Endorsement (for K-12 teachers) using the LIB designator. However, PSU also has a separate designator (ULIB) for research courses aimed at the general student population.
be: to fill gaps and provide individual learning experiences. Our proposed use would be similar to that at UO, where the designator is used for: a skills-related 100-level course, a variety of special topics offerings; upper-division undergraduate and graduate courses in digital humanities and digital scholarship; and experiential education options such as Readings and Conference courses and internships.

Accountability:

1. What is the academic college of the designator?
   OSU Libraries and Press

2. Who is responsible for administering courses in the designator, e.g. scheduling and catalog updates. Who are the faculty contact persons
   The OSUL&P Curriculum Council will include representatives from all library departments. The Curriculum Council will review the course schedule and catalog listings, and recommend updates.
   The faculty contact person will be the Associate University Librarian for Teaching and Engagement (currently: Cheryl Middleton).

3. Who is responsible for consistency and outcome assessment for courses in the designator?
   The Curriculum Council will review courses before they are proposed, and will also conduct regular reviews on the courses to ensure that they still match their descriptions, and that stated outcomes are still being met.

4. Which units get credit for the SCH generated by courses in the subject code?

5. Who is responsible for communicating information about the new designator to stakeholders, including advisors, Admissions and students.
   The Associate University Librarian for Teaching and Engagement, in consultation with the OSU Libraries Teaching and Engagement department.

Impacts:

1. Will courses in the new designator duplicate or compete with existing ones?
Minimally, though it is important to note that none of these courses will continue in their current form if the designator is granted. Librarians have in the past taught courses that would likely be replaced by LIB options:

- ENG 200 (Library Skills for Literary Studies) is currently offered (and taught by an OSUL&P librarian) in Fall and Winter terms.
- HST 499/599 (Archival Studies) was offered Winter 2012 as a Special Topics course, taught by OSUL&P archivists.
- GRAD 521 (Research Data Management) is currently being developed as a Category 2 proposal for Fall 2013.

2. **Are there expected cross-listings or curricular equivalencies?**

In the future, we do expect to work with departments and/or colleges to identify courses that might be cross-listed. There are no concrete plans for cross-listings at this time.

3. **How will the new designator affect transfer credits?**

At this point, these courses would be electives so the impact would be minimal.

4. **Will any previous existing designators expire as the new one appears?**

No.

5. **How will the new designator benefit students?**

As stated above, information skills are central to OSU’s Learning Goals for Graduates. A library-specific course designator will allow the OSUL&P the flexibility we need to help students develop those skills. Some of the specific benefits to students include:

- All students will have access to information skills courses, even if they are not enrolled in a course where a librarian is asked to contribute.
- Librarians are in a position to identify gaps in understanding that make it difficult for students to transfer the skills they learn in course-based research assignments to real-world settings. The LIB designator would give us the flexibility to address those gaps.
- Transfer students will benefit from information science courses that are not embedded in courses they may have taken. Currently, most OSU students are introduced to college-level research practice in WR 121. At OSU, this course has an articulated information literacy outcome, but that is not the case everywhere.
WR121 is offered. Students who transfer to OSU with these credits have no opportunity to make up the research component of that class.

- The Libraries, Press, and Archives have a rich variety of projects that could provide students with valuable experiential learning opportunities. The LIB course designator would allow students to earn credit for their work, opening those opportunities up to more students.
- Depending on their previous institutions and experience, graduate students frequently have gaps in their information literacy skills. LIB courses will give them the ability to build information skills that cut across disciplinary boundaries, and to develop a more complete understanding of the entire research process.