Library and Information Science

Director

Lucy Santos Green

Graduate degree: MA in library and information science

Graduate certificate: special collections and archives

Faculty: https://slis.uiowa.edu/faculty-and-staff

Website: https://slis.uiowa.edu/

The School of Library and Information Science offers a graduate-level program of professional and academic preparation for careers in libraries and information centers. The program is accredited by the American Library Association. In concert with the mission of the University of Iowa, the school seeks excellence in its education of future library and information professionals, its contribution to the knowledge base of library and information science, and its service to the school's local, regional, national, and international constituencies.

Library and information professionals serve the needs of their own constituencies—children and teachers, members of academic communities, employees of profit and nonprofit organizations, and the public at large—ranging from information poor to information rich. They work in the contexts of issues such as information and communication technology, public and private information policy, managerial policy, and regional, national, and international economics.

The school offers the MA in Library and Information Science and a variety of dual degrees and certificates to specialize in different areas of information professions, including joint offerings with the Center for the Book, the College of Law, the Department of English, and a school teacher-librarian endorsement for licensed K–12 teachers. The MA may be pursued while completing other degrees at the University of Iowa, including other master's and PhD degrees. Undergraduates at the University of Iowa may also apply for the Undergraduate to Graduate (U2G) degree program and complete their bachelor's degree in combination with the MA in Library and Information Science.

Student Organizations and Activities

All MA students in the school are automatically members of LISSO, the Library and Information Science Student Organization, which also serves as the student chapter of the American Library Association. LISSO sponsors various activities, such as speaker series, workshops, brown bag lunches, and social events. Participation in LISSO events provides students with significant opportunities for professional and extracurricular growth as well as completion of capstone portfolio requirements. Students are encouraged to join other state and national professional organizations.

Honor Society

The Beta Beta Theta Chapter of Beta Phi Mu, the international honor society for library and information science, is located at the University of Iowa. Each year new members are chosen from the top 25% of the preceding year's graduating class. To be eligible for membership, graduates must achieve a grade-point average of at least 3.75, demonstrate professional promise, and be recommended by the faculty.

Related Certificate

Certificate in Book Arts and Book Studies

Students may apply to earn the Certificate in Book Arts and Book Studies. The program requires 15 additional s.h. of graduate credit through the University of Iowa Center for the Book for students who are enrolled in the joint Library and Information Sciences MA/Certificate in Book Arts and Book Studies program. For more information, see the MA and Certificate in Book Arts and Book Studies in the catalog.

Programs

Graduate Programs of Study

- Master of Arts in Library and Information Science
- Certificate in Special Collections and Archives

Facilities

The School of Library and Information Science (SLIS) is housed in the south wing on the third floor of the university's Main Library, in a setting that promotes community among students, faculty, and staff and provides easy access to the resources of the University of Iowa Libraries. Facilities are provided for the varied instructional and research activities of the school.

The school includes classrooms dedicated for use by School of Library and Information Science faculty and students. These classrooms feature a wired workstation technology setup with Windows and Macintosh computers fully equipped with videoconferencing systems and large high-definition screens.

University of Iowa Libraries

All of the resources of the University of Iowa Libraries are available to the school's students and faculty. The system contains more than 4 million volumes in the Main Library and six departmental libraries.

The web-based catalog provides access to books and periodicals, electronic indexes, and full-text databases held by the university libraries. In addition, InfoHawk+ provides online resource access to resources arranged by subject and academic discipline. Wireless internet access is available in the Main Library.

The school benefits from proximity to the Learning Commons, encompassing the majority of public space on the first floor of the Main Library. The Learning Commons is a technology-infused, comfortable, and flexible learning space, and an academic and information help center.

The third floor of the Main Library, where SLIS is located, also houses the map collection, Special Collections, and University Archives, including the Iowa Women's Archives.

Other Libraries

Students have access to a variety of libraries through field trips, practicum experience, and personal use: the State Historical Society of Iowa library in Iowa City; the Iowa City, Coralville, and Cedar Rapids public and school libraries; the Augustana, Coe, Cornell, Mount Mercy, and Grinnell college

libraries; and the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum in West Branch, IA.

Other Resources

The second floor of the University Capitol Centre houses the instructional services and campus services departments of the university's Information Technology Services. It provides instructional and research computing facilities and services for the university community. All university students, staff, and faculty may use the center's computers for university-related research, thesis preparation, and class work. Instructional Technology Centers provide campuswide access to the university's academic computing resources.

Courses

Library and Information Science Courses

SLIS:4150 Introduction to Book Studies 3 s.h.
Theory and practice of book studies; meanings of word and image in the book format; comparative study of other media, applied study of the codex as a physical artifact. Same as ENGL:4150, UICB:4150.

SLIS:4910 The Book in the Middle Ages 3 s.h.
Relation of text, decoration, function, creators, and audience in different genres of medieval manuscript books 400-1500 A.D. Same as HIST:4422, UICB:4910.

SLIS:4920 The Book in Early Modern Europe 3 s.h.
History of the book and communication in Europe 1400-1800; production, distribution, and use of texts in cultural context. Same as HIST:4429, UICB:4920.

SLIS:5010 Libraries, Culture, and Society 3 s.h.
Role of libraries and information agencies in society; major issues including information policy, professional ethics, literacy, diversity, technology, and pedagogy. Requirements: admission to library and information science.

SLIS:5020 Public User Services and Technology 3 s.h.
Information and technological practices and affordances of public and school libraries; information technology needs of public and school library users; digital divide and inequality; reference and technical support practices and systems in public and school libraries; user technology management (IT strategic planning and public computing policies). Requirements: admission to library and information science.

SLIS:5030 Information Organization 3 s.h.
Introduction to information organization, the systems and standards used in libraries and information centers to describe and organize documents and records for optimal stewardship and retrieval; hands-on experience in creating media (e.g., LibGuides, Omeka galleries) and encoding XML documents; preparation for further practice in cataloging, metadata, preservation, and retrieval. Requirements: admission to library and information science.

SLIS:5041 College and University Libraries 3 s.h.
Focus on praxis of academic librarianship—the way theories and ideas are applied and embodied in day-to-day work of librarians and organization of academic libraries; exploration of different types of academic libraries and their goals, functions, services, and contexts in which they operate; different types of academic librarianship; development of a preparedness for engaging complexities of academic library work as it progresses the goals of higher education; for students interested in academic librarianship, archives, and special collections. Requirements: admission to library and information science program.

SLIS:5042 Public Libraries 3 s.h.
Modern public libraries were founded on principles of equality, democracy, intellectual freedom, and public good; exploration of the historical development of public libraries and current issues related to their management and operations; practical projects and observation of library operations; opportunity to apply classroom learning to real-world work; for students interested in working in a public library or archives. Requirements: admission to library and information science program.

SLIS:5044 School Library Media Administration 3 s.h.
How to create and deliver a program that focuses on teaching responsibilities of school librarians and their collaborative role in the school; examination of research, standards, curricular frameworks, information process, and inquiry models; administrative and leadership roles of teacher librarian including policy and procedure development, budgeting, and program evaluation; development of a functional library program plan.

SLIS:5200 Innovation and Technology Methodology 3 s.h.
Power of technology to connect, communicate, create, convince, and collaborate within library setting; development of a personal philosophy and network within the innovative technology realm; introduction to a variety of multimedia tools; creation of projects on multiple platforms.

SLIS:5220 Resources for Children 3 s.h.
Children's literature and librarianship are entwined, interdisciplinary fields that now encompass everything from storytelling to new media, reflecting the field's service to a population spanning from newborns to 14-year-olds; survey of issues that youth librarians must understand by studying a progression of ages and developmental stages, issues of professional practice, and elements of genre and media for young people, anchored by books and media suited to these ages; strategies and resources that youth services professionals can use for creating responsive services and collections in the 21st century.

SLIS:5230 Resources for Young Adults 3 s.h.
Examination of topics related to populations served by youth service departments (i.e., societal issues and informational needs) and the ways libraries meet needs of young adults; immersion into the world of young adults and how this relates to recreational reading and information seeking needs; how to evaluate and select from a variety of fiction, nonfiction, print, digital, and web-based resources; how to guide young adults to become competent, critical consumers and producers of information while creating a welcoming environment that celebrates diversity.

SLIS:5240 Resources for Adults 3 s.h.
Role of public libraries in meeting adults' informational and recreational needs; popular culture materials, reader's advisory services, lifelong learning.

SLIS:5400 Community Archives 3 s.h.
Community archives are projects and organizations that employ archival methods to organize self-determined group memory. Set in sometimes complex symbiotic relationships with other heritage organizations like libraries, institutional archives, and museums, community archives can be community-led and participatory. Explore the state of community memory as organized by community leaders; ask after community archival practices, prerogatives, and sustainability in the contemporary United States toward broader concerns that tie community memory and how it is kept with questions of community self-determination and wellbeing.

SLIS:5450 Reader's Advisory: Practices, Resources, and Media 3 s.h.
Reader's advisory, the professional term for connecting books and readers in libraries, is made up of practices and ideas that facilitate leisure reading and enjoyment of books and media. Cover different modes, strategies, and resources for reader's advisory work in libraries; give attention to related activities such as author visits, book clubs, and algorithms and reading. Share learning about recommendations and genres as part of a plan for developing best practices in this important area of public library service.

SLIS:5500 Authorship After Automation: Writing, Creativity, and Generative Artificial Intelligence 3 s.h.
Examination of generative AI writing tools as information systems that produce, circulate, and transform text across creative, academic, and professional contexts; engagement with scholarship from critical AI studies, authorship studies, and writing and textual history alongside contemporary literary and cultural works responding to AI or algorithmic writing tools; adoption of an exploratory approach to AI engagement, emphasizing experimentation, iterative revision, and transparent reflection to support informed, critical decisions about when, how, and whether AI systems should be used; no programming background required. Requirements: admission to library and information science.

SLIS:5520 Studies in Book History and Technologies 0-3 s.h.
Topics related to production, distribution, and consumption of books through history and into the future. Same as UICB:5520.

SLIS:5530 Preservation Management 3 s.h.
Responsible stewardship of collections, integration of preservation into libraries and archives systems, maximizing limited resources, establishing preservation priorities, and advocacy; appropriate care of books, paper, photographs, time-based media (e.g., audio, video, film), and born-digital objects; lectures, discussions, student presentations, and hands-on activities; for students who will be responsible for managing collections. Same as UICB:5530.

SLIS:5535 Book Conservation 3 s.h.
Practical methods, materials assessment, conservation history and evolution. Prerequisites: UICB:4270. Same as UICB:5220.

SLIS:5600 Reading Culture: History and Research in Print and Digital Media 3 s.h.
What reading means, and what it means to read, have changed with time and place; cultural study of books and reading to evaluate strategies and resources involved in crafting historical interpretations of books and their readers; consideration of ways that reading has always been interdependent with other media, from needlework to social media; how researchers locate and interpret primary source material to study reading culture, and how cultural heritage organizations promote their holdings to researchers. Same as UICB:5600.

SLIS:5630 Introduction to Special Collections and Rare Books 3 s.h.
Introduction to history of collecting in special collections and key areas of praxis (e.g., appraisal, arrangement and description, preservation, reference and access, outreach).

SLIS:6020 Literacy and Learning 3 s.h.
Learning and literacy theory relevant to work in information services; how librarians can help people process information and use it to form understanding and create new knowledge. Prerequisites: SLIS:5010.

SLIS:6040 Media Production Workshop 3 s.h.
Hands-on workshop to familiarize students with media production software and methods common to work in libraries and information centers; students may produce media including websites, apps, podcasts, videos, infographics, and tweets; studio course with emphasis on peer assistance and feedback.

SLIS:6115 Introduction to Research Methods in Library and Information Science 3 s.h.
An introduction to the fundamental concepts and techniques of research in library and information science, with an emphasis on both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Students will explore the purpose of research in social inquiry, develop an understanding of empirical research, and distinguish between basic and applied research. Key topics include research design, sampling techniques, data collection, and analysis, as well as ethical considerations in research.

SLIS:6130 Community Engagement 3 s.h.
Community engagement is the process of asking, listening to, and empowering individuals, organizations, and partners to build relationships and move toward common goals that benefit and improve a community; exploration of applications for community engagement; opportunity for students to explore community engagement principles through practical experiences; for students interested in library programming and outreach, or work in a library or archives. Requirements: admission to library and information science program.

SLIS:6140 Academic User Services and Technology 3 s.h.
Information and technological needs of academic library users; methods and models of reference and technical support services; standards for user interface (UI)/user experience (UX), including web content accessibility guidelines (WCAG); communicating about and ethical implications of academic library technologies. Same as IGPI:6140.

SLIS:6145 Digital Preservation and Stewardship 3 s.h.
Concepts, theories, and ethical practices for preservation of born-digital and digitized materials in cultural heritage institutions. Learn to apply standards, best practices, and sustainable strategies for the preservation of wide-ranging digital collections; situate preservation as a key component of responsible digital stewardship, assess tools and systems, devise storage strategies, and optimize workflows for the long-term accessibility of digital collections; understand basic digital stewardship practices, personal digital archives, digital forensics, social media and web archiving, and data management for the digital humanities.

SLIS:6150 Information Behavior 3 s.h.
People seek, gather, and use information in various contexts; exploration of patterns of information behavior to develop a better understanding of personal and sociocultural aspects of human information needs and practices in contexts; practice-based assignments that provide opportunities for students to research an information activity or phenomenon, a type of information, or a particular user group; how librarianship is about understanding and serving information needs of various communities.

SLIS:6170 Management, Teams, and Leadership 3 s.h.
Managers, teams, and leaders are critical for effective operations of libraries and information centers; exploration of principles and practices of organizational management, human resources, financial management, budgeting, communications, policy making, and strategic planning; strategies for cultivating and supporting inclusive, culturally competent organizations and structured approaches for planning and evaluating library programs and services; practical assignments that prepare students to work in libraries and archives. Requirements: admission to library and information science program.

SLIS:6250 Cataloging and Classification 3 s.h.
Introduction to various systems used to describe materials and information in library catalogs; principles of organizing catalog information for effective retrieval; standards used across libraries, archives, and museums including Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules (AACR2), Resource Description and Access (RDA), Dewey Decimal System, and Library of Congress Classification; knowledge and skills needed to begin work as professional catalogers in a diverse range of libraries.

SLIS:6255 Rare Book Cataloging 3 s.h.
Application of cataloging standards to rare books and other special collections materials; hands-on cataloging of rare books and visits to local collections; critical skills and confidence necessary to begin cataloging rare, special, and unusual books using accepted standards from the field; for students interested in archives and special collections librarianship.

SLIS:6330 Collection Development 3 s.h.
Collecting is a core library activity that includes various types of media collected from traditional print to digital media; focus on curating an inclusive collection that is accessible to all library patrons; examination of the life cycle of a resource within the library from understanding intellectual freedom policies to identification of resource needs, selection and acquisition, promotion and use, to deselection; collection development across library settings and how collection development relates to instruction in libraries. Prerequisites: SLIS:5010 and SLIS:5030.

SLIS:6335 Metadata Theories and Applications 3 s.h.
Introduction to concepts, principles, functional requirements, and practices of metadata; emphasis on metadata implementations in library, archive, and museum communities; extensive hands-on exercises; application and design of metadata element sets and schemas, data exchange formats, and value vocabularies.

SLIS:6345 Stewardship of Information and Collections 3 s.h.
Library collections provide a foundation for library service; exploration of issues affecting development and management of library collections including policies, assessment, budgeting, selection, deselection, acquisitions, partnerships, formats, marketing, legal issues, cooperation, and ethics; strategies for cultivating and supporting inclusive, culturally competent collections, and how this supports intellectual freedom; practical assignments that prepare students for collection stewardship work in public, academic, and school libraries. Prerequisites: SLIS:5010. Corequisites: SLIS:5010, if not taken as a prerequisite. Requirements: admission to library and information science program.

SLIS:6350 Archives: Theory and Practice 3 s.h.
Overview of theories, principles, ethical practices, and core functional areas of archival stewardship; taught from a lifecycle management approach; covers collection development, appraisal, accessioning, preservation, collection management, arrangement and description, access and use, and digitization.

SLIS:6355 Public Services and Community Engagement for Special Collections and Archives 3 s.h.
Advanced focused study in the areas relating to special collections and archives.

SLIS:6370 Topics in Book Studies 3 s.h.
Topics relevant to book studies and special collections. Same as UICB:6370.

SLIS:6411 Special Topics in Library and Information Science 3 s.h.
Processes and resources that humanities students and scholars use to find information and create knowledge considered in context of larger cultural forces that shape inquiry, and library and university resources that support scholarly communication; for students interested in humanities subject librarianship, special collections, and humanities centered archives.

SLIS:6490 Information Policy and Ethics 3 s.h.
Recent developments in production, use, and organization of information have created new opportunities and raised ethical challenges that demand responses from information professionals; exploration of major ethical frameworks and their relevance for addressing ethical issues arising in information-intensive environments; practice-based assignments that provide opportunities for students to apply ethical theories to key ethical issues faced in various information-intensive contexts. Same as IGPI:6490.

SLIS:6520 Practicum in Libraries and Information Centers 3 s.h.
Focus on practical application of theory; students gain experience in library and information science work, work with faculty member to identify opportunities for practicum placement in libraries and other organizations, and set professional and personal goals; 120 hours of fieldwork; participation in classroom conversations. Requirements: 12 s.h. of SLIS coursework.

SLIS:6530 School Library Media Practicum 3 s.h.
Field experience in an elementary and a secondary school library program for a total of 40 hours; discussion of various program components including delivery of library's instructional program, collaborative efforts, integration of information literacy skills and technology to support learning, and administrative and operational tasks involved in managing a school library program; students facilitate a lesson at both sites and complete a project that supports library instruction.

SLIS:6570 Independent Study 1-3 s.h.
Formal contract between student and faculty member. Requirements: formal proposal.

SLIS:6600 Curation and Collection Development for Special Collections 3 s.h.
Fundamentals of collection development for special collections curators that guide the collecting lifecycle for rare books and distinctive collections; includes an overview of the history of institutional collecting, proactive collecting and policy creation, collections assessment, and workflows; students will learn approaches to budgeting and allocating funding, strategies for building relationships with dealers, approaches for working with individual donors alone and in collaboration with development officers, as well as the legal and ethical frameworks that guide the purchase, acquisition, use, circulation, and deaccessioning of cultural heritage materials.

SLIS:6700 Ethical Artificial Intelligence in Cultural Heritage Institutions 3 s.h.
Introduces the foundational concepts of digital leadership within the context of libraries, archives, and museums, with a focus on navigating the challenges and opportunities of a post-digital society; students will explore how emerging technologies—particularly artificial intelligence—are reshaping the competencies, mindsets, and strategic approaches required of contemporary GLAM professionals; prepares students to lead digital transformation efforts with ethical awareness, technological fluency, and visionary thinking through case studies, critical readings, and applied projects.

SLIS:6800 Applied Research in Archives and Special Collections 3 s.h.
Introduction to original research in special collections librarianship and archives, emphasizing the development of independent research projects grounded in historical, socio-cultural, ethical, or practical dimensions of the field; students will build on prior coursework to formulate research questions, craft proposals, engage in scholarly inquiry, and craft a publishable-quality paper in consultation with the instructor; emphasis will be placed on critical thinking, peer review, and communicating research findings which will equip students with the skills to contribute meaningfully to the professional and academic discourse in the field.

SLIS:6900 Introduction to Legal Research for Library and Information Science Students 3 s.h.
Introducing students without legal training to the concepts and tools necessary to provide basic legal research assistance in an academic, public, or special library; structure of the U.S. legal system, reading and understanding legal citations, and free and subscription legal research resources; ethics of providing legal research assistance to non-lawyers. Corequisites: SLIS:5010.

SLIS:7900 SLIS Graduation Seminar 0 s.h.
Creation of an electronic portfolio that includes an introduction, résumé, professional statement, and work samples (with introductory reflective essays) that document competency in the American Library Association's nine professional competency areas.