Library and Information Science

Director
• Lindsay K. Matlock

Graduate degree: M.A. in library and information science
Graduate certificate: special collections librarianship
Faculty: https://slis.uiowa.edu/faculty-and-staff
Website: https://slis.uiowa.edu/

Today’s age is defined by the intersection of information, technology, and human creativity. In this context, library and information science is dedicated to understanding the nature of information, the interaction between information and communication technologies, the relationship between information and knowledge, the cognitive and affective aspects of knowledge acquisition, and the interface between people and information. It offers new knowledge, technological benefits, and professional expertise for every dimension of human affairs.

Library and information professionals take on many challenges in serving the needs of their constituencies—children and teachers, members of academic communities, employees of profit and nonprofit organizations, and the public at large—constituencies that range 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 of Library and Information Science prepares professionals to meet these diverse challenges. It offers a graduate-level program of preparation for careers in all types of libraries and information centers, providing students with a strong, well-rounded education in an environment that supports individuals from all segments of a multicultural, multiethnic, and multilingual society. Its curriculum reflects the profession’s immediate and long-range needs and prepares students to be leaders in a changing field.

By promoting excellence in research, the school contributes to the base of theoretical and practical knowledge in library and information science and helps develop an understanding of how to meet the varied and changing information needs of individuals and society. It also provides public service through continuing education programs, selective consulting services for library and information centers, and participation in professional organizations. The school strongly encourages its students, faculty members, and alumni to shape the future of the profession by filling key roles in organizations involved in all aspects of the information cycle.

Undergraduate students who want to pursue a degree in library and information science may choose to participate in the combined degree program which allows them to complete their baccalaureate and graduate degrees in five years. See Combined Programs in the M.A. in library and information science section of the Catalog.

Graduate students working toward the M.A. degree in library and information science may elect to pursue a combined Juris Doctor (J.D.) degree program in collaboration with the College of Law or an M.F.A. in book arts offered by the Center for the Book. See Combined Programs in the M.A. in library and information science section of the Catalog.

Students interested in school librarianship may earn teaching licensure through the College of Education; see "School Teacher Librarian" under Requirements in the M.A. in library and information science section of the Catalog.

Library and information science M.A. students may earn the Certificate in Book Studies/Book Arts and Technologies or the Certificate in Special Collections Librarianship. In addition, they may earn the Certificate in Informatics and choose a subprogram in bioinformatics and computational biology, geoinformatics, health informatics, or information science. In addition, other graduate students may earn the Certificate in Special Collections Librarianship.

Related Certificate

Public Digital Humanities

The Certificate in Public Digital Humanities is especially for students with humanities backgrounds who want to gain expertise and credentials to work more intensively with technology. The program brings students together with varied academic backgrounds to learn how to communicate, sort out the roles required for fully functioning teams, and understand the unique contributions made by individuals across disciplines. Students learn to appreciate the diversity of humanities research methods while identifying core digital activities that underlie research projects. For more information, see the Certificate in Public Digital Humanities.

Student Organizations and Activities

All M.A. 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. Students also are encouraged to join other state and national professional organizations.

B Sides is a student-run project from the School of Library and Information Science. The journal and podcast aim to provide an interactive and accessible space where library and information science students, faculty, alumni, and community professionals can dialog about all aspects of the profession, study, research, and practice of library and information science and related fields.

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 percent of the preceding year’s graduating class. To be eligible for membership, graduates must achieve a g.p.a. of at least 3.75, demonstrate professional promise, and be recommended by the faculty.

Programs

Graduate Programs of Study

Major
• Master of Arts in Library and Information Science
Certificate

• Certificate in Special Collections Librarianship

Facilities

The School of Library and Information Science (SLIS) is housed in the south wing of the University’s Main Library, in a setting that promotes community among students, faculty, and staff and provides easy access to 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 SLIS faculty and students. These rooms include a wired workstation technology classroom with Windows and Macintosh computers fully equipped for videoconferencing, and seminar classrooms with videoconferencing systems and large high-definition screens.

Gunther Commons

Gunther Commons, a state-of-the-art collaboratory equipped with workstations, is the school’s combined student center and technology lab. Individuals and teams of students gather in the collaboratory to work on course assignments and to gain experience with specialized software that supports the latest teaching technologies. Students have access to Windows and Macintosh computers, with gigabit access to the campus network and wireless service throughout the Main Library.

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 four 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 University Libraries. In addition, InfoHawk+ provides online resource access to selected internet and CD-ROM resources arranged by subject and academic discipline. Wireless internet access is available in the Main Library.

The school benefits with proximity to the Learning Commons. It encompasses 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 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.

Other Resources

The second floor of the University Capitol Centre (UCC) 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 and the internet.

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 physical artifact. English majors and English and Creative Writing majors may apply this course to the following area and/or period requirement. AREA: Literary Theory and Interdisciplinary Studies. PERIOD: Varies by semester. 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:4910, UICB:4910.

SLIS:4920 The Transition from Manuscript to Print 3 s.h.

SLIS:5010 Cultural Foundations  1-3 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 Computing Foundations  3 s.h.
Review of technology, technology history, and theories of technology in context of cultural heritage institutions and work in information centers. Requirements: admission to library and information science.

SLIS:5030 Conceptual Foundations  3 s.h.
Theory, principles, and standards in organization of information; function of catalogs, indexes, bibliographic networks; introduction to metadata descriptions, name and title access, subject analysis, controlled vocabularies, classification systems. Requirements: admission to library and information science.

SLIS:5041 College and University Libraries  3 s.h.
Objectives, organization, unique functions, and services of academic libraries; educational environment in which academic libraries function; examination of issues and problems affecting academic libraries. Prerequisites: SLIS:5010. Corequisites: SLIS:5010, if not taken as a prerequisite.

SLIS:5042 Public Libraries  3 s.h.
Historical development of public libraries; current issues in public library management and policy making, including intellectual freedom; readers advisory service and genres of popular materials for adults. Prerequisites: SLIS:5010. Corequisites: SLIS:5010, if not taken as a prerequisite.

SLIS:5043 Special Libraries  3 s.h.
Management, organizational structures, collections, and client services in special libraries; site visits to a variety of special libraries and information centers; projects that apply theoretical principles. Prerequisites: SLIS:5010. Corequisites: SLIS:5010, if not taken as a prerequisite. Same as IGPI:5043.
SLIS:5044 School Library Media Administration  3 s.h.
Design of K-12 library programs including major functions of teaching and learning, information access, and leadership and program administration. Prerequisites: SLIS:5010. Corequisites: SLIS:5010, if not taken as a prerequisite.

SLIS:5200 User Education: Multimedia  3 s.h.
Development of multimedia projects for educational use in libraries; students develop a portfolio of projects using multimedia technology; applications of multimedia for teaching and learning; exploration and evaluation of platforms for delivering multimedia in educational environments. Same as IGPI:5203.

SLIS:5220 Resources for Children  3 s.h.
Evaluation and use of books, magazines, electronic media, and other sources of information and recreation in relation to youth development.

SLIS:5230 Resources for Young Adults  3 s.h.
Topics related to populations served by youth services departments (e.g., societal issues, informational needs); seminar.

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: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 Topics in Preservation  3 s.h.
Care, conservation, and preservation of cultural heritage artifacts; readings, discussion, hands-on sessions. 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.
Cultural nature of reading practices in historic and contemporary contexts; print and digital culture; reading communities; examples of recent scholarship; use of primary resources; seminar. Same as UICB:5600.

SLIS:5630 Introduction to Special Collections Librarianship  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:5700 Cultural Heritage  3 s.h.
Increased use of digital technologies in collection, organization, dissemination, and use of heritage resources that generate intellectual, social, technological, legal, and ethical challenges to—and opportunities for—the heritage practice; exploration of challenges and opportunities, as well as their impact on the heritage profession; students become familiar with key heritage-related concepts and topics, apply them to a concrete project, and write a report of their findings.

SLIS:5900 Health Informatics  3 s.h.
Technological tools that support health care administration, management, and decision making. Same as HMP:5370, IGPI:5200, ISE:5860, MED:5300.

SLIS:5950 Health Information and Communication  3 s.h.
Fundamentals of medical librarianship, including how to engage with consumers and practitioners in need of health information; overview of health information resources and seeking skills; how to interact with users in need of health information; basic skills requisite to medical librarianship; community engagement, understanding health literacy, interacting with diverse user populations, and ethical considerations central to health information.

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:6100 Database Management  3 s.h.
Principles and practices of database design and management; discussion and practice of database application lifecycle, data modeling, relational database design, SQL queries, reports, and other interfaces to database data and documentation; individual and group projects. Prerequisites: SLIS:5020. Same as IGPI:6100.

SLIS:6110 Evidence-Based Practice in Library and Information Science  3 s.h.
Structured approach to improved libraries through decision making that supports collection, interpretation, and evaluation of data; assessment of the effectiveness of library programs and services.

SLIS:6115 Information and Inquiry  3 s.h.
Expert skills in seeking and evaluating information that responds to patron needs, supplemented by trajectory of and contemporary practices for library reference work, including tools that support library users’ inquiries and information seeking.

SLIS:6120 Natural Language Processing  3 s.h.
Tools and techniques for computational processing of text including lexical analysis, part-of-speech tagging, named entity recognition, relationship extraction, topic detection and tracking, sentiment analysis, and question answering; example corpora and applications drawn from multiple disciplines including biomedicine, digital humanities, and social science. Prerequisites: SLIS:5020. Same as IGPI:6120.

SLIS:6130 Community Engagement  3 s.h.
Ways in which information professionals in libraries and other settings learn about, collaborate with, and provide services and outreach to community members; introduction and overview of community engagement theory and practice; service learning or community-based research projects. Prerequisites: SLIS:5010.

SLIS:6140 Digital Environments  3 s.h.
Methods and models for building digital libraries; organization with metadata; standards such as those for object identifiers, open access, building cross-linkages between collections; automatic harvesting of content. Prerequisites: SLIS:5020. Same as IGPI:6140.

SLIS:6145 Digital Preservation and Stewardship  3 s.h.
Introduction to concepts and theories related to preservation and continued stewardship of born-digital and digitized materials; taught from an archival perspective; focus on current methods of collection, maintenance, and access for digital collections in libraries, archives, and museums.

SLIS:6150 Information Behavior  3 s.h.
Understanding how information users approach their information needs; concepts for understanding information use; analysis of user communities.
SLIS:6155 Information Visualization 3 s.h.
Introduction to theories, techniques, and examples of information visualizations for different presentations of data. Prerequisites: SLIS:5020. Same as IGPI:6155.

SLIS:6170 Management, Teams, and Leadership 3 s.h.
Survey of management issues common to all information environments: understanding organizations, decision making, hiring and personnel, grant writing, and marketing.

SLIS:6250 Beginning Cataloging and Classification 3 s.h.
Systems for describing materials and information in catalogs and organizing them for effective retrieval in libraries, museums, and other information centers; Anglo-American Cataloging Rules (AACR2) and Resource Description and Access (RDA) descriptive principles; Dewey Decimal Classification and Library of Congress Classification, Sears List of Subject Headings and Library of Congress Subject Headings, cataloging networks and services. Prerequisites: SLIS:5030. Corequisites: SLIS:5030, if not taken as a prerequisite.

SLIS:6255 Beginning Rare Books Cataloging 3 s.h.
Concepts and application of descriptive cataloging of rare materials (books); rare books and how their special features shape cataloging; format includes lecture and discussion, in-class and hands-on (if available) cataloging of rare books, and possible visits to the UI Center for the Book, the John Martin Rare Book Room, and UI Libraries Special Collections; students gain confidence and critical skills to start cataloging rare, special, and unusual books encountered in the workplace.

SLIS:6330 Collection Development 3 s.h.
Collecting as a core library activity; various types of media collected from traditional print media to new digital media; how collections are structured and managed to provide for selection, organization, and access. Prerequisites: SLIS:5010 and SLIS:5030.

SLIS:6335 Metadata Theories and Applications 3 s.h.

SLIS:6345 Stewardship of Information and Collections 3 s.h.
Principles for creating, building, and maintaining digital and print collections in libraries and other information organizations. 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.
Exploration of the history of archival thought and conceptualizations of "the archives"—how archives are formed, methods by which records are selected and described, and ways in which archival records are used to construct histories; students explore how value is assigned to records through archival appraisal, how archivists prepare collections for access, and how these materials are represented in archival finding aids and other discovery tools; practice-based assignments provide opportunities for students to engage with local archival collections. Prerequisites: SLIS:5010 and SLIS:5030.

SLIS:6355 Public Services for Special Collections and Archives 3 s.h.
Focused examination of core services in special collections and archives including reference, instruction, and outreach; reading room services and policies; research strategies and tools for answering reference questions; best practices for in-person and virtual teaching with primary sources; community outreach, events, exhibitions, and social media. Prerequisites: SLIS:5630 or SLIS:6350. Corequisites: SLIS:5630 or SLIS:6350, if not taken as a prerequisite.

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

SLIS:6380 Analysis of Scholarly Domains 3 s.h.
Information transfer in academic disciplines; scientific method, other means of knowledge construction, and resulting literatures; reference tools used to control literature for a variety of audiences; emphasis on humanities, social sciences, or sciences. Same as IGPI:6380.

SLIS:6411 Topics in Library and Information Science 1-3 s.h.
Current topics in the field of library and information science.

SLIS:6490 Information Policy and Ethics 3 s.h.
Ethical and legal issues as they relate to information policy development and interpretation; application of information policies to address problems in information organizations. Same as IGPI:6490.

SLIS:6520 Practicum in Libraries and Information Centers 3 s.h.
Supervised field experience in selected libraries and information centers; emphasis on application of theory to practice; at least 120 hours of fieldwork. Requirements: 15 s.h. of SLIS coursework.

SLIS:6521 Distance and Online Education: Practicum in Libraries and Information Centers 3 s.h.
Supervised field experience in selected libraries and information centers; emphasis on application of theory to practice; at least 120 hours of fieldwork. Prerequisites: SLIS:5010 and SLIS:5020 and SLIS:5030 and (SLIS:6110 or SLIS:6170) and SLIS:6115. Requirements: minimum of 15 s.h. of SLIS coursework.

SLIS:6530 School Library Media Practicum 3 s.h.
Supervised field experience in library media centers at elementary and secondary school levels; emphasis on application of theory to practice; at least 40 hours of fieldwork; seminar meetings. Prerequisites: SLIS:5044.

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

SLIS:6571 Distance and Online Education: Independent Study 1-3 s.h.
Formal contract between student and faculty member; opportunity to pursue in-depth research in a particular area of interest that does not duplicate an existing course in the curriculum; students meet with faculty member to design a plan of study and submit a bibliography and description of the final project. Requirements: formal proposal.

SLIS:6580 Thesis 0-6 s.h.
SLIS:6590 Digital Humanities Capstone arr.
Application and practice of classroom experience to a specific project under guidance from a faculty member and project team leader. Prerequisites: CLAS:7290 or SLIS:7290. Requirements: admission to public digital humanities certificate program, an approved certificate plan of study on file, completion of 12 s.h. of approved coursework, and good standing in all required certificate coursework. Same as GRAD:6590.

SLIS:7290 Digital Humanities Theory and Practice 3 s.h.
Overview of theories and use of technology to preserve, deploy, visualize, map, and analyze concepts; discussions with practicing digital public scholars; assignments consist of a digital portfolio tailored to student research; introductory course in public digital humanities certificate. Same as CLAS:7290.