



International Librarianship Courses

Information on international librarianship broadens the perspective of library school students as they begin their professional career. It introduces them to innovative ways of serving users in different cultures. It can also make them aware of extraordinary challenges faced by libraries in different governmental structures, particularly where this is a restrictive government. The information can also bring a different perspective on the philosophy and values of the library profession.

Members of the International Library Cultural Exchange Interest Group (ILCE-IG) are prepared to teach a course in international librarianship on an adjunct basis. The information below summarizes a possible approach to the course however; each course is developed in close cooperation with the sponsoring MLIS program.



Emporia students in Bulgaria

Typical Course Objectives

- Students will understand the importance of international librarianship
- Students will read, reflect, and share their own opinions of what they read and view
- Students will appreciate the challenges and issues in providing library service in other countries

Format

The course can be taught in either a semester or quarter format. It can be taught either synchronously or asynchronously on a blend of both. It can also be taught online or in person. Typically the course includes assignments that the students complete before they spend 10-12 days in a country that is the focus of the course.

Example of Course Outline

- Students study international librarianship in general; a historical overview of the country being visited; and the history of libraries in the country being visited

- Students focus on one library from the list of libraries to be visited and do research into its history including contact with a country member of the library staff
- Students visit school, public, and academic libraries in country selected
- Students visit cultural sites and meet with librarians and other residents in the country being visited.
- Students keep a journal throughout the course with particular emphasis on the trip. Students share opinions and experiences in their journal.

Mentors

ILCE-IG can also provide mentors to participate in the course and possibly travel with the group. A mentor is assigned to each student. The students can choose whether they want to interact with the mentor. The mentor does not share any contact with the student with the adjunct professor. The mentors can review assignments before submission and seek guidance if desired. The mentors may or may not participate in the country visit.



Kathy Plath with young girl with her first library card in Nicaragua

Financing

The MLIS arranges the financing of the course. The lead adjunct professor in the course is paid an adjunct faculty salary as well as all expenses related to the course, including any trips to the home campus and the cost of the trip to the chosen country. Mentors do not receive compensation.

Current countries to which visits can be scheduled

ILCE-IG currently can make arrangements to travel and visit libraries in:

- Bulgaria – Eastern European country only 25 years free of Communist domination, a Bill and Melinda Gates Global Libraries recipient
- Nicaragua – Underdeveloped close-stacked libraries supported by the government but with a vibrant Library Association (ANIBIPA) and several grassroots lending library programs.
- Zagreb – Modern libraries in a developed European country.

For more information

Contact Nancy Bolt at nancybolt@earthlink.net or Janet Lee at Janet.lee35@gmail.com . We are happy to discuss all aspects of providing an international librarianship program.