

# Critical Library Instruction Today: An Introduction and Call to Action

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# About the presenter



# Critical Librarianship

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Centers a commitment to  
social justice

Questions the myth of  
neutrality

Asks who benefits, and why

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# Critical Library Instruction

- Aims to understand how libraries participate in systems of oppression and find ways for librarians and students to act upon these systems
- Applies critical theory and most often the ideas of critical pedagogy to libraries
- More than just instruction; a way of thinking about information literacy as a whole, from libraries' educational activities to information literacy documents

# Critical Library Instruction at Columbia University

# Library Sessions for University Writing

## The Undergraduate Writing Program

### What is University Writing?

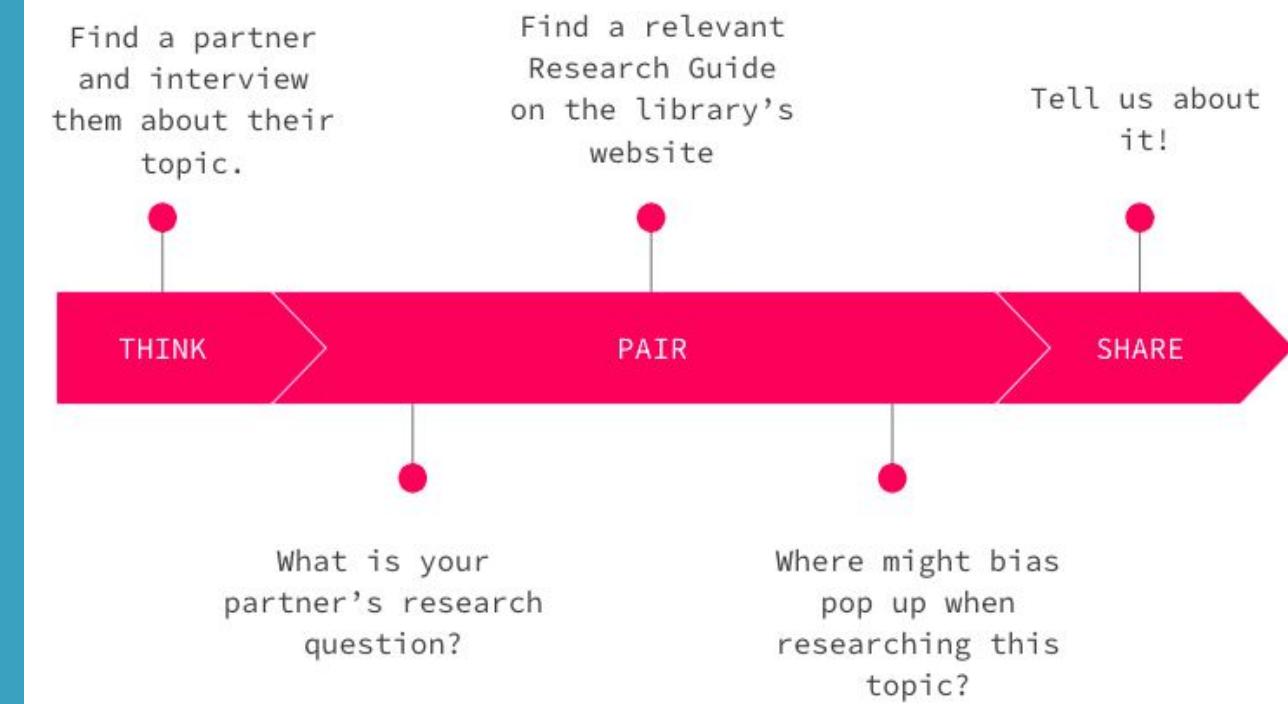
*ENGL CC/GS1010: University Writing*, is a one-semester seminar designed to facilitate students' entry into the intellectual life of the university by teaching them to become more capable and independent academic readers and writers. The course emphasizes habits of mind and skills that foster students' capacities for critical analysis, argument, revision, collaboration, meta-cognition, and research. Students read and discuss essays from a number of fields, complete regular informal reading and writing exercises, compose several longer essays, and devise a research-based project of their own design.

# Workshops with Critical Approaches

## Reading and Human Bias

### Agenda & Three Questions

- I. How do we define bias?
- II. How do we recognize bias?
- III. How do we inoculate against bias in the research process?



# Support for Teaching Librarians

- University Writing Debriefs for librarians and Writing Center colleagues
- Workshops on Anti-Racist Library Instruction & Outreach
- Discussions within library divisions on critical and inclusive library instruction

What expectations are there of (critical) library instruction and information literacy today? Are they up to the task?

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What is critical library instruction's role in combating disinformation (if any)?

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What are the next steps for critical library instruction in our fragmented society?

“You have to act as if it were possible  
to radically transform the world.

And you have to do it all the time.”

- Angela Y. Davis

Lecture at Southern Illinois University, 13 Feb. 2014

# Recommended Reading

Ferretti, J. A. (2020). Building a critical culture: How critical librarianship falls short in the workplace. *Communications in Information Literacy*, 14 (1), 134-152.

Higgins, S., & Gregory, L. (2013). *Information literacy and social justice: Radical professional praxis*. Library Juice Press.

Pagowsky, N., & McElroy, K. (2016). *Critical library pedagogy handbook: Volumes 1 & 2*. Association of College & Research Libraries Press.

Seale, M. (2020). Critical library instruction, causing trouble, and institutionalization. *Communications in Information Literacy*, 14 (1), 75-85.

# Contact

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