Tune up your #Critlib toolkit:
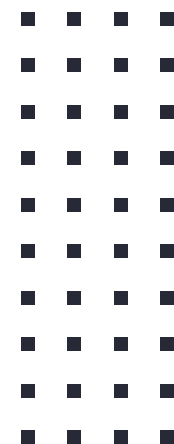
Scaffolding critical information literacy discussions with upper level students

Erin Durham

tinyurl.com/CritlibToolkit

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Plan for this session

➤ Scaffold #Critlib activities in one shot sessions

➤ Share three #Critlib activities

➤ Adjustments in times of COVID-19

Link to slides & activities: tinyurl.com/CritlibToolkit

"[Critical information literacy] examines the social construction and political dimensions of information, and problematizes information's development, use, and purposes"

-Eamon Tewell (2015)

What are some of the challenges of including #critlib in one shot sessions?

"timing"

Scaffolding #critlib throughout curriculum

ENGL 100

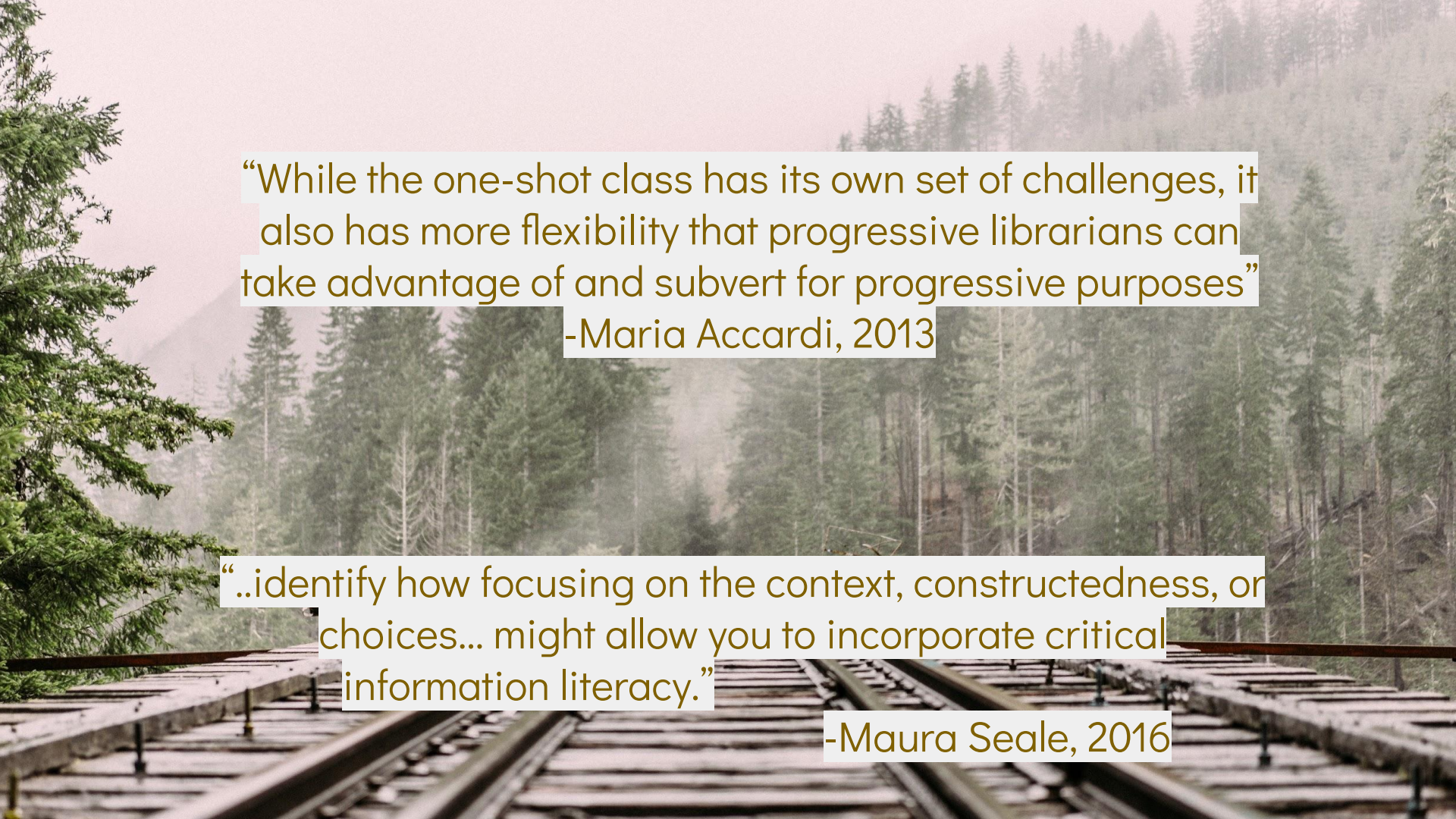Writing Intensive Course

English

Modern Languages

Music, Dance

Theatre

Opportunities and Challenges

"While the one-shot class has its own set of challenges, it also has more flexibility that progressive librarians can take advantage of and subvert for progressive purposes"
-Maria Accardi, 2013

"..identify how focusing on the context, constructedness, or choices... might allow you to incorporate critical information literacy."

-Maura Seale, 2016

Main Purpose

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➢ Help students with research assignments

➢ Have robust critical conversations

#Critlib Toolkit

What are some #critlib concepts you have discussed or would like to discuss in class?

Algorithmic bias

Privilege & accessibility

Contributing to scholarly conversation

#Critlib Activities

1. Algorithms: Beyond a Black Box
2. Information Systems as Borderlands
3. Scholarly contribution

Questions?

Please share in the Chat box

Activity #1: Algorithms: Beyond a Black Box

Faculty Learning Community

Seeing White: The Influence of Structural and Institutional Racism in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education
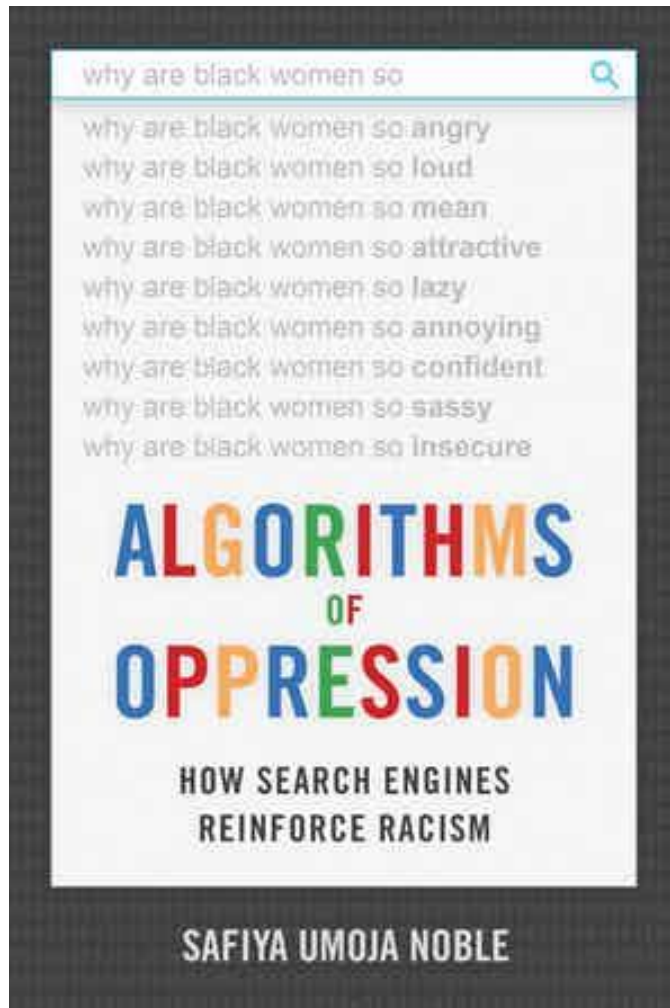
Noble, Safiya (2018). Algorithms of Oppression

Activity Context

➤ Taught to Theatre 400-level class (majors)
➤ Class size: 21 students
➤ 20-30 minute activity
➤ Discussion, video clip, small group activity
➤ Part of larger research session preparing students for final project

Learning Outcomes ~ Students will:

➢ Share their thoughts on what is helpful and/or problematic about the way information is organized and labelled

➢ Discuss the ways internet and library database search algorithms are socially constructed, and what they reveal about structures of power and privilege

Activity discussion & video clip

- What is helpful about search terms?

- What might be problematic?

Safiya Noble, Algorithms of Oppression

Dr. Safiya Noble, Algorithms of Oppression

Presentation at Personal Democracy Forum, June 2016

Small Group Activity

Students work in small groups of 3-5
Pass out research role card & whiteboard

1. Left column: brainstorm search terms
2. Compare/contrast results & terms used by internet & database searches

Group Brainstorm	Google	Databases

Student Examples:

Whiteboard 1:

Group Brainstorm	Google *order of results depends on browser cookies	Databases
OG search terms		took OG + google search te...
• social services	→ Subsidized housing (resrc)	→ financial eval te... (b...
• housing insecurity	→ American housing survey	→ US cencus da... (book)
• urban housing	→ "solutions qualific-ations	*books, history a... the sub., research...
• public housing	→ "policy (website)	*older sources
• homelessness + urban	→ US Dept HUD	→ community x heal...
• poverty + homelessness	→ income demo.	→ unemployment (book)
• gov / fed housing programs		→ gov. housing program abuse
→	*mostly article, gov websites, resources *newer sources	→ US homelessness

Whiteboard 2:

Group Brainstorm	Google	Databases
Latinx/Latina/ Latino 2015 – 2020	"portrayal of latinos on TV" latinos	"latinx representation in media" + dates: 2015-2020 setting
[Names of primary] mainstream tv channels	"latinx representation on TV"	
	↳ Broad range of results, articles from news organizations, largely criticism of media, largely focused on specific series, episodes, or seasons thereof.	↳ Academic articles, able to select for peer review, largely addressing specific issues and providing specific examples across different ranges.
Criticism		
Critics Audiences		
[Associated publications] [Twitter mentions, review aggregators, etcetera]		
"portrayal" "media"		
"representation"		

Helpful	Unhelpful	Helpful	Unhelpful
Better than Bing	Less-vetted	Select for peer-review	Possibly prohibitive
Access to current journalistic content	More opinion conforms to user to some degree	Extremely specific searches	
More accessible			

Discussion

- Is there anything you noticed that was similar or different between the internet vs. library databases?

- What might be helpful and/or problematic about the way information is organized and labelled?

Student Reflection:

Q: What might be helpful and/or problematic about the way information is organized and labelled?

Something problematic about google is the relevancy ranking it uses to show you the sites in order and something problematic about databases is that not everyone has access to it.

People in power get to decide how information is organized and can prioritize the sources that other people see, so it's easier for already marginalized groups to become even more marginalized.

The organization and labeling allows for ease of access to multiple resources for a topic, however may be limited due to the changing of terms through the life of the database.
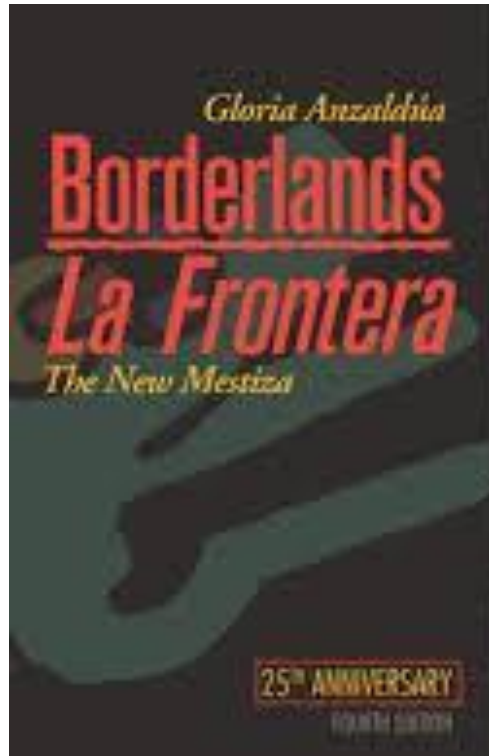
Assessment

➤ Observe student engagement
  ○ Discussion
  ○ Whiteboard activity

➤ Written reflection

Can be generalized and tailored to other disciplines

Activity #2: Information Systems as Borderlands

Anzaldúa, G. (1987). Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza

Activity Context

➢ SPAN 400/GWST 600 course

➢ Class size: 8 students

➢ Part of larger project to research a feminist object

➢ 10 min discussion or 15–20 min activity

➢ Discussion, small group activity

Learning Outcomes ~ Students will:

➢ Students will discuss how information structures and systems are not neutral

➢ Students will apply the concept of a borderland to information retrieval & sharing

"Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish us from them. A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition."

-Gloria Anzaldúa

"Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish us from them. A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition."

-Gloria Anzaldúa

How can the concept of a borderland be applied to our systems of information retrieval and sharing (i.e. internet searches, library databases, social media, news, wikipedia, etc.?)

In what ways do our information systems relate to borderlands?

Student Examples

➢ Information can easily be added online

➢ Wikipedia as information source

➢ Not all voices are represented

Lesson Activity Development

➤ Generalized the lesson plan

➤ Included small group research activity

➤ Created reflection sheet

> "Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish us from them. A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition."
> — Gloria Anzaldúa

Reflect on your experience researching a topic using various information systems and resources. Share 2-3 sentences as you respond to Anzaldúa's quote and/or the questions below:

- How can the concept of a borderland be applied to our systems of information retrieval & sharing (i.e. internet searches, library databases, social media, news, wikipedia, etc.?)
- Whose voices are represented? Whose voices may be absent?
- How might the borderlands concept relate or influence your own research process?

Reflection Prompt

Activity #3: Contributing to the scholarly conversation

Activity Context

➢ ENGL 321 course: writing tutor certification

➢ Class size: 14 students

➢ Class assignment option: conference submission

➢ Small groups of 3-4 students

➢ 25+ mins

Learning Outcomes ~ Students will

➢ Explore the process of submitting an academic conference proposal

➢ Take on the role of an information creator by contributing to the scholarly conversation

Formatted conference proposal questions into google form

What is the title of your presentation?

5 responses

Questioning Eurocentrism in the Writing Center

Should there be a standard written English? Other ways of writing and speaking

Reaching New Populations Through Online Writing Tutoring

Learning how to navigate writing from students in the Writing Center

Working With Students With Learning Disabilities

Student Responses

Session C: 2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

C1. Roundtable, LA 4201. What Do "Diversity" and "Social Justice" Mean to Writing Center Practitioners? ~~Violeta Brito, Uchenka Uchendu, Flamine Noreene Griffin~~; University of Maryland, Baltimore County. *This roundtable will engage participants to think critically about diversity and social justice in writing centers. We will analyze the past, present, and future pedagogies of writing centers in the context of social justice.*

In times of COVID-19....

NCPTW 2020

Writing Centers at the Confluence of Diversity and Democracy

Conference Proposal Submission

Conference Submission Brainstorm
ENGL 321 | Apr 7, 2020

Work with your group to draft a sample conference proposal in this google doc. Scroll down until you find your groups' section on the doc. You have 20 mins or so to do so, before we group back together, so this is an exercise in brainstorming- not perfection! The whole point is to try ideas out and take risks in a supportive, non-judgmental environment. Feel free to use the WebEx chat or google comments

Feel free to refer to NCPTW conference resources such as:
- Conference website: https://pittsburgh2020.thencptw.org/
- Proposal submission portal: https://ncptw.info/welcome_proposals.php

Asynchronous version

As you are sifting through various sources of information, it is important to think critically about the results you are finding. Check out this fascinating talk by Dr. Safiya Noble, an Information Studies professor at UCLA:

Description (optional)

Challenging the Algorithms of Oppression: Safiya Noble

What might be helpful and/or problematic about the way information is organized and labelled? *

Short answer text

Student Responses

Most search engines use advertising algorithms and are not solely information retrieval services.

Companies such as google can create algorithms that simply push you towards information that seems 'click-worthy' even if it is not the proper narrative of the story. So often, if you are unfamiliar about something, a google search can answer what the main idea is, but you often lose out on other ideas based on the topic

It aids in propelling misinformation and negative stereotypes about a particular group of people.

Problematic: commercial spaces dominate search engines so when it comes to searching up information our ideas are influenced by the first thing that comes up... Helpful get the most recent information which is good.

Synchronous Discussion

Used web conferencing chat and mic features

Online #critlib teaching

➤ #Critlib concepts remain- just the tools and format are different
➤ Use breakout rooms for small groups when web conferencing
➤ Collaborative platforms

Shared Google Folder:

#Critlib Toolkit

tinyurl.com/CritlibToolkit

Questions?

Thank you!

tinyurl.com/CritlibToolkit

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