

Lindsay McNiff, 2014  
Dalhousie Libraries

# Good things come in small packages:

Reimagining IL instruction in the first-year seminar



# Today's plan

- What is a first-year seminar (FYS)?
- Librarian involvement in the FYS
- Context: Dal FASS FYS
- What I did
- Final thoughts

# What is a first-year seminar anyway?

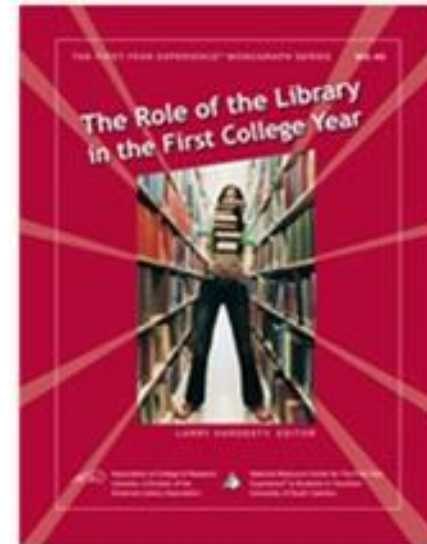
- Two main types (with variations):
  - First-Year Experience Seminar
  - Topic-centred or Thematic Seminars
- Why?
  - Positive impact on retention
  - Increases student use of services/activities
  - Promotes academic socialization

# Librarian involvement in the FYS

- John N. Gardner
  - Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education

**Hardesty, L. (Ed.). (2007). *The role of the library in the first college year*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition.**

**The First-Year Experience and Academic Libraries: A Select, Annotated Bibliography:**  
<http://www.ala.org/acrl/aboutacrl/directoryofleadership/sections/is/iswebsite/projpubs/tmcfyebib>



# Selected initiatives

- Baker, 2006
  - Longitudinal view of FYE instruction program
- Braquet & Westfall, 2011
  - Librarians teaching topic-centred FYS
- Filgo, 2012
  - Embedded Twitter librarian
- Philips & Case, 2013
  - Developed 9 IL enrichment modules based on the academic research process

# Selected findings & observations

- Boff & Johnson, 2002, nationwide survey (US)
  - 86% of FYE curricula contained library component
  - 81% librarians involved with curriculum development; 84% librarians involved with teaching
- Borrelli & Johnson, 2012
  - Stronger collaborative ties in the FYS resulted in greatest improvement in measured outcomes
- Philips & Case, 2013
  - Completion of IL modules can decrease students' confidence

# Selected findings & observations 2

- Baker, 2006
  - Focus on what is important and relevant (or, “the scavenger hunt was fun, but how will it help with research?”)
  - Research is a hard sell for first year students; future need is not enough
- Stamatoplos, 2000
  - FYS as a site for experimentation
- Lindsay, 2003
  - “all of their experiences in GenEd 104 foster information literacy”

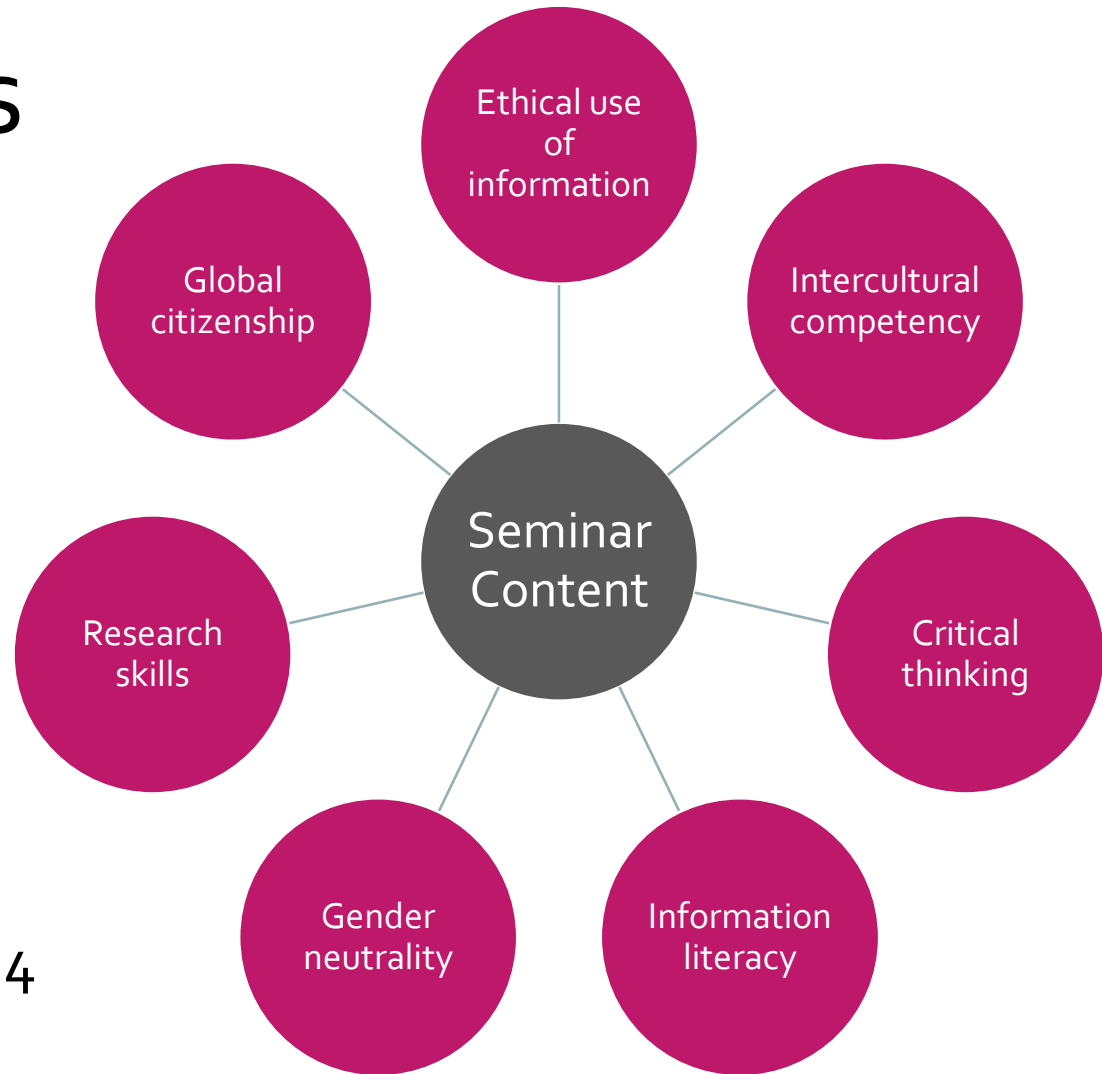
# Context: Dal FASS FYS

- Dalhousie, FASS, retention
- Two-semester FYS pilot
- Criteria for a successful FYS:
  - Helps students excel academically
  - Provides students with core competencies promoting lifelong learning



# FYS goals

- Interactive discussion
- Small sections
- Students from across FASS programs
- First-year students only
- Quantitative assessment over 4 years



# Fall 2013 offerings:

- The Celtic World
- Freedom
- Friend, Neighbor, Stranger, Self: The Political Significance of Personal Relationships
- Latin America Through the Lens of Hip Hop
- The Performer in Society

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# Opportunities

- Connect better with faculty
- Get to know first-year students
- Experiment

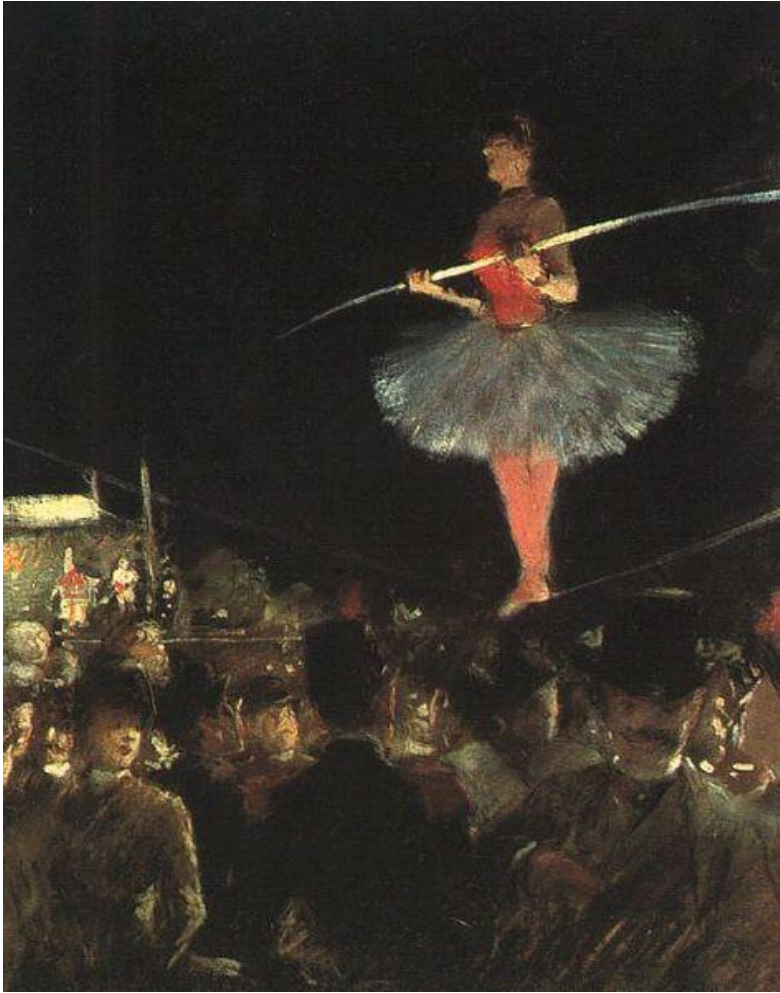


[muppet.wikia.com](http://muppet.wikia.com)

# Initial approaches

- Meetings with professors
- Contact info (“Your librarian”) added to course syllabi
- LibGuide pages
- Scheduled 5-minute introduction in each section

# The Performer in Society



[Jean-Louis Forain \[Public domain\], via Wikimedia Commons](#)

- Opportunity to talk about IL concepts

# The Performer in Society

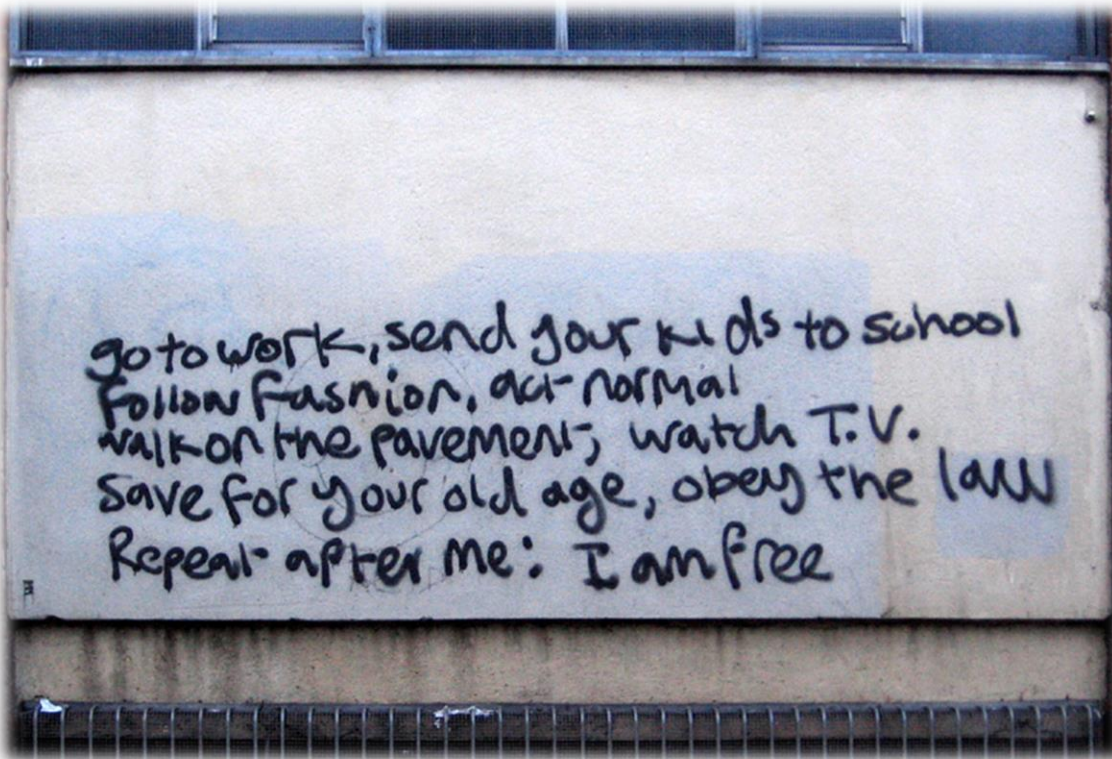
## First session

- IL concepts
  - Different information sources and purposes
  - Research is iterative & about discovery
- Modelling the research process
  - Googling without shame

## Second session

- Worked with the professor to address gaps
  - [Scholarly vs. popular sources](#)
  - Evaluating sources for relevance
  - Integrating sources – having a conversation

# Freedom



<http://www.gurusfeet.com/files/blogpics/repeatafterme.jpg>

- Intersection between seminar topic and information literacy
- New exercise for in-text citations



# Freedom & Online Privacy

- Assigned readings and facilitated 80-minute seminar discussion
- Established connection between information and the library
- Active learning/Jigsawing during seminar session

# Freedom

## Research session

- Designed annotated bibliography assignment
- Created authentic activity for IL session

## Citation session

- Citation exercise: Rob Ford & Selfies meet APA style

**FULL NAME:**

**WRITE A COUPLE OF SENTENCES ABOUT THE TOPIC PROVIDED:**

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**PARAPHRASE THE ABOVE STATEMENT (PUT IT IN YOUR OWN WORDS)**

# In-text citation exercise

# Feedback

- Students liked knowing I was there
- Students liked being pointed to new resources
- They might have welcomed a trip to the library... and perhaps some more database demos
- Thought I “taught pretty dry material in the most interesting possible way”

# Final thoughts

- Information literacy straddles the academic/intellectual and the practical
- Connection with faculty is essential
- There might be a fit between IL and the seminar topic
- Librarians can provide insight into the academic preparedness of first-year students
- The annotated bibliography is a good assignment!
- The first-year seminar is a laboratory
- Instruction should remain as relevant as possible

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- Sanabria, J.E. (2013). The library as an academic partner in student retention and graduation: The library's collaboration with the freshman year seminar initiative at the Bronx Community College. *Collaborative Librarianship*, 5(2), 94-100.
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**Thank you!**

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