Program Description:

Throughout my work, I argue that intellectual freedom leads to social justice. A quick review of the 2020 American Library Association’s Office for Intellectual Freedom’s (2020) Most Challenged Books list demonstrates that the majority of the books on the list are focused on diverse topics including race and gender expression. Without support for intellectual freedom, the voices of people who are marginalized would not be heard. However, the discourse continues to focus on how support for intellectual freedom leads to the proliferation of hate speech and other harmful expression and is against the core value of social justice/social responsibility.

I believe this is because the field of library and information science has not sufficiently integrated Kimberle Crenshaw’s (1989) concept of intersectionality into our core philosophical foundations. Crenshaw’s theory of intersectionality argues that individual progress and development, social space, and group identity are all equally important for human flourishing.

Bio:

Emily is an associate professor in the School of Information Sciences at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her book, Book Banning in 21st Century America (Rowman & Littlefield) is the first monograph in the Beta Phi Mu Scholars’ Series. She also recently edited Trigger Warnings: History, Theory Context (Rowman & Littlefield) and co-edited Foundations of Information Ethics (ALA). Her articles have been published in the Library Quarterly, Library and Information Science Research, and the Journal of Intellectual Freedom and Privacy. Emily serves on the boards of the Beta Phi Mu. and the National Coalition Against Censorship. Her research interests include information access, intellectual freedom and censorship, information ethics, information policy, and the intersection of print culture and reading practices. She is also a member of the Mapping Information Access research team. Emily received her Ph.D. from the doctoral program at the Rutgers University School of Communication & Information. Her master’s in library and information science is from the iSchool at Illinois. She also holds a B.A. in Religious Studies from Smith College and an A.M. in the same field from The University of Chicago Divinity School.