

## Spotlight on Amelia Brunskill, Visiting Assistant Professor, Information Services and Liaison Librarian

### Optimizing the use and impact of online instruction and data visualization tools

Liaison librarians are crucial partners with and advocates for the many disciplines at UIC. Students, educators and researchers rely on liaison expertise for course-integrated instruction, individualized research assistance and acquisition and maintenance of library resources to achieve their educational and research goals. Visit **[library.uic.edu/contact](http://library.uic.edu/contact)** to connect with your librarian liaison today!

**Amelia Brunskill** is a visiting assistant professor and information services and the liaison librarian for the College of Applied Health Sciences at the Library of the Health Sciences-Chicago. Her emerging research interests include how to optimize the use and effectiveness of asynchronous instruction tools, and the impact and use of data visualization tools to communicate information about library resources and services.

**View Faculty Profile** < <http://researchguides.uic.edu/brunskill/profile>>

### **What is your educational background?**

I earned my master of science in information studies from the University of Texas at Austin. Prior to that, I earned my bachelor of science in psychology and bachelor of arts in interdisciplinary visual arts from the University of Washington. For my psychology degree, I spent a year studying bumblebees and the interaction between their foraging behaviors and reproductive development and a summer studying language acquisition in young children at the University of Minnesota.

### **How did you come to specialize in the Health Sciences?**

I was initially drawn to the sciences through my experiences as a psychology major focusing on animal behavior, and then in graduate school I became interested in digital preservation and interned at the Sandia National Laboratories. My interest in the health sciences began when I took a position working for an Independent Review Board that reviewed clinical trials for pharmaceutical companies. My interest continued to grow in my first professional librarian position as the liaison for the sciences at Dickinson College, where I worked with a number of biology and psychology classes focused on health sciences topics and became familiar with the wonder that is PubMed, a database of over 27 million citations for biomedical literature.

### **Tell me a little bit about your job responsibilities.**

I joined the Library of the Health Sciences-Chicago in February 2017. I serve as the liaison librarian for the College of the Applied Health Sciences, which includes the departments of Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Biomedical and Health Information Science, Disability and Human Development, and Kinesiology and Nutrition. As the liaison librarian, I do consultations, office hours, and instruction for these departments. So far, I've found that there is considerable interest among my departments in information and guidance on conducting systematic reviews and using citation management tools. Also, since the College of Applied Health Sciences has a considerable population of online learners, including a fully online M.S. in Health Informatics program, I've been working on creating online resources and tools that will be useful for distance learners, including web tutorials and videos.

**What impact does your work have on student success?**

I believe that librarians are a critical part of the overall support system for students who might otherwise feel lost and overwhelmed by the challenges that higher education can present. My goal is to provide useful guidance for students as they navigate the research literature, easing the stress and anxiety that often accompanies this process, and help them to move forward with their projects in a thoughtful and effective manner. I'm also a member of the Library's Student Success Committee, which designs activities to promote and assess the library's impact on student success, with a particular emphasis on ensuring the success and retention of first-year and transfer students.

**What do you enjoy most about your job?**

What I have appreciated most about my position so far is the opportunity to work closely with students and faculty. I've served as a faculty facilitator for Interprofessional Education (IPE) Day, where students from across the health sciences and other UIC colleges work together as part of a blended course, and also as a judge for the Student Research Forum, where students from all disciplines can present their research findings. The more I interact with students here at UIC, the more impressed I become with their strong ethos, professional commitment and intellectual rigor. I've also been struck by how students in the health sciences frequently have a profoundly personal connection to their chosen discipline, often rooted in health concerns and inequities faced by their family members and communities. I feel very privileged to be able to play a role in helping them pursue their studies.

**What is your research focused on?**

In the past, my instruction has primarily taken the form of in-person interactions, either in the course of a class or individual interactions, so one of my primary emerging research interests is to explore and research how to optimize the use and effectiveness of online instruction tools.

**How does your research inform your teaching and other aspects of your job responsibilities?**

Anything that I learn about delivering effective library instruction through online formats should be highly applicable to my work in creating such materials for students in my departments.

**What should everyone know about the librarian liaison program?**

I would love for everyone at UIC to be aware of the vast amount of both individual and collective expertise that exists within the librarian liaison program. I have been incredibly impressed by both how knowledgeable my colleagues are and how generous they are with their time.