

Zine-Making for  
Community  
Empowerment  
and Library  
Instruction



RÍO HONDO  
COLLEGE  
Library



California Conference  
on Library Instruction

## Claudia Rivas

- x High school English and ELD teacher for 11 years
- x ESL faculty at RHC for 3 years
- x Teacher Librarian at 2 high school districts
- x Part-time academic librarian for 5 years



# Me and Zines

## Timeline:

- X Fall 2018: hired FT
- X Fall 2019: started zine collection and workshops
- X Jan 2020: PD Workshop: Zines! How they empower the student voice, their role in libraries, and their potential in your classroom!
- X COVID
- X 2022: Post-COVID
- X 2023: Zine Outreach Project

- Appx 20 faculty attended
- Feb 2020: taught 8 zine workshops for 5 different faculty with approximately 215 students exposed to zines and zine-making
- March 2020: 1 workshop for 29 students
  
- April 2020: 2 virtual workshops
- Oct 2020: 1 virtual workshop



Zine Outreach  
Project

# UCLA/CalRBS/RLI

## **“California Rare Book School**

is a continuing education program dedicated to providing the requisite knowledge and skills for professionals working in all aspects of the rare book community, and for students interested in entering the field.

Founded in 2005, CalRBS is a project of the Department of Information Studies in the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies (GSE&IS) at UCLA. CalRBS is supported by an informal consortium of many of the academic and research libraries and antiquarian booksellers of Southern California.”

“About CalRBS.” *UCLA California Rare Book School*. [www.calrbs.org/about](http://www.calrbs.org/about). Accessed 20 March 2025.

## CaIRBS/RLI and Mellon

**“The Radical Librarianship Institute** is the most extensive library continuing education program focused on supporting library professionals to push for widespread systemic change that is centered on social and racial equality, collective action, community strengthening, and public participation...

The RLI aims to support library professionals by developing the systematized certificate-granting training institute to support the widespread programmatic, pedagogical, and complex requirements of such work with a special focus on fostering community support and activist networks to enable more social participation intended to push for systemic change.”

“Radical Librarianship Institute.” *UCLA California Rare Book School*. <https://www.calrbs.org/courses/radical-librarianship-institute/>. Accessed 19 May 2025.

# Details of RLI

## The Radical Librarianship Institute consisted of

- x \$10k award to implement project
- x 5 day in-person training at UCLA
- x 7 months (initially) to complete the project
- x Final print product (book)

25 librarians (and their proposed projects) were selected as part of the inaugural cohort.

Represented in this cohort:

- 12 states
- 4 private universities
- 5 public universities
- 7 public libraries/systems
- 4 non-profit orgs
- 1 community college

# Details of ZOP

## Goals of the Project:

- x To engage individuals from all parts of the Río Hondo College community with opportunities to make something that reflects them and what matters to them.
- x To add unique, underrepresented voices from marginalized groups to the RHC Library collection.
- x To demonstrate the value of sharing unique and personal stories that sometimes do not align with mainstream narratives.
- x To generate more inclusive and accurate records while teaching basic information literacy concepts around access and retrieval by helping creators to catalog their own work.
- x To “flip” RHC Library’s existing zine collection from being composed predominantly of items from outside contributors to one that is “community dominant.”
- x To build the groundwork for a unique, community-created zine collection.

## 3 Phases of Project:

- Zine Fest
  - 2 days
  - Introducing zines to the community
- Series of Workshops
- Final Print Book of collected zines

# Workshops format

## Intro to Zines workshop

X 2-3 hour workshop

X 30 minute  
presentation

X Rest of time, listen  
to music & make  
zine(s)

## Drop-In Workshop

X 2-3 hour workshop

just to have access  
to materials and  
make zine(s)

X Cataloging zine(s)

## Cataloging Zine

X Whenever

participants were  
done with zine and  
ready to donate, they  
were given access to  
the Zine Cataloging  
form where they  
cataloged the zine  
themselves

# Zine Collection process

## Collecting zines

X While participants filled out the form, copies were sometimes made for participants if they did NOT want to donate their original zine.

## Scan

X If assistant available, original zines were scanned at moment of donation.  
X Scanning original was preferred to capture best images of zine.

## Physical & Digital Zines

X Using Cataloging form provided, Librarian and Library Techs will be cataloging zines for circulation.  
X Coming soon, more digital zines!

[bit.ly/ZineCataloging](https://bit.ly/ZineCataloging)



# Results of ZOP

## Via ACRL Project Outcome Survey (78 respondents):

- x 87% learned something new
- x 86% felt more confident about using what they learned
- x 71% intend to discuss or share with others what was learned
- x 90% were more aware of programs and services provided by the library

## The Project

- 56 total workshops hosted
- Workshops had appx 500 attendees in a year
- Generated 156 new and unique RHC community made zines to add to the RHC Library zine collection
- Final Print Book of collected zines for project

# Challenges

## Workshop attendance

- X Low attended when students come on their own time (stipends for participants)
- X Best attended workshops were those with faculty/class

## Completion of zines

- X Time to make copies for those who don't want to donate originals and to have for library's archives
- X Time for scanning originals (editing/finalizing files)

## Bureaucratic red tape

- X Managing grant money through college's foundation
- X Working with campus bookstore to distribute stipends

# ZINES!

---

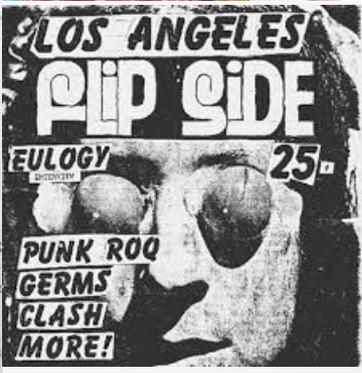
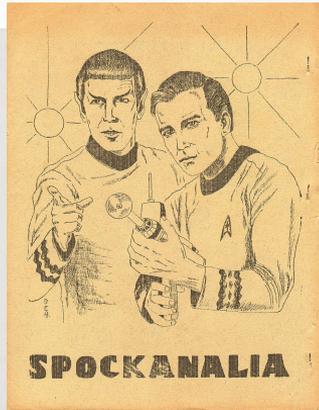
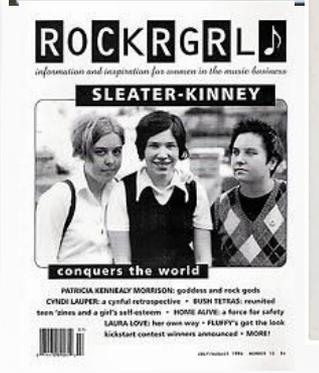
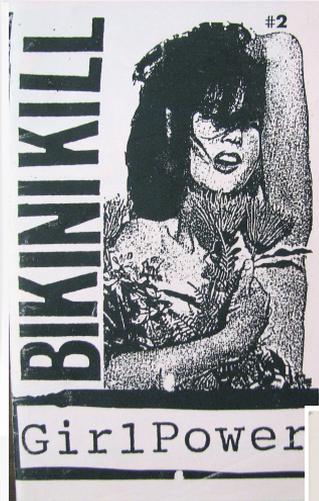
By Claudia Rivas, Librarian





# What are zines?

As explained by LAPL, “Pronounced like magazine—without the mag—zines are self-published, independently made, usually photocopied, and have a small print run... Zine content can be personal, political, niche, artistic, visual—there are no rules!”





# A brief history of zines

# Sci-Fi

- ❑ First zines created by sci-fi fans.
- ❑ Used the medium to publish fan fiction, reviews and news about their favorite authors and serials.
- ❑ Circulated from fan to fan by hand within small communities
- ❑ Many zines still follow this method of distribution to date.

# 1970s

- ❑ The punk revolution was the beginning for zinesters.
- ❑ Punk kids embraced the DIY of zines and took advantage of advances in photocopy technology.
- ❑ Creating zines was dirt cheap, fun and you could publish anything you wanted — they were a perfect tool of the punk counter-culture.

# 1990s

---

- ▣ The **riot grrrl movement** emerged out of the alternative and punk music scene in the U.S.
- ▣ They used the adaptability & format of the zine to promote their music and forward their agenda.
- ▣ The riot grrrl era produced personal and political zines with explicitly feminist themes. One of the staple zines of this period was Bikini Kill.
- ▣ Bikini Kill and many others promoted girl power, activism, personal journalism and of course, music.

# Today

---

- ▣ Some zinesters looking to save money on printing costs host their work online in the form of e-zines.
- ▣ Tumblr is a favorite for teens and tweens, but many zinesters opt to host their e-zines or sale of print zines using a personalized domain.
- ▣ Digital zines can also serve as resource and networking sites, serving as a gateway to expand the zine community.
- ▣ Regardless of format or publication date, zinesters tend to keep prices low and opinions radical.
- ▣ Zines can be purchased online directly from zinesters either through their personal websites or commonly through *Etsy*.
- ▣ If not online, you will have to find them in person at a zine fest!



# Why are zines important?

- ❑ Promote activism, freedom of speech and freedom of expression.
- ❑ They empower future authors and artists.
- ❑ They cost virtually nothing to produce and enable you to utilize items that you probably already have.
- ❑ Adaptable to all age groups and skill sets.
- ❑ Take on an endless variety of formats, themes and materials.
- ❑ Value freedom from rules above all else.



## Why are zines important? ...cont.

- Resistance from the establishment.
- Move away from commercial production.
- Provide a voice for marginalized youth.
- Provide a voice for the minority vs majority.
- Platform to be read, seen, heard.
- Serve as important historical sources (primary!)
- Tool to preserve cultural heritage.
- A way to share stories.
- Offers collections with meaning.

# Zines in libraries

- Repository of zines (collections)
- Browse, read, borrow zines
  - Long Beach PL, LAPL (7)
- Safe space to make & show zines
- Represent local community members

# Zines at RHC Library

- Started building collection in 2019
- Focus on student, staff, and faculty donated zines
- Regularly host zine making workshops
- Zine Outreach Project
- Zines as books (coming soon!)



Look at  
samples!  
\*18+

# Examples of Types of Zines

- ▣ Comic
- ▣ Cooking
- ▣ Education
- ▣ Fanzine
- ▣ Fashion
- ▣ Horror
- ▣ Illustration
- ▣ LGBTQIA+
- ▣ Literary
- ▣ Music
- ▣ Perzine
- ▣ Photography
- ▣ Poetry
- ▣ Politics/Social Justice
- ▣ Self-care
- ▣ Spirituality
- ▣ Technology

## 2 Most Common Zine Formats

---

### BOOKLET (½ page fold)

- Using as many sheets of paper as you need, fold each page in half.
- To assemble, staple spine to keep pages together.
- Recommended for those with large artwork and/or with lots to say.

### MINI-ZINE (8 page fold)

- Using a single sheet, fold it into 8 squares.
- Cut where appropriate in order to collapse into a small booklet.
- Recommended for those with limited or concise content to share.
- Youtube video

## What to Do with a Finished Zine...



- ❑ Share what you've made!
- ❑ If you want to include it in the RHC Library, with your permission, we will make a copy of your zine to add to our collection.
- ❑ Or donate the original to the RHC library or other zine libraries.
- ❑ Or sell your zine at a zine fest!
- ❑ Trade with other zinesters.
- ❑ Or keep for yourself (last resort).

## Resources

---

Zines Libguide: [libguides.riohondo.edu/zines](https://libguides.riohondo.edu/zines)





TIME TO  
MAKE YOUR  
ZINE!

## Zine Idea Prompts

1. Talk about your summer plans.
2. Share a dream destination.
3. Share a little known fact about you.
4. Draw your favorite things in life.
5. A day in the life of you.
6. Your favorite childhood memory.
7. A goal to accomplish in the next year.

## Works Cited

---

Wee, Daniel Vincent. "We Need to Talk About Zines: The Case for Collecting Alternative Publications in the Australian Academic University Library." *Journal of the Australian Library and Information Association*. 12 Jun 2017. doi.org/10.1080/24750158.2017.1334320.

"Zine Library." *Los Angeles Public Library*, City of Los Angeles, [www.lapl.org/zines](http://www.lapl.org/zines). Accessed 21 Oct. 2019.

"Zine Machine: A DIY Magazine Primer." *Programming Librarian*, 6 May 2019, [www.programminglibrarian.org/articles/zine-machine-diy-magazine-primer](http://www.programminglibrarian.org/articles/zine-machine-diy-magazine-primer). Accessed 22 Oct. 2019.

Thanks!

Any questions?

You can contact me at [crivas@riohondo.edu](mailto:crivas@riohondo.edu)