School of Library and Information Studies
University of Oklahoma

LIS 5343 Archival Concepts and Traditions

Spring 2013
Wednesdays 4:30-7:10 PM
Locations: BL 100

Instructor: Dr. Kelvin L. White
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COURSE DESCRIPTION
Prerequisite: 5033. Introduction to the principles and practice of collecting, servicing, and arranging archival holdings. Includes appraisal, acquisition, arrangement and description, preservation, and administration of institutional archives.

INTERPRETATION OF COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course is an introduction to the historical and evolving theoretical foundations, professional institutions, key practices/terms/concepts, and contemporary issues of the archival and manuscripts professions across cultural worlds. The course will use a combination of lectures, in-class discussions, site visits, assignments, and readings. It is designed with two types of students in mind:

- A student specializing in archives—this course provides an in-depth introduction to the field; introduces terms and concepts that will be used in other specialization courses; and explains how the various components of archives fit together.
- A student not specializing in archives—this course provides an overview of archives and records administration; helps students become conversant with terminology and concepts; and explains how archives and records relate to other aspects of information management.

OBJECTIVES
Students who successfully complete this course will gain:

- Understanding of why societies, cultures, organizations, and individuals create and keep records and archives.
- Cognizance of the various environments where archives and records are created, managed, and used.
- Awareness of the ways that organizations and individuals use records and archives for research, ongoing operations, accountability, and organizational memory across various cultural worlds.
- Sufficient familiarity with the concepts, functions, processes, and underlying ideas of scheduling, inventory, appraisal, accessioning, preservation, arrangement, description, reference, and outreach in traditional and digital archival and manuscripts environments.
- Sensitivity to legal, policy, cultural, and ethical issues surrounding archives and records.
Comprehension of how archival and recordkeeping practices differ from and relate to other information management practices.

Be able to define and discuss entities and concepts that are central to Archival Science including “records,” “manuscripts,” “public archives tradition,” “provenance,” “respect des fonds,” “original order,” “records life cycle” and “records continuum,” and identify the roles played in the development of these concepts.

REQUIRED TEXT/READINGS
There is one required text: Terry Eastwood and Heather MacNeil (eds.), *Currents in Archival Thinking* (Santa Barbara, California, Libraries Unlimited, 2010).

The textbook may be ordered online at: [http://www.archivists.org/catalog/](http://www.archivists.org/catalog/) or the university bookstore (Norman). Students are strongly encouraged to become student members of SAA to get a discount. Additional required weekly readings will be available on the class website, Desire-to-Learn. A very helpful resource is the SAA Glossary of Archival Terminology available here: [http://www.archivists.org/glossary/](http://www.archivists.org/glossary/). Please consult this resource for basic terminology throughout the semester.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY
My personal teaching philosophy emphasizes active intellectual innovation (not memorization) and critical thinking. More specifically, my philosophy is that learning is the shared burden of both the instructor and student. An over-emphasis on lecture makes learning passive and biased because all the student has to do is come to class, perceive to listen to the instructor, take notes, then leave.

My preferred pedagogical method is that of Freirean dialogic action where I come to class prepared to represent my knowledge and expect students to come to class prepared to represent his/her knowledge (i.e. come to class having read the material and ready to discuss his/her reactions/perspectives to the readings) through open dialogue. We learn from one another. As the instructor, I will facilitate discussions and state my perspectives as necessary.

EXPECTATIONS
This course will be delivered using a variety of learner-centered pedagogies, including group discussions, class discussion, and individual and/or group exercises. As such, I expect the following from each student:

- Adequate preparation: You are expected to complete required readings each week and be able to discuss them and raise questions about issues you do not understand.
- You will be required to contribute to class discussions for each and every class session. A contribution may be raising a question, reflecting on an assigned article, synthesizing readings, commenting on a classmate’s reflections, etc. as indicated by the professor’s prompts in the discussion forum. Further details to follow each week.
- Discussion board: Each week, students are required to provide an informal critical response to the readings as prompted by the professor. Responses should be minimum 250 words, but students should feel free to provide a longer response if the mood takes them. A critical response does not mean simply summarizing the readings. Students should synthesize the readings, identify gaps and overlaps, resonances and dissonances between readings, and challenge the readings’ assumptions and arguments. Individual students’ responses should engage with other responses on the discussion board.
- You will be required to participate in small group exercises as well as individual
reflections and brainstorming sessions.

✓ This classroom is a collaborative laboratory. You are encouraged to expand your horizons, try out new ideas, and entertain other ways of seeing the world. You are encouraged to change your mind, even if your views are inconsistent.

✓ Timely completion of assignments.

✓ Critical and original thinking, oral and written presentation skills, evidence of reading widely, and class participation will be important components of this class and will be graded accordingly.

✓ Formal written assignments should conform to the Chicago Manual of Style. Students should review expectations for the academic integrity of work by reading and reviewing the items posted at the URLs listed below.

**ATTENDANCE AND RELATED POLICIES**

**Class attendance**
Class attendance is expected. Non-attendance may adversely affect student performance on assignments and tests. Attendance is also important because the graduate student experience encompasses more than fulfillment of assignments. As noted in the *OU SLIS Graduate Student Handbook*:

**Fundamentally, responsibility for education at the graduate level belongs to the individual student.** Faculty provide the basic frame in which the study is undertaken, offer assistance in setting the parameters of study, and serve as facilitators and mentors. This approach to the learning environment is particularly necessary as a conceptual framework for the development of information professionals who must exercise critical thinking, analyze problems, and design solutions as a daily part of their work life, who must be independent and lifelong learners who also function effectively as team members in a diverse and dynamic information environment.

**Absence for religious holidays**
“It is the policy of the University to excuse absences of students that result from religious observances and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of examinations and additional required classwork that may fall on religious holidays.” (Section 3.13.2, *The Faculty Handbook*). Students who plan to observe a religious holiday should notify the instructor as soon as possible in order to make appropriate arrangements for classwork or rescheduling of examinations.

**Reasonable accommodations**
The University of Oklahoma is committed to providing reasonable accommodation for all students with disabilities. Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact the instructor as soon as possible to discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate educational opportunities. Students requesting accommodations are required to contact the Office of Disability Services. This office accepts requests from students for reasonable accommodation after the student has self-identified as an individual with a disability. The Office of Disability Services on the Norman campus is located in Goddard Health Center, Suite 166, phone 405/325-3852 or TDD only 405/325-4173. On the OU-Tulsa campus, students should contact the OU-Tulsa Student Affairs located in Room 1C 53.
**Academic Integrity**
Students should review expectations for the academic integrity of work by reading and reviewing the items posted at the URLs listed below.

Academic Integrity and Misconduct: [http://integrity.ou.edu/students_guide.html](http://integrity.ou.edu/students_guide.html)

**GRADING**
The following criteria will be used to assess all written assignments:

**A (90-100%)**
The student demonstrates excellence in the use of the following criteria:

- independent thought and critical judgment
- insightful conceptual analysis
- critical evaluation of sources and issues
- clearly developed thought process in response to the question
- comprehensive understanding of relevant issues
- use of literature and/or sources in ways that are both relevant and supportive of points made in the paper
- sources fully and accurately identified
- heightened awareness of personal relevance of issues under discussion

**B (80-89%)**
The student demonstrates a high level of competency in relation to the following:

- independent thought and critical judgment, but may stick fairly closely to conventional terms of reference;
- some insightful conceptual analysis
- some critical evaluation of sources and issues
- quite well-developed thought process in response to the question or title of the paper
- some understanding of relevant issues
- use of literature and/or sources in ways that are both relevant and supportive of points made in the paper
- sources fully and accurately identified
- some awareness of personal relevance of issues under discussion
- inclusion of all the elements expected of all essays

**C (70-79%)**
There will be very good use of many or most of the aspects outlined for an A-grade or B-grade essay, although certain features will be only partially realized. Thus, for example, a typical C-grade essay will demonstrate the following:

- some independent thought, but critical points lack depth
- lack of sustained conceptual or theoretical analysis, tending to accept uncritically the principal concepts and theories in an area (merely offers summary)
- quite well-developed thought process in response to the question or title of the paper;
- uneven coverage of relevant issues
- little use of literature and/or sources in ways that are both relevant and supportive of points made in the paper
- sources inadequately identified
- little awareness of personal relevance of issues under discussion
D (60-69%)
There will be a satisfactory use of a limited number of the features outlined for an A-grade paper, although significant elements will be underdeveloped. Thus, for instance, a typical D-grade paper will:

- display little evidence of independent thought and critical judgment;
- include a partial and rather superficial coverage of key issues;
- lack insightful conceptual analysis;
- show poorly-developed thought process in response to the question or title of the paper;
- show little or no awareness of personal relevance of issues under discussion.

Fail (below 60%)
- display independent thought largely in the form of unsubstantiated opinion;
- demonstrate no evidence of critical judgment;
- include unbalanced coverage of relevant issues, with some omitted altogether;
- lack insightful conceptual analysis;
- show no awareness of personal relevance of issues under discussion;
- include attempts to fulfill some of the elements required of all essays, but it will have failed by and large to achieve those aims.

For example:
- there may be an attempt to respond to the question, but the essay as a whole will not answer it;
- exposition will tend to be confused and badly structured;
- it will often be badly written;
- there may be no references;
- evidence of little or no reading around the topic.

Your grade will be comprised as follows:

- Class participation: 10%
- Archives in the news summary: 10%
- Archives visit report: 15%
- Midpoint Critical Reflection Paper (4 pages): 15%
- Research Paper Proposal: 5%
- Research paper (15-20 pages): 45%

Grades of Incomplete:
The Graduate College has strict conditions under which a student is given an incomplete in a regularly scheduled, letter-graded course. A grade of Incomplete (I) will be given only for a justifiable reason (due to unavoidable circumstances, not lack of planning on the student's part) and only if the student is passing the course. It is the responsibility of the student to request a grade of I and to meet with the instructor as early as possible to determine the requirements for completing the course. Any incomplete granted must be removed by the deadline specified by the instructor. The time limit set for removal of an incomplete will take into account the circumstances of the situation but may not exceed one calendar year.

ASSIGNMENTS
Details on individual assignments will throughout the semester. All assignments are to be handed in via the course dropbox by 11 P.M. on the day they are due. All late assignments will be penalized 10% per day. Assignments turned in after two calendar days of the original due date will be not be accepted.

Please use 1” margins, 12-point Time New Roman font, and Chicago Manual of Style.
footnote citations. All written assignments are subject to Turnitin.com

A1: Archives in the News Presentation: Due THROUGHOUT SEMESTER
Many issues related to topics covered in this class appear in various local and national news outlets. For this assignment, students will sign up to give a brief overview (3 paragraphs) on a news story related to archives or records (broadly defined). Students will pick an archives-related news story, briefly summarize the story, and go over key issues or questions from the story that relate to material addressed in this course. Presenters will pose key questions on this news story in class. Students will sign up for a particular date on the first week of class.

A2: Archives Visit Report: Due anytime before or on Wednesday, April 24, 11 P.M.
The goal for this assignment is for you to understand a physical (i.e. non-virtual) archives and archival institution (including special collections) from a user perspective. Your assignment is to choose a topic, person, or event of your choice related to some aspect of history (economic, political, cultural, etc.) of an under-represented group. Locate and visit an archive that contains archival material relevant to your topic. Write a 5-6-page paper that identifies your topic (briefly) and the process of identifying the archival institution that you chose (i.e. why did you chose this archive as opposed to others?). Also, include a detailed discussion about your experience at the archives (including your experiences with finding aids, archival staff, entrance/exit procedures, and actually locating and viewing material related to your topic). Finally, make sure that you briefly describe your reactions to your overall experience and comment on how your experience might be improved.

A3: Midpoint Critical Reflection Paper: Due Wednesday, March 6th, 11 P.M.
In this four-page paper you will critically reflect (not summarize) on what you have learned in this class thus far, how it might have changed your thinking about archives, and how it might impact your practice as an archivist or librarian. More details to follow!

A4.1: Research Paper Proposal: Due Wednesday, March 27th, 11 P.M.
Paper proposals should include a proposed title, thesis, one paragraph summary, and list of at least 10 sources.

A4.2: Final Research Paper: Due Thursday, May 2nd, 11 P.M.
For this assignment, you have two options. For either option, your work should be thorough and scholarly, drawing upon appropriate theoretical, historical, cultural, or other texts as appropriate to reinforce your argument. Your paper should comment on what you have determined to be your source material as well as how and where you located your source material. It should also comment on the extent to which archival theory and practice, as you have learned in this class, address or might need to be extended to address issues arising from the topic or case you have chosen. Grading will be based on critical analysis and reflection, relevance of the topic to the course, integration of written references from archival studies journals, and written quality. Please note: it is often better to pick a very narrow topic and say a lot then to pick a broad topic and say a little. If you have questions, please contact the instructor. Please indicate on your title page which option you have chosen.

Research paper option #1:
Archives are critical instruments that can be used not only in support of dominant power structures, organizations, and groups (such as governments, colonial powers, literature cultures, big business, legal systems, and academic institutions), but also for the empowerment of individuals and communities who have been repressed, persecuted, colonized, ignored, deceived, or whose culture is based on alternate ways of remembering. Prepare a research paper on a topic
of your choice that in some way underscores the societal value of archives for a community that is racially, culturally, or otherwise underrepresented or marginalized. Your assignment may address any medium—text, sound, film, home video, oral history, photographs, or any historical or contemporary case or event that relates to records broadly defined.

**Research paper option #2:**
Throughout this course, we have explored how large concepts such as trust, accountability, and memory form the basis of many archival functions. Pick one larger concept (trust, accountability, power, memory, truth) and explain how it is implicated in or applies to one archival function (appraisal, arrangement, description, access, preservation, digitization) in one specified historical or contemporary case, event, or collection. Examples include: trust and appraisal in collections about the Tulsa Race Riots; memory and access in the Internet Archive’s collection of personal websites about a particular theme; power and preservation in the Navajo Nation’s collection of boarding school memoirs, etc. Your assignment may address any medium—text, sound, film, home video, oral history, photographs, or any historical or contemporary case or event that relates to records broadly defined. You are encouraged (but not required) to take advantage of the collections and resources available at local archival institutions.

**READINGS AND SCHEDULE**

**Week 1 (Jan 17):** Introductions; review syllabus and course logistics

No readings assigned.

**Week 2 (Jan 24):** Overview of the archival profession and archival consciousness.

**Required readings:**
- “So You Want To Be an Archivist: An Overview of the Archives Profession,”
  [http://www2.archivists.org/profession](http://www2.archivists.org/profession)

**Week 3 (Jan 31):** Key archival concepts: provenance, record, archive, documents…what are these?

**Required readings:**


**Week 4 (Feb 7):** Archival purpose; historical development of the archival profession; silence, power, and the archive.

**Required readings:**

**Week 5 (Feb 14):** Archival functions: inventory, control, appraisal, selection, and acquisition

**Required readings:**
- Ciaran B. Trace, “On or Off the Record? Notions of Value in the Archive.” In Terry Eastwood and Heather MacNeil (eds.), *Currents in Archival Thinking* (Santa Barbara, California, Libraries Unlimited, 2010), pp. 47-68.
Week 6 (Feb 21): Archival functions: arrangement and description (archival representation);

Required readings:
Harris, Verne. “Stories and Names: Archival Description as Narrating Records and Constructing Meanings.” In Archives and Justice: A South African Perspective. 131-156.

Yakel, Beth. “Archival Representation” in Archives, Documentation and Institutions of Social Memory (Blouin and Rosenberg eds.); 151-163.


Week 7 (Feb 28): Use, reference, and outreach: promoting your archives and how patrons access archives

Required readings:


Reminder: A3 due in dropbox March 6th, 11 P.M.

Week 8 (Mar 7): Ethics and advocacy (not outreach), professional accountability, truth and administration of justice

Preparation: We will discuss the following codes of ethics in class.
   
   
   
**Required readings:** Things to think about as you read: Who owns the archives? Who has rights to access records and archival materials? When are access restrictions justified? How are archives used (or not used) to bring about (or deprive) justice? How do archives figure in oppressive regimes? What are the archival issues in democratic societies? What are the ethical dimensions of archival practice?

First Archivist Circle, “Protocols for Native American Archival Materials,”
http://www2.nau.edu/libnap-p/protocols.html


**Week 9 (Mar 14)** Preservation

**Required readings:**


**Week 10 (Mar 21): Spring Break—no class!!**

**Reminder:** A4.1 due in dropbox March 27th, 11 P.M.

**Week 11 (Mar 28):** Nontextuality: orality, digital, and the kinetic

**Required readings:**


**Week 12 (Apr 4): Digitization**

**Preparation**

Review and come to class prepared to discuss the promise and problems of the Internet Archive.

- About the Internet Archive, [http://www.archive.org/about/about.php](http://www.archive.org/about/about.php)

**Required readings:** As you read, think of these questions: How are archival records transformed when made digital? What ethical and legal issues should be addressed in digitizing historic records? How should archivists deal with born-digital material?


**Week 13 (Apr 11): Fundraising, Marketing, Public Relations, and Community Outreach**

**Required readings:**


Pluralizing the Archival Paradigm. Remembering and the archive.

Required readings:


**Week 14 (Apr 18): Archives and Memory**
Things to think about: Who controls the past? What is the relationship of archives with collective memory? How do archives figure in the construction of a common identity and a sense of a collective past? What is archival memory?

- Relationship of archives with other heritage institutions
- Archival memory and how archives facilitate remembrance and recollection
- The dynamics of social remembering

Required readings:


Ricardo L. Punzalan, “‘All the Things We Cannot Articulate’: Colonial Leprosy Archives and Community Commemoration,” In Jeannette A. Bastian and Ben Alexander (eds.), *Community Archives: The Shaping of Memory* (Facet, 2009), pp. 197-219.

**Highly recommended (not required) reading for this week:** Connerton, Paul. *How Societies Remember.*

**Reminder:** Last day to submit A2 to the dropbox is April 24th, 11 P.M.
Week 15 (Apr 25): Future Directions in Archival Research
Things to think about: What are the current issues, debates, and projections within and about archives? Where do we go from here? What have you learned this semester?
  • Archival pluralism
  • Archives and postmodernism
  • Community-based archives
  • Indigenous knowledge and rights

Required readings:
Monash University, Statement of Principles relating to Australian Indigenous Knowledge and the Archives (2009),

Week 16 (May 2): A4.2 is due in dropbox by 11 P.M.

No readings assigned.