SCHOOL OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

LIS 5563 ARCHIVAL APPRAISAL

Spring 2012
Wednesdays 4:00-6:40 PM
Locations: BL 104

Instructor: Dr. Kelvin L. White
Office: 401 W. Brooks, Bizzell Library, Room 118E (enter computer lab and turn left; first door on the left)
Email: kwhite@ou.edu
Office hours: Wednesdays 2-4PM or by appointment

Graduate Assistant: Ann Marie Schneider (Ann.M.Schneider-1@ou.edu)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Prerequisites: LIS/KM 5033, LIS/KM 5053; LIS 5343. Evaluation and examination of contributions of key figures in development of archival appraisal theory; identification and evaluation of distinct movements in archival appraisal; identification of cultural, political, sociological, and technological movements that can impact appraisal methodologies.

INTERPRETATION OF COURSE DESCRIPTION

Appraisal is understood as a concept of evaluating archival materials to determine how they should be understood, circulated, and disposed. The course deals with fundamental questions related to the role and constitution of archives in society (paying particular attention to under-represented communities), and the relationship between larger socio-cultural forces and archives. The course will also examine and evaluate the contributions of key figures in the development of American archival appraisal theory; identify and evaluate distinct and related movements in archival appraisal; identify cultural, political, sociological, and technological factors (such as electronic/digital records) that can have an impact on appraisal methodologies; and consider issues of bias within the appraisal process.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1) Describe the implications of archival appraisal on the archival field as a whole, as well as its relationships to cultural heritage, politics, and other wider dynamics;

2) Be able to define, expand, and discuss entities and concepts that are central to archival appraisal, including the notion of appraisal itself and how it might differ in various epistemological domains;

3) To review the history and concepts of archival appraisal as a practice of cultural construct;

4) To review existing appraisal policies and past appraisal decisions and to prepare appropriate documentation plans for a given archival environment;
5) Explain the nature of collecting and how this varies cross-culturally and cross-historically;

6) Identify and demonstrate the ways in which records and archival appraisal serve as instruments of bureaucracy, accountability, democratic access, community and individual empowerment, and scholarship;

7) Be sufficiently familiar with the functions, processes and underlying ideas of scheduling, appraisal, accessioning, and de-accessioning in traditional and digital archival and manuscripts environments to be able to articulate major approaches and considerations in each area with reference to key literature in the field;

8) Develop effective appraisal strategies for various types of communities and institutions.

In addition to the learning objectives above, students should be able to answer these types of questions:

- How unified or homogeneous must a theory of appraisal be, and in what cases must the specific context of an archival record be considered in the process of appraisal?
- If appraisal is a socially constructed concept, how can the archive truly impact the imagination of society?
- What is an archival record and how is this determinant around cultural and literacy differences?
- What is the impact of the processes of appraisal and re-appraisal on the evidentiary integrity of a body of archival materials?
- What new issues are raised in appraisal with the emergence of electronic records?
- What possibilities are held for the archive to impact imagination, a collective culture, a social change?

**REQUIREMENTS**

**Expectations:** This course will be delivered using a variety of learner-centered pedagogies, including group discussions, class discussion, and individual and/or group exercises. Assigned readings for each topic area will be required. Students are expected to read widely based on the required readings as well as those relevant to their own assignments and interests. They should be prepared to discuss and comment upon readings and lectures and to integrate these into their 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. 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.

- Academic Integrity and Misconduct: [http://integrity.ou.edu/students_guide.html](http://integrity.ou.edu/students_guide.html)
- Examples of Plagiarism: [http://integrity.ou.edu/files/nine_things_you_should_know.pdf](http://integrity.ou.edu/files/nine_things_you_should_know.pdf)
- Writing Center: [http://www.ou.edu/writing/](http://www.ou.edu/writing/)

Students should be mindful that successful completion of assignments will require a considerable amount of reading and analysis, and should plan their time accordingly.

**NOTE:** All assignments are expected to be turned in on time (i.e. no later than 7:00 PM on the due date). All late assignments will be penalized 10% per day. Assignments turned in after two calendar days of the original due will not be accepted without sufficient evidence of extenuating circumstances.
**Class Participation:** Students are expected to contribute substantively to class discussions.

**Required texts:** Required readings are available to students online/and or will be handed out in class. Additional readings may be recommended during the semester and will be available on Desire to Learn.

**Assignments and Grading:**

The final grade will be based on the following:

**Class participation and discussion 20%:** Each student will be expected to complete a lengthy set of readings and to participate regularly in class discussions and group projects. A significant portion of the student's grade will be based on his or her participation in class; any student not participating in the class discussions will receive no higher than a "B" for the course.

**Midterm 10% (March 28th):** Each student will be given an in class midterm to test core archival theory and concepts.

**Assignment (group) #1 Appraisal report 30%**. Students should work in small group of 2-3 students, selected by a process to be determined by discussion at the first class meeting (either by self-selection of students interested in evaluating the appraisal or acquisition policy of a particular repository or kind of repository or by a random drawing of students’ names). In either case, the appraisal report should evaluate the acquisition or appraisal policy of an Oklahoma City metropolitan-area or another geographic area's archives, historical manuscripts, or records/information resources management program (excluding any program associated with the University of Oklahoma). The nature of the program can be based on the student’s/student group's interests and selection. The paper (9-11 pages, not including appendices and other front/back matter) should do the following:

1. Describe the institution's appraisal policy (or practice if it lacks a formal policy)
2. Evaluate the institution's policy and practice based on appropriate archival and records management standards (with citations and discussion)
3. Propose ways that the policy and practice could be strengthened
4. Propose ways that the "success" of the policy and practice could be measured or evaluated

Students should structure this paper according to the four elements listed above. Each student should visit the institution (in person or virtually), interview appropriate staff, and immerse him/herself in the relevant appraisal literature and, if available, literature concerning the particular archival program. A student can evaluate the policy of an archives or historical manuscripts program in another area of the country, conducting the relevant interview by telephone and examining appraisal policy documents provided by the institution. The paper is **due on March 28th**. Students/student groups should inform the instructor about the institution they have **selected by February 15th**.

**Assignment (individual) #2 (40%)**

**Option 1:** For this option, students will choose an information institution of his/her choice and develop an appraisal policy (12-15 pages) for acquisition and selection. This paper is **due on May 2nd**. Chosen institutions **must be approved by the instructor by March 28th**.

**Option #2:** Prepare a 12-15 page seminar paper on a topic related to any of the areas addressed in the syllabus. The instructor is willing to consider other research paper topics related to particular career objectives
The instructor may ask some students to continue to work on their papers from other terms if they are deemed to have some merit for expansion into publishable papers. The research paper should relate to an in-depth treatment of some aspect of archival appraisal or the relationship of archival appraisal to other disciplines’ selection methodologies (such as library collection development). This paper is intended to enable the student to do in-depth reading and study on a single aspect of archival appraisal. Students should plan on meeting with the instructor to discuss their paper in order to evaluate their progress; this meeting can be in-person, e-mail, or over the phone. This paper is due on May 2nd. All students doing a research paper are required to his/her topic approved by March 28th.

Grading for ALL written assignments will be based upon the quality of the analysis, critical insight, and reflection; students’ ability to relate what they are analyzing to what they have read for class and on their own; and the written quality of the paper. Your work should be thorough and scholarly, drawing upon appropriate theoretical, historical, cultural, and literary or other texts as appropriate to reinforce your argument. It should also comment upon the extent to which archival theory and practice, as you have learned about them in this class, address or might need to be extended to address, issues that you see arising from the topic or case you have chosen.

NOTE: All written assignments should use size 12 Times New Roman and should be double spaced with margins no greater than 1 inch.

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

Interpretation of grades in general

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Numerical Equivalent</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>(95-100 points)</td>
<td>Outstanding achievement. Student performance demonstrates full command of the course material and a high level of originality and/or creativity that far surpasses course expectations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>(90-94 points)</td>
<td>Excellent achievement. Student performance demonstrates thorough knowledge of the course materials and exceeds course expectations by completing all requirements in a superior manner.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>(87-89 points)</td>
<td>Very good work. Student performance demonstrates above average comprehension of the course materials and exceeds course expectations on all tasks as defined in the course syllabus.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>(83-86 points)</td>
<td>Good work. Student performance meets designated course expectations, demonstrates understanding of the course materials, and performs at an acceptable level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>(80-82 points)</td>
<td>Marginal work. Student performance demonstrates incomplete understanding of course materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>(77-79 points)</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory work. Student performance demonstrates incomplete and inadequate understanding of course materials. <strong>The School of Library and Information Studies requires that a student receiving more than 6 credit hours of C in letter-graded courses in library and information studies be withdrawn from the program.</strong> This requirement will be observed regardless of a student's overall grade point average.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>(73-76 points)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>(70-72 points)</td>
<td>Unacceptable work. Any SLIS student receiving a grade of D or lower in any letter graded LIS graduate course will be withdrawn from the program.</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>(60-69 points)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>(60-69 points)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>(60 points)</td>
<td>Failing. Any SLIS student receiving a grade of D or lower in any letter graded LIS graduate course will be withdrawn from the program.</td>
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**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.

**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.

MAJOR DIVISIONS OF THE COURSE

Readings and Schedule

Classic Readings on Archival Theory:


Mitchell, Thornton W. ed. *Norton on Archives* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press,

(Week 1) January 18: Course Overview: Brief introductions; review syllabus (course objectives, materials, and assignments); Archival Science vs. Archival Studies

No readings assigned.

(Week 2) January 25: Historical overview of the development of archives and archival consciousness.


(Week 3) February 1: Archival Institutions: A Matter of Trust

“The Society of American Archivists: Description and Brief History,” available at: http://www2.archivists.org/profession


(Week 4) February 8: Concepts of Protecting the Archive; Provenance, respect de fonds, and original order


(Week 5) February 15: Conceptualizing the “record” and “appraisal”; Selection of institutions chosen for appraisal reports due


Ham, Gerald F., Selecting and Appraising Archives and Manuscripts (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1992), Chapters 1 & 2. (short)


(Week 6) February 22: Social, Cultural, and Judicial Contexts of Appraisal

Kenneth E. Foote, "To Remember and Forget: Archives, Memory, and Culture," American


(Week 7) February 29: Culture and Collection, Cultural Expression and Archives


(Week 8) March 7: Appraisal Models—Boles and Young

Frank Boles and Julia Marks Young, “Exploring the Black Box: The Appraisal of University Administrative Records,” American Archivist 48 (Spring 1985) 121-139.


Frank Boles, Selecting and Appraising Archives chapters 4 and 5

(Week 9) March 14: Appraisal Models—Documentation Strategists


(Week 10) March 21: Spring Break; no class!

(Week 11) March 28: In-class midterm. Assignment # 1 due. Approval for assignment #2 (either option #1 or option # 2) due.

(Week 12) April 4: Business Records and Functional Analysis (Macro-Appraisal)


(Week 13) April 11: Appraising Non-textual Records (Guest Speakers??)


Peter Botticelli, "Records Appraisal in Network Organizations" *Archivaria* 49 (Spring 2000) 161-191

Lucie Paquet, “Appraisal, Acquisition, and Control of Personal Electronic Records: From Myth to Reality,” *Archives and Manuscripts* (November 2000), 71-91

(Week 14) April 18: Sampling, Re-appraisal, and “Deaccessioning”


Terry Cook, "Many are called but few are chosen: Appraisal Guidelines for Sampling and Selecting Case Files," *Archivaria* 32 (Summer 1991): 25-50.


(Week 15) April 25: Student paper presentations. No readings assigned.

(Week 16) May 2: Final papers (assignment #2) due by 7PM. Assignment: Complete papers and submit via D2L dropbox.