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**University of Michigan
School of Information**

Winter 2009

**SI 580 / History 600
Understanding Records and Archives: Principles and Practices**

SYLLABUS

Instructor: Paul Conway

DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to principles, practices, and current debates in the field of archives and records administration. It is designed with two types of students in mind.

- For students who plan to specialize in archives and records management, this course: provides an in depth introduction to the field; introduces terms and concepts that will be used in other courses in the specialization; and, explains how the various components of archives and records administration fit together.
- For students who pursue another specialization, the course: offers an overview of archives and records administration; helps students become conversant with terminology; and, explains how archives and records relates to other aspects of information management.

The course will be a combination of lecture, discussion, demonstrations, and problem solving. It will include a site visit to a local archival institution and require independent research and writing. It is an intensive introduction. Critical reading of course materials will be essential to stimulate active participation in class discussions.

OBJECTIVES

- Understand why societies, cultures, organizations, and individuals create and keep records and archives.
- Become familiar with the evolution of methods and technologies used to create, store, organize, and preserve records and archives.
- Become conversant in the terminology and concepts used in archives and records administration.
- Be aware of the ways that organizations and individuals use records and archives for research, ongoing operations, accountability, litigation, and organizational memory.
- Become familiar with the basic components of programs including inventory, classification, appraisal, disposition, acquisition, arrangement, description, preservation, reference, access, use, outreach, and public programming. Understand the relationships between these program elements.
- Be aware of the various environments where archives and records are created, managed, and used.
- Understand how archival and recordkeeping practices differ from and relate to other information management practices.
- Be aware of the legal, policy, and ethical issues surrounding archives and records administration.
- Become familiar with the structure, organization, literature, and current issues in the archives and records professions.

READINGS

Books for Purchase: There are two required texts for the course which must be purchased directly from the Society of American Archivists. See: <http://www.archivists.org/catalog/pubsfaqs.asp>

- James M. O'Toole and Richard J. Cox, *Understanding Archives and Manuscripts* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2006). <http://www.archivists.org/catalog/pubDetail.asp?objectID=1997>
- Michael J. Kurtz, *Managing Archival and Manuscript Repositories* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2004). <http://www.archivists.org/catalog/pubDetail.asp?objectID=1280>

Reserves: Copies of these texts have been placed with University Reserves, 2178 Shapiro Undergraduate Library, 764-7493, <http://lib.umich.edu/reserves/>

World Wide Web: Some class preparation requires review of information resources available via the World Wide Web. URLs are provided with the reading assignments.

Readings Location: A separate document lists the required and optional readings for each week of class. Given the diversity of sources for course readings, the following "key" is offered to serve as a guide as to where specific course readings can be located:

- B** - Book for purchase, available in reserves
- C** - CTools
- O** - Online reading

Glossary: In addition, the Society of American Archivists has posted an online glossary that will prove useful to you over the course of the semester:

- *A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology* edited by Richard Pearce-Moses.
<http://www.archivists.org/glossary/index.asp>

ASSIGNMENTS

See separate documents for detailed information on assignments with writing, data gathering, and teamwork requirements. Assignments are posted individually on CTools, where all work should be submitted.

Adequate Preparation -- reading required materials each week.

Participation in Class Discussions – Adequate preparation for class is expected. Plan on spending up to an hour of preparation for every hour of class time. Active engagement with course material, raising questions, contributing to classroom discussions is important for the success of the class. Class attendance is mandatory; absences must be noted to the instructor via email, preferably in advance of class.

Archives Website Presence Analysis (5-7 pages) comparing and contrasting the mission, program, holdings, and services of three archival repositories based on information from their World Wide Web home pages.

Special Collections Survey Project will model on a small scale some of the most important appraisal, processing, and preservation assessment activities that are required to make available to users unprocessed archival and manuscript collections. Working in teams of two or three, students will use a database-driven survey methodology to gather appropriate data and prepare a report that describes the experience of surveying unprocessed collections. During the final class session, using the one summary, students will explore and discuss the issues, controversies, themes of their peers research papers.

Final exam -- Take home exam, open book and open notes. Distributed on Week 13.

EVALUATION

- Preparation and class participation: 20%
- Archives web presence assignment: 20%
- Special collections survey project: 30%
- Final exam: 30%

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Students are encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities that will augment information presented in the class. Possible extra curricular activities include:

- Participating in the local Student Chapter of the Society of American Archivists. Upcoming events will be announced in class.
- Subscribing to listserv discussions in the field of archives and records management. A list of potential discussion lists can be found at the end of this syllabus.
- Visiting local repositories and/or records management programs. Be sure to call and arrange visits in advance. The Society of American Archivists Student Chapter will be organizing tours and site visits throughout the semester.
- Attending lectures and discussion on archives and records topics sponsored by SI or other organizations on campus and beyond.
- Finding part-time employment or volunteering at local organizations with archival or records management problems.
- Exploring web based resources. There are numerous archival and records management resources -- including institutions, professional associations, research projects, laws, policy papers, and the like -- available on the web and new sites will certainly emerge during the course of the semester. The web is also a tremendous resource for current events reporting on archives and records related issues.

Additional opportunities/activities/resources will be announced in class as they come to my attention. Students are encouraged to raise related issues from other courses they are taking in class discussions.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Any student will need an accommodation for a disability is directed to me during my office hours or email me to make an appointment.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic honesty and responsibility is fundamental to our scholarly and professional community. Students are responsible for maintaining high standards of conduct while engaged in course work, research, dissertation or thesis preparation, and other activities related to academics and their profession. It is expected that students will abide by the provisions of the Rackham Graduate School Policy Statement on Academic and Professional Integrity and Procedures for Investigating Allegations of Academic & Professional Misconduct.

<http://www.rackham.umich.edu/policies/gsh/appb/>

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

Students are encouraged to bring notebook computers to class and to use them actively as learning tools. Students should:

- use laptops for taking notes, conducting research required for activities, and other specific classroom tasks as assigned by the instructor. During class, students should not check e-mail, chat, IM, play games, or perform other off-task activities.
- engage in class activity as actively as they would in any other class. The computer should not become a barrier to one-on-one interaction, but instead should help facilitate the exchange of ideas and engagement in classroom contact.
- demonstrate sensitivity to others. Students should not display screen images, including wallpapers and screen savers, that might be distracting or offensive to other members of the class.

OFFICE HOURS

Students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of at least one office hour session during the course. The instructor is available and willing to advise on project topics, specialized readings, and contacts in the digital library field.

COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

- Course Logistics
- Course Objectives and Requirements
- Introduction of the students and instructor
- Archives and Records Management Professional Organizations/Literature
- Overview of Archives & Records Management
- The significance of records to each of us
- Archives & records in the news media

WEEK 2: WHY DO ARCHIVES EXIST?

- The evolution and nature of written communications
- Historical evolution of archives and archival programs
- Users of and uses for archives
- Archives and accountability

REQUIRED READINGS:

B James M. O’Toole and Richard J. Cox, *Understanding Archives and Manuscripts* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2006). Chapter 1 & 2, pp. 1-86.

O David Bearman, *Archival Methods* (Pittsburgh: Archives and Museum Informatics Technical Reports, Vol. 3, No. 1, Spring 1989), pp. 59-67, Chapter 6. http://www.archimuse.com/publishing/archival_methods/#ch6

O Richard J. Cox and David A. Wallace, “Introduction.” In Richard J. Cox and David A. Wallace, eds., *Archives and the Public Good: Accountability and Records in Modern Society* (Westport, Connecticut: Quorum, 2002), pp. 1-18. <http://www.mybestdocs.com/cox-wallace-book-intro.htm>

WEEK 3: THE NATURE OF ARCHIVES

- The definition of a record
- Forms and formats of records
- Reliability and authenticity of records
- Symbolism and records; Uniqueness and records

REQUIRED READINGS:

C Yeo, Geoffrey, Concepts of Record (1): Evidence, Information, Persistent Representations. *American Archivist* 70 (Fall-Winter 2007). Available Online to SAA members and through Mirlyn.

C Yeo, Geoffrey, Concepts of Record (2): Prototypes and Boundary Objects. *American Archivist* 71 (Spring-Summer 2008). Available Online to SAA members and through Mirlyn.

C Luciana Duranti, "Reliability and Authenticity: The Concepts and Their Implications," *Archivaria* 39 (Spring 1995), pp. 5-10.

C James M. O'Toole, "The Symbolic Significance of Archives," *American Archivist* 56 (Spring 1993), pp. 234-255.

C James M. O'Toole, "On the Idea of Uniqueness," *American Archivist* 57 (Fall 1994), pp. 632-658.

WEEK 4: BASIC ARCHIVES AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT CONCEPTS

- The principle of provenance
- The principle of original order
- Series/fonds/record group
- Organizational functions
- Recordkeeping requirements
- Context and contextual information

REQUIRED READINGS:

C Ernst Posner, "Some Aspects of Archival Development Since the French Revolution." In Maygene F. Daniels and Timothy Walch, eds., *A Modern Archives Reader* (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Service, 1984), pp. 1-14.

C Nancy Bartlett, "Respect des Fonds: The Origins of the Modern Archival Principle of Provenance," *Primary Sources & Original Works* 1 (No.1/2, 1991), pp. 107-115.

C T.R. Schellenberg, "Archival Principles of Arrangement." In Maygene F. Daniels and Timothy Walch, eds., *A Modern Archives Reader* (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Service, 1984), pp. 149-61.

C David A. Bearman and Richard H. Lytle, "The Power of the Principle of Provenance," *Archivaria* 21 (Winter 1985-86), pp.14-27.

C Terry Cook, "What is Past is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas Since 1898, and the Future Paradigm Shift," *Archivaria* 43 (Spring 1997), pp. 17-63.

WEEK 5: ARCHIVES AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT: PROGRAMS, INSTITUTIONS, PROFESSIONS

- Program missions, mandates and functions
- Types of archival institutions
- Relations between records managers and archivists
- Education, Research, Practice
- Relationships with other information management professions

REQUIRED READINGS:

B Michael Kurtz, *Managing Archival and Manuscript Repositories* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2004).
Read/ browse.

C Anne-Marie Schwirtlich, "Getting Organised." in Judith Ellis (ed.), *Keeping Archives* (Melbourne, Australia: Thorpe, 1993), pp. 25-73, Chapter 2.

C F. Gerald Ham, "Archival Choices: Managing the Historical Record in an Age of Abundance," *American Archivist* 47 (Winter 1984), pp. 11-22.

O Presentations from "A Sense of A*CENSUS" Session @ SAA Annual Meeting, New Orleans, August 19, 2005.

O Vicki Walch, General Data Analysis and Overview. <http://www.archivists.org/a-census/reports/Walch-ACENSUS.pdf>

O Elizabeth Yakel and Jeannette Bastian, Special Report: Graduate Education. <http://www.archivists.org/a-census/reports/YakelBastian-ACENSUS.pdf>

C Sue Myberg, "Records Management and Archives: Finding Common Ground," *Information Management Journal* March/April 2005: 24-26, 28-29.

C Eric Ketelaar, "Archivistics Research Saving the Profession," *American Archivist* 63 (Fall/Winter 2000), pp. 322-340.

WEEK 6: VISIT TO THE BENTLEY HISTORICAL LIBRARY

PREPARATION:

H Bentley Historical Library, *Annual Report*.

O Bentley Historical Library. Thoroughly review institutional website: <http://bentley.umich.edu/>

WEEK 7: CORE ARCHIVAL AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS I

- Analysis of recordkeeping requirements and organizational functions
- Inventory and control

- Appraisal
- Disposition

REQUIRED READINGS:

B James M. O'Toole and Richard J. Cox, *Understanding Archives and Manuscripts* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2006). Chapters 3 & 4, pp. 87-132.

C T. R. Schellenberg, "The Appraisal of Modern Public Records." In Maygene F. Daniels and Timothy Walch (eds.), *A Modern Archives Reader* (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Service, 1984), pp. 57-70.

C Eldon Frost, "A Weak Link in the Chain: Records Scheduling as a Source of Archival Acquisition," *Archivaria* 33 (Winter 1991-92): 78-86.

C Helen W. Samuels, "Who Controls the Past," *American Archivist* 49 (Spring 1986), pp. 109-124.

C Catherine Bailey, "From the Top Down: The Practice of Macro-Appraisal," *Archivaria* 43 (Spring 1997), pp. 89-128.

C Richard Cox, *No Innocent Deposits: Forming Archives by Rethinking Appraisal* (Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2004), pp. 231-293, Chapters 9 & 10.

WEEK 8: CORE ARCHIVAL AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS II

- Acquisition
- Accessioning
- Arrangement and description

REQUIRED READINGS:

C Anne-Marie Schwirtlich and Barbara Reed, "Managing the Acquisition Process." in Judith Ellis (ed.), *Keeping Archives* (Melbourne, Australia: Thorpe, 1993), pp. 137-156, Chapter 5.

C Paul Brunton and Tim Robinson, "Accessioning," in Judith Ellis (ed.), *Keeping Archives* (Melbourne, Australia: Thorpe, 1993), pp.207-221, Chapter 7.

C Timothy L. Ericson, "At the 'Rim of Creative Dissatisfaction': Archivists and Acquisition Development" *Archivaria* 33 (Winter 1991-1992), pp. 66-77.

O Michael J. Fox, Introduction to Archival Organization and Description. Read and complete the online tutorial. http://www.getty.edu/research/conducting_research/standards/introarchives/index.html

C Avra Michelson, "Description and Reference in the Age of Automation," *American Archivist* 50 (Spring 1987), pp. 192-208.

C Elizabeth Yakel, "Archival Representation," *Archival Science* 3 (No.1, 2003), pp. 1-25.

C Michelle Light and Tom Hyry, "Colphons and Annotations: New Directions for the Finding Aid," *American Archivist* 65 (Fall/Winter 2002), pp. 216-230.

C Mark Green and Dennis Meissner. *More Product, Less Process: Pragmatically Revamping Traditional Processing Approaches to Deal with Late 20th Century Collections*. March 2005.

PREPARATION:

Review the following two websites (browse/search) Note what you looked at and think about how archival materials are represented for users and access. Come to class prepared to discuss what you found.

O ArchiveGrid: <http://archivegrid.org/web/jsp/index.jsp>

O Online Archive of California: <http://findaid.oac.cdlib.org/>

WEEK 9: CORE ARCHIVAL AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS III

- Preservation
- Reference
- Access and use
- Outreach and public programming

REQUIRED READINGS:

C James M. O'Toole, "On the Idea of Permanence," *American Archivist* 52 (Winter 1989), pp. 10-25.

C Paul Conway, "Archival Preservation Practice in a Nationwide Context," *American Archivist* 53 (Spring 1990), pp. 204-222.

O Anne R. Kenney and Nancy Y. McGovern, *Digital Preservation Management: Implementing Short-term Strategies for Long-term Problems* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, September 2003). Complete this tutorial. http://www.library.cornell.edu/iris/tutorial/dpm/eng_index.html

O Conway, Paul. "Overview: Rationale for Digitization and Preservation. In *Handbook for Digital Projects: A Management Tool for Preservation and Access*. Edited by Maxine Sitts. Andover, MA: Northeast Document Conservation Center, 2000, pp. 9-12. <http://www.nedcc.org/digital/dighome.htm>

C Sigrid McCausland, "Access and Reference Services." in Judith Ellis (ed.), *Keeping Archives* (Melbourne, Australia: Thorpe, 1993), pp. 273-305. Chapter 10.

C Mary Jo Pugh, *Providing Reference Services for Archives and Manuscripts* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005), pp. 33-73. Chapter 3, Identifying Uses and Users of Archives.

C Elizabeth Yakel, "Thinking Inside and Outside the Boxes: Archival Reference Services at the Turn of the Century," *Archivaria* 49 (Spring 2000), pp. 140-160.

C Ann Pederson, "User Education and Public Relations." in Judith Ellis, (ed.), *Keeping Archives* (Melbourne, Australia: Thorpe, 1993), pp. 306-349, Chapter 11.

B Michael Kurtz, *Managing Archival and Manuscript Repositories* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2004), pp. 221-237. Chapter 13, Public Relations.

C Timothy Ericson, "'Preoccupied With Our Own Gardens:' Outreach and Archivist," *Archivaria* 31 (Winter 1990-91), pp. 114-22.

C Terry Cook, "Viewing the World Upside Down: Reflections on the Theoretical Underpinnings of Archival Public Programming," *Archivaria* 31 (Winter 1990-91), pp. 123-134.

C Kathryn Nicholls, "Exhibiting Evidence: A Case Study," *Archivaria* 55 (Spring 2003), pp. 27-42.

WEEK 10: RECORDS AND RECORDKEEPING SYSTEMS

- How records fit into the communications, workflow, structure of organizations and societies
- Characteristics of recordkeeping systems
- Differences between information systems and recordkeeping systems

REQUIRED READINGS:

B JoAnne Yates, *Control Through Communication: The Rise of System in American Management* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), pp. 101-275, Chapters 4-8 and Conclusion,

C Elizabeth Yakel, "The Way Things Work: Procedures, Processes, and Institutional Records" *American Archivist* 59 (No. 4, Fall 1996), pp. 454-464.

C Ciaran B. Trace, "What is Recorded is Never Simply 'What Happened': Record Keeping in Modern Organizational Culture," *Archival Science* 3 (No. 1-2, 2002), pp. 137-159.

C David Bearman, "Recordkeeping Systems," *Archivaria* 36 (Autumn 1993), pp. 16-36.

C Margaret Hedstrom, David A. Wallace, Peter Botticelli, Denise Anthony, and Sarah Naakso, *Final Report -- Expanding the Options: Strategies for Preserving Electronic Records of Collaborative Processes* (National Historic Records and Publications Commission Grant Number 97-3265, March 2002).

WEEK 11: USERS AND USES OF ARCHIVES

- Who uses archives?
- How are archival records used?
- How are changing uses affecting archival programs and functions

REQUIRED READINGS:

O David Bearman, *Archival Methods* (Pittsburgh: Archives and Museum Informatics Technical Reports, Vol. 3, No. 1, Spring 1989), pp. 39-48, Chapter 4, Access and Use.

http://www.archimuse.com/publishing/archival_methods/#ch4

C Paul Conway, "Facts and Frameworks: An Approach to Studying the Users of Archives" *American Archivist* 49 (Fall 1986), pp. 393-407.

C Elizabeth Yakel, "Listening to Users," *Archival Issues* 26 (No.2, 2002), pp. 111-127.

C Elizabeth Yakel, "AI: Archival Intelligence and User Expertise," *American Archivist* 66 (Spring/Summer 2003), pp. 51-78.

C Bente Jensen and Charlotte S.H. Jensen, "The Archives' Perception of Users – the Users' Perception of Archives," *Comma* (forthcoming).

C Helen R. Tibbo, "Primarily History in America: How U.S. Historians Search for Primary Materials at the Dawn of the Digital Age," *American Archivist* 66 (Spring/Summer 2003), pp. 9-50.

C Wendy Duff, Barbara Craig, and Joan Cherry, "Finding and Using Archival Resources: A Cross-Canada Survey of Historians Studying Canadian History," *Archivaria* 58 (Fall 2004) pp. 51-80.

C Gudmund Valderhaug, "Memory, Archives, Justice – A Norwegian Perspective," *Comma* (forthcoming).

WEEK 12: LEGAL, POLICY, AND ETHICAL ISSUES

- Who owns the archives?
- Who has rights to access records and archival materials?
- When are restrictions justified?
- Who controls the past?

REQUIRED READINGS:

O Society of American Archivists, "Code of Ethics for Archivists." (2005).
http://www.archivists.org/governance/handbook/app_ethics.asp#code

O ARMA International, "The Code of Professional Responsibility." (undated).
<http://www.arma.org/about/overview/ethics.cfm>

O Association of Colleges and Research Libraries (ACRL), Rare Books and Manuscripts Section (RBMS), *Standards for Ethical Conduct for Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Librarians, with Guidelines for Institutional Practice in Support of the Standards*, 2d edition, 1992.
<http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlstandards/standardsethical.htm>

C Elena S. Danielson. "The Ethics of Access," *The American Archivist* 52 (Winter 1989), pp. 52-62.

C Karen Benedict, *Ethics and the Archival Profession* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2003), pp. 1-20, Chapter 1-3.

C R. Jackson Armstrong-Ingram, "The Givenness of Kin: Legal and Ethical Issues in Accessing Adoption Records," *Archival Issues* 22 (No. 1, 1997), pp. 21-35.

C Judith Schwarz, "The Archivist's Balancing Act: Helping Researchers While Protecting Individual Privacy," In Behrnd-Klodt and Wosh (eds.) *Privacy and Confidentiality Perspectives: Archivists and Archival Records* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005), pp. 82-92.

C Martin L. Levitt, "'Ethical Issues in Constructing a Eugenics Website,'" In Behrnd-Klodt and Wosh (eds.) *Privacy and Confidentiality Perspectives: Archivists and Archival Records* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005), pp.112-125.

C Sarah Rowe-Sims, Sandra Boyd, and H.T. Holmes, "Balancing Privacy and Access: opening the Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission Records," In Behrnd-Klodt and Wosh (eds.) *Privacy and Confidentiality Perspectives: Archivists and Archival Records* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005), pp.159-174.

C James M. O'Toole, "Archives on Trial: The Strange Case of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers." In Richard J. Cox and David A. Wallace, eds., *Archives and the Public Good: Accountability and Records in Modern Society* (Westport, Connecticut: Quorum, 2002), pp., 21-35.

C Verne Harris, "'They Should Have Destroyed More': The Destruction of Public Records by the South African State in the Final Years of Apartheid, 1990-1994." In Richard J. Cox and David A. Wallace, eds., *Archives and the Public Good: Accountability and Records in Modern Society* (Westport, Connecticut: Quorum, 2002), pp., 205-228.

WEEK 13: WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF THE PAST?

- Current issues, debates, and projections within and about archives and records management

REQUIRED READINGS:

B James M. O'Toole and Richard J. Cox, *Understanding Archives and Manuscripts* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2006), pp. 133-146, Chapter 5.

C Steven Hensen, "Revisiting Mary Jane, or, Dear Cat: Being Archival in the 21st Century," *American Archivist* 65 (No. 2, 2002): 168-175.

C David Bearman and Margaret Hedstrom, "Reinventing Archives for Electronic Records: Alternative Service Delivery Options." In Margaret Hedstrom (ed.) *Electronic Records Management Program Strategies* (Pittsburgh: Archives and Museum Informatics, 1993), pp. 82-98.

C Tom Nesmith, "Seeing Archives: Postmodernism and the Changing Intellectual Place of Archives," *American Archivist* 65 (Spring/Summer 2002), pp. 24-41.

C Jeanette Allis Bastian, "Whispers in the Archives: Finding the Voices of the Colonized in the Records of the Colonizer," In Margaret Procter, Michael Cook, and Caroline Williams (eds.) *Political Pressure and the Archival Record* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005): pp. 25-43.

C Verne Harris, "Archives, Politics, Justice," In Margaret Procter, Michael Cook, and Caroline Williams (eds.) *Political Pressure and the Archival Record* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005): pp. 173-182.

PREPARATION:

O About the Internet Archive, <http://www.archive.org/about/about.php>

O Internet Archive, Wayback Machine, <http://www.archive.org/web/web.php>. Review and come to class prepared to discuss its promise and problems.

Week 14: PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

ASSIGNMENTS

Archives Website Presence Analysis

A directory of over than 5,000 websites containing information about repositories holding rare books, manuscripts, archives and special collections is located at: <http://www.uidaho.edu/special-collections/Other.Repositories.html>

Go to this website and select the homepages of three repositories. Write a brief paper (5-7 pages) comparing and contrasting the mission, program, holdings, and services of three archival repositories based *solely* on information from their World Wide Web presence. To facilitate comparisons, select three sites that share some common features (similar types of repositories, thematic emphasis, location, etc.). Please address the following questions:

- 1) What is the purpose and mission of each repository?
- 2) Who are the clientele of each repository?
- 3) What useful information did you find at the website (content, policies, reports, catalogs, reference and other user services, information on archives, other?)
- 4) What did you expect to find that was not there?
- 5) How would you evaluate the three websites in terms of content, services offered, usability, and navigation?

The following article - available via CTOOLS @ "Resources" > "Assignments" > "Archives web presence" - will prove useful for evaluating your sites from a usability (including design, functionality, visibility) perspective: C Elizabeth Yakel and Jihyun Kim, "Midwest State Archives on the Web: A Content and Impact Analysis," *Archival Issues* 28 (no. 1, 2003-2004): 47-62.

Final Exam

This will be a take home written exam. You will have 5 days to complete this exam. Examinations turned in after the deadline will have a penalty of 10% (-3 points) applied to the grade. The final exam will be divided into two sections. The first section is a choice of short answer questions that cover the readings and class presentations. This section is designed to assess how well you understand key ideas regarding the management of archives and records. The second section will require you to choose a question and compose a well-reasoned analytical essay specifically addressing the question you select. Your answer should require between 1,500 and 3,000 words to complete. In crafting your answer you should draw from the course readings but not be limited to them, as you will have read only a small portion of the relevant archival literature through this course. Model essays are expected to dig deeper into the literature and the literature of other professions relevant to the topic of the paper.

Special Collections Survey Project

Background

The Special Collections Library at the University of Michigan is home to more than 400 collections of archival and manuscript material that together occupy approximately 4,700 linear feet of shelf space in Hatcher, Buhr, and the Bentley Historical Library. While some of these collections are used by students and scholars from across the campus and around the world, many are simply not available to the very community they are intended to serve. A large portion of these archival and manuscript collections remain unprocessed or are inadequately described and therefore are not known, cannot be discovered, and will not be used.

Over the course of the next several months, these “hidden collections” will be “exposed” by way of a comprehensive survey of un- and underprocessed archival and manuscript collections in the Special Collections Library. The purpose of the survey is twofold:

1. To make information about un- and underprocessed collections available to the public.
2. To collect information that can be used to inform collection management decisions; establish and guide processing priorities; facilitate selection and other activities associated with digitization and exhibit preparation; and ensure our readiness for anticipated and unanticipated opportunities of all kinds, especially opportunities for funding.

Assignment

The purpose of this assignment is to model on a small scale some of the most important appraisal, processing, and preservation assessment activities that are required to make available to users unprocessed archival and manuscript collections. Working in teams of two or three, students will learn about and handle at least two collections: one a collection of archives or organizational records and the other a collection of personal papers or manuscripts. For each collection, students will gather data that will be used for a variety of purposes, including making collection-level information available to the public by way of MARC records and EAD finding aids; estimating processing time; and facilitating selection and other activities associated with digitization and exhibit preparation.

Students will use a database-driven survey methodology to gather appropriate data, working in the field with actual unprocessed collections held by the Special Collections Library (in Hatcher and in Buhr). Each team will prepare a report that describes the experience of surveying unprocessed collections, including reporting on the time required for major steps, difficulties encountered along the way, and the extent to which minimal-level processing may or may not be appropriate for the collections surveyed.

Upon completion of this assignment, students should be able to (1) appreciate the size and complexity of unprocessed collections of archival and manuscript material (2) diagnose and document a range of common and uncommon preservation problems (3) gather systematically and present in relatively standardized form the information required for collection-level descriptions of archival and manuscript collections and (4) exercise critical judgment about the level of processing that is required to make a collection useable.

This assignment is in actuality a pilot project intended to test the feasibility of, and estimate the resources required for, a comprehensive survey of all collections held in the Special Collections Library, the purpose of which would be to make possible the creation of adequate and uniform collection-level descriptions; understand more fully the prevalence of unmet preservation challenges; inform collection management decisions; and establish and guide processing priorities. Ultimately, and ideally, the larger effort would also help us develop priorities and funding strategies for digitizing the most valuable and the most heavily used collections held by the Special Collections Library.

Procedural Overview

The following are the major steps of the project.

1. Form teams of 2 or 3 students.
2. Identify two collections to be surveyed, one from the list of archival collections and one from the list of manuscript collections. All collections are held by the Special Collections Library and are housed in the Buhr Building or on the 7th floor of the Hatcher Graduate Library. Teams may not duplicate collection surveys, but instead must sign up uniquely for two collections.
3. Complete a "Collection Survey Sign-Up" form that will require you to estimate the days and the times when you will be working on each collection.
4. Obtain and study the documentation that has been assembled for each collection. The scope and quality of existing documentation varies widely from collection to collection.
5. Examine the survey template and the survey manual, which explains the nature of the information to be gathered and how to enter the information into the FileMaker Pro template. The template may be used as a paper data gathering form, as an off-line data entry form, or as a guide for using a different tool (such as Excel) to record the survey data.
6. Decide on the use of technology tools for gathering survey information. The choice will turn on the availability of laptop computers and the work-style preferences of the team members.
7. Survey the collection and complete the template
8. Enter the data in the FileMaker Pro database.
9. Complete a Survey Report for each collection.

Training

During the third class session, the project librarian will provide an overview of the data gathering exercise, including an explanation of the FileMaker Pro template and specific procedures for completing it. The project librarian and other Library staff will be available for consultation and assistance throughout the course of the project.

Deliverables

Each student team will produce two products for each collection surveyed, both of which will be assessed in assigning a grade for this assignment. The project deliverables are due Sunday, April 19 at 5:00 pm.

A database record. Students will create and complete a FileMaker Pro database record for each collection surveyed.

A survey report. Each team will prepare a report for each collection surveyed. The report will include information on the experience of surveying the collection and will provide quantitative and qualitative information on the survey process and the recommended next steps. Each report will contain at least the following sections:

1. Brief narrative description of the scope and contents of the collection
2. Description of preservation problems encountered, including commentary on various media and containers. The report should reach a general conclusion about the preservation risk faced by the collection, given its present storage conditions, physical state, and expected uses.
3. Description of the physical processing challenges that the collection faces, including insight into the general order of the material and the effort needed to ready the collection for use.
4. Comments on those portions of the collection that might be amenable to digitization, including subjective judgments on the possible benefits and/or challenges of digitization.
5. Comments on the challenges encountered in completing the survey, including issues involving the working environment, the usability of the survey template, and the physical and intellectual condition of the collection.
6. Subjective judgments on research value and processing priority, given what you have been able to learn about the collection and its context.
7. Report on the time spent on the following parts of the project including learning and practicing with the survey tools, physically handling the collection, completing the “collection” portion of the template, completing the “survey” portion of the template, and preparing the survey report

Assessment

The **database record** will be assessed in terms of the completeness of the data and the accuracy with which the data is recorded according to the guidelines specified in the survey manual. In cases where information is not available or cannot be entered as specified in the manual, student teams will be expected to include an explanatory note in the database record.

The **survey report** will be assessed in terms of its quality as measured by the completeness and the thoughtfulness of the information provided in each section of the report as well as its overall presentation (e.g., format, style, neatness, attention to detail, accuracy, etc.).

Open Reporting

The last session of class will be dedicated to team reports on the survey project. The session will be an opportunity for students to (1) draw some general conclusions about processing archival and manuscript collections and (2) make specific recommendations regarding the feasibility of using the survey tool for a more comprehensive project in the Special Collections Library.

SCHEDULE

WEEK 1 (January 13): INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

- Course Logistics
- Course Objectives and Requirements
- Introduction of the students and instructor
- Archives and Records Management Professional Organizations/Literature
- Overview of Archives & Records Management
- The significance of records to each of us
- Archives & records in the news media

WEEK 2 (January 20): WHY DO ARCHIVES EXIST?

- The evolution and nature of written communications
- Historical evolution of archives and archival programs
- Users of and uses for archives
- Archives and accountability

WEEK 3 (January 27): THE NATURE OF ARCHIVES

- Forms and formats of records
- Reliability and authenticity of records
- Symbolism and records; Uniqueness and records

WEEK 4 (February 3): BASIC ARCHIVES AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT CONCEPTS

Assignment Due: Review of Information about Archives on the World Wide Web

- The definition of a record
- The principle of provenance
- The principle of original order
- Series/fonds/record group
- Organizational functions
- Recordkeeping requirements
- Context and contextual information

WEEK 5 (February 10): PROGRAMS, INSTITUTIONS, PROFESSIONS

- Program missions, mandates and functions
- Types of archival institutions
- Relations between records managers and archivists

- Education, Research, Practice
- Relationships with other information management professions

WEEK 6 (February 17): VIST TO THE BENTLEY HISTORICAL LIBRARY

SPRING BREAK (February 24)

WEEK 7 (March 3): CORE ARCHIVAL AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS: PART ONE

- Analysis of recordkeeping requirements and organizational functions
- Inventory and control
- Appraisal
- Disposition

WEEK 8 (March 10): CORE ARCHIVAL AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS: PART TWO

- Acquisition
- Accessioning
- Arrangement and description

WEEK 9 (March 17): CORE ARCHIVAL AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS: PART THREE

- Preservation
 - Reference
 - Access and use
 - Outreach and public programming

WEEK 10 (March 24): RECORDS AND RECORDKEEPING SYSTEMS

- How records fit into the communications, workflow, structure of organizations and societies
- Characteristics of recordkeeping systems
- Differences between information systems and recordkeeping systems

WEEK 11 (March 31): USERS AND USES OF ARCHIVES

- Who uses archives?
- How are archival records used?
- How are changing uses affecting archival programs and functions

WEEK 12 (April 7): LEGAL, POLICY, AND ETHICAL ISSUES

- Who owns the archives?
- Who has rights to access records and archival materials?
- When are restrictions justified?
- Who controls the past?

WEEK 13 (April 14): WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF THE PAST?

Assignment Due: Hidden Collections Survey

- Current issues, debates, and projections within and about archives and records management

WEEK 14 (April 21): REPORTS ON FINAL PROJECT AND REVIEW FOR FINAL EXAM

Final Exam Distributed

Exam Due Sunday, April 26 at 5:00 pm.