University of Maryland, College of Information Studies

INST 604: Introduction to Archives & Digital Curation

Spring 2019
Online Section

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Office: HBK 4105B
Office Hours: ELMS Chat Office Hours Tuesdays, 4:00-5:00pm, or by appointment
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Course Description:

This course introduces students to the practice of archival thinking, an important skill in caring for an increasingly complex, multimedia, and heterogeneous information. Is the information stored in a secure place (whether servers or stacks)? Is there guaranteed long-term access to the records, manuscripts, or data? How do we ensure the authenticity and reliability of the information we keep? How do we use archival records to hold those in positions of power accountable? What are the ways that marginalized groups are represented in historical sources? What access systems should be in place to maximize the discoverability of the items in our collection? Archivists answer these questions in particular ways and those specific perspectives and ideas that inform their actions are what we will study during the term.

As a class, we shall examine fundamental theories and practices as well as the essential principles and standards that archivists apply in designing and implementing strategies for the preservation and long-term access of information. We will pay attention to the changing informational, organizational, societal, and technological landscapes and consider how those changes are affecting archival practices, the information and preservation professions, and the implementation of foundational archival ideas. We will also consider the values of the archives profession that form the mandate to manage and care for a body of information resources in diverse organizational and institutional contexts.

This is a foundational course if you are training to become a professional archivist, manuscripts curator, records manager, digital curator, data librarian, etc. The course will provide you with essential knowledge for pursuing a variety of career paths, including:

- Professional careers in archives and records management - This course provides you an introduction to the field; introduces terms and concepts that will be used in more advanced courses; and builds a foundation for internships and professional networking.

- Careers in related information fields - This course provides you with a survey of broadly applicable concepts used in information management, data curation, information policy, and user services.

- Advanced degrees in history - This course provides you with critical understanding of how archives are formed and organized; describes how archival actions, policies and functions influence knowledge production; and gives an overview of the changing
intellectual and social perspectives on the function archives in society as well as the purpose and value of archival research.

No matter what your career goals, you will become conversant with terminology and concepts and learn how archives and records relate to other aspects of information management.

**Learning Outcomes**

- Comprehension/critique of professional literature: Become conversant with the basic concepts, practices, and methods used to create, store, organize, and preserve records and archives.
- Presentation on a topic of professional interest: Identify organizational, legal, technological, and cultural factors that have an impact on records and archives.
- Quality and quantity of contributions to discussions/debates in class and online: Analyze how organizations and individuals use records and archives for research, ongoing operations, accountability, and organizational memory.
- Analysis of problems presented in case studies/examples: Develop a knowledgebase and set of principles for responding to legal, policy, and ethical issues.
- Develop and defend your position on a contemporary issue or problem: Understand how archival and recordkeeping practices differ from other information management practices.
- Explain an archives or records management concept to an interested third party: Understand how archival and recordkeeping practices relate to other information management practices.

**COURSE POLICIES**

**Citation and Formatting**

Use standard professional formatting (double spacing, 1” margins, Times New Roman, 12-point font) for all assignments. For citations, you may either use APA or Chicago style.

**Class Participation and Attendance**

This course makes active use of the classroom time and space. Students are expected to contribute productively to classroom discussions, debates, and exercises. Your ability to contribute to classroom activities will depend on your preparation in advance. The quality of your contributions will be judged on that basis. Advance preparation includes completing all reading assignments; listening to/watching pre-recorded talks, lectures, presentations, videos, etc.; and completing on-line explorations and exercises. You will also have the opportunity to initiate discussions and bring related material to our attention (such as breaking news on archives and records).

University policy excuses the absences of students for illness, religious observances, participation in University activities at the request of university authorities and compelling circumstances beyond the student's control. You may miss a single class for a medical reason without providing medical documentation, but for more than one absence you should provide documentation. For more information, see University Policy V-1.00G on Medically Necessary
Absence. If you are unable to attend class, please inform me in advance by email to akriesbe@umd.edu so that we can make appropriate alternative arrangements.

Textbook & Course Materials
There is no assigned textbook for this course. All readings are available for download on ELMS or via URLs defined in this syllabus.

Syllabus Change Policy
Please note that this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice. I will disseminate changes or updates to the syllabus, readings, assignments, etc via ELMS.

Academic Integrity
It is important that you practice academic honesty in all aspects of the class. Much of your learning happens when you challenge yourself to produce original work. You should familiarize yourself with the violations outlined in the University of Maryland’s Code of Academic Integrity. Among these include:

- **Cheating**: Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise.
- **Fabrication**: Intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.
- **Facilitating Academic Dishonesty**: Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic dishonesty.
- **Plagiarism**: Intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one's own in an academic exercise.

Violation of these university policies will result in penalties, which might range from failing an assignment, to failing a course, to being expelled from the program, at the discretion of the instructor and the iSchool administration.

Students With Disabilities
The University provides appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities. The campus' Disability Support Services Office (DSS) works with students and faculty to address a variety of issues ranging from test anxiety to physical and psychological disabilities. If you think you may have a disability, you should consult with DSS (4-7682, email Dissup@umd.edu). To receive accommodations, you must first have your disabilities documented by DSS. Once notified, DDS prepares an Accommodation Letter for course instructors regarding needed accommodations. Students are responsible for presenting this letter to their instructors.

Emergency Preparedness
For complete information on university closures and other emergencies, please visit: [http://www.umd.edu/emergencypreparedness/](http://www.umd.edu/emergencypreparedness/)

CourseEvalUM
Course evaluations are a part of the process by which the University of Maryland seeks to improve teaching and learning. The University Senate approved the implementation of a standard, online, University-wide course evaluation instrument. Each course evaluation contains a set of universal questions, and some are supplemented by questions from specific colleges.
Across the University, course evaluations are administered through a web-based system dubbed CourseEvalUM. Students who leave no "Pending" evaluations in their Evaluation Dashboard each semester can view the aggregate results of a sub-set of universal items online.

All information submitted to the Evaluation System is confidential. Instructors and academic administrators can only view summarized evaluation results after final grades have been submitted. Instructors and academic administrators cannot identify which submissions belong to which students. This standardized set of evaluation results provides the University with useful information on teaching and student learning across the campus.

For additional info see Student Fast Facts at: https://www.irpa.umd.edu/Assessment/CourseEval/stdt_faq.shtml

Assignments and Evaluation
You will receive various forms of feedback (such as written comments and one-on-one consultations) on your class performance. Keep in mind that grades are only one type of indicator of learning and progress in this course. Grades will be based on the quality of your assignments and classroom engagement. If at any point during the semester you are in need of additional guidance or explanation on how your assignments are graded, please do not hesitate to set up an appointment with me so we can explore ways to ensure that you are meeting the expectations of the course. Grade distribution shall be as follows:

- Repository Website Analysis 10%
- In-Person Repository Visit 10%
- Wikipedia Assignment 15%
- Course Themes in the News 10%
- Final Assignment 15%
- Periodic Writing Responses 20%
- Discussion Participation 20%

Repository Website Analysis
Compare and contrast the mission, program, holdings, and services of three archival institutions based solely on information from their institutional public websites World Wide Web home pages. To facilitate comparisons, select three institutional websites that share some common features (types of repository, thematic emphasis, location, etc.).

In-Person Repository Visit
Visit an archival institution in your local community. Do not request a tour or explain your role as a student of archives and digital curation (however, if asked by repository staff please do not lie or mislead about your intentions or participation in this course). During your visit, act as if you were a user coming to the repository to work on a project as a historian, genealogist, teacher, or other researcher. Review a finding aid (online or at the repository), and request access to a physical collection (or portion thereof) for your examination. Summarize your experience in a report, with a particular focus on user services. Examples of the types of details to include: What was required to gain access to the collection? What security measures did you observe at the repository? Was the finding aid sufficiently detailed, accurate, or helpful? Did you speak to an archivist? What else affected your experience of using the particular archival collection. Please be sure to note the repository and collection you consulted in your paper.
Wikipedia Assignment
This assignment will ask students to expand, strengthen, and write articles for Wikipedia on a variety of topics related to the course. The assignment will train students on how to write for the encyclopedia, identify relevant sources, and represent archival concepts on this information platform.

Course Themes in the News
For this assignment, your task is to draw a connection between course themes and the news/current events. Identify a story from the past year around which to build your paper. The story or issue should have issues related to archives and/or digital curation at its core, or relate closely to the concepts we discuss in class.

Your assignment is to write a short paper explaining the current event and its relationship to archives and digital curation. Go beyond just summarization of the article and apply the critical lens we’ve been developing in class this term. How did the article represent an archival or digital curation function? What would change about this article if the author were a student in this course?

Periodic Writing Responses
I will use ELMS to ask you to compose a series of written responses to the course readings and supplemental materials throughout the semester. These will be separate from and in addition to the discussion threads for each module.

Final Assignment: Position Paper or Final Exam
Choose one of the following assignments:

- Final exam. Take home exam, open book, and open notes.
- Position Paper (10 – 12 pages, double spaced). This assignment gives you an opportunity to analyze one legal and/or ethical problem that is similar to issues you are likely to confront at some point in your career. You will have to select a topic from a list. The purpose of this assignment is to research the archives and digital curation issues related to the case as thoroughly as you can (in the limited time available) then formulate your position on the topic. Present your position and make the best argument you can to support your position using factual information, guidelines, precedent, related cases, and the like to support your position. You will have to let the instructor know that you are opting to take this assignment by Week 6.

Submission and Citation
All assignments are to be submitted on ELMS on their respective due date. Use standard professional formatting (double spacing, 1” margins, Times New Roman, 12-point font) for all assignments. For citations, you can use APA or the Chicago Manual of Style (Notes and Bibliography). Please see me with any questions if you prefer a different style.

Students are expected to submit all class assignments in a timely manner. If you require an extension, please let me know so we can discuss alternative arrangements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Repository Website Analysis</td>
<td>Week 4 (Feb 18)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course Themes in the News</td>
<td>Week 7 (March 11)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Repository Site Visit</td>
<td>Week 9 (March 25)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wikipedia Assignment</td>
<td>Week 15 (May 6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Position Paper / Final Exam</td>
<td>Choose between submitting a position paper or taking the final exam. Inform the instructor of choice by Week 6 (March 4). Final Exam questions will be released Week 15.5 (May 13). Position papers and final exams due May 19th at 11:59 p.m.</td>
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**Class Participation**
This course is being offered online. However, discussion and interaction amongst students remains critical to the learning process and your growth as an information professional. As such, I want to establish some baseline expectations for your engagement on the ELMS discussion boards. **For each module, I expect you to comment at least once.** While not required, it is a good idea whenever possible to incorporate course readings in your comments. You should present your ideas about readings as well as respond to and engage with your fellow students’ posts. I will be monitoring and responding/engaging online as well, to keep conversations moving and on track.

I expect that the discussion threads remain places of respect, where debates about archival ideas do not become attacks and where everyone in the course remains committed to developing positive learning experiences for all course participants.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**
Beyond the assigned readings and class discussions, the following resources will help you navigate the field of archives and digital curation:

- 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* [https://www2.archivists.org/glossary](https://www2.archivists.org/glossary)
- Archives in the News Google Group: Aggregated list of domestic and international news stories related to archives and records [http://ter.ps/ghn](http://ter.ps/ghn)
- The Digital Curation Centre in the UK has extensive resources on digital curation and data management [http://www.dcc.ac.uk/resources](http://www.dcc.ac.uk/resources)

**Extra-Curricular Activities**
I encourage you to participate in extra-curricular activities to augment information presented in the class. Participation in extra-curricular events will help you grow as a professional. It will also help you become more actively informed about issues and trends in the field. Possible extra-curricular activities include:

- Active participation in various activities organized by the Student Archivists of Maryland (SAM). Upcoming events will be announced in class.
- Subscribing to discussion forums or participating in blogs in the field of archives and records management.
• Visiting local repositories and/or records management programs. Be sure to call and arrange visits in advance. SAM will likely be organizing tours and site visits throughout the academic year.

• Attending lectures and discussion on archives and records topics sponsored by the iSchool or other organizations on campus and beyond, such as professional organizations.

• Finding part-time archival or records management employment or volunteering at local organizations.

• 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.
## Course Schedule at a Glance

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Deadlines</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>January 28</td>
<td>Course Introduction, Welcome, Review of Syllabus</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Feb 4</td>
<td>History and Development of Archives</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Feb 11</td>
<td>Records and the Nature of Archives</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Feb 18</td>
<td>Archival Representation</td>
<td>Archives web presence analysis assignment</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Feb 25</td>
<td>Provenance and Original Order</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>March 4</td>
<td>Overview of Archival Functions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>March 11</td>
<td>Digital Curation, OAIS, and Trusted Digital Repositories</td>
<td>Course Themes in the News assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>March 18</td>
<td>SPRING BREAK</td>
<td>Enjoy your break!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>March 25</td>
<td>Curation and Management of Research Data</td>
<td>Repository site visit</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>April 1</td>
<td>Digital Surrogacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>April 8</td>
<td>Digital Archives and Social Justice</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>April 15</td>
<td>Archival Ethics</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>April 22</td>
<td>Community Archives and Post-custodialism</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>April 29</td>
<td>Contemporary Issues in the Profession</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>May 6</td>
<td>Archival Activism and Human Rights</td>
<td>Wikipedia assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>May 13</td>
<td>Course Wrap-up and Distribution of Final</td>
<td>Position papers and final exams due May 19th at 11:59 p.m.</td>
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## Course Outline

**Week 1. Course Introduction**

We will spend most of this week getting to know each other, sharing our expectations, and going over course logistics.

### Week 2. History and Development of Archives

Why do archives exist and why do we create and keep records? We shall have the opportunity to explore answers to this question at this session. In navigating the readings for the week, reflect on this question and consider coming up with your own response.


### Week 3. Records and the Nature of Archives

In the next 2 weeks, we will work through the definitions and discuss the applications of archival core concepts. We will also explore the appropriateness and applicability of traditional archival theory to contemporary problems and issues.


### Week 4. Provenance and Original Order

This week, we will continue to work through the definitions and discuss the applications of archival core concepts. We will also explore the appropriateness and applicability of traditional archival theory to contemporary problems and issues.

**Week 5. Archival Functions**

In week 2, we discussed the societal role of archives. Weeks 3 and 4 covered the key principles and values that animate archival work. This week we shall look into the internal workings of archival institutions by focusing on their critical functions. These are typically broken down into appraisal and selection, accession and acquisition, arrangement and description, reference and access, promotion and outreach, and preservation. We shall examine how these traditional repository functions reflect the core concepts we previously discussed.


**Week 6. Archival Representation**

This week’s readings focus on archival description, or the ways archival holding are represented. In archives, the finding aid forms a prominent role as both an access tool and collections management. Many hours of archival labor and expertise are devoted to the creation of this representational device. Various online access systems are also created either as the online version of, or as supplement to, the paper finding aid. These access tools define the archival collections and in profound ways define the users and uses of archives.

Week 7. Digital Curation, OAIS, and Trusted Digital Repositories
This week, we will take a closer look at digital curation and how it resonates with archival practice. We shall also examine the Open Archival Information System (also known as the OAIS Reference Model) and discuss how it extends traditional archival ideas in the digital age.


Week 8. Digital Surrogacy
Digitization for preservation and access has become a fundamental archival responsibility. This week we shall take a look closer look at how digital surrogates are changing how we manage heritage collections and are redefining access and use of archives.


Week 9. Sustainability, Disasters, Risk, and the Future of Archives
This course confronts the notion that archives and digital repositories do not exist in a vacuum. This week’s readings speak to the organizational realities and constraints that affect the sustainability of archival initiatives. We will also discuss how climate change impacts archival work and what this might mean in the future.

Paradise Lost? Pacific Island Archives Threatened by Climate Change


Week 10. Curation and Management of Research Data
Many claim that data curation is a new and added responsibility that has the capacity to transform archival practice. Some, however, argue that managing materials that resulted from research data gathering has always been within the traditional archival purview. This week, we shall examine the roles and contributions of archivists in research data curation.


Week 11. (November 6) Digital Archives and Social Justice
Archivists shape our understanding of the past through the decisions we make around what to preserve and what to overlook. This week we will introduce the ideas of archival justice and examine a few case studies of projects using digital tools to collect and preserve records related to human rights and social justice.


Week 12. Archival Ethics
Archives and records professionals are engaged in debates over their role in creating and enabling transparency, the extent to which they exercise power over creation, destruction and access to records, and the degree to which they have authority over record making and record keeping processes. Professional ethics statements provide principles and guidance, but do not offer a formula for finding an acceptable balance between privacy and access, security and
disclosure, author and/or donor restrictions and researchers’ right to know. In this session, we will discuss and debate the issues raised in several controversial cases.


Also browse various Codes of Ethics relevant to the field:

- *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*

**Week 13. Community Archives and Post-custodialism**

Technological changes and shifts in societal and professional values have inspired deep reflections on traditional archival practice. In the past 30 years, we have witnessed new recordkeeping and preservation arrangements as well as the redefinition of what it means to serve to underrepresented communities. There are also efforts to “democratize” archival work. This we week, we shall explore some of these important shifts and movements in the field.


**Week 14. Activism, Human Rights, and Social Justice**

Archives and records professionals are engaged in debates over their role in creating and enabling transparency, the extent to which they exercise power over creation, destruction and
access to records, and the degree to which they have authority over record making and record keeping processes. This week, we will debate these issues.


**Week 15. Contemporary Issues in the Profession**

This will be our final full week of the semester, and will discuss the current state of the field and issues being discussed in the archival profession, possible career opportunities, and future course ideas.

- Additional readings may be announced as this week draws near

**Final Assignment Due May 19, 11:59pm in ELMS**