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 environment. 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 to 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.

Dr. Eric Hung
he / him / his
ehung124@umd.edu

Online Class:
Asynchronous Meetings

Office Hours
ELMS Chat Office Hours: Mondays, 2:00-3:00pm, or by appointment. If you want to meet in-person, I am generally on campus on Tuesdays.

Syllabus Policy
This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.

Course Communication
- Time-sensitive announcements will be posted on ELMS and e-mailed to the class via ELMS.
- To contact me, please email via ELMS. I will reply to e-mails usually within 24 hours on weekdays and within 48 hours on weekends. If I have not replied within that time frame, please send me a reminder.
**Learning Outcomes**

Students who successfully complete this course will be:

1. Conversant with the basic concepts, practices, and methods used to create, store, organize, and preserve records and archives. This skill will be demonstrated through the ability to summarize, critique and apply professional literature on discussion boards and writing assignments.

2. Identify organizational, legal, technological, and cultural factors that have an impact on records and archives. This skill will be demonstrated through the “Course Themes in the News” project.

3. Analyze how organizations and individuals use records and archives for research, ongoing operations, accountability, and organizational memory. This skill will be demonstrated through the “Archival Repository Website Analysis” and “Archival Repository Visit” projects, various discussion boards, and the PriceFest project.

4. Use your knowledge base about legal, policy and ethical issues in archives to analyze problems presented in case studies and examples. This skill will be demonstrated through various discussion boards and the final paper.

5. Develop and defend your position on a contemporary archival issue or problem. Be sure that you understand how archival and recordkeeping practices differ from other information management practices. This skill will be demonstrated through various discussion boards and the final paper.

6. Explain an archives or records management concept to an interested third party.

**Course Materials**

All other required reading and viewing materials are available through ELMS.

**Campus Policies**

It is our shared responsibility to know and abide by the University of Maryland’s policies that relate to all courses, which include topics like:

- Academic integrity (e.g., cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic honesty, plagiarism)
- Student and instructor conduct
- Accessibility and accommodations
- Grades and appeals

Please visit [https://gradschool.umd.edu/course-related-policies](https://gradschool.umd.edu/course-related-policies) for the Graduate School’s full list of campus-wide policies and follow up with me if you have questions.

**Citations and Formatting**

Please use APA or Chicago-style for citations. Papers should be double-spaced with 1-inch margins. You do not need to purchase a special font, but please use a font and font size that is known for accessibility, such as Arial, Helvetica, Lucida Sans, Tahoma, and Verdana. This syllabus uses Tahoma ([https://www.boia.org/blog/best-fonts-to-use-for-website-accessibility](https://www.boia.org/blog/best-fonts-to-use-for-website-accessibility)).
Class Structure and Professionalism

Students are expected to contribute productively to weekly discussions, debates, and exercises. Your ability to contribute to these activities depends on your advance preparation. This includes completing all reading assignments, watching lecture videos, and (if required) completing on-line explorations and exercises. Although this is an online course that meets asynchronously, I try to mimic the interactions that are possible in an in-person course. Each module is one week, and it starts on Monday and concludes at 11:59pm on Sunday. The exception is the last module, which will be extended until the last day of class on Tuesday, May 12. Most of the assigned readings will be posted at the beginning of the semester. I will do my best to post the weekly overview and my lectures one week ahead of time. Videos of guest speakers are posted when available. Discussion boards will open on Friday afternoon before the start of the week. I will let you know when they are available.

This is a large class. To make the discussion board manageable, the class will be divided into two halves. For each week, one half is responsible for making an initial post of at least 75 words by the end of the day of Thursday, and the other half is responsible for writing two responses of at least 50 words each between Thursday and Sunday. Towards the end of each week, every student will write a two-sentence takeaway for the week. I generally expect you to address the question(s) I ask on each discussion board. However, you are also welcome to initiate discussions on other topics that are brought up by the week’s lectures/readings, and to bring related material to our attention (such as news items, blogs, events).

Community Standards

As a graduate course, the materials we discuss will be challenging. Many also involve deeply held beliefs, moral-ethical issues, and current hot-button issues. To ensure that every student can learn, the class environment needs to be welcoming and harassment-free. Your classmates may have different perspectives on issues than you, but they still deserve your respect. For this course, I am adapting tenets from the “Norms for Courageous Conversations” developed by Diversity Best Practices (a division of Working Mother Media):

- Stay engaged and listen for understanding
- Take risks and speak your truth
- Become comfortable with intellectual discomfort
- Expect and accept non-closure

I will discuss these tenets in greater detail in the first lecture.

Assignments and Grades

Your final grade will be based on the following components:

- Archival Repository Website Analysis (short paper) Feb. 9 10%
- Archival Repository Visit (short paper) Mar. 1 10%
- Collection Advocacy Project (community engagement plan) Mar. 29 15%
- Course Themes in the News (presentation) Varies 15%
- PriceFest Class Project (digital curation project) Apr. 19 10%
- Final Position Paper (paper, blog, class discussion) May 3 25%
- Discussion Board Participation Weekly 15%

A+ 97+%
A  94-96.9%
A- 90-93.9%
B+ 87-89.9%
B  84-86.9%
B- 80-83.9%
C+ 77-79.9%
C  74-76.9%
C- 70-73.9%
D+ 67-69.9%
D  64-66.9%
D- 60-63.9%
F  <59.9%
A note about class participation grades: To encourage to take risks and to explore difficult questions, discussion boards will be graded on a complete/incomplete basis. If you have made a substantial effort to answer the question or to introduce a related topic, you will get credit.

**Missed Deadlines**

If you will not be able to meet an assignment deadline, contact the instructor before the due date to explain why you will need to submit the assignment late and what your plan is; these will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Unless prior permission has been granted, **no late work is accepted without a documented medical or family emergency.** This policy is in place to ensure all students have their work returned to them in a timely fashion.

**Accommodations**

Students with disabilities should inform me of their needs at the beginning of the semester. Please also contact the Disability Support Services (301-314-7682 or http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS/). DSS will make arrangements with you and me to determine and implement appropriate academic accommodations. Inclusion is one of the iSchool’s core values, and I have attempted to make all materials and assignments accessible to people with varying abilities. However, if there is something else I can do to make the class more accessible please schedule a time to come talk to me. This will benefit not only yourself but also my future students.

**Help is Available**

You are expected to take personal responsibility for your own learning. This includes acknowledging when your performance does not match your goals and doing something about it. Everyone can benefit from some expert guidance on time management, reading, and writing, so I encourage you to consider visiting http://ter.ps/learn to schedule an appointment with an academic coach. Sharpen your communication skills (and improve your grade) by visiting http://ter.ps/writing and schedule an appointment with the campus Writing Center. Finally, if you just need someone to talk to, visit http://www.counseling.umd.edu. These services are a part of your tuition, so please use them. **Everyone needs help...** all you have to do is ask for it.

**Names/Pronouns and Self Identifications**

The University of Maryland recognizes the importance of a diverse student body, and we are committed to fostering equitable classroom environments. In your introduction video, I invite you to tell us how you want to be referred to both in terms of your name and your pronouns (he/him, she/her, they/them, etc.). The pronouns someone indicates are not necessarily indicative of their gender identity. Visit https://trans.umd.edu to learn more. Additionally, it is your choice to disclose or not to disclose how you identify in terms of your gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, and dis/ability, among all aspects of your identity. I will do my best to address and refer to all students according to their wishes, and I will do my best to not presume an identity. I ask you to do the same for all of your fellow Terps.
Additional Student Resources

For more information on UMD’s Student Services, see http://www.studentaffairs.umd.edu/student-life. If you or someone you know feels unsafe, the university has resources (see list below). Read more about hate-based crimes here: https://ocrsm.umd.edu/files/Hate_Bias_FAQs_final.pdf

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Course Schedule

Unit One: The History and Purpose of Archives in North America

What led historical societies and state archives to be formed in North America? What needs were these institutions designed to fulfill? Who did/do they serve and who did/do they not serve? How did “traditional” archival practices develop? How have these types of organizations changed? What hasn’t changed? What legacies have made making meaningful change difficult? What new types of archival institutions have developed in recent decades? Will technological innovations lead to an evolution or a revolution in archival institutions? These are some of the key questions we will try to answer in this opening unit.

Week 1: What are (not) archives? Who & what functions do they (not) serve? (Jan. 27 – Feb. 2)

Start: Week 1 Overview

Videos: Week 1 Lecture


Assign: Archival Repository Website Analysis (due February 9)
Submit: Five-minute introductory video with your answer to the opening exercise
Discussion board #1 (Group A: initial post by Thursday and takeaway by Sunday; Group B: two responses and take-away between Thursday and Sunday)

Week 2: The History of Archives in North America (February 3 – February 9)
Videos: Week 2 Lecture
Submit: Discussion board #2 (Group B: initial post by Thursday and takeaway by Sunday; Group A: two responses and take-away between Thursday and Sunday)
Archival Repository Website Analysis (due February 9)

Week 3: Provenance, Original Order, and Their Discontents (February 10 – February 16)
Videos: Week 3 Lecture
Assign: Archival Repository Visit Report (due March 1)
Submit: Discussion board #3 (Group A: initial post by Thursday and takeaway by Sunday; Group B: two responses and take-away between Thursday and Sunday)
Peer review ”Repository Website Analyses” by two classmates
Unit Two: Traditional Archival Functions

In this unit, we explore the tasks that archivists traditionally do. Specifically, they determine what materials enter the archives (appraisal), process the new collections so that researchers can learn about them (arrangement/description/representation), provide materials to researchers and answer their questions (reference/access), and keep materials from deteriorating as much as possible (preservation). You will be introduced to these processes in the next three weeks. Archivists have always done some community engagement. In recent decades, however, responsibilities in this area have greatly increased. We will explore them in unit four.

Week 4: Introduction to Archival Functions, Archival Appraisal (February 17 – February 23)

Videos: Week 4 Lecture


Assign: Course Themes in the News Group Project (presentations from Weeks 9 to 14)

Submit: Discussion board #4 (Group B: initial post by Thursday and takeaway by Sunday; Group A: two responses and take-away between Thursday and Sunday)

Week 5: Archival Representation (February 24 – March 1)

Videos: Week 5 Lecture


Submit: Archival Repository Visit Report (due March 1)
Discussion board #5 (Group A: initial post by Thursday and takeaway by Sunday; Group B: two responses and take-away between Thursday and Sunday)

Week 6: Archival Preservation and Sustainability (March 2 – March 8)

Videos:  Week 6 Lecture


Assign:  Collection Advocacy Project (due March 29)

Submit:  Discussion board #6 (Group B: initial post by Thursday and takeaway by Sunday; Group A: two responses and take-away between Thursday and Sunday)

Unit Three: Digital Curation

In this unit, we turn to the digital. We begin by asking such basic questions as: What difficult is digital curation and digital preservation? How are key models of digital curation? And what do we need to preserve when we put a digital object in an archive? Afterwards, we will explore two key issues in digital curation: digitization (the creation of digital surrogates of physical objects) and data curation (how to preserve data and make them available for future researchers).

Week 7: What is Digital Curation? OAIS & Traditional Archival Practice (March 9-15)

Videos:  Week 7 Lecture


Assign: PriceFest Class Project (due April 19)
Submit: Discussion board #7 (Group A: initial post by Thursday and takeaway by Sunday; Group B: two responses and take-away between Thursday and Sunday)

Week 8: Spring Break (March 16 – March 22)

Week 9: The Promises and Dangers of Digitization (March 23 – March 29)
Videos: Week 9 Lecture
Two Course Themes in the News Group Presentations
Submit: Collection Advocacy Project (due March 29)
Discussion board #9 (Group B: initial post by Thursday and takeaway by Sunday; Group A: two responses and take-away between Thursday and Sunday)

Week 10: Curation and Management of Research Data (March 30 – April 5)
Videos: Week 10 Lecture
Two Course Themes in the News Group Presentations
Daniel Noonan and Tamar Chute (2014). Data Curation and the University Archives. *American Archivist, 77*(1), 201-216 (pp. 217-240 are optional).
Submit: Discussion board #10 (Group A: initial post by Thursday and takeaway by Sunday; Group B: two responses and take-away between Thursday and Sunday)
Unit Four: Archives & Digital Curation in the Age of Postmodernism & Beyond

“Traditional” archival theories were developed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and are closely related to the rise of historical positivism and the notion that history is a science based on source study. In the 1970s and 1980s, scholars in the humanities and social sciences—particularly women, indigenous people, people of color, queer people, and people who are disabled—became raising serious questions about grand narratives, supposedlly universal paradigms and questions, the focus on rationality, and erasures in historical writing. The situations in Shakespeare’s plays aren’t relevant to everyone, and we have to acknowledge that there are a wide range of answers to questions of ethics and meaning. The umbrella term for this new skepticism is postmodernism. Archives—particularly large institutions—have had a difficult time adjusting to postmodernism. In this unit, we will explore two closely related responses to postmodernism. First, scholars in the humanities (and, to a lesser extent, social sciences) began to develop new understandings of the archive that can be quite foreign to the archives discipline. Second, new types of archival institutions—indigenous archives, community archives, social justice archives, participatory archives—started to pop up, and they frequently follow policies that are quite different from traditional practices.

Week 11: Theories of the Archive in the Postmodern Humanities (April 6 – April 12)

Videos: Week 11 Lecture


Assign: Final paper (due May 3)

Submit: Discussion board #11 (Group B: initial post by Thursday and takeaway by Sunday; Group A: two responses and take-away between Thursday and Sunday)

Week 12: Indigenous Archives (April 13 – April 19)

Videos: Week 12 Lecture (with guest: Kendra Greendeer)


Submit: Materials for PriceFest Class Project

Discussion board #12 (Group A: initial post by Thursday and takeaway by Sunday; Group B: two responses and take-away between Thursday and Sunday)

**Week 13: Social Justice Archives (April 20 – April 26)**

**Videos:** Week 13 Lecture

Two Course Themes in the News Group Presentations


Submit: Discussion board #13 (Group B: initial post by Thursday and takeaway by Sunday; Group A: two responses and take-away between Thursday and Sunday)

**Week 14: Community and Participatory Archives (April 27 – May 3)**

**Videos:** Week 14 Lecture

Two Course Themes in the News Group Presentations


Submit: Final Paper (paper, blog, presentation)
Discussion board #14 (Group A: initial post by Thursday and takeaway by Sunday; Group B: two responses and take-away between Thursday and Sunday)

**Week 15/16: Recent Developments in Archives and Critical Theory (May 4 – May 12)**

**Videos:** Week 15 Lecture

**Readings:**

Submit: Discussion board #15 (Everyone submits a post with five takeaways for the course, by Friday, and write two-to-three responses by the last day of class)

Short Peer Review Essay on a topic you did not write about