UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
COLLEGE OF INFORMATION STUDIES

INST 782
SECTION 0101

ARRANGEMENT, DESCRIPTION AND ACCESS FOR ARCHIVES

Course Syllabus
Fall 2018

Instructor: Kenneth W. Heger, Ph.D.  Class Time: Wednesday, 6 – 8:45 pm
Email: kheger@umd.edu  Classroom: Hornbake HBK 1112

Please put INST 782 in the subject line of course-related e-mail messages
I will respond to student e-mails as soon as I can.

Office Hours: By Appointment

Course Overview and Objectives

• This course introduces the arrangement and description of archival materials, and current techniques to access to those materials. Its objectives are:
• To familiarize students with collections of archival documents and their interrelationships
• To examine the principles underlying the arrangement of archival documents
• To develop the intellectual framework for the systematic identification and critical evaluation of an archival fond and its parts
• To understand the principles and methods for describing archival materials according to standards adopted by the archival community
• To understand the importance of empirical research in identifying user needs and evaluating the extent to which archival description meets those needs
• To demonstrate a working knowledge of key concepts by producing inventories for records
• To examine and analyze systems and techniques to provide access to information about records and copies of records
Readings
Readings are listed for each week; their location (e.g. SAA Website) is indicated in the syllabus. Access to course documents is through your ELMS account. Additional readings and other materials may be distributed during the semester. Students are expected participate in class discussions.

There are no required textbooks for the course; however, it is recommended that you have a copy of Describing Archives: A Content Standard (Chicago: SAA, 2007), the standard archival description in the U.S. You can purchase this book directly from SAA (www.archivist.org) or from the University bookstore.


Course Requirements

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ASSIGNMENTS

1. DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION EXERCISE (20%) Due October 10
In this exercise you will apply basic concepts of arrangement and description that you learn in class. You will be working with digitized records available through the National Archives and Records Administration’s (NARA) on-line catalogue. You can access the on-line catalogue through NARA’s website through the “Research Our Records” link on the home page at www.archives.gov. Click on the search our records link and type the National Archives ID number (NAID) in the search box. You can access the digital copies by selecting the person’s name and the clicking on the “digital copies” tab, or by clicking on the icon to the left of the person’s name [if you hover your cursor over the icon it will read “digital copies available.”]

Exercise – Access NAID Number 1098000. Provide a complete series title for the records. Write an arrangement statement, i.e. how are the records arranged. Write a description of the records, including characterizing the kinds of documents included in the files, the document formats, and the major subjects about to which the documents pertain. After this description work, make a list of customer groups who might be interested in the records with a brief statement why that might be the case. This assignment should be no longer than three pages. Note: Restrict your work to the

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documents on-line through this NAID. Do not use the NARA catalogue to look for additional archival information. The assignment is merely to write a series title.

2. PERSONAL PAPERS ASSIGNMENT (30%) Due October 31

Identifying records series and providing succinct scope and content notes (description) are key skills in being a successful archivist. In this exercise you will examine your personal papers, the records you create in your life such as correspondence, photographs, school records, etc. This work will help you understand how to identify series and write series titles. In the assignment you will assume that all of your personal records are of enduring value; this is not an appraisal exercise. Do the following:

- Write a title for each series
- Indicate the documents’ dates
- Provide an approximate volume [quantity] for the records
- A short arrangement statement
- Topics/Subjects the records cover
- Records types/formats
- Any gaps in the material
- References to any unique documents
- Any potential access problems or restrictions

In addition to the list of series, include a report of 3-5 pages on how you determined the scope of your records, how you determined the series, any difficulties or problems you encountered, and your thoughts on the process of arrangement.

3. EVALUATION OF AN ON-LINE VIRTUAL ACCESS SYSTEM (30%)

Due November 28

Users of archives expect each institution to have a websites to help them understand and access records. Understanding how to utilize this resource is an increasingly important skill in archival science. In this assignment you will examine an existing website and evaluate it as an access system. Choose one of the institutions’ websites to see how they have done it. Consult additional literature as required, but don’t contact the institution(s).

Your report should address at least the following issues:

- Structure and components of the on-line access, i.e. how do you navigate the site?
- Ways in which the descriptions can be searched (and ways in which they can’t)
- Assistance for users in searching archival material and understanding the descriptions they encounter, including e-mail and chat features
- Levels of description represented, and how the relationships among levels are represented

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• Availability of digital surrogates
• Any difficulties you encountered in finding any of this information

University of Texas Libraries (www.lib.utexas.edu)

Maryland State Archives (www.msa.md.gov)

National Archives and Records Administration (www.archives.gov)

New York Public Library (www.nypl.org)

Organize your report in a logical manner, using headings to be sure that you have addressed all the issues. Since it is unlikely that you will look at every area on the sites, explain how you selected the samples you looked at, and how you systematically examined the sample. Where necessary, cite the access tools and/or finding aids you looked at as evidence to support the statements you are making in the report.

4. CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION (20%)
This final part of your grade will recognize regular class attendance and your contributions to class discussions and your work on teams during in-class exercises.

REQUIREMENTS OF WRITTEN WORK

Plan to submit all written assignments in hard copy, unless you make prior arrangements with the instructor

Quality of Writing
Excellent written communication skills are essential to the provision of information in professional contexts. Written work will be graded on the quality of writing as well as on its content and evidence of critical analysis. The mark for work that is not well written, clearly organized, and grammatically correct will be reduced accordingly. Please write in active voice.

Formatting
• Double space, in Times New Roman 12 point type, with 1 inch margins all around
• Include a list of sources consulted
• Cite sources in conformity with the most recent edition of Turabian, using either nots-bibliography style or in-text citations-references list style. See examples at www.press.uchicago.edu/book/turabian-citationguide.html.
- **Number the pages** and staple them together. Please do not submit your assignments in a binder or folder.
- Limit headers and footers to page numbers only. Please do not include headers or footers to include your name or the title of the assignment.

**Grade**
A point-based letter grade will be assigned for each assignment. The course will be graded in accordance with University and i-school guidelines: A=Excellent (90-100); B=Satisfactory (80-89); C=Barely Adequate (70-79); D/F=Failure (<70).

**Classroom Environment**
The classroom environment should be professional and respectful. Students are to arrive punctually; please do not leave early. If you know in advance you must leave early please let the instructor know before class begins. Please turn off or mute all phones and other communication devices during each class session. If you use your laptop in the classroom, limit the usage of the computer to course-related reasons, such as taking notes. Please refrain from eating during class.

**Academic Integrity**
The University of Maryland, College Park has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity, administered by the Student Honor Council. The Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all students. For more information on the Code, see [www.shc.umd.edu](http://www.shc.umd.edu). Plagiarism is of particular concern in a networked digital environment. Be certain to cite your sources and use quotation marks where appropriate.

**Extensions**
Extensions beyond an assignment’s due date will only be granted if the instructor is satisfied that you have a legitimate reason for being late. Late submissions of written assignments will carry a penalty, unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor. Unexcused delays in submission of an assignment will result in a reduction of the grade by one category for each day the paper is late; for example, a paper that would have received a B+ if submitted on time will receive a B if submitted a day late.

**Students with Disabilities**
Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must inform the instructor of their needs and provide written documentation about the appropriate academic accommodation from Disability Support Services ([www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS](http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS)) at the beginning of the semester.
WEEKLY TOPICS

Week 1 – August 29. INTRODUCTION TO COURSE

Week 2 – September 5. ARRANGEMENT AND DESCRIPTION IN CONTEXT

Readings:

- Deodato, Joseph. “Becoming Responsible Mediators: The Application of Postmodern Perspectives to Archival Arrangement and Description.” *Progressive Librarian* 27 (Summer 2006): 52-63. (on-line through UMD libraries Research Port)

Week 3 – September 12. ARCHIVAL ARRANGEMENT.

Readings:

- Meehan, Jennifer. “Making the Leap from Parts to Whole: Evidence and Inference in Archival Arrangement and Description,” *American Archivist* 72:1 (Spring/Summer 2009) 72-90 (SAA Website)
**Week 4 – September 19.** ISSUES IN ARCHIVAL ARRANGEMENT.

Readings:

- Currall, James; Michael Moss; and Susan Stuart. “What is a Collection?” *Archivaria* 58 (Fall 2004): 131-146. (on-line e-Archivaria site)

**Week 5 – September 26.** STUDYING THE USERS OF ARCHIVES.

Readings:

Week 6 – October 3. ARCHIVAL DESCRIPTION. INTRODUCTION & GENERAL THEORY.
Readings:


Week 7 – October 10. ARCHIVAL DESCRIPTION AND STANDARDS FOR ARCHIVAL DESCRIPTIONS. GENERAL THEORY CONTINUED, DACS. Document Description Exercise Due.
Readings:

Week 8 – October 17. HIGHLIGHTS OF ENCODED ARCHIVAL DESCRIPTION (EAD)

Readings:
- Fox, Michael “Implementing Encoded Archival Description: An Overview of Administration and Technical Considerations.” *American Archivist* 60 (Summer 1997): 330-343. (SAA website)
- Riley, Jenn; Shepard, Keley “A Brave New World: Archivists and Shareable Metadata” *American Archivist* 72 (Spring/Summer 2009): 91-112. (SAA Website)
- EAD Help Pages: [www.archivists.org/saagroups/ead/](http://www.archivists.org/saagroups/ead/) (especially the section on EAD implementors [www.archivists.org/saagroups/ead/implementors.html](http://www.archivists.org/saagroups/ead/implementors.html)) to see what different people are doing

Week 9 – October 24. ARCHIVISTS, “ARCHIVAL INTELLIGENCE,” AND RESEARCHER SERVICES.
“Archival Intelligence” How archivists help patrons find information and education them about archives

Readings:
- Barbara, Kate. “Linked Data in the Archives.” *Archival Outlook* (July/August 2016): 6 & 22. (PDF file as course document)
- Deodato, Joseph. “Becoming Responsible Mediators: The Application of Postmodern Perspectives to Archival Arrangement and Description.” *Progressive Librarian* 27 (Summer 2006): 52-63. (on-line through UMD libraries Research Port)
- Dong, Lorrie. “Exploring the Reaches of Privacy and Technology: Central State Hospital Digital Archives Project.” *Archival Outlook* (July/August 2016): 10. (PDF file as course document)
• Ruth, Janice E. “Educating the Reference Archivist” *American Archivist* 51 (Summer 1988): 266-276. (SAA website)

**Week 10** – October 31. TRADITIONAL ACCESS TECHNIQUES AND SYSTEMS
Inventories, guides, file title lists. **Personal Papers Exercise Due.**

Readings:

• Holmes, Oliver W. “Archival Arrangement: Five Different Operations at Five Different Levels.” *American Archivist* 27:1 (1964) 41-61. (PDF on Course ELMS Site)
• Roe, Kathleen D., *Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts*, Chapter on “Developing Access Tools,” pp 86-97 (PDF on Course ELMS Site)
• National Archives Staff Information Paper 14: “The Preparation of Inventories” (Course document on ELMS)

**Week 11** – November 7. WEBSITES AS ACCESS PORTALS
Static Access Tool: Making information about holdings available on-line, including FAQs, topic pages, general information about holdings, ability to order finding aids and records on-line (“fixed fee” files)
Dynamic Access Tool: E-mail, chat, on-line help, webinars

Readings:

• Prom, Christopher J. “User Interactions with Electronic Finding Aids in a Controlled Setting.” American Archivist 67 (Fall/Winter 2004): 234-268. (SAA Website)

**Week 12 – November 14. CROWD SOURCING AND TRANSCRIPTION.**

**Readings:**

• **Benoit III, Edward.** “#MPLP Part 2: Replacing Item-Level Metadata with User-Generated Social Tags.” American Archivist 81:1 (Spring/Summer 2018): 38-64. **This article is assigned reading; we will discuss it in class.**

• Evans, Max J. “Authority Control: An Alternative to the Record Group Concept,” American Archivist 49 (Summer 1986): 249-261. (SAA website)
• Everts, Bart. “Archives Reenergized: Using a Milestone Anniversary to Reinvigorate Interest in Your Collection.” Archival Outlook (July/August 2015): 8 & 28. (PDF file as course document)
• Hager, Joshua D. “To Like or Not to Like: Understanding and Maximizing the Utility of Archival Outreach on Facebook.” American Archivist 78: 1 (Spring/Summer 2015): 18-37. (PDF file as course document)
• “The Rise of Crowdsourcing” www.wired.com/wired/archives
• Jeff Howe “Crowdsourcing: Why the Power of the Crowd is Driving the Future of Business” www.crowdsourcing.com

**Week 13** – November 21. NO CLASS. THANKSGIVING BREAK

**Week 14** – November 28. DIGITIZATION AS PART OF YOUR ACCESS SYSTEM
General discussion of theory and practice of digitization of legacy holdings. Key points: Preservation; Prep Work; Metadata; Effect on Legacy Description; Crowd Sourcing Opportunities. **On-Line Access System Exercise Due.**

Readings:

• Oliver, Gillian; Chawner, Brenda; Liu, Hai Ping “Implementing Digital Archives: Issues of Trust” *Archival Science* (2011) 11: 311-327. (springerlink website)
• Poole, Alex H. “Archival Divides and Foreign Countries? Historians, Archivists, Information-Seeking, and Technology: Retrospective and Prospect.” *The American Archivist* 78: 2 (Fall/Winter 2015): 375-433. (PDF file as course document)
• Prom, Christopher J. “Using Web Analytics to Improve Online Access to Archival Resources” *American Archivist* 74 (Spring/Summer 2011): 158-184. (SAA Website)

**Week 15 – December 5. DIGITIZATION AS PART OF YOUR ACCESS SYSTEM.**

• Class will meet in Hornbake 4110
• The entire class will be hands-on, introducing you to digitization techniques and equipment.
• **Note:** You may be working with original materials; therefore, you may not have food or drink in 4110 during the class