OVERVIEW

Appraisal is considered to be the archivist’s “first responsibility.” The responsibility is “first” because appraisal comes first in the sequence of archival functions and thus influences all subsequent archival activities, and it is “first” in importance because appraisal determines what tiny sliver of the total human documentary production will actually become “archives” and thus part of society’s history and collective memory. The archivist is thereby actively shaping the future’s history of our own times.

The topic of appraisal remains one of considerable controversy in archives. The archival literature includes debates over the definitions and indicators of long-term value, the purpose of appraisal, who intervenes in appraisal decisions, when in the information life cycle do they intervene, and which methods work for which types of records and which types of organizations. The literature is replete with tensions between the theory and practice of appraisal and between questions of universalism versus specificity (by type of record, media, type of organization, time period, country, etc.).

One of the problems with the literature on appraisal is that there is a very weak research base and few methods for evaluating the feasibility or effectiveness of different appraisal methodologies. As a consequence, in this course, we place considerable emphasis on the outcomes of different theories and methods of appraisal and on implementation of appraisal recommendations and decisions. We will also look at appraisal and selection as particular types of information problems, namely: How do archivists make decisions about what to keep in an environment of great uncertainty about supply (what else is out there) and demand (especially future demand)? Finally, prevailing appraisal models were developed with organizational records and institutional practices of collecting in mind. Thus, we also place some emphasis on approaches that cater to community, personal, and literary archives.

The weekly sessions and readings of this course fall under the following four themes:

• Appraisal theories and ideas
• Institutional appraisal strategies
• Non-institutional appraisal
• Ethics and social justice

The class format typically is lecture for the first half of the class, followed by class discussions of readings or case studies.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

• Understand the methodologies and tools that archivists apply to develop archival collections and select records for inclusion in archives.
• Become familiar with appraisal and selection of archives in different organizational, temporal, and technological environments.
• Develop skills in research, organizational analysis, and presentation of appraisal recommendations.
• Learn how to document and implement appraisal decisions.
• Understand practical, legal, and ethical issues associated with appraisal and acquisition of archival materials.
COURSE POLICIES

Citation and Formatting. Use standard professional formatting (double spacing, 1” margins, Times New Roman, 12-point font) for all assignments. For citations, use the Chicago Manual of Style Notes and Bibliography system: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html

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 the instructor in advance by email (punzalan@umd.edu) so that we can make appropriate alternative arrangements.

Classroom Technology Etiquette. You are encouraged to bring laptop, notebook, or tablet computers to class and to use them actively as learning tools. You should:
... Use laptops for taking notes, conducting research required for activities, and other specific classroom tasks as assigned by the instructor. During class, you should strongly resist the temptation to check e-mail, chat, IM, play games, or perform other off-task activities.
... Engage in class activity as actively as you can. The computer should not become a barrier to interaction and engagement, but instead should help facilitate the exchange of ideas and engagement in classroom contact. If you know you are not good at multi-tasking and your electronic devices become a distraction rather than an aide, focus on the opportunity to listen – think – talk without mediation.
... Tweet, if you think any 280 characters are worth sharing with your followers or the world in general and you can protect the privacy and anonymity of fellow class members.
... Show sensitivity to others. You should not display screen images and multimedia content that might be distracting or offensive to other members of the class, including wallpapers, screen savers, or random browsed content.

Textbook & Course Materials. There will be no assigned textbook for this course. All readings are available for download on Canvas.

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

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 violations of the 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.

For further clarification or information on the Code of Academic Integrity: http://www.shc.umd.edu/SHC/Default.aspx
**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 accommodations needed. Students are responsible for presenting this letter to their instructors.

**Emergency Preparedness.** For complete information, please visit: http://www.umd.edu/emergencypreparedness/.

**Course and Teaching Evaluation.** 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 being 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

**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 so we can explore ways to ensure that you are meeting the expectations of the course. Grade distribution shall be as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>% grade</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance &amp; class participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Every session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection development policy analysis (group, reported in class)</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2/26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appraisal exercise (individual, worksheet)</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>3/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case study analysis (individual, written analysis)</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>4/9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BitCurator exercise (group, reported in class)</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>4/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web archiving project (group, written reflection)</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>5/14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each assignment will have a corresponding written instructions. These will be available for download at the course site.
## COURSE CALENDAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wk</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class Theme</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1/29</td>
<td>Course introduction and overview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2/5</td>
<td>Records, archives, and appraisal: overview of concepts</td>
<td>Collection development policy exercise assigned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2/12</td>
<td>“Traditional Appraisal” and Its Critics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2/19</td>
<td>Appraisal mandates and policies / Donor relations</td>
<td>Appraisal exercise assigned</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2/26</td>
<td>Functional analysis and macro-appraisal</td>
<td>Collection development policy exercise presented in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3/5</td>
<td>Documentation strategies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>3/12</td>
<td>Sampling, the “Black Box” approach, and the Minnesota method</td>
<td>Appraisal exercise due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>3/19</td>
<td>No class – spring break</td>
<td>Case study analysis assigned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>3/26</td>
<td>Justifying appraisal decisions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>4/2</td>
<td>Appraisal and acquisition of digital archives</td>
<td>BitCurator exercise assigned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>4/9</td>
<td>Web Archiving</td>
<td>Case study analysis due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>4/16</td>
<td>Literary manuscripts and personal papers</td>
<td>Web archiving assignment assigned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>4/23</td>
<td>Community archives and democratizing appraisal decisions</td>
<td>BitCurator exercise presented in class</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>4/30</td>
<td>Ethics and Social justice</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>5/7</td>
<td>Maintenance, repair, and upkeep / Reappraisal and deaccessioning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>5/14</td>
<td>Semester summary and wrap up</td>
<td>Web archiving assignment due</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Week 1: Course introduction and overview (1/29). This session will introduce students to the course: format, requirements, expectations, topics.

Week 2: Records, archives, and appraisal: overview of concepts (2/5). This session will introduce to key concepts and current issues in appraisal. The readings introduce key intellectual developments, methods, and debates that we discuss throughout the term. The instructor will provide an overview of archival appraisal and discuss why, in spite of cheap storage and a shift from saving space as the primary motivating factor for appraisal, there are many reasons why appraisal remains a core archival function.

- Terry Cook, “‘We Are What We Keep; We Keep What We Are’: Archival Appraisal Past, Present and Future,” Journal of the Society of Archivists 32(2) (2011): 173-189.

Week 3: “Traditional Appraisal” and Its Critics (2/12). This session will cover the development and evolution of principles and guidelines for appraisal. We will discuss T.R. Schellenberg’s Guidelines for Appraisal, which have influenced appraisal practice in the United States (and elsewhere) for the past 60 years.


Week 4: Appraisal mandates, policies, and donor relations (2/19). Archivists utilize various expertise, policies, and resources as basis in order to develop and grow their collections. In this session, we discuss elements of collection development policy and practice, including: collection analysis and evaluation and records retention and disposition scheduling. We will also pay attention to the various aspects of developing and maintaining relationships with donors.

- National Archives and Records Administration, Inquiry into the Disposal of Records of the Naval Research Laboratory Stored at the Washington National Records Center, April 24, 1998.
- Relevant to the reading above, skim: National Archives and Records Administration, Federal Records Management: Frequently Asked Questions about Records Scheduling and Disposition

Week 5: Functional analysis and macro-appraisal (2/26). Macro-appraisal and institutional functional analysis are two methods developed to help archivists cope with the quantity and
interconnectedness of records. We'll discuss how each is carried out and whether they have historically been effective.


**Week 6: Documentation strategies (3/5).** Documentation strategies were developed in the 1980s towards better collection development and appraisal planning, and to encourage inter-institutional cooperation. We discuss the underlying concepts, obstacles to design and implementation, and how documentation strategies have evolved.


**Week 7: Sampling, the “Black Box” approach, and the Minnesota method (3/12).** In this session, we review a range of sampling methodologies that support selection of, and access to, case files and other voluminous groups of records. We also look at two institutional approaches that incorporate multiple appraisal models and techniques: the Black Box approach and the Minnesota Method.


**Week 8: No class — spring break (3/19)**

**Week 9: Justifying appraisal decisions (3/26).** As we’ve seen, archivists have a wide variety of appraisal approaches and strategies at their disposal. This week we'll explore how archivists justify appraisal decisions, from choosing a strategy to explaining how it’s implemented to responding to public criticisms over controversial acquisition.

**Week 10: Appraisal and acquisition of digital archives (4/2).** Archivists and archival scholars have grappled with electronic records appraisal and acquisition for years. This week, we shall explore the appraisal issues and strategies pertaining to digital manuscripts and archives.


**Week 11: Web archiving (4/9).** We shall discuss appraisal in the context of web archiving. The web has become a significant space of social, political, and economic interaction. Much of recent and contemporary history cannot be accurately represented without consulting the archived web. But given the sheer volume, complexity, and dynamic nature of online information, how do archivists determine which aspect of the web is worthy of long-term or permanent stewardship? What tools do they use to help in this determination?


**Week 12: Literary manuscripts and personal papers (4/16).** We shall explore approaches to appraising personal archives and literary collections, as well as how individuals practice appraisal in managing their own records.


**Week 13: Community archives and democratizing appraisal decisions (4/23).** We consider participatory archiving and community engagement in appraisal, among other practices in the valuation of records in non-institutional contexts.


**Week 14: Ethics and Social justice (4/30).** We extend our exploration of ethics and appraisal by investigating the relationship of archives to the pursuit of social justice.


**Week 15: Reappraisal and deaccessioning (5/7).** This unit explores debates, issues, and approaches to reappraisal and deaccessioning, including how the responsibility of ongoing maintenance, repair, and upkeep affect the sustainability of long-term preservation of collections.


**Week 16: Semester summary and wrap up (5/14).