Overview

This course provides an introductory overview of the archival profession. Throughout the course of the semester students can expect to:

- Develop an understanding of the historical development of the field of archives.
- Engage with current issues, trends, and theories that are shaping the profession.
- Consider the role of the archivist and the use of archives and historical collections by a range of users.
- Become familiar with the theoretical considerations that underlie the core functions of archival administration.
- Explore the legal and ethical responsibilities, as well as the codes of conduct that have been developed and debated within the profession.
- Gain an understanding of the ways that new technologies and digital records are shaping the way that archivists do their work and the skills they must develop to perform the core archival functions with digital records.
Assignments

This course has four written assignments and two in-class assignments, which require pre-class preparation. Only the written assignments are graded, but the in-class assignments are required and count towards your participation grade. Additional information on the assignments will be provided in the NYU Classes course shell under the assignments tab.

Archives Web Presence Analysis (Due Oct. 3)
Arrangement Scheme (Due Oct. 24)
Finding Aids Critique (Due Oct. 31)
Reference Reflection (Due Nov. 21)
Digital Curation Tool Review (Due Dec. 5)
Final Paper (Proposal Due: Oct. 17, Final Paper Due December 13)
Discussion Leader (Due as assigned)

Classroom and Grading Policy

You are expected to attend all classes, complete all readings, and participate in large and small group class discussions. If you are going to be absent, notify me prior to class. If you are going to be absent for a class session for any reason, excepting religious observance, you will be responsible for submitting a 4-5 page paper that analyzes the readings for that week, due the following class session. Assignments that are submitted late with no negotiated extensions will receive a reduced grade.

Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the dates listed above. All documents are to be submitted via the course shell.

Please observe page limits, pay attention to comments on written work, and take those comments into consideration when completing subsequent assignments.

Grades are determined according to the following criteria: Class Participation (15%); Web Presence Paper (20%); Finding Aids System Critique (20%); Reference Reflection (15%); Final Paper (30%).

Readings

Most of the class readings are freely available articles from online journals, scanned excerpts from books that are available in the course shell, and online links. There is no required textbook for this course, but students who want a general primer on archives may find one of the following two books of use. They are fairly expensive, so
I have put them on reserve in the NYU Library, however, copies are also available on Amazon.


All readings are labeled to help you find them. If the reading is labeled NYU CLASSES, it is posted in the course shell. If it is labeled E-JOURNAL or E-BOOK, it is available online via the NYU Library. Other readings have posted links that take you straight to the reading.

**September 12: Introduction**

Review professional websites with information about archives and records management:

- ARMA International ([http://www arma org/](http://www arma org/))
- International Council on Archives ([http://www ica org/](http://www ica org/))
- National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators ([https://nagara org/](https://nagara org/))
- National Archives and Records Administration ([http://www archives gov/](http://www archives gov/))
- New York State Archive or another state archives ([http://www archives nysed gov/](http://www archives nysed gov/))


**September 19: Basic Concepts**


ARMA International. Generally Accepted Recordkeeping Principles. ([http://www arma org/docs/sharepoint-roadshow/the-principles_executive-summaries_final doc](http://www arma org/docs/sharepoint-roadshow/the-principles_executive-summaries_final doc))


**September 26: History of Archives and Archival Theory**


Alex Poole, “The Strange Career of Jim Crow Archives: Race, Space, and History in the Mid-20th Century Jim Crow South,” *American Archivist* 77:1 (Spring/Summer, 2014), pp. 23-63. (NYU CLASSES)


**October 3: Current Trends in the Archival Profession**


**October 17: Acquisitions, Accessioning, and Appraisal**


Doris J. Malkmus, “Documentation Strategy: Mastodon or Retro-Success?” *American Archivist* 71:2 (Fall/Winter 2008), pp. 384-409 (E-JOURNAL);


Anne-Marie Schwirtlich and Barbara Reed, “Managing the Acquisition Process,” in Judith Ellis (ed.), Keeping Archives (Thorpe, 1993), pp. 137-156. (NYU CLASSES)


October 24: Arrangement and Description


EAC-CPF Tag Library. http://eac.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/tag-library.html. Read the about page and explore the tags and schemas.

October 31: Making, Using, and Critiquing Finding Aids

Explore the ArchivesSpace sandbox staff interface. http://www.archivesspace.org/sandbox

Explore 2 to 3 implementations of the ArchivesSpace public interface. Links on this page usually link out to implementations: http://www.archivesspace.org/members
Explore the following finding aids websites:

- New York Public Library (http://archives.nypl.org/)
- California Digital Library (http://www.oac.cdlib.org/)
- Orbis-Cascade Alliance (http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/)
- Princeton University (http://findingaids.princeton.edu/)


**November 7: Reference and Outreach**


George Bain, John Fleckner, Kathy Marquis, and Mary Pugh, “Reference, Access, and Outreach: An Evolved Landscape, 1936-2011 (Session 406),” *American Archivist* 74 (Supplement 1), pp. 1-40. (E-JOURNAL)


**November 14: Users and Uses of Archives**


Interview with Laurel Thatcher Ulrich about her research for *A Midwife’s Tale* http://dohistory.org/book/100_interview.html

Wendy Duff and Catherine Johnson, “A Virtual Expression of Need: An Analysis of E-mail Reference Questions.” *American Archivist* 64:1 (Spring/Summer, 2001), pp. 43-60. (E-JOURNAL)

**November 21: Ethics: Collecting and Access**


James 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* (Quorum, 2002), pp. 21-35. (BOBST E-BOOK)


**November 28: Copyright, Law, and Policy**

Peter B. Hirtle, Emily Hudson, and Andrew T. Kenyon, Copyright & Cultural Institutions, *Guidelines for Digitization for U. S. Libraries, Archives, & Museums*, (Cornell University Library, 2009) Chapters 2 and 3, [https://ecommons.cornell.edu/bitstream/handle/1813/14142/Hirtle-Copyright_final_RGB_lowres-cover1.pdf?sequence=2](https://ecommons.cornell.edu/bitstream/handle/1813/14142/Hirtle-Copyright_final_RGB_lowres-cover1.pdf?sequence=2)


Christine Anne George, “Archives Beyond the Pale: Negotiating Legal and Ethical Entanglements after the Belfast Project,” *American Archivist* 76:1 (Spring/Summer 2012), pp. 47-67 (E-JOURNAL)

**December 5: Digital Curation and Its Challenges**


**December 12: Preservation: Analog and Digital**


**December 13: Wrap-Up, Presentations**

No reading for this week. Students will make 10-15 minute presentations on their research papers, with added time for questions, and we will then wrap-up with a discussion about the semester as a whole.