University at Albany
State University of New York
Department of Information Studies

IST 656 Archives and Manuscripts 3 Credits Fall 2011

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Prerequisites: None

Course Description:
Administration of archival and manuscript collections; appraisal, arrangement, description, and reference services; current practices at national, state, and local levels. Topics include concepts of records management, preservation and conservation, online retrieval systems, and freedom of access and privacy.

Course Objectives:

1. Introduce students to theories and practices for the administration of archives and manuscripts.

2. Introduce students to the archival profession and its relationship to the allied fields of librarianship, records management, and history.

Student Exit Competencies:

Students completing this course should

1. Understand the nature and importance of records in society, the place of archives within the information environment, and the historical development of archives and the archival profession.

2. Understand the principles underlying the basic archival practices of appraisal, arrangement, description, preservation, reference, and access.

3. Be familiar with the types of archives and manuscripts repositories and their problems and special requirements.
4. Be familiar with the role of information technology in modern archival management and the problems in the management and preservation of electronic records.

5. Be aware of the legal, ethical, and professional issues that archivists deal with and be able to discuss these issues.

As a comprehensive survey of the field of archives administration, this course addresses eight of the objectives the department has identified for students in the M.S. in Information Science program:

1. Demonstrate a sense of professional identity by applying the concepts and principles of the information sciences and related disciplines.
2. Know the history and evolving roles of the information professional in the changing global society.
3. Create, select, acquire, organize, manage, preserve, retrieve, evaluate, and disseminate information using relevant theories and practices.
4. Recognize the crucial role of users in the design and implementation of information systems.
5. Formulate, interpret, and implement information policy, and promote ethical standards in the production, management, and use of information.
6. Understand the importance of information access issues, including privacy, equity, intellectual property, and intellectual freedom.
7. Understand, implement, and use appropriate technologies in the delivery of information content and services.
8. Apply management principles to the creation, administration, and promotion of information organizations and systems.

Course requirements:

1. Required readings. See the outline of course content.

2. Paper on an archives/records issue in the news: Write a five-page analysis of the treatment of an archives/records issue in the news. Further details will be given in class. Due September 27.

3. Short review paper. Write a five-page paper based on the following three articles. The paper should pay particular attention to what you see as the practical impact of postmodernist thinking on archival practice. Due October 18.

Terry Cook, “Fashionable Nonsense or Professional Rebirth: Postmodernism and the Practice of Archives,” Archivaria 51(Spring 2001): 14–35


4. Reference assignment: Locate archival and manuscript materials using published finding aids and Internet resources and write a brief assessment of the Web site of an archival repository. Due November 1.

5. Term paper. Write a paper of approximately 15-20 pages analyzing a particular issue or problem in the archives field. Papers should give evidence of wide reading in the archival literature. Further details will be provided in class. *Topics and preliminary bibliography due no later than November 1*. Papers due December 6.

**Evaluation of Student Performance** will be based on:

1. Participation in class discussion 5%
2. Archives/Records in the news paper 15%
3. Short review paper 20%
4. Reference assignment 10%
5. Term paper 50%

**Teaching Methodologies:**

1. Lectures
2. Discussion
3. Case/problem analysis
4. Internet/MARC demonstration

**Statement on Academic Dishonesty:**

The Department of Information Studies takes academic dishonesty very seriously. Before taking classes within the Department of Information Studies, you should familiarize yourself with the department’s penalties and procedures for violations of academic integrity, available in both the department’s Graduate Handbook and online at [http://www.albany.edu/informationstudies/ist_resources.php](http://www.albany.edu/informationstudies/ist_resources.php)

Professors reserve the right to add to the department’s policy as they see appropriate.

**Outline of Course Content and Required Readings:**

All of the readings in the course outline are required. Students should do the assigned readings before class and be prepared to discuss them. Most of the readings are either on reserve in Dewey Library or accessible electronically through the Electronic Reserves system on the University Libraries homepage or through the libraries’ access to electronic versions of journals. The *American Archivist* through 2007, for example, is available through JSTOR. It is also available electronically on the SAA website at
The University Bookstore has copies of the basic text for the course:


The basic text is supplemented by selections from the following volumes in the Society of American Archivists’ Archival Fundamentals Series II:


These books, and others published by the Society of American Archivists are available for purchase directly from SAA at [www.archivists.org](http://www.archivists.org). SAA members (including student members) receive a discount on all book purchases from SAA. A student membership in SAA costs $47, and you must provide evidence of your current student status.

Key additional readings are taken from the following volumes:


**August 30**

Introduction to the course requirements: Structure, readings, assignments. Introduction to archival terminology and functions.


**September 6**

The nature of archives and manuscripts and the archival profession. Types of institutions and repositories. Relationships with other disciplines. The role of records in society.


September 13

Historical development of recordkeeping, archival principles, and archives and manuscript collections.


O'Toole and Cox, *Understanding Archives and Manuscripts*, pp. 45–86.


September 20

Guest Lecture: Geoffrey Williams, University Archivist. Class meets at the M. E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, 3rd floor, Science Library.

Browse the web page of the M. E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives: [http://library.albany.edu/speccoll/](http://library.albany.edu/speccoll/)

September 27

Introduction to appraisal theory and practice. ARCHIVES/RECORDS IN THE NEWS PAPER DUE.


Boles, *Selecting and Appraising Archives and Manuscripts*, 1–41.


[Excerpts from this report are also available in *A Modern Archives Reader*, 57–70.]


**October 4**

Recent trends in appraisal theory. Acquisition and accessioning practices.


**October 11**

Arrangement of archives and manuscripts. Processing Collections.


**October 18**

Descriptive standards and practices in archives. Use of the MARC format and Encoded Archival Description. Introduction to the Reference Assignment. SHORT REVIEW PAPER DUE.


**October 25**

Archival reference services and user studies. Introduction to the Reference Assignment.


Pugh, *Providing Reference Services for Archives & Manuscripts*, 111–47.


**November 1**

Access to archives. TERM PAPER TOPICS DUE. REFERENCE ASSIGNMENT DUE.


**November 8**

Preservation management for archives and manuscripts.


Ritzenthaler, *Preserving Archives and Manuscripts*, pp. 1–42.


November 15

The impact of electronic records and recordkeeping systems on archives.


November 22

Management, outreach, and advocacy.


November 29

Legal and ethical issues in archives.


Peter B. Hirtle, “Copyright Term and the Public Domain in the United States 1 January 2011” <http://www.copyright.cornell.edu/training/Hirtle_Public_Domain.htm>


December 6

Current state and future prospects of the archival profession. Presentation on archives internships. TERM PAPER DUE.


