IISP 546
Fall 2015
Fundamentals of Records Management
David F. Lowry, CRM

Course Syllabus

This course offers an introduction to the fundamental concepts and practices of records and information management as they are applied to organizations and institutions in the corporate, non-profit, and public sectors. The topics to be covered will convey an understanding of the purpose and basic components of a records management program, the nature and issues posed by electronic records and the relationship of records management to other information management disciplines (e.g., library science, archives and information governance). The textbook for the course will be *Records and Information Management: Fundamentals of Professional Practice*, 2nd Ed., by William Saffady (ARMA International, 2011), which can be ordered on-line at www.arma.org (Non-member Price: $60/Member Price: $40 ISBN: 978-1-936654-00-0).

TOPICS TO BE COVERED:

1. Course introduction and requirements
2. The Records Management Profession
3. Overview of RIM; rational, concepts and definitions
4. Records surveys and inventories
5. Retention scheduling
6. Inactive records storage and retrieval
7. Document imaging and micrographics
8. Files classification
9. Disaster management and vital records protection
10. Business Process analysis and records management
11. Electronic document management system
12. Management of electronic messaging
13. Records management and the law
14. Information governance

The class will meet each Monday evening from 7:15 - 10:05 PM from August 31st to December 7th, except for September 7th (Labor Day) and September 14 (Rosh Hashanah). Office hours will be from 6:45 - 7:15 PM in Draper 113 each Monday evening that class is scheduled to meet or by appointment. I can be reached by phone at (518) 396-7901 or by email at stockadedave@gmail.com
WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

Your grade in this course will be determined by successful completion of five (5) of the following written assignments and your performance on take-home mid-term and final examinations. As noted below, assignments 1, 2 & 3 are required of all students. Due dates for completion of all assignments will be announced in class. All papers should be typed, double-spaced and approximately five to seven pages in length. Please consult with me if you have any questions about your selection of these assignments.

1. **My Records.** Make a list of at least fifty (50) different types of records that document various events, achievements, transactions and other activities in your life to date. Include the name of the record, approximate date(s), its main purpose, and the name of the agency or organization that maintains the record. (*This ungraded assignment is required of all students.*)

2. **Retention Schedules.** Locate three (3) official retention schedules maintained online by a business, government agency or non-profit organization. Describe briefly the scope, content, format, indexing, instructions for use and any other pertinent information for each of the selected schedules. Then identify the retention periods designated for each of the following record series. Note the specific item number that corresponds to each of these records on the schedules as well as any problems you encountered in trying to determine the appropriate retention periods. (*This assignment is required of all students.*)

   1. Minutes of Board of Directors, Trustees or other governing body
   2. Personnel files maintained by a human resources department
   3. Workers compensation case records
   4. Engineering drawings for buildings that the organization owns or occupies
   5. Routine correspondence
   6. Purchasing orders and related documents
   7. Contracts and other legal agreements
   8. Litigation case files
   9. Budget files
   10. Payroll records
   11. E-mails
   12. Video recordings created for surveillance or public safety purposes
   13. Invoices submitted for payment
   14. Financial audit reports
   15. Records related to property insurance claims, and
   16. Annual reports.

3. **Records in the News.** Prepare a list of citations with summaries for articles related to records management issues that are published in the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal* or other major newspaper during the semester. Articles can deal with any aspect of records management such as growth of paper files, destruction of records, value of office space, automated recordkeeping systems, recordkeeping costs, use of records in litigation, etc. For each article, cite the title of the article, the newspaper in which it appeared, and a brief summary. (*This assignment is required of all students.*)

4. **Records Inventory.** Using a form to be supplied in class, inventory at least five (5) significant records series maintained by any local office, government agency, business or other organization. For this assignment, you must have physical access to all of the records that comprise each series as well as the ability to interview and ask follow-up questions of the principal custodian and/or other person(s) familiar with the records. After you have compiled the inventory data, write a two to three-page summary of your experience.
5. Records Access/Privacy Protection Laws. Visit the website of the New York Department of State, Committee on Open Government (www.dos.ny.gov/coog), which administers the Freedom of Information (FOIL) and Personal Privacy Protection Laws (PPPL). Review and summarize the major provisions of either one of these laws. Then select and describe four (4) advisory opinions covering different aspects of that law issued by the Committee. Outline any questions which these opinions raised in your mind.

6. Inactive Records. Visit an inactive records storage facility and prepare a report on how it performs the basic administrative functions of records transfer, space allocation, records retrieval and disposition. Also describe the physical facility, major pieces of equipment used, staffing, security measures and disaster plans in place. Explain what you think are the major strengths and weaknesses of the program.

7. Information Governance. Identify an organization with an information governance policy. Describe and critique the components of the policy. Do you think it is comprehensive? How does records management fit into the policy? Papers should be three to five pages in length.

8. Micrographics/Document Imaging. Visit a local file conversion bureau and prepare a report on the physical facilities, production equipment, job-tracking system, quality control procedures, clientele and scope of the services provided. Explain what you think are the major strengths and weaknesses of the service.

9. E-mail Policies. Locate an email policy of any organization and describe and critique its components. What do you think are its strong points and weak points? What key components are missing and what effect may that have on the organization? Pay special attention to the records management and retention components if any. Papers should be three to five pages in length.

10. Filing Systems. Describe the products of a vendor that markets filing cabinets, supplies, or related produce for in-office storage of paper records or engineering drawings. Examples include Tab Products, Smead Manufacturing, Esselte and Steelcase but you can use your preferred search engine to identify other vendors. Your report should discuss the types of filing products and related services that the vendor offers.

11. Disaster Preparedness/Business Continuity. Locate a business, government agency or non-profit organization that maintains a written disaster preparedness or business continuity plan. Read the plan and, if possible, interview the person principally responsible for maintaining and implementing it. Prepare a report describing and analyzing the plan based on information from class, the textbook and/or other published sources.

12. Electronic Document Management Systems. Locate and watch an on-line demo of a commercially available EDMS/ECMS system. Based on information presented in the demo and elsewhere, describe how the system manages the creation, use, storage, and disposition of the records and other content it is used to maintain. Explain the program’s main features and capabilities such as version control, access control, file taxonomy, indexing, metadata and reports management.

13. Archives and Records Management. Prepare an annotated bibliography of articles, books, and other publications dealing with the relationship of records management and archives. The selected publications may deal the similarities and differences of the two disciplines, the need for archives involvement in records management (and/or vice versa), conflicts between the two fields, or any other aspect the relationship. Your bibliography should include at least 15 articles totaling 100 pages of reading. Include a summary of the main points and a full bibliographic citation in a format of your choice for each cited work.

14. Records Management Listserv. Join the records management listserv sponsored by Florida State University at RECMGMT-L@lists.ufl.edu. Monitor the list posts for six weeks. Judging from the posts, what do you think are the major concerns of and problems for today’s records managers? What appear to be the best suggested solutions to these problems? Write a three to five page summary.
15. *Records Management Programs*. Based on site visits and related reading, describe the records management policies and practices of a specific company, academic institution, local government, hospital or other organization. Your report should address the company’s records retention practices, protection of vital records, use of microfilm and/or document imaging technology, offsite storage and any electronic document management/content management systems.