Museum Studies 707/History727
Archival Principles and Practices
Course Syllabus

Class Meets every Tuesday, 9:30 – 12:00, Spring Semester, 2013

Instructor: Sheryl Williams, Curator of Collections, Spencer Research Library
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Office Hours: Mondays, 3:00 – 4:00, Thursdays, 9-10, or by appointment

Textbook:


Course Description:

This course is introductory in nature, and intended to provide students with an understanding of what archives are and what archivists do. Readings and weekly lectures/discussions cover a broad range of archival topics, interspersed with opportunities for discussion with practicing archivists. Several visits to local archival repositories are also included.

All readings listed are required, and class discussion will be expected over the readings. Class attendance and participation in discussion are critical. In addition to the readings there will be three short assignments throughout the semester and a longer, paper due at the end of the semester. Each of three assignments will require a 10 minute presentation to the class. The final paper will require a 20 minute presentation in class.

For Your Information

The KU Office of Disability Resources coordinates accommodations and services for all students who are eligible. The DR office is located in 22 Strong Hall; its phone number is 785-864-2620 (V/TTY). Information about DR services can be found at www.disability.ku.edu.

Intellectual property

Course materials prepared by Sheryl Williams, together with the content of all her discussion comments, are her property. Video and/or audio recording of any class meetings without the instructor’s consent is prohibited.
Course Outline

January 22  Discussion of course requirements
Introduction to archives and the archival profession
Tour of Spencer Library

January 29  Understanding Archives and Archivists
In class exercise

Required Readings:
O’Toole, James and Richard Cox, Understanding Archives and Manuscripts, Chicago, Society of American Archivists, pp. viii – 43.


February 5  Archival History
Selection/Documentation/Appraisal

Required Readings:


**February 12**  Field work/donor relations
Guest speaker: Deborah Dandridge, Field Archivist, Kansas Collection, African American Collecting Program, Spencer Research Library
Guest speaker, Laird Wilcox, founder of the Wilcox Collection of Contemporary Political Movements

**Required Readings:**


**February 19**  University Archives
Guest speaker: Archivist, Letha Johnson, Assistant University Archivist
Spencer Research Library
Tour of University Archives, Spencer Research Library

*Assignment one due. Presentations in class of assignment one*

**Required Readings:**

Laver, Tara Zachary, “In a Class by Themselves: Faculty Papers at Research Universities – Archives and Manuscript Repositories, American Archivist, Vol. 66, no.1, Spring Summer 2003, pp.159-196.


**February 26**  Archival function: reference and outreach
Guest speaker Caitlin Donnelly, Head of Reader Services, Spencer Library
**Required Readings:**


Finch, Elsie Freeman, “In the Eye of the Beholder: Archives Administration from the User’s Point of View,” American Archival Studies, pp. 415- 432.

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**March 5**  
Museum Archives  
**Assignment 2 is due. Brief presentations in class**

**Required Readings:**


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**March 12**  
Archival function of Arrangement and Description  
Guest speaker, Michael Readinger, Spencer Library Manuscript Processing Coordinator  
In-class exercise

**Required Reading:**

Roe, Kathleen, Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts, Society of American Archivists, 2005, chapter 2, pp. 11-27, and chapter 3, pp. 34-44


In preparation for class, consult the finding aids on the Spencer Research Library’s website (http://spencer.lib.ku.edu) and review two prior to class.

March 19  Spring Break  No classes

March 26  Tour of the Robert Dole Archives, Dole Institute of Politics with Audrey Coleman, Senior Archivist
Assignment 3 is due. Brief Presentations in class

Required Readings:


April 2  Ethics in the Archives
Photographs, films, sound recordings

Required Reading:


April 9  Tour, Kansas State Historical Society, Library and Archives Division, Topeka, Kansas with Lin Fredericksen
**Required Reading:**


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**April 16**  
Archives and the Digital World  
Guest speakers Michael Church, Kansas State Historical Society and Brian Grubb, Project Director, “Communities and Conflict: The Impact of the Civil War in the Ozarks, Springfield-Greene County Library District

**Required Readings:**


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**April 23**  
Electronic Records /Digital Initiatives  
Guest speakers, Matt Veatch, State Archivist, Kansas State Historical Society and Becky Schulte, University Archivist, Spencer Research Library

**Required Readings:**


**April 30**

**Final Papers due**
Class presentations of final papers

**May 7**
Management/security
The future: Libraries, archives, and museums

**Required Reading:**


**Assignments**

**Assignment One:** Interview an archivist/records manager/ information specialist/librarian who works with archival materials.
Due date: February 19 (presentation same day)

In this exercise you are required to interview (in person or by email/phone) a working archivist (in an area of interest to you), and prepare a two – three page summary of your interview. You should ask the interviewee questions about the nature of their work, what they normally do in a work day, what kind of education they have for their archival position, and what issues they have faced in their work. What are some of the challenges that they deal with now? Feel free to go beyond these questions. If you have trouble identifying an archivist to interview, see me, and I will assist you in locating someone.

Assignment Two: Review of use policies for different archives
Date Due: March 5 (presentation same day)

Compare the use policies for two different archival institutions (other than Spencer Library). Prepare a two-page summary of your findings, including similarities and differences.

Assignment Three: Review of finding aids
Date Due: March 26 (presentation same day)

Review finding aids for manuscripts/archival records from three different institutions (either in person or via the web). Prepare a two to three page summary of what you have reviewed, how the information is presented, what differences and similarities you notice, and how easy (or not) they are to use. If you need help in locating finding aids please see me.

Final Project: Paper on an archival function.
Due Date: April 30 (includes presentation in class)

Select an archival function, or aspect of archival work you are interested in, and write an in-depth paper (10-15 pages) on this function, including a review of relevant literature, a discussion of the controversies discussed in the literature (if applicable), strengths and weaknesses noted in the literature, and your reaction to the issues discussed. You should include at least 15 articles, and several monographs (if relevant) in your review. Papers are to be footnoted, include a bibliography, and to follow the most current edition of the Chicago Manual of Style.

You will present this paper in class. The presentation should be 15 – 20 minutes, and allow for questions from your colleagues.
Grading

In this course we will be using only whole letter grades (A, B, C, D, F) with no pluses or minuses

The components of your work for this class will be weighted as follows:

Class participation: 30 %
Assignments 1-3: 30%
Final Paper: 40%