LIS 635-01: Archives Appraisal, Acquisition and Use
Spring 2017

Class Hours: Tuesdays 6:30 – 9:20p
Office Hours: Tuesdays 3:00-6:00pm, and by appointment
Credits: 3
Prerequisites: LIS 625 Management of Archives and Special Collections
Location: PMC 611

Bulletin Description:
This course wrestles with some key issues that pertain to archival collection policy. Students will explore why materials are being accepted or solicited for an archive; how society or an organization is "documented;" how archival materials will be used; who will use archival materials and why. Students should be able to design an appraisal or acquisition policy for a collecting institution that will serve the archives larger mission at the end of the course.

Course Goals:
- Students will develop a more sophisticated understanding of the field of archival studies by building on what was learned in LIS 625 Management of Archives and Special Collections.
- Students will focus on more “big picture” issues in the field of archival studies, such as who should document society, what should be documented, and why should it be documented.
- Students will create a work of original research in the field of archival studies.
- Connect archival appraisal, acquisition and usage knowledge to evaluating real-world, NYC archival and special collection environments.

Student Learning Objectives:
By the end of the course, students will be able to:
- Demonstrate sophisticated understanding of archival appraisal and acquisition practices and techniques.
- Relate archival mission statement and collection development policies to user access
- Apply archival appraisal, acquisition and usage knowledge to evaluating real-world archives and special collections.
- Discuss archives appraisal in light of the history of the field and potential futures.
Course Schedule and Readings

1/17 – Course Introduction

- Overview of syllabus
- Assign weekly presenters of topics
- Post a photo of yourself and fill-out your profile on the LMS
- Sign-up for the Society of American Archivists (SAA) Listserv (do not have to be a dues-paying member) http://www2.archivists.org/listserv

1/24 – Historical Overview

Boles text:
- Ch. 1: Why Archivists Select
- Ch. 2: Muddied Waters and Conflicting Currents: An Overview of Appraisal Thought

Further Reading:


Reflection Questions:
Boles writes that the “big tent” of archival purpose is something whose “preservation... that I believe matters greatly” (p. 41). What is this “big tent” and why does he thinks it needs preservation?

1/31 – Mission Statement and Collection Policies

Boles text:
- Ch. 3: The Big Picture: Mission Statements, Records Management, and Collection Development Policies

Further Reading:


Reflection Questions:

Copy and paste an archival repository’s collection policy and include the URL of where you found it. Are the goals and objectives of the repository clear? Who does the repository serve (users/clientele)?

2/7 – Traditional appraisal (a.k.a. Micro-appraisal)

Boles text:
- Ch. 4: Mucking about in the Records: Making Selection Decisions on the Ground
- Ch. 5: Putting the Pieces Together: A Selection Model

Further Reading:


Reflection Questions:

Boles outlines a number of competing issues that an archivist should consider concurrently when making selection decisions “on the ground.” What are these issues? Are there one of these issues that stand out to you as being particular important (e.g., based on some past experience)?

2/14 – Use/Users of Archives and its relationship to Appraisal


Further Reading:


Reflection Questions:
Do you agree with Greene and Brichford that “‘use of the archives and the growth of its reputation’ was ‘the surest proof of sound records appraisal’” (p. 158)? If you agree with this idea, how might you implement it practically?

2/21 – Selecting Archives & Manuscripts for Digitization


Further Reading:


Reflection Questions:

In previous weeks, we have read about approaches to selecting materials to include in archive. In following weeks, we will explore the topic of appraising and acquiring born-digital materials. However, this week we will look at the topic of selecting analog materials for digitization that are already in processed collections. Purcell argues that digitizing materials based on what “‘looks old’ or ‘looks cool’ is a flawed approach to digitization” (p. 108). What might be a better approach?

2/28 – Appraising Born-Digital Records

Appraisal and Acquisition Strategies text:
- Introduction: Collecting Digital Archives: Building Blocks for Success (Michael Shalllcross)
- Module 14: Appraising Digital Records (Geof Huth)

Further Reading:


**Reflection Questions:**

This week’s reading focuses on appraising born-digital records, especially from the perspective of an institutional archivist. How is appraising born-digital records similar and different from appraising paper-based records?

3/7 – Collecting Born-Digital Manuscripts & Archives

*Appraisal and Acquisition Strategies* text:
- Module 15: Collecting Digital Manuscripts and Archives (Megan Barnard and Gabriela Redwine)

*Further Reading:*


*Appraisal and Acquisition Strategies* text:
- Module 16: Accessioning Digital Archives (Erin Faulder)

*Boles text:*
- Ch. 6: All Media Are Created Equal and with the Right to Be Archived: Media and Selection

**Reflection Questions:**
Barnard and Redwine (2016) discuss strategies for acquiring born-digital materials from their creators. Is there some strategy discussed that you think is absolutely essential, and why?

3/14 – No Class; Spring Break!

3/21 – Functional Analysis


Further Reading – Functional Analysis:


Further Reading – Macro-appraisal:


Reflection Questions:

How is functional analysis different from micro-appraisal?

3/28 – Documentation Strategy

Guest Speaker: Dr. Susan Malbin, Director of Library and Archives, American Jewish Historical Society


Further Reading:

Reflection Questions:

How is documentation strategy different from micro-appraisal and functional analysis? According to Malkmus, what are some factors that can ensure success (or failure) of documentation strategy?

4/4 – Appraisal of Non-textual records

Guest speaker: Carmel Curtis, Audiovisual Archivist, United Nations

Choose Your Own Adventure: Choose an article/chapter from one of the following categories based on interests:

Moving Image and Sound Records


3-dimensional objects


Photography


Architectural records


Reflection Questions:

This week, we choose a reading on appraising non-textual records from the following categories: a) moving image and sound records, b) 3-dimensional objects, c) photography, and d) architectural records. What article did you read? What is noteworthy about appraising records from this category?

4/11 – Re-appraisal


Further Reading:


*Reflection Question:*

TBD

**4/18 – Identity, Memory and Culture**


*Further Reading:*


*Reflection Questions:*

TBD

**4/25 – Diversity, Inclusion and the Archival Record**

Further Reading:


Reflection Questions:

TBD

5/2 – Studio Week (Individual Project Work Week)

Further Reading - International perspectives:


5/9 – Presentations

Textbooks

The following books are required reading for the course. It is recommended that you purchase them; however, they are also available on reserve in the library:


Additional required and further readings are available online via the LMS ([http://lms.pratt.edu](http://lms.pratt.edu)).

Course Requirements

Students’ course grades will be determined by performance on the following activities:

1. Class Participation (20%)
2. Topic Reflections (20%) – 11 responses required over the course of the semester
3. Archival Case Study Project (60%)
   a. Proposal (10%) – due March 21, Instructor feedback on March 28
   b. Proposal Presentation (10%) – due in March/April
   c. Final Paper (30%) – due last day of class
   d. Final Presentation (10%) – due last week or two of class

Class Participation

Students are expected to be prepared and to contribute to class discussions each week with scholarly analyses and insights. In addition, each week one student or a team of two students will present their perspective on the topic of the readings for the week. This is an opportunity to consolidate your (or your team’s) understanding on a topic, to present your perspective, to make novel connections to other domains, and to relate the readings to real-world experience. Presenters may use the reflection questions posed (available on the LMS) to guide their presentations, or may choose their own direction in discussing the topic. Presenters should be prepared to make around a 10-minute presentation, employ some visual aids (e.g., PowerPoint) and conclude with some questions or issues they would like to discuss.
more thoroughly. Remember that everyone in the class has read the week’s readings, so it should not simply be a summarization of what we have already read.

The schedule of presenters will be decided on the first day of class.

Forms of digital distraction (working on email, social media, etc.) will be interpreted by the instructor as reduced participation in the course.

**Topic Reflections**

Each week, students are expected to write at least two paragraphs that reflect on the readings. Reflections can be in response to the topic reflection questions posted on the LMS. Students responses should be posted on the LMS by 6pm (at the latest) on the day of class (late responses will receive a reduced grade). Please do not bring in a hard-copy or email unless the LMS is unavailable. The purpose of these responses is to allow students the opportunity to reflect on the readings and share their reflections with the other members of the class. Students are encouraged to read the responses by their fellow classmates (this is, however, not a requirement). Based on interests, students may choose two weeks NOT to do a weekly response. This means by the end of the semester, each student should have posted 11 responses.

Please note that the instructor will refer to these responses during class discussion and may ask students to further clarify or expand on their response.

**Archival Case Study Project**

The objective of the Archival Case Study Project is to produce an original work of research in the field of archival studies. The final case study should discuss archival theory and practices with respect to identifying, acquiring and authenticating records with enduring value to records creators, institutions, researchers and society, and apply such thinking to how it plays out in a real-world archive or special collections in the tristate New York City area.

To produce the case study, it is expected that students complete the following:

- **1. Repository Overview**
  - Select an archival case study site in the tristate New York City area which is an institutional archive or collecting institution. The ArchiveGrid provides a list of some repositories in the area: [https://beta.worldcat.org/archivegrid/](https://beta.worldcat.org/archivegrid/).
  - Retrieve and review the institution’s mission, collecting policy, finding aids and online digital collections.

- **2. Relevant Literature**
  - What literature on archives appraisal, acquisition and use has bearing on understanding this particular case? Readings from the class can be used, as well as other sources in the field of archival studies. This include the many monographs at the Pratt Manhattan library and journals in the field, such as:
    - *American Archivist* (Pratt subscription)
    - *Archivaria* (open access)
    - *Archival Science* (NYPL and interlibrary loan)
    - *Journal of the Society of Archivists* (NYPL and interlibrary loan)
    - *Archival Issues* (Pratt subscription)
    - *Journal of Archival Organization* (NYPL and interlibrary loan)
    - *Records Management Journal* (Pratt subscription)
    - *Information & Culture* (Pratt subscription)
3. **Collections Evaluation** - Discuss how the processed collections and online digital collection speak to the institution’s mission and collecting policy? Further, how do the digitized or born-digital online collections speak to the archive’s mission and collecting policy?
   - If questions arise during this phase of the project, it is recommended that students attempt to contact an archivist with the repository and get answers to these questions through email, telephone or face-to-face. These can be cited in the final paper as personal communications.

4. **Access of Collections** - Visit the archive or special collection to access a particular collection or some component of a particular collection based on the relationship of those components to the institution’s mission and collecting policy. How does the provisions for access speak to the archive’s mission?

5. **Conclusions** – Based on your research, what can we conclude about this particular case with respect to mission, collection policy, collections, digitized collections, and ability to use them? What bearing does this case have on what is known about (the literature on) archives appraisal, acquisition and use?

**Final Paper** – 5,000-6,000 words with citations as footnotes or endnotes in *Chicago Manual of Style* 15th or 16th editions ([http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/)).

**Final Presentation** – This is a 10 minute presentation, with additional time for Q/A, that should be approached like a professional conference-style presentation. A visual aid (e.g., Powerpoint) should be used. The presentation should be considered the oral version of the final paper, which should cover all the terrain addressed in the final paper. However, the presentation should not be a reading of the final paper but rather the paper reimagined as an engaging presentation. You are encouraged to re-use your presentation in the #infoshow (annual showcase of Pratt SI student work).

**Proposal** - Note that a proposal should be submitted mid-semester that you should think of as a work that is building toward the final paper. It should complete project step #1, and include a list of references that will be consulted for step #2. A plan for addressing steps #3, #4 and #5—and any preliminary ideas findings that you think you will be discussing in the final paper—should be introduced here.

**Proposal Presentation** – This is the oral presentation of your proposal (10 minutes maximum), and should cover the same terrain as the written proposal. However, like the final presentation, it should not be a mere reading of the proposal, but the proposal reimagined as an engaging presentation with visual aid (e.g., Powerpoint).

**Notes on Assessment and Evaluation**

1. All assignments must completed in order to receive a passing grade in the course
2. SI is going green: all work must be submitted electronically via the LMS.
3. Students with extensive absences (three or more for any reason) will be required to drop the course.

**MSLIS E-Portfolio**

Starting Fall 2012, all students entering the MSLIS degree program are required to complete an e-portfolio that must be approved by their advisor before they will be permitted to graduate. The e-Portfolio provides students with an opportunity to showcase their best work from the courses they have taken at SI, and an opportunity to demonstrate they have met the learning objectives of a Master of Information and Library Science.
Students must demonstrate that their work fulfills at least one of the following learning outcomes:

1. **Research** - Students carry-out and apply research
2. **Communication** - Students demonstrate excellent communication skills and create and convey content
3. **Technology** - Students use information technology and digital tools effectively
4. **User-Centered Focus** - Students apply concepts related to use and users of information and user needs and perspectives
5. **Reflective Practice** - Students perform within the framework of professional practice

Detailed information on the learning outcomes, requirements and how to create your e-portfolio is available from: [https://www.pratt.edu/academics/information/current-students/mslis-e-portfolio/](https://www.pratt.edu/academics/information/current-students/mslis-e-portfolio/)

Note that the Archival Case Study Project can be used to satisfy the Research SLO, and possibly used to satisfy others based on work completed, specifically the Communication, User-Centered Focus, and Reflective Practice SLO.

**Pratt’s grading scale:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>A 4.0 (96-100)</th>
<th>A- 3.7 (90-95)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Superior work:</td>
<td>B+ 3.3 (87-89)</td>
<td>B 3.0 (83-86)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very good work:</td>
<td>B- 2.7 (80-82)</td>
<td>C+ 2.3 (77-79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marginally satisfactory:</td>
<td>C 2.0</td>
<td>F 0.0 (0-69)</td>
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**Policies**

All Institute-wide policies are listed in the Bulletin under “Community Standards,” which include policies on attendance, academic integrity, plagiarism, computer, and network use. Students who require special accommodations for disabilities must obtain clearance from the Office of Disability Services at the beginning of the semester. They should contact Mai McDonald, Disability Services Coordinator, in the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs, Main Building, Lower Level: 718-636-3711.

**Notes on Research, Archiving and Photographs**

1. Students taking this class may be asked to participate in faculty-sponsored research for advancing knowledge in the field of Information and Library Science. This research will exclude any personally identifiable information. If you object to this practice, please communicate with the instructor at the beginning of the semester.
2. Student work may be retained by Pratt SI and disseminated, including through electronic networks (e.g., repositories, websites). Students retain intellectual property rights on their work but Pratt has the right to use and display your work (for more information see Pratt’s Intellectual Property Policy available at: [https://www.pratt.edu/uploads/96-intellectual_property_policy.pdf](https://www.pratt.edu/uploads/96-intellectual_property_policy.pdf))
3. Students in the class may be photographed during class related activities. Photographs may be archived in institutional archives or websites. Photographs may be name tagged. If you object to being included in such photographs, please communicate with the instructor at the beginning of the semester.