

**School of Information and Library Science
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
INLS 757 - Principles of Archival Description
Spring 2013**

Meeting Time: Tuesday and Thursday, 12:30-1:45 pm

Location: Hanes Hall 112

Credits: 3

Instructors:

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Part 1 of this course introduces students to archival and recordkeeping metadata foundations. Students will learn about the history of archival description, archival description workflows, the role and evolution of records management activities, continuum model thinking, and the emergence of digital curation and intersections with archives and records management considerations. We will also address the fundamental building blocks for recordkeeping metadata, as well as metadata for preservation and repository management. Finally, Part 1 will investigate current issues and debates related to archival and recordkeeping metadata.

Part 2 of this course is based on the principles of archival description as expressed in Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS). Students will explore implementation of DACS and examples of other relevant data content standards useful in archival description, and data structure standards used by U.S. archivists, primarily Encoded Archival Description (EAD) and MARC. We will consider how these descriptive standards intersect with archival arrangement and the decisions that archivists must make in balancing arrangement and description needs of collections, perceived needs of users, and the pressures to intelligently manage human and financial resources available for processing archival collections. The course will also provide students with theoretical and practical aspects of authority and subject analysis work as it applies to archival collections; the history and development of archival standards in the U.S.; the use of content management systems in archival description; the impact of arrangement and description on users; and descriptions of special formats and born-digital records.

The course will be a combination of lecture, discussion, and problem solving. Critical reading of course materials will be essential to stimulate active participation in class discussions.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

- Complete readings BEFORE CLASS each week. Manage your time accordingly.
 - How to Read a Book - <http://www.si.umich.edu/~pne/PDF/howtoread.pdf>
- Written work should be of high quality. If you have concerns about writing, address them early and often.
 - UNC Writing Center in Phillips Annex (two buildings east of Peabody) - <http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/>
- Come to class on time.
- Participate in discussions - counts as 20% of your total grade for the course.
- Demonstrate that you have read the material, understood and synthesized it.
- Tell us when you do not agree. This is a discussion forum, not just a lecture session. No one in the room has a monopoly on correct answers. Ideas are presented in order for you to analyze and critique them. You are encouraged to question the assumptions of the readings, your instructor and your fellow students. Your comments should reflect mutual respect and should not attack individuals.

COURSE READINGS

This course will rely on one text: Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS) (SAA, 2004 or 2007 print editions are fine or the standard is available in PDF form from: <http://files.archivists.org/pubs/DACS-2007.pdf>

The schedule of topics and readings for each week are available in the Resources section of this site.

Note: All of the major archival journals are now available electronically. Access to the most recent three years of American Archivist and most recent four years of Archivaria are restricted to subscribers or members (UNC subscribes to both); all older issues are freely available through the Web. American Archivist is available through both MetaPress and JSTOR.

- American Archivist - <http://www.archivists.org/periodicals/aa.asp> and <http://webcat.lib.unc.edu/record=b1288175>
- Archival Issues - <http://www.midwestarchives.org/archivalissues.asp> and <http://webcat.lib.unc.edu/record=b2495979> Archival Science - <http://webcat.lib.unc.edu/record=b3933397>
- Archivaria - <http://journals.sfu.ca/archivar/index.php/archivaria/issue/archive>
- Archives and Manuscripts - <http://www.archivists.org.au/directory/80> and <http://webcat.lib.unc.edu/record=b1288802>
- Journal of Archival Organization - <http://webcat.lib.unc.edu/record=b4396386>

The Society of American Archivists also has a glossary that you may find useful over the course of the semester: A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology, edited by Richard Pearce-Moses, <http://www.archivists.org/glossary/>>

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Reaction papers: You will turn in five short papers reacting to journal articles assigned as readings during the semester. The schedule for these reaction papers is as follows:

- Due 17 January at the beginning of class, uploaded to Sakai (see assignments), reaction to MacNeil, Heather. "Metadata Strategies and Archival Description: Comparing Apples and Oranges." *Archivaria* 39 (1995): 11-21.
- Due 19 February at the beginning of class, uploaded to Sakai (see assignments), reaction to Dow, Elizabeth H. "Encoded Archival Description as a Halfway Technology." *Journal of Archival Organization* 7, no. 3 (2009): 108-15.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15332740903117701>
- Due 7 March at the beginning of class in hard copy, reaction to Jennifer Meehan, "Making the Leap from Parts to Whole: Evidence and Inference in Archival Arrangement and Description, *American Archivist* (Vol 72 No 1) Spring/Summer 2009: 72-90.
- Due 26 March at the beginning of class in hard copy, reaction to Heather MacNeil, "Picking Our Text: Archival Description, Authenticity, and the Archivist as Editor," *American Archivist* (Vol 68 No 2) Fall/Winter 2005: 264-278.
- Due 18 April at the beginning of class in hard copy, reaction to Steven L. Hensen, "Squaring the Circle: The Reformation of Archival Description in AACR2," *Library Trends* (36) Winter 1988: 539-552. (Available in the Resources section of the class Sakai site)

Reaction papers should be two double-spaced pages using a twelve-point font. In your first paragraph concisely summarize the author(s)'s major argument(s), point(s), or conclusion(s). In the remainder of the reaction paper discuss what you think is interesting, stimulating, controversial, worthy of additional research and thought, or whatever else you reacted to in the article or parts thereof. Quote from the article under consideration and use parentheses following those quotations to indicate the page number on which they can be found, e.g., (117). Tie in your own experiences, other things you may have read (footnote these), or just plain common sense in making your argument(s) or point(s) in reaction to the article.

2. Archival research assignment (due March 19) and DACS assignment (due April 9): detailed description of these assignments and how to submit them will be provided in class at the appropriate time.

3. Short answer assessments: Students will reply to short answer questions designed to test the concepts covered in each part of the course. The assessments will be given out in class on 21 February, due 28 February and 18 April due 25 April.

EVALUATION

Evaluation will be based on the following factors

- Preparation and class participation: 20%
- Reaction Papers: 20%
- Research Assignment: 20%
- DACS assignment 20%
- Short answer assessments 20%

The most important measures of your performance in this and all other classes at SILS will be your ability to engage in challenging materials with your fellow students; your reputation for insights and professionalism among your peers and with your instructor; your integration of course material with the other things you are learning both inside and outside the classroom; and your ability to apply what you've learned in your future career. However, the conventions of academia dictate that I also assign labels (called grades) to your work on assignments and for the course as a whole.

Based on UNC Registrar Policy for graduate-level courses

(<http://regweb.unc.edu/resources/rpm24.php>), both assignment and semester grades will be H, P, L or F. Few students will obtain an "H," which signifies an exceptionally high level of performance (higher than an "A" in an A-F systems). The following is a more detailed breakdown:

- H Superior work: complete command of subject, unusual depth, great creativity or originality
- P Satisfactory performance that meets course requirements (expected to be the median grade of all students in the course)
- L Unacceptable graduate performance: substandard in significant ways
- F Performance that is seriously deficient and unworthy of graduate credit

IMPORTANT NOTE ON PLAGIARISM

Be aware of the University of North Carolina policy on plagiarism. Your written work must be original. Ask if you have any doubts about what this means. All cases of plagiarism (unattributed quotation or paraphrasing) of anyone else's work, whether from someone else's answers to homework or from published materials, will be officially reported and dealt with according to UNC policies (Instrument of Student Judicial Governance, Section II.B.1. and III.D.2, <http://instrument.unc.edu>).

Special Needs: If you feel that you may need an accommodation for a disability or have any other special need, please make an appointment to discuss this with us. We will be most able to address special circumstances if I know about them early in the semester. Our office hours and contact information are listed at the beginning of this syllabus.