

SIMMONS COLLEGE

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

Fall 2007

LIS 441: Appraisal of Archives and Manuscripts

Class Hours: Monday 6 – 9 pm.

Instructor: Jeannette A. Bastian

Office Hours: Wednesday 10-12 pm. and by appointment.

Phone and email: 617-521-2808; bastian@simmons.edu

Course Description: This course examines archival appraisal, the most critical task of the archivist. Through appraisal, the archivist determines which records have continuing value for long-term preservation. Appraisal of records not only affects all other archival functions but significantly impacts which part of the human documentary record will be preserved as part of society's collective memory.

GSLIS Student Learning Outcomes

Outcome #7: Apply relevant research studies to tasks requiring problem solving and critical thinking.

Outcome #9: Respond to diversity among individuals and communities through policies, collections and services

Additional Course Outcomes:

1. Students understand the history and basic theories of archival appraisal
2. Students understand the methodologies and techniques of archival appraisal
3. Through practical exercises, students can evaluate appraisal and acquisition policies.

Students must satisfactorily meet all the requirements described in the syllabus. Extenuating circumstances or other valid reasons for not making up the course assignments will be considered by the instructor, but the student will be required to provide evidence of the severity of the circumstances preventing the student from completing the assignments. Unexcused late submissions of assignments will lead to a half reduction in your grade each day the assignment is late.

The **Academic Support Center (ASC)** at <http://my.simmons.edu/academics/asc/> offers writing tutors and will help students with learning challenges. Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with documented physical, sensory, systemic, cognitive learning and psychiatric disabilities. If you have a disability and anticipate that you will need a reasonable accommodation in this class, it is important that you contact the Director of the Academic Support Center at 617-521-2471 early in the semester. Students with disabilities are also encouraged to contact their instructors to discuss their individual needs for accommodations.

Students should be aware that Simmons follows a College Honor Code. It can be found at <http://my.simmons.edu/gslis/resources/student-info/honor-code.shtml>

Course Requirements:

1. Appraisal Report: Due December 1.

The appraisal report should evaluate the collecting, acquisition or appraisal policy of an archival repository. The student will visit the repository or may use an online repository if it has both its policies and collections online, will evaluate the collection and the policies, interview the appropriate staff, read in the appropriate literature and prepare an 8-10 page double –spaced paper. Be prepared to discuss it in class. The paper will address the following:

1. Description of the institution, the institution's collection, its policy and/or practice (if it lacks a formal policy).
2. Evaluation of the institution's policy and/or practice based on standard archival and records practice, supported by the archival literature
3. Propose ways that the policy and practice could be strengthened . If appropriate, suggest alternative or additional appraisal strategies that might be appropriate and effective for the institution and why. These must be grounded in the existing archival literature.
4. Propose ways that the "success" of the policy and practice could be measured or evaluated

Students should structure this paper according to the four elements listed above. Each student should visit the institution (in person or virtually), interview appropriate staff, and immerse him or herself in the relevant appraisal literature and, if available, literature concerning the particular archival program.

Writing and footnoting style must adhere to a standard citation system such as APA or *Chicago Manual of Style*.

2. Group Reports: Due Dates As Assigned in Syllabus. Groups will be assigned to investigate and conduct part of a class session on one of the following three appraisal strategies.

Macro-Appraisal
Documentation Strategy
Electronic Records/ Records Continuum

Presentations may be power-point or web presentations. All presentations must include the following:

5. Discussion of the appraisal strategy and how it works?
6. Key proponents of this strategy? A review and discussion of their writings.
7. Advantages and disadvantages of this strategy
8. Your critical assessment
9. Questions for the class discussion

3. Case Studies: Due October 13 – No class, email to instructor. Students will be responsible for reading and analyzing two related appraisal case studies, presenting them to the class and submitting a 5-7 page analysis. The case studies will be assigned by the instructor. The analysis should include the following:

- What is the case study about?
- What are the appraisal issues ?
- Were the appraisal issues resolved ? And if so, how?
- Your thoughts on the issues and their solutions? Were there other options?
- How does the appraisal literature support or not support the solutions?

Case Studies: (each student will be assigned two studies):

All read: Karen M. Lamoree, "Documenting the Difficult or Collecting the Controversial," *Archival Issues* 20:2 (1995): 149-154.

(1) Jeremy Brett, "A Case Study of the Web-Site Appraisal Process as Applied to State Government Agency Web Sites in Wisconsin," *Archival Issues*, 27 (2) (2002): 99-110.

*Helmut M. Knies, "Reappraising and Reaccessioning Wisconsin State Government Records: An Agency-Wide Approach," *Archival Issues*, 30 (1) 2006, 35-44.

(2) Tamar G. Chute and Ellen D. Swain, "Navigating Ambiguous Waters: Providing Access to Student Records in the University Archives," *American Archivist* 67 (Fall/Winter 2004): 212-233.

*Christopher J. Prom and Ellen D. Swain, "From the College Democrats to the Falling Illini: Identifying, Appraising and Capturing Student Organizational Websites," *American Archivist* (Fall/Winter 2007): 344-363.

(3) Brian Keough and Amy C. Schindler, "Thinking Globally, Acting Locally: Documenting Environmental Activism in New York State," *Archival Issues* 28 no2 121-35 2003/2004

Robert Horton, "Cultivating Our Garden: Archives, Community, and Documentation," *Archival Issues*, v. 26 no. 1 (2001) p. 27-40.

(4) Tom Hyry, Diane Kaplan and Christine Weideman, "Though this be madness, yet there is method in 't': Assessing the Value of Faculty Papers and Defining a Collecting Policy," *American Archivist* 65 (Spring/Summer 2002): 56-69.

Nancy Deromedi, "Personal Faculty Web site: Exploring Archival Issues and Digital Convergence," *Archival Issues*, 29 no. 1 (2005): 9-18.

(5) Colleen McFarland, "Documenting Teaching and Learning: Practices, Attitudes, and Opportunities in College and University Archives," *Archival Issues*, 29 no. 1 (2005): 19-35.

T. Z. Laver (2003). "In a class by themselves: Faculty papers at research university archives and manuscript repositories." *American Archivist*, 66 (Spring/Summer 2003), 159-196.

(6) Michele Christian, "Documenting Student Life: The Use of Oral Histories in University Archives," *Archival Issues*, v. 27 no. 2 (2002) p. 111-24.

*Kathryn M. Neal, "Giving It More Than the Old College Try: Documenting Diverse Populations in College and University Archives," in Prom and Swain, *College and University Archives* (Chicago: SAA, 2008): 97-116.

(7) Todd Daniels-Howell, "Reappraisal of Congressional Records at the Minnesota Historical Society: A Case Study," *Archival Issues*, 23 (1, 1998): 35-40.

*Pam Hackbart-Dean, "A Hint of Scandal: Problems in Acquiring the Papers of Senator Herman E. Talmadge – A Case Study," *Provenance* 13 (1995): 65-80.

(8) Julie Herrada, "Letters to the Unabomber: A Case Study and Some Reflections," *Archival Issues* 28 (1) (2003-2004): 35-46.

Diane E. Kaplan, "The Stanley Milgram Papers: A Case Study on Appraisal of and Access to Confidential Data Files." *American Archivist* 59, no. 3 (Summer 1996)

Response Papers (four): Due at the classes indicated.

Write a one page (approximately 300-350 word) response paper on any aspect of the the readings assigned for that week. Post it on the class wiki. Do not summarize the readings but give your thoughts on them and raise any questions you may have. End your paper with one question for class discussion. The weekly reading assignments below indicate which weeks require response papers. **Response papers must be emailed to the instructor the day before the class.**

Grading:

Class Participation and Response Papers: 25%

Group Project: 25%

Appraisal Paper: 25%

Case Study: 25%

Recommended Texts;

Richard J. Cox, *Documenting Localities: a Practical Model for American Archivists and Manuscripts Curators* (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1996).

Richard J. Cox, *No Innocent Deposits; Forming Archives by Rethinking Appraisal* (Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2004).

Barbara Craig, *Archival Appraisal, Theory and Practice* (Munche: KG Sauer, 2004).

Helen W. Samuels, *Varsity Letters: Documenting Modern Colleges and Universities* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1992).

Syllabus:

September 8. Introduction. An Appraisal Mindset.

Case Study: Ohio Penitentiary Records

September 15. Archival Appraisal: Basic Definitions, History of Appraisal, Role of Records Management.

Required Readings:

Richard J. Cox, *No Innocent Deposits; Forming Archives by Rethinking Appraisal* (Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2004). Chapter 9 (p.231-258).

Terry Cook, "What is Past is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas Since 1898, and the Future Paradigm Shift," *Archivaria* 43 (Spring 1997): 17-63.

Case Study in class: FBI Files

September 22. Functional Analysis, Value and Significance. *Response Paper #1.*

Required Readings

Hans Booms, "Society and the Formation of Documentary Heritage: Issues in the Appraisal of Archival Sources," *Archivaria* 24 (Summer 1987), pp. 69-107.

Terry Cook, "Mind Over Matter: Towards A New Theory of Archival Appraisal," in Barbara L. Craig, ed., *The Archival Imagination: Essays in Honour of Hugh A. Taylor* (Ottawa: Association of Canadian Archivists, 1992), pp. 38-70.

F. Gerald Ham, *Selecting and Appraising Archives and Manuscripts*, 15-24; 51-65.

September 29. Collecting Policies, Intrinsic Value.

Required Readings

Timothy L. Ericson, "At the 'rim of creative dissatisfaction': Archivists and Acquisition Development," *Archivaria* 33 (Winter 1991-92):66-77.

James M. O'Toole, "On the Idea of Permanence," *American Archivist* 52 (Winter 1989): 10-25.

Faye Phillips, "Developing Collecting Policies for Manuscript Collections," *American Archivist* 47 (Winter 1984): 30-42.

October 6. Reappraisal and Deaccessioning. *Response Paper #2*

Required Readings

Leonard Rapport, "No Grandfather Clause: Reappraising Accessioned Records," *American Archivist* 44 (Spring 1981): 143-150.

Karen Benedict, "Invitation to a Bonfire: Reappraisal and Deaccessioning of Records as Collection Management Tools in an Archives – A Reply to Leonard Rapport," *American Archivist* 47 (Winter 1984): 43-49.

*Mark A. Greene, "I've Deaccessioned and Lived to Tell About It: Confessions of an Unrepentant Reappraiser," *Archival Issues* 30 (1), p. 7-22.

Sheila Powell, "Archival Reappraisal: The Immigration Case Files," *Archivaria* 33 (Winter 1991-92): 104-116.

October 13. Columbus day.

October 20. Collecting – Building Community and Identity. *Response Paper #3. Email Case Studies to Instructor*

Required Readings

Noriega, Chon A. "Preservation Matters." *Aztlan: A Journal of Chicano Studies* 30, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 1-20.
http://www.chicano.ucla.edu/press/journals/Issues/documents/jlcommentary_v30n1sf2005.pdf

*Andrew Flinn, "Community Histories, Community Archives: Some Opportunities and Challenges," *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 28 (October, 2007): 153.

Verne Harris, "Contesting Remembering and Forgetting: The Archive of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission," in his *Archives and Justice, A South African Perspective* (Chicago: SAA, 2007): 289-304.

Carolyn Heald, "Are We Collecting the 'Right Stuff'?" *Archivaria* 40 (Fall 1995): 182-188.

Roy Rosenzweig, "Scarcity or Abundance? Preserving the Past in a Digital Era," *American Historical Review* 108, no. 3 (2003): 735-762.

October 27. Government Appraisal Policies

Guest Lecturer: Marvin Kabakoff, Senior Records Analyst, National Archives & Records Administration

Required Readings

National Archives and Records Administration, "Strategic Directions: Appraisal Policy," <http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/initiatives/appraisal.html>

National Archives of Australia, "Why Records are Kept: Directions in Appraisal," http://www.naa.gov.au/recordkeeping/disposal/why_keep/summary.html

November 3. Appraisal Models: Documentation Strategy. **Student Presentation.** *Students begin presenting Case Studies*

Required Readings

Helen W. Samuels, "Who Controls the Past," *American Archivist* 49 (Spring 1986): 109-24.

Richard J. Cox, "The Archival Documentation Strategy: A Brief Intellectual History, 1984-1996 and Practical Description," *Janus* 2 (1995): 76-93.

Philip Alexander and Helen W. Samuels, "The Roots of 128: A Hypothetical Documentation Strategy," *American Archivist* 50 (Fall 1987): 518-31.

Timothy L. Ericson, "'To Approximate June Pasture', The Documentation Strategy in the Real World," *Archival Issues* 22:1 (1997): 5-20

November 10. Appraisal Models: Macroappraisal. **Student Presentation**

Required Readings

Catherine Bailey, "From the Top Down: The Practice of Macro-Appraisal," *Archivaria* 43 (Spring 1997): 89-128

Terry Cook, "Macro-appraisal and Functional Analysis: Documenting Governance Rather than Government," *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 25 (1), (2004) : 5-18.

Normand Fortier, "Transparency, Compliance, and Accountability: Developing a Knowledge Infrastructure for Macroappraisal at Library and Archives Canada," *Archival Science Online First* (2006), 18p.

Adrian Cunningham and Robyn Oswald, "Some Functions are More Equal than Others: The Development of a Macroappraisal Strategy for the National Archives of Australia", *Archival Science Online First* (2006), 22p.

November 17: Appraisal Models: Electronic Records. Student Presentation

Required Readings

Peter Botticelli, Records Appraisal in Network Organizations, *Archivaria* 49 (Spring 2000): 161-91. <http://journals.sfu.ca/archivar/index.php/archivaria/issue/view/426>

Frank Upward, "Structuring the Records Continuum - Part One: Postcustodial principles and properties,"
<http://www.sims.monash.edu.au/research/rcrg/publications/recordscontinuum/fupp1.html>

Victoria Electronic Records Strategies, <http://www.prov.vic.gov.au/vers/vers/default.htm>
TBA

Dan Zelenyj, "Archivy *Ad Portas*: The Archives-Records Management Paradigm Revisited in the Electronic Information Age," *Archivaria* 47 (Spring 1999): 66-84.

November 24: Non-Textual Records, Other Appraisal Strategies – The Black Box. Response Paper #4

Required Readings

Guest Speaker: Leah Weisse, WGBH

Mary Ide and Leah Weisse, "Developing Preservation Appraisal Criteria for a Public Broadcasting Station," *The Moving Image* 3.1 (2003) 146-157,
http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/the_moving_image/v003/3.1ide.html

Grimm, Tracy. "Identifying and Preserving the History of the Latino Visual Arts: Survey of Archival Initiatives and Recommendations." Latino Policy and Issue Brief No. 6, Chicano Studies Research Center, April 2005.
http://www.chicano.ucla.edu/press/siteart/crr_06April2005.pdf

*Verne Harris, "Postmodernism and Archival Appraisal: Seven Theses," in his *Archives and Justice, A South African Perspective* (Chicago: SAA, 2007);101-105.

Frank Boles and Julia Marks Young, "Exploring the Black Box: The Appraisal of University Administrative Records," *American Archivist* 48 (Spring 1985).

December 1: Other Appraisal Strategies: Sampling, User-based, Minnesota Method. *Appraisal Reports Due*
Required Readings

Terry Cook, "Many are Called but Few are Chosen: Appraisal Guidelines for Sampling and Selecting Case Files," *Archivaria* 32 (Summer 1991): 25-50.

Mark Greene, "'The Surest Proof': A Utilitarian Approach to Appraisal," *Archivaria* 45 (Spring 1998): 127-69.

Margaret J. Dixon, Beyond Sampling: Returning to Macroappraisal for the Appraisal and Selection of Case Files, *Archival Science* , Online First (2006), 29p.

December 8: The Ethics of Appraisal.

Required Readings

Adrian Cunningham, "Beyond the Pale? The 'Flinty' Relationship between Archivists Who Collect the Private Records of Individuals and the Rest of the Archival Profession," *Archives and Manuscripts* 24 (May 1996): 20-26.

Randall C. Jimerson, "Archives for All: Professional Responsibility and Social Justice," *American Archivist* 70 (Fall/Winter 2007): 252-281.

Thomas Wilsted, "Observations on the Ethics of Collecting Archives and Manuscripts," *Provenance* 11 (1993): 25-38.

Student Reports