Archival Theory and Practice
Spring, 2004

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Brief:
This course seeks to engage innovations in the theory and method of archival research while introducing students to the practice of archivists. Using the archival holdings of the Tippecanoe County Historical Association (TCHA) as our primary resource, we will discuss both the “how to” and the “how come” of archives: their invention, organization, cultural significance and pragmatic use. We will read discussions of archival creation and study by leading scholars and we will work with the TCHA to index, create finding aids, make preservation recommendations, or digitize materials in their collections even as we use those materials as the basis for our critical work.

Texts (at Von’s Books):
Jacques Derrida, Archive Fever
Carolyn Steedman, Dust

Coursepack (at Copymat), indicated by (CP) in the reading schedule

Requirements:
50% Critical Archival Project
Proposal (due February 5)
Draft (due March 12)
Completed Project (due April 22)

Guidelines for Critical Archival Project
For the proposal, please provide information about the following:
- The name of the collection you will be processing and any other identifying information
- Informal description of collection: records creator, dates, contents (attach existing finding aids, if any)
- The current status of the collection’s processing:
  ✓ Accession records
  ✓ Preservation steps already taken
  ✓ Preservation steps remaining, if any, and estimate of time and materials required to complete
  ✓ Arrangement steps already taken; steps remaining and estimate of time required
✓ Description steps taken and remaining, an estimate of time required

- Arguments for conducting processing work on this collection:
  ✓ Merits of the records:
  ✓ Need for (additional) processing
  ✓ General interest and potential use of records

- Reasons you should do the work:
  ✓ Special expertise and/or skills
  ✓ Special interest in subject or media

By “draft”, we mean a preliminary version of the work you are doing on the collection—transcription, preservation steps, indexing, finding aids, etc. We expect that by this point the project should be nearly completed, and that as we read the draft we will be able to make finishing suggestions.

For the completed project, please turn in the archival work you’ve performed (or direct us to it at the TCHA). In addition, please submit an analysis of the project. What were your critical or theoretical considerations? How did you meet challenges or problems? What remains to be done on the project? Who now should have access or find the collection meaningful and in what ways? How would you ensure future access to the collection and relevance of your archival work?

50% Critical Research Project
  Proposal (due March 5)
  Poster Presentation of Research (April 27-29)
  Paper (due April 29)

For the proposal, turn in a 1-2 page abstract of your project, including mention of the materials from the TCHA that you will use, your disciplinary or methodological approach, the significance of your project, and projected findings. Please also include a bibliography of primary and secondary sources as appropriate and a timeline or projection of your research.

Details of the poster presentation TBA

The paper should be 18-30 pages long

Also required: constant attendance and active participation in class discussions; preparation of a text for class discussion (texts will be on reserve; details TBA)
Schedule:
Please note: materials in the course pack are generally excerpts from longer works. While we welcome your industrious reading of whole books, for the purposes of discussion, we will focus only on the assigned selections.

Jan. 15: The Rhetoric of the Archive: finding aids; excerpts from *Keeping Archives*

Before our Jan. 27 meeting, please read as background Gregory Hunter, “Introduction to Archives and Manuscripts”; James Gregory Bradsher, “An Introduction to Archives”; and James M. O’Toole, “from *Understanding Archives and Manuscripts* (all in CP). These should also be helpful for the tour at TCHA.

Jan. 20: At Tippecanoe County Historical Association (TCHA), 909 South Street, Lafayette (across from the Fowler House): Introduction and tour; discussion of protocols
Jan. 22: At TCHA: free exploration of holdings

Jan. 27: Guest speaker, Sammie Morris, Purdue University archivist.
Please read the following, all in the coursepack:
- Sammie Morris, “Starting from Scratch: How to Create a Museum Archives”
- Dallas Museum of Art, Archives Policies and Procedures (2 pages)
- Excerpts from David B. Gracy II’s course packet (all in our course packet)

Jan. 29: Guest Speaker, Dr. Ronald J. Stephens, Coordinator, African/African American Studies at Grand Valley State University: presentation on ongoing archival research project

Feb. 3: Archival Research Narratives:
- John Demos, *Unredeemed Captive*
- John Kasson, *Houdini, Tarzan and the Perfect Man*
- Mary Beth Norton, *In the Devil’s Snare* (all in coursepack)

Feb. 5: Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever*  
CRITICAL ARCHIVAL PROJECT PROPOSAL DUE

Feb. 10: Derrida, *Archive Fever*
Feb. 12: Archival research narratives.
- Lauren Berlant, *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City*
- Lawrence Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow*
- Anne Myles, “From Monster to Martyr” (all in coursepack)

Feb. 17: Archival research narratives.
- Jean Fagan Yellin’s introduction to Harriot Jacobs’s *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*  
- Henry Louis Gates’s introduction to Hannah Crafts’s *The Bondwoman’s Narrative* (both in coursepack)

Feb. 19: Archival research narratives.
- Theodora Penny Martin, *The Sound of our Own Voices*
- Elizabeth McHenry, *Forgotten Readers*
- Jacqueline Jones Royster, *Traces of a Stream* (all in coursepack)

Feb. 24: Carolyn Steedman, *Dust*
Feb. 26: Digital Archiving
- David Brown, “Using Computers and Document Imaging” (CP)
- Site organized by the American Social History Project at the City University of New York Graduate Center and the Center for History and New Media at George Mason University—archives emails and other electronic ephemera exchanged on September 11, 2001: www.911digitalarchive.org

Mar. 2: Archivist theory.
- Carolyn Heald, “Is There Room for Archives in the Postmodern World?”
- Dorothy E. Smith, “Textually Mediated Social Organization” (in coursepack)

Mar. 4: Group Archival project
**CRITICAL RESEARCH PROJECT PROPOSAL DUE**

Mar. 9: Group Archival project
Mar. 11: Group Archival project
**ARCHIVAL PROJECT DRAFT DUE**

**SPRING BREAK**

Mar. 23: Workshop research projects and problems
Mar. 25: Individual archival research time

**Saturday afternoon, Mar. 27: Special Session.**

In conjunction with the American Studies 40th Anniversary Symposium, our class will present preliminary research/archival findings in a public forum at the TCHA.

Mar. 30: Workshop research projects and problems

April 1: Individual archival research time

April 6: Workshop research projects and problems
April 8: Individual archival research time

April 13: Workshop research projects and problems
April 15: Individual archival research time

April 20: Workshop research projects and problems
April 22: Individual archival research time
**CRITICAL ARCHIVE PROJECT DUE**

April 27-29: Presentations of research and archival projects (format TBA)
EXAM WEEK: RESEARCH PAPERS DUE