ARST 5200 · ARRANGEMENT AND DESCRIPTION OF ARCHIVAL MATERIAL
SAMPLE SYLLABUS (BASED ON FALL 2014)

ADMINISTRIVIA

INSTRUCTOR
Seth Shaw
Office hours: Face-to-face, phone, WebEx: Monday through Friday, 10:00 P.M. – 2:00 P.M. EST, as available. Evening appointments are possible by appointment

PREREQUISITES
ARST 5000 · Principles and Practices of Archives

CREDIT
3 weekly contact hours

SCHEDULE AND LOCATION
Lecture: Thursday evenings, 6:30 – 8:30 P.M., WebEx virtual classroom

Discussion & Course Materials: Georgia View (D2L)

FORMAT OF COURSE
Online course including weekly, synchronous lectures by the professor and asynchronous student discussion of assignments and readings.

DESCRIPTION
In-depth and applied study of the intellectual and physical organization of archival material in all media and formats. Examination of the core principles and standards underlying the processes of arrangement and description, their evolution over time, and their application to different types of archival collections in multiple settings. Applying methods to and exploring future practices within the digital environment. Learn to arrange and describe archival collections to preserve their original context of creation and promote use by researchers.

BACKGROUND
Arrangement and description are the processes by which archivists gain intellectual and physical control of historical records and manuscript collections, organize them and make them available to researchers. Guided by the twin principles of provenance and original order, the arrangement of an archival collection should reflect the original use of the materials by the records creator and also facilitate access by researchers. In presenting the arrangement to researchers via descriptive tools such as metadata records and finding aids, professional standards must be followed and harmonized with institutional practice and the needs of researchers.

Over time the principles of arrangement and description have evolved to cope with the glut of modern organizational records. As technology has influenced the creation of records, so has technology shaped and influenced archival practice. From the typewriter through to the creation of modern digital records, technology has made the production and dissemination of information easier and easier. As
archivists have struggled to cope with the volume of modern records and their rapidly changing formats, practices such as MPLP (More Product, Less Process) have developed to combat ever-growing backlogs. Similarly, experimentation with arranging born digital records continues as archivists debate best practices.

This course examines the core principles and standards underlying the processes of arrangement and description, their evolution over time, and their application to different types of archival collections in multiple settings. The course also asks students to consider the future of arrangement and description in the context of the digital environment. How has practice changed? What must change in order to effectively manage digital records in the future? This is also a practical course in which students will learn the steps of arrangement and description and practice their implementation.

**COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES**

At the end of this course, students will:

**Arrangement:**
- Be able to discuss, apply and critique the guiding principles of arrangement, including provenance; original order; informational and evidential value; physical vs. intellectual control of records; and hierarchical levels of arrangement;
- Be able to discuss how modern records collections and evolving technology have influenced archival theories of arrangement;
- Be able to plan and manage a processing project effectively, including writing a processing plan;
- Be able to arrange an archival collection in multiple formats, including paper, photographs, audio/visual, and born digital.

**Description:**
- Be able to recognize and describe the variety of methods and formats used to provide access to archival collections, including archival inventories, MARC catalog records, and EAD records;
- Be able to recognize and describe the variety of different metadata standards and their applications;
- Be able to effectively describe archival collections for access;
- Be able to effectively cross-walk related metadata standards.

**Readings and Resources**
- Additional weekly readings are linked from the corresponding week in the course schedule
- A bibliography of (optional) related readings is included at the end of the syllabus
Grading

- Participation:
  - Class Participation: 15%
  - GAView Participation: 10%
  - Congreave walk-through: 5%
- E-Records Survey: 6%
- Foundations exam: 15%
- Wayward Processing project:
  - Processing Plan: 6%
  - Single-level descriptions: 5%
  - Multi-level descriptions: 5%
  - Controlled Access terms: 5%
  - Digital Objects: 3%
- Mapping exercise: 10%
- Final exam: 15%

- Late work is penalized a letter grade.
- Without excuse, a grade of zero points will be assigned for missed work.

Expectations

Students are responsible for their own education. Throughout the course, students should assess their progress towards the course objectives and outcomes. At the same time, the course instructor is responsible to facilitate students’ learning by structuring content, by providing a foundation of information through readings and lectures, by guiding discussion, and by answering students’ questions.

Students should bring curiosity and creativity to the course. They are expected to think critically about the course content – the readings, the lectures, and discussion. Students are encouraged to (respectfully) challenge the ideas presented in the course. Those challenges must be justified based on the literature, empirical evidence, or other authoritative source. When evidence is contradictory, students should develop a synthesis that finds commonalities, identifies differences, and notes how a particular context may influence that synthesis. As such, there is seldom a “right” answer, but well-reasoned and well-informed points of view. Students are given credit for correcting course materials submitted by the instructor.

Computing Requirements and Responsibilities

Each student enrolled at Clayton State University is required to have ready access throughout the semester to a notebook computer that meets faculty-approved hardware and software requirements for the student’s academic program. Students may use either a Windows or Macintosh computer. Computers must have at least 2 GB of RAM, and more is highly recommended. Computers must have at least 50GB free disk space. Students in the MAS program must also have
- High-speed Internet.
- A headset with a microphone (preferred) or earphones during synchronous classes to minimize feedback. Typical price is $25 and up. Headsets with a USB connection are recommended. For purposes of comparison, not endorsement, see Logitech’s H390.
- A webcam. Typical price is $25 and up. For purposes of comparison, not endorsement, see Microsoft LifeCam Cinema 720p HD Webcam or LifeCam VX-3000. Note that most laptops now come with acceptable webcams built-in.
- A backup of their system using an external drive or cloud storage.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: Dates are based on Spring 2014 and are included to give a sense of timelines. Future dates will vary based on the start of course and holidays.

Check GAView for discussion questions and case studies before you begin the reading assignments.

21 Aug ~ 1. Introduction, the Archives Life-Cycle, and the Role of Processing
Introduces the course and the how this course sits in the archival endeavor.

Topics:
- Overview of Course
  - Content
  - Assignments
  - Expectations
  - Policies and procedures
- The “Information Flood”
- The Archival Context of Arrangement & Description

Readings:
- Arlene Taylor. *The Organization of Information*, Ch. 1. *Note: can be mostly skimmed, but pay closer attention to the differences between Libraries, Archives, and Museums.*

28 Aug ~ 2. Foundations of Archival Arrangement & Description
Introduces the fundamental concepts of archival arrangement and their historical development.

Topics:
- Provenance
- Original order
- Informational value
- Evidential value
- Physical arrangement
- Intellectual arrangement

Readings:
- Kathleen Roe, *Arranging & Describing Archives & Manuscripts*, Ch. 2 (pp. 11-31), 3 (32-44), and part of 4 (pp. 56-67).
Arlene Taylor. *The Organization of Information*, Ch. 3

**No Show Deadline:** Last day for students to report to class. There may be serious financial aid consequences for any student who is reported as a no show due to the reduction in credit hours.

**04 Sep ~ 3. The Practice of Arrangement & Description**

A great deal of work surrounds the practice of arrangement and description to prepare collections for access and use ("processing"). Processing has adapted over time to reflect changes in economics, technology, and modes of access. How do these trends impact the practice of arrangement and description?

**Topics:**
- The work of arrangement and description
- Levels of Processing
- More Product, Less Process (MPLP)

**Readings:**

**Wayward Family Collection Processing Plan (due 18 Sep)**

**11 Sep ~ 4. Arrangement & Description of “Special Formats”**

Arrangement and description (and processing more generally) of non-textual materials requires some adaptation of practice. How do we accommodate these “special formats”?

**Topics:**
- Archival “Othering” (aggregate v. item-level description)
- Arranging and Describing Electronic Records

**Readings:**

18 Sep ~ 5. Archives Descriptive Standards and Their Products
Discusses the role of standards and introduces the array of standards employed in the archival context.

Topics:
- Types of Standards
  - Data Value standards
  - Content standards
  - Format standards
- Core Community Standards for Archival Description:

Readings:
- Arlene Taylor. The Organization of Information, Ch. 2 & 5

25 Sep ~ 6. Using Describing Archives, a Content Standard (DACS)
Discusses the history, context, and use of Describing Archives, a Content Standard (DACS).

Topics:
- History & Context
- Levels and Elements of Description
- Single Level Minimum / Optimum / Added Value
- Multilevel Minimum / Optimum / Added Value
• Elements

Readings:

Notes:
• Please familiarize yourself with the Congreve [materials description] and complete the DACS elements form before class (both found in GA View). We will be describing the collection using DACS as a class exercise.
• It is highly recommended you read the Michael Rush article, listed in the supplemental bibliography below, if time permits.

2 Oct ~ 7. Foundations Exam – No Class
The exam will be available on GAView at 6:30 pm. Upload your completed exam to GAView before 9:00 pm.

9 Oct ~ 8. Encoded Archival Description (EAD)
Discusses the history, context, and use of Encoded Archival Description (EAD).

Topics:
• History & Purpose
• Process
• Structure
• Resources

Readings:

Websites:

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<tr>
<td>Creating single-level records using the ArchivesSpace.</td>
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<td><strong>Topics:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• The role of archival management software.</td>
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<td>• Basic navigation and features of ArchivesSpace.</td>
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<td>• Creating a single-level description.</td>
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<td><strong>Readings:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• ArchivesSpace Documentation: Basics, Managing Repositories, Working with Resources, and Export an EAD or MARCXML file (in Importing and Exporting Data). Accessed at: <a href="https://docs.archivesspace.org/Default.htm">https://docs.archivesspace.org/Default.htm</a> <em>Note: Requires a login that will be sent to you individually.</em></td>
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<th>23 Oct - 10. Multi-level Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Creating multi-level descriptions using ArchivesSpace.</td>
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<td><strong>Topics:</strong></td>
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<td>• Adding multi-level descriptions in ArchivesSpace.</td>
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<th>30 Oct - 11. Controlled Access Headings</th>
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<td>Adding controlled access headings (names and subjects) using ArchivesSpace</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Topics:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• The role of controlled access terms</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Add controlled access headings to Wayward description (due: 6 Nov)</strong></td>
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Selecting appropriate terms
Adding controlled access terms in ArchivesSpace

Readings:
- ArchivesSpace Documentation: “Controlled Value Lists.” Accessed at: https://docs.archivesspace.org/Default.htm Note: Requires a login that will be sent to you individually.
- Arlene Taylor, Organization of Information, Ch. 9.

Reference:

Websites:
- Art and Architecture Thesaurus Online (http://www.getty.edu/vow/AATSearchPage.jsp)

6 Nov – 12. Introduction to Metadata
Introduces the role and use of metadata in the archival context.

Topics:
- Types of standards (review)
- Types of metadata
  - Descriptive
  - Administrative
  - Structural
- Common Formats
- Function driven metadata

Readings:
- Arlene Taylor. The Organization of Information, Chapter 4.

Websites:
• MODS. Accessed at: http://www.loc.gov/standards/mods/
• PREMIS. Accessed at: http://www.loc.gov/standards/premis/

13 Nov. ~ 13. Metadata Interoperability & Mapping

Metadata becomes even more useful when it can be shared and transformed. Metadata Mapping Exercise (due 4 Dec)

Topics:
• Benefits of metadata sharing
• Barriers to effective metadata sharing
• Mapping metadata between schema (crosswalks)

Readings:

Websites:

20 Nov ~ 14. Digital Object Records & Information Packages

How digital assets and metadata are bound together into digital objects and creating digital object records using ArchiveSpace. Describe Wayward surrogate(s) (due: 11 Dec)

Topics:
• Information Packages
• BagIt
• METS
• Levels of description for digital object records
• Creating digital object records in ArchivesSpace
• Exporting from ArchivesSpace

Readings:
• ArchivesSpace Documentation: “Working with Digital Objects.” Accessed at: https://docs.archivesspace.org/Default.htm Note: Requires a login that will be sent to you individually.

Websites:

27 Nov ~ No Class: Thanksgiving Holiday

04 Dec ~ 15. New Access & Use Models
Technological advancements have opened new models for providing access to and discovering relationships between archival materials.

Topics:
• Mass digitization
• Interfaces & visualizations
• Digital humanities

Readings:

11 Dec ~ 16. Final Exam
The exam will be available on GAView at 6:30 pm. Upload your completed exam to GAView before 9:00 pm.

DUE: Everything.
No late work accepted after today.
ASSIGNMENTS (IN SUMMARY)

1. Online discussion and participation in class sessions

   In class: This is a combination lecture and seminar. The instructor will serve to frame certain topics, but students are expected participant in all class discussions.

   In GAView: Some weeks (7) will include discussion boards intended as a primer for conversation. Each week consider how the readings apply to the listed description and list of topics. Students are strongly encouraged to introduce other, relevant topics. An exploration of unfamiliar terms and concepts can be invaluable to clarify these ideas for yourself and others. Some weeks may include additional questions to prompt further reflection.

   To get full credit for discussion, you submit at least one post that offers your own analysis and evaluation of the ideas in article or substantially builds on/answers another’s comment or question. You are encouraged to offer you opinions in support or contrary to the ideas in the article if supported by your experience or ideas from other authorities (readings, practical experience). Posts must be made before class starts to receive credit.

   Congreve walkthrough: A few weeks (4) will include a demonstration of the ArchivesSpace collection management software. Students are expected to follow along and submit the completed work before the following week’s class period.

2. Wayward Family Processing Project

   The Wayward Family Processing Project is a multi-part project aimed at exposing students to the processing regimen and introducing them to the ArchivesSpace, an application supporting description, management, and access of archival materials. Conducted over several weeks, the components are:

   · Processing Plan
   · Single level resource description
   · Multi-level resource description
   · Adding controlled access terms to the description
   · Digital object description

   At its conclusion, you will have handed in the following, all for the Wayward Family Collection:

   · A processing plan
   · A multilevel resource description output as EAD and PDF and including digital archive objects
   · Digital object records, single- and multi-level, and output as METS records utilizing the MODS descriptive metadata standard.

3. Electronic Records Survey Exercise
Students will download a zip file containing a set of records in a directory structure and then write a survey of the file contents including a proposed arrangement.

4. Foundations Exam

A combination of short and long answers.

5. Metadata Mapping Exercise

Students will compose a simple data map showing how metadata records in one system would be mapped to MODS. Emphasis will be on representing data relations in an intelligible, usable manner.

6. Final Exam

The final will be in the form of three short essays (approximately 750 words each) to be selected from a batch of six questions.
SUPPLEMENTAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

ARRANGEMENT


TRENDS IN ARCHIVAL PROCESSING


DESCRIPTIVE PRACTICES & STANDARDS


**DESCRIBING ARCHIVES, A CONTENT STANDARD**


**CONTROLLED ACCESS HEADINGS**


**METADATA**


**INFORMATION PACKAGES & DIGITAL OBJECT RECORDS**
