

The Archive: Theory, Form, Practice
Syllabus Outline

In this seminar, you will explore the fundamentals of archival work while also thinking about the “big questions” of the archive. How do we organize information and knowledge? How do taxonomies shape our critical understanding of a field? And how do we account for is absent, lost or even unknowable? You will be given the opportunity to do hands-on archival work in two ways: first, by being tasked to investigate a particular processed Newberry collection to identify its constructed and contingent nature (e.g. its provenance, year of processing, organizational approach); and second, by working with archival staff to write a processing plan for an unprocessed collection at the Newberry. This methodological work will be buttressed by a deep engagement with conceptual issues raised through a discussion of readings from historians, literary scholars, and theorists.

The seminar will take place from 9:30 to 12:30 in Towner Fellows Lounge (TFL) on the second floor of the Newberry, unless noted otherwise. Lunch will be catered from 12:30 to 1:30 in TFL. On the first and last day of the seminar, we will also meet in the afternoon from 2 to 4/4:30 pm. Otherwise, afternoons should be reserved for your own work with collection materials.

October 5th: What is an Archive? // Liesl Olson, Director of Chicago Studies; Alison Hinderliter, Interim Lloyd Lewis Curator of Modern Manuscripts and Selector for Modern Music; Catherine Grandgeorge, Processing Archivist.

READINGS:

1. Terry Cook, “What is Past is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas Since 1898, and the Future Paradigm Shift” (1997).
2. Michelle Caswell, “‘The Archive’ is Not An Archives: Acknowledging the Intellectual Contributions of Archival Studies” (2016).
3. Selected Newberry Finding Aids: Fanny Butcher Papers (literary papers); Goodman Family Papers (family papers); Pullman Company Records (business papers); Arts Club of Chicago (organization papers).

2-4 pm: Tour of the Stacks. Introduction to Unprocessed Collections.

October 12: Processing and the Process of the Archive // Liesl Olson, Alison Hinderliter, Catherine Grandgeorge.

READINGS:

1. James O’Toole and Richard Cox, chapters 3-4 from *Understanding Archives and Manuscripts* (2006).
2. Mark Greene and Dennis Meissner, “More Product, Less Process: Revamping Traditional Archival Processing” (2005).
3. “Collection Survey and Processing Plan,” adapted from “Manuscript Processing Manual and Procedures” created by Jennifer Gotwals (Harvard, 2013) and compiled by Catherine Grandgeorge (Newberry, 2018).
4. “Description: Finding Aids”; “Newberry Library Arrangement Practices,” edited by Alison Hinderliter (2018).

5. Thomas Osborne, "The Ordinarity of the Archive" (1999).
6. [optional] Michel Foucault, "Lives of Infamous Men" (1979).

October 19: Archive Fever, the Philosopher and the Historian // Liesl Olson

- READINGS:
1. Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever* (1995).
 2. Carolyn Steedman, selections from *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History* (2002).

October 26: Born-Digital Materials in the Archives // Guest faculty presentation, Naomi Nelson, Director of the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University. Please meet in the first floor seminar room.

- READINGS:
1. Jefferson Bailey, "Disrespect des Fonds: Rethinking Arrangement and Description in Born-Digital Archives." *Archive Journal* (June 2013).
<http://www.archivejournal.net/essays/disrespect-des-fonds-rethinking-arrangement-and-description-in-born-digital-archives/>
 2. Besser, Howard. "Archiving Aggregates of Individually Created Digital Content: Lessons from Archiving the Occupy Movement." *Digital Technology and Culture* 42:1 (2013), pgs. 31-38.
 3. Reside, Doug. "File Not Found: Rarity in an Age of Digital Plenty." *RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage* 15:1 (2014), pgs. 68-74.
<http://rbm.acrl.org/index.php/rbm/article/view/416/416>

Nov. 2: Getting a Grip: The Challenges of Preserving Born-Digital Materials as Evidence // Guest faculty presentation, Chris Prom, University Archivist and Andrew Turyn Professor, University of Illinois Library.

- READINGS:
1. Bearman, David. "Item Level Control and Electronic Recordkeeping." *Archives & Museum Informatics* 10 (1996): 195-245. <http://www.archimuse.com/papers/nhprc/item-lvl.html>.
 2. Gollins, Tim. "Parsimonious Preservation: Preventing Pointless Processes." In *Online Information Proceedings*, 75-78. The National Archives (UK), 2009. <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/information-management/parsimonious-preservation.pdf>.
 3. Prom, Christopher J., Giovanni Michetti, Katherine Timms, Andrea Tarnawsky, and Richard Pearce Moses. "Arrangement and Description in the Cloud: A Preliminary Analysis." In *Born Digital in the Cloud: Challenges and Solutions: Contributions to the 21. Archival Science Colloquium/International*

Symposium of the Archives School Marburg, edited by Karen Anderson, Irmgard Christa Becker, and Luciana Duranti. Veröffentlichungen Der Archivschule Marburg, Hochschule Für Archivwissenschaft, Nr. 65. Marburg: Archivschule, 2018.

4. Belovari, Susanne. "Historians and Web Archives." *Archivaria* 83 (June 13, 2017): 59-79.
<https://archivaria.ca/index.php/archivaria/article/view/13600>.

November 16: Archive and Ethics // Liesl Olson and Analú López, Ayer Librarian.

READINGS:

1. Brent Hayes Edwards, "The Taste of the Archive" (2012)
2. Northern Arizona University Institute for Native Americans, "[Protocols for Native American Archival Materials](#)" (2007)
3. Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts" (2008).

November 30: Archives and Historical Imagination // Liesl Olson.

READINGS:

1. Roger Darnton, "The Good Way to Do History" (2014)
2. Arlette Farge, selections from *The Allure of the Archives* (1989)
3. Liesl Olson, "May-June, 1929"; "Chicago, Fall 1941" from *Chicago Renaissance* (2017).

December 7: Hidden Archives and Archival Stewardship // Guest Faculty Presentation, Melissa Barton, Curator, Prose & Drama, Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Visit by Andrea Jackson, Executive Director, BMRC.

READINGS:

1. [Mapping the Stacks](#) and [Black Metropolis Research Consortium](#) websites.
2. [Finding aid](#) for the South Side Community Art Center
3. Bill Mullen, "Arts in Uniform: The South Side Community Art Center and the Defense of Culture" from *Popular Fronts* (1999), pp. 81-105.
4. [National Trust for Historic Preservation](#), South Side Community Art Center

2-4:30 pm: Presentations and Evaluations.