

AMST 650/ENGL 680: Archives and Digital Humanities

Room 227 Heavilon Hall

Thursdays 4:30-7:20pm

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Description

How are archives and cultural memory being re-built by Digital Humanities? This seminar introduces students to traditional archival theory and practice, then turns through historiography to digital history, culture, and rhetoric.

Since the archival turn, traditional archiving practices—activities such as appraisal, acquisition, arrangement, preservation, description, disaster planning, finding aids, access, and electronic records—have been rethought through various lenses, most particularly postmodernism, digital spaces, and now posthumanism. We are particularly interested how archives conceived as places (or nonplaces), methods, and processes contribute to the production of culture. Thus, we will review traditional and emerging constructions of "archive" as they contribute to our coming understandings of digital libraries, digital publications, and digital humanities.

We will read a variety of research from archival theory, history, library science, information theory, and new media. While each of these disciplines have their own approaches, we will advocate for a user-centered approach to archives. That is, rather than thinking about how archives *should* be built, we will be concerned with charting how actual users might/do use those archives and with building archives that users can use.

We will also consider the role of archives in digital humanities, especially how archival methods can assist in building history and creating cultural memory. Part of the influence of digital humanities scholarship is interdisciplinary; digital archives allow for multiple perspectives and views on a core of materials, leading to opportunities for interdisciplinary scholarly collaboration.

We will work in groups on microprojects that explore description (e.g., how descriptions vary when constructed to invite different kinds of public participation), finding aids (e.g., deconstructing collections using the logic of their arrangement and the language of their finding aids), and preservation (e.g., whether to preserve with mylar sleeves or digitization). But we will also build a set of materials—a commonplace book, so to speak—consisting of digital sites and resources useful for enacting digital humanities. We will also turn to digital archives, exploring the extant types, planning some needed collections, considering the challenges of "saving" native electronic media, and digitizing some materials. We hope participants will 1) better understand the issues, theories, and practices important to archives and historical work in this digital age, 2) contribute their knowledge to a local community organization (TCHA), and 3) begin a project relevant to their own interests.

In addition to their own projects, students will work with the Tippecanoe County Historical Association to process and/or digitize some of their materials. They will also be required to maintain progress reports on their work with TCHA and on their own projects.

Required Texts (available at Vons)

Cohen, Daniel J., and Rosenzweig, Roy. (2006). *Digital History: A Guide to Gathering, Preserving, and Presenting the Past on the Web*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Derrida, Jacques. (2005). *Paper Machine*. Trans. Rachel Bowlby. Stanford: Stanford UP.

Steedman, Carolyn. (2002). *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History*. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP.

*All other readings will be accessed online or distributed digitally.

Work

TCHA work (33%)—The Tippecanoe County Historical Society is in need of both traditional and digital archival processing. Students will work individually or collaboratively on a project that both interests you and meets the needs of TCHA. You will need to produce a project proposal and a timeline for the work, plus progress reports on how that work is coming and how you theorize it along the course readings and theories.

Digital archival project (33%)—This should be a project emanating from your own interests, which can be individual or collaborative. You will need to produce a project proposal and timeline for the work, plus progress reports on how that work is coming and how you theorize it along the course readings and theories. The course will conclude with presentations on your projects during the last class meeting.

Weekly progress reports and commonplace book contributions (33%)—you will post weekly progress reports that integrate and reflect on connections between your archival work and the course readings. You will also be expected to build and contribute to a collection of sites/resources on digital humanities using Zotero (a commonplace book). Similarly, you will want to build your own individual collection of resources on Zotero that are personally useful for you.

Course Calendar

Jan 14: Frames of Reference

- Introduction to course and to major issues within archive studies and digital humanities
- Read preface, ch 1 and ch 2 of Steedman, *Dust*

Jan 21: Memory and History

- Finish Steedman, *Dust*
- Blouin, "Archivists, Meditation, and Constructs of Social Memory"
- Klein, "The Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse"
- Haskins, "Between Archive and Participation"
- Kaplan, "We are what we collect, we collect what we are"
- Osborne, "The Ordinariness of the Archive"

Jan 28: Inventing Archives--From disciplines to communities

- Visit to TCHA (meet at TCHA, 909 South St. at 4:30pm)
- Shilton and Srinivasan, "Participatory Appraisal and Arrangement for Multicultural Archival Collections"
- Flinn, "Community Histories, Community Archives: Some Opportunities and Challenges"
- "Cataloging Guidelines for Community Archives"
- select one of the following articles from your discipline that discusses positioning of archives in your discipline:
 - Biesecker, "Of Historicity, Rhetoric: The Archive as Scene of Invention"
 - Deloria, "Broadway and Main: Crossroads, Ghost Roads, and Paths to an American Studies"
 - Gray and Sheppard, "Moving History: Promoting Moving Image Archive Collections in an

Emerging Digital Age"

--Wells, "Claiming the Archive for Rhetoric and Composition"

Feb 4: Traditional Archival Methods and New Approaches on Collections

- Schellenberg, *Modern Archives* [Definitions, pp. 11-16; Develop Principles in America, pp. 179-193; American Finding Aids, pp. 204-214]
- Greene & Meissner, "More Product, Less Process" [part of Lit Review pp. 213-222; Principles for Change ff, pp. 240-256]
- Holmes, "Archival Arrangement: Five Levels"
- Fox and Wilkerson, Introduction to Archives (Getty Research)
- Leigh, "Context! Context! Context! Describing Moving Images at the Collection Level"
- Cox, "The End of Collecting: Towards a New Purpose for Archival Appraisal"
- Yakel, "Archival Representation"

Feb 11: Traditional Archival Methods and New Approaches on Finding Collections

- Menne-Haritz, "Access--The Reformulation of an Archival Paradigm"
- Light and Hyry, "Colophons and Annotations: New Directions for the Finding Aid"
- Hurley, "The Making and Keeping of Records: What are Finding Aids For?"
- Upward and McKemmish, "Teaching Recordkeeping and Archiving Continuum Style"
- Upward, "Modelling the continuum as paradigm shift in recordkeeping and archiving processes, and beyond a personal reflection"

Feb 18: Issues in Classification Systems

- Bowker, "The Kindness of Strangers"
- Bowker and Star, *Sorting Things Out* [selections to be determined in class]
- Star "Grounded Classification: Grounded Theory and Faceted Classification"
- Schaffner, "The Metadata is the Interface: Better Description for Better Discovery of Archives and Special Collections"
- Albrechtson and Jacob, "The Dynamics of Classification Systems as Boundary Objects for Cooperation in the Electronic Library"

Feb 25: Digital History/Digital Humanities--are they possible?

- Cohen et al "Interchange: The Promise of Digital History"
- Grafton, "Apocalypse in the Stacks: The Research Library in the Age of Google"
- Cohen, "Is Google Good for History"
- Davidson, "Humanities 2.0"
- Kassow, excerpt from *Who Will Write Our History?*
- Dodge, "Re-imagining the Past"

Mar 4: Documentation

- Derrida, *Paper Machine*
- Kafka, "Paperwork: The State of the Discipline"
- Jackson, excerpt from *Marginalia*
- Johnson, "Technical Documents as Rhetorical Agency"

Mar 11: Museums and the Curation of Digital Exhibits

- Kalfatovic et al, "Smithsonian Team Flickr: a library, archives, and museums collaboration in web 2.0 space"
- Trant, "Exploring the potential for social tagging and folksonomy in art museums: Proof of concept."

- Erway, "Supply and Demand: Special Collections and Digitization"
- Baron, "The SWAP Project: Building a Museum Database from the Ground Up"
- Schnapp, "Animating the Archive"

Mar 18:

- No class—Spring Break

Mar 25:

- Fogu, "Digitizing Historical Consciousness"
- Marty, "An Introduction to Digital Convergence"
- Freshwater, "The Allure of the Archive"

Apr 1:

- Masanes, selections from *Web Archiving*

Apr 8:

- Daines and Nimer, "Web 2.0 and Archives"

Apr 15:

- First half of Cohen and Rosenzweig, *Digital History*

Apr 22:

- Finish Cohen and Rosenzweig, *Digital History*

Apr 30: Final Projects

- Student presentations of projects