

Department of History - Public History Program
His 9806a: Understanding Archives: The Management of Primary Sources in the Digital Age
Course Outline for Fall 2011

Course Instructor: Don Spanner Ph.D., M.L.I.S. E-mail: dspanner@uwo.ca

Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to the fundamentals of professional archival work. Class sessions will primarily be lecture driven, but combine discussion, practical exercises, and demonstrations. Students will gain a solid grounding in the history of the profession, an understanding of basic archival terminology, principles, theory, as well as an appreciation of current practices and how digital technologies have impacted both archival management and public programming.

Course Objectives

1. To understand the nature of archival documents, as recorded information, and the institutions responsible for preserving them;
2. To understand the principles of archival science;
3. To explore methods of retrieving information from archival records, bearing in mind their organization and preservation;
4. To examine management systems for the intellectual and physical control of archival records;
5. To examine the impact of digital technology on archival management and outreach initiatives.

Course Requirements and Grading

Readings: There are no required texts, but there will be reading assignments as indicated on a pending course website schedule. These readings will be available on reserve in the Weldon Library or, in some cases, at the Graduate Resource Centre (Faculty of Information & Media Studies, 2nd floor, North Campus Building).

Required Assignments: All students will write two 12-15 page double-spaced *essays* on a topic chosen from a list distributed by the instructor in the first week of class. Students will also partake in an *arrangement & description project* where their knowledge of arrangement and description will be applied in creating a RAD inventory for an archival fonds/collection. Each student will be required to give a 20 minute presentation on an effective *digital resource* pertinent to archives (schedule will be arranged in class). Finally, students will be given four practical

reference/research *exercises* over the course of the term. The grade breakdown is as follows:

	Number	Unit Value	Total
Essays	2	20%	40%
Arrangement & Description Project	1	30%	30%
Digital Resource Presentation	1	10%	10%
Exercises	4	5%	20%
Total		n/a	100%

Calendar of Topics

Week 1. Sept. 8	Introductions and Review of Course Outline, Expectations, etc.
Week 2. Sept. 15	Understanding Archives and the Archival Profession: History, Types, and Archival Culture
Week 3. Sept. 22	History & Development of Archival Principles and Theory
Week 4. Sept. 29	Appraisal "Theory" and Practice; Models, Frameworks, and Collection Development
Week 5. Oct. 6	Arrangement & Description: Fundamental Principles & Procedures
Week 6. Oct. 13	Issues in the Preservation of Archival Records
Week 7. Oct. 20	Archives Field Trip
Week 8. Oct. 27	Users of Archives: Identifying Services & Needs
Week 9. Nov. 3	Uses of Archives: Understanding the Research Potential of Archival Records
Week 10. Nov. 10	Traditional Public Programming
Week 11. Nov. 17	Web-based Reference Tools and the Re-Animation of Records
Week 12. Nov. 24	Digital Outreach: On-line Exhibits and Digital Classrooms
Week 13. Dec. 1	A Case Study on Marketing Strategies: The Veterans Project