

LIS 641

Community-focused Archives and Museums

SYLLABUS / Fall 2020 / ONLINE
(08.02.2020: subject to change)

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Office hours: Mondays noon – 2 pm via ZOOM and by appointment via ZOOM or telephone.

Course website: d2l.arizona.edu

Course Description:

In this course, students will draw from carefully curated lectures, discussions, guest presentations, and community-focused assignments to develop an understanding of community-based archives and museums as knowledge domains. Students will be introduced to the concept of “research with respect” to develop practical strategies for working within community-focused archives and museum contexts to: identify records, artifacts, and their creation; document their activities; collect, manage, display, make accessible, and preserve records and other historical and cultural material.

Students will be required to reflect critically on questions that arise as part of their distinct engagement with communities, community-focused archival and museum projects, including but not limited to the following:

- 1 – What is a community?
- 2 – How do different communities conceive of records and cultural heritage?
- 3 – What is a community-focused archives? A community-focused museum? What foundations underpin their existence?
- 4 – What is political about community-focused archives and museums?
- 5 – Why is it important for communities to work with and for their own memory projects?
- 6 – Who is best qualified to engage in such projects?
- 7 – What methods can be used in community-focused archival and museum productions?
- 8 – What are short- and long-term priorities of a community archives? A community museum?
- 9 – How are community-focused archives and museums sustainable? And what are ethical concerns of institutional/academic and community collaborations?
- 10 – To what extent, if at all, should archivists/museum specialists be ‘activists’ or ‘advocates’ for particular communities?
- 11 – How can an archivist/museum specialist acquire the necessary cultural sensitivity to work

with communities with which they are less familiar? Or not a part of?
12 – Who speaks for a community?
And many more to be uncovered and discussed!

Students are expected to do all assigned readings and participate in online discussions. Discussions are an integral part of this class as we make sense of our readings and everyday practices together. Participation is absolutely necessary for success. Students are encouraged to integrate relevant prior classroom learning, and personal, professional, and research experiences and reflect upon how these might be utilized or translated in order to work with communities, their archives & museums, and digital and physical materials.

Course Learning Outcomes:

This course recognizes all of us as co-inquirers into the world(s) we live in. Together we will focus on intensive theoretical engagement and sharing while we pull apart the big picture issues surrounding ambiguous definitions of communities, identity, belonging, information and relational literacies, along with the understandings of *archives*, *archival records*, *museums*, *heritage and memory work*, and professional and everyday *archivists & information professionals* more broadly conceived.

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to-

1. Articulate and analyze different notions of communities and communities of records,
2. Identify and communicate shifting definitions of community through critical interrogations of identity, representation, and the roles of information,
3. Identify and discuss relevant protocols, agreements, and ethical requirements related to community engagement,
4. Outline a strategy for working with a specific community,
5. Understand how to initiate a plan for building and sustaining a community-focused archives and museum,
6. Understand how to design and implement a strategy for documenting a community,
7. Identify funding sources and strategies for community archives and museum,
8. Identify community-centric methods for archival and museum appraisal, description, access, and outreach,
9. Analyze and implement with decolonizing methodologies and developing a methodological and analytical framework for collaborative work within communities.

In addition, this course focuses primarily on these **School of Information Competencies: A1, A2, A3, B5, B7, C8, and C9. To read more about each competency, please visit http://si.arizona.edu/master-arts-library-and-information-science#Student_Competerencies

Required Texts:

Readings for specific class topics will be listed in the D2L site and accessible online. Be prepared to log in through UA Libraries to read from the e-book *Community Archives, Community Spaces: Heritage, Memory and Identity*, edited by Jeannette A. Bastian and Andrew Flinn. Facet Publishing, 2020. I will post the link to the e-book when it's available.

Methods of Evaluation:

15% or 150 points	Core Concepts Reflection
25% or 250 points	Questions & Quotes, QQ (10 weeks x 25 pts/week)
20% or 200 points	Field Visit + Critical Reflection on Field Visit
15% or 150 points	Annotated Bibliography
15% or 150 points	Design an Info-Graphic about your Research Area
10% or 100 points	Presentation of Findings (Annotated Bibliography)

Active Participation is required but is difficult to be quantified in the grading scheme. So, please be prepared for discussions, brainstorming, and deep conversations through D2L as well as through any possible synchronous class conversations through ZOOM.

90 – 100 = A “exemplary, far beyond requirements/expectations”

80 – 89 = B “exceeds requirements/expectations”

70 – 79 = C “meets requirements/expectations”

60 – 69 = D “falls short of requirements/expectations”

below 59 = F “repeat course, if needed”

All written work will be evaluated for format, organization, style, grammar, and punctuation as well as content and argument. Select your most familiar formatting style such as APA, Chicago Manual Style, or MLA.

Work and course requirements are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor with proper notice to students.

Requirements for the Course:

To succeed in this course, 2-3 hours of study time per hour of formal class time (or per unit) are required. This means that in addition to our ‘three hours’ of formal class time, 6-9 hours a week of study time are needed in order to meet course expectations. These hours should be spent on reading texts, writing papers, researching for new information, or thinking about course content. College-level reading and writing abilities are assumed.

Course Assignments:

Questions & Quotes, QQ (10 weeks x 25 pts/week)

Submit one question and two quotes from the assigned readings to the appropriate week’s D2L Discussion Forum **by Wednesdays at noon** (SEE COURSE CALENDAR/SCHEDULE). You should pose open-ended questions that generate conversations. Your question can address a specific reading or theme running through several readings. Quotes may be anything from the readings that resonate with you. Along with the quote, write a paragraph or two explaining why you find the quote significant. Personal and professional reflections that are connected with the readings/discussions are appropriate for this assignment. Then please read one another’s QQs and thoughtfully respond in ways to demonstrate your ability to comprehend readings and make meaning of them in relation to archival contexts.

Worth 25 points = your initial post (20) + your responses (5).

Core Concepts Reflection

For this assignment, you will write a 4-5 page double-spaced paper that synthesizes ideas from the readings so far and makes an argument based on your own critical reflection of the readings. Please pick one of the following questions to answer.

- What is a community archive/museum?
- What is the relationship between identity and community archives/museums?
- How do community archives/museums challenge dominant professional archival / museum theory and practice?

Your reflection should have a thesis statement/ make an argument, and cite and engage at least three readings from class. It should not just be a regurgitation of the readings: you should have your own critique of them. It may help you to ask yourself: What is missing from the readings so far? Or you may ask yourself: How do these concepts apply (or do not apply) to my own particular communit(ies)?

Worth 150 points.

Critical Reflection on Virtual “Field” Visit

****Virtual “Field” Visit: Please identify and virtually visit a community-based archives and/or museum in your local community. Schedule a phone or email exchange with the archivist or archival staff and take ample time to review their online presence such as website, branding, mission/vision statements, collection policies, and social media networks.**

For this assignment, you will write a 4-5 page double-spaced paper that reflects critically on the community-based archives and/or museum site you visited, putting the archives/museum site into the context of the literature and class discussion so far. Your reflection should have a thesis statement/ make an argument, and cite and engage at least three readings from class. Questions you *may* address may include:

- How does this particular site define community?
- What is the relationship between community, identity and archives/museum at this site?
- Why is remembering (or forgetting) important to this particular community?
- What practices does this particular community archives/museum site engage in and how does this practice relate to dominant archival/museum theory and practice?
- What is your positionality in relation to this community archives/museum and how did that impact your visit?

This is not a comprehensive list, nor are you expected to answer all of these questions.

Worth 200 points.

Annotated Bibliography

As a class we will review the previously developed Annotated Bibliography and expand it. In the first few weeks of the course, we will consider and identify any additional key areas of research within community-based archives and museums. Each student will select one particular area to research, review, and expand.

An Annotated Bibliography is an organized list of sources (like a reference list). It differs from a straightforward bibliography in that each reference is followed by a paragraph length annotation, usually 100–200 words in length. Depending on the assignment, an annotated bibliography might have different purposes:

- Provide a literature review on a particular subject
- Help to formulate a thesis on a subject
- Demonstrate the research you have performed on a particular subject
- Provide examples of major sources of information available on a topic
- Describe items that other researchers may find of interest on a topic

For our course, the purpose is to demonstrate research and provide examples of sources about selected areas within community-based archives and museums. As research into community archives is a more recent phenomenon, our work to together build an annotated bibliography will provide a great resource for researchers as well as practitioners about what is being done in and for community contexts.

Please research and find *at least 5 articles* and other scholarly resources in your selected area to build the annotated bibliography. See ASSIGNMENT SHEET with instructions.
Worth 150 points.

Info-Graphic Design

While you're working on researching and writing your Annotated Bibliography, please create an Info-Graphic to convey your findings to diverse communities. Consider the audience(s) you identify and what information to share and how in a graphic design. What you develop can be something that we, as a class, can circulate about the importance of community-based archives and museums through print or electronic methods.

(See, for example, what Gracen Brilmyer produced in collaboration with Professor Michelle Caswell as part of their 2016 class together at UCLA on Archives, Records, and Memory.

http://www.gracenbrilmyer.com/dismantling_whiteSupremacy_archives3.pdf)

Worth 150 points.

Presentation of Findings

Now that you've completed your Annotated Bibliography, please create a presentation to convey your findings. The medium for your presentation will be up to you, but I encourage you to be thoughtful and creative with an emphasis on teaching us through your findings. Please limit your presentation to around 5 minutes.

Respond to these questions:

1 – What did you find in the readings?

2 – How might your findings influence the discipline and profession more broadly?

3 – How do you understand the role that community-based archives & museums play in and for communities?

Worth 100 points.

University Policies

<https://academicaffairs.arizona.edu/syllabus-policies>