

Critical Digital Archives

Graduate Seminar¹

In this interdisciplinary graduate seminar we will explore theoretical and practical issues related to the creation, access, and discovery of archives and special collections, including acquisition, description and technical specifications, community building, and post-custodial models. With emphasis on critical archival theory and state-of-the-art digital humanities approaches, this course draws from literary & cultural studies, information studies, critical indigenous studies, history, art history, and anthropology as we build a rigorous theoretical framework and engage in hands-on practice. This course will pair humanistic approaches to the (de)colonial archive with practice and theory from information science and the digital humanities.

The first unit focuses on colonial archives and special collections and surveys the field of critical archival studies from literary studies, history, and information studies. The final assignment asks students to write a “critical archive review” that reflects on the interface, metadata, and materials in a digital collection of colonial Latin American materials.

The second unit focuses on human rights and social justice archives. This unit explores the ethical and practical complications of digitizing and researching politically sensitive collections. As a final assignment, students are asked to propose a humanities media project that will create supplemental materials to a Latin American human rights archive that address some of the ethical concerns addressed in the unit.

The third unit focuses on archives and social justice. This unit explores archival structures and activities that exist outside of or beyond academic or state institutions, and the ways that archives have been used in the pursuit of social justice. The final assignment asks students to build a prototype of a community-centered collection, drawing on archival materials of their choice.

¹ This syllabus is based on a course taught in collaboration with Kelly McDonough (fall 2018) at the University of Texas at Austin.

Schedule

Unit 1: Colonial Archives

Week 1: Archives & Libraries

1. Caswell, ML. (2016). "'The Archive' Is Not an Archives: On Acknowledging the Intellectual Contributions of Archival Studies"
2. Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. "Chapter 1: The Power in the Story." *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1995. 1-31.
3. Lazo, Rodrigo. "Migrant Archives." In *States of Emergency*. Russ Castronovo and Susan Gillman, ed. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009. 36-54.
4. Aguirre, Carlos and Javier Villa-Flores. "Los archivos y la construcción de la verdad histórica en América Latina." *Jahrbuch für Geschichte Lateinamerikas*, Volume 46, Issue 1 (2009). 5-18.

Week 2: Reading & Writing Archives

1. Burns, Kathryn. "Chapter 4: Power in the Archives." *Into the Archive*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010. 1-19.
2. Fuentes, Marisa. "Chapter 5. 'Venus': Abolition Discourse, Gendered Violence, and the Archive." In *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016.
3. Stoler, Ann Laura. "Chapter 1: A Prologue in Two Parts." *Along the Archival Grain*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010. 1-16.
4. Tortorici, Zeb. "Chapter 1: Viscerality in the Archives: Consuming Desires." In *Sins Against Nature: Sex and Archives in Colonial New Spain*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2018.
5. Tortorici, Zeb: Digital Appendix to *Sins Against Nature*.

Week 3: Archival Histories

Selections from Carlos Aguirre and Javier Villa-Flores, From the Ashes of History (Editorial A Contracorriente, 2015):

- Pedro Guibovich Pérez, "Fortunas y adversidades del Archivo de la Inquisición de Lima" (39-60)
- Amy Chazkel, "History Out of the Ashes: Remembering Brazilian Slavery After Rui Barbosa's Burning of the Documents" (61-78)

Selections from Carlos Aguirre and Ricardo D. Salvatore, Bibliotecas y Cultura Letrada en América Latina

- Iván Molina Jiménez, "Las bibliotecas nacionales de América Central durante los siglos XIX y XX" (73)
- Christina Bueno, "La Biblioteca Nacional de Antropología e Historia de México: un legado del nacionalismo porfiriano," 205.
- Máximo Farro, "Ciencias del archivo, lenguas indígenas argentinas y tecnología del papel: las bibliotecas personales como espacio de producción erudita en la antropología argentina, 1860-1910" (225).

Week 3: Archives & Access

1. Putnam, Lara. "The Transnational and the Text-Searchable: Digitized Sources and the Shadows They Cast." *American Historical Review* 2016 121 (2): 377-402.

2. Anderson, Jane. "Anxieties of Authorship in the Colonial Archive." In *Media Authorship*. Taylor and Francis, 2013. 229-246. DOI: 10.4324/9780203136010
3. Kim Christen. "Does Information Really Want to be Free? Indigenous Knowledge Systems and the Question of Openness." *International Journal of Communication*. 6 (2012).
4. Punzalan, Ricardo. "Legacy Matters: Describing Subject-Based Digital Historical Collections" (co-authored with Christian James), *Journal of Archival Organization* 12 (2016): 1–18.
5. Matthew Butler and David Bliss, "The Hijuelas Project."
6. Fundación Histórica Neogranadina: <http://neogranadina.org/>
7. Escritos de Mujeres: <http://www.iisue.unam.mx/escritoras/>

Unit 2

Week 1: Human Rights Archives

1. Weld, Kirsten. "Waging Guatemala's Archive Wars: Documentation, Mobilization, Justice."
2. The AHPN Digital Portal: ahpn.lib.utexas.edu

Week 2: Archives and Surveillance

1. Ann J. Gilliland, "A Matter of Life or Death: A Critical Examination of the Role of Records and Archives in Supporting the Agency of the Forcibly Displaced." *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies*. 1.2 (2017).
<https://doi.org/10.24242/jclis.v1i2.36>
2. Lila Caimari y Mariana Nazar, "Detrás de una puerta gris: Notas sobre los archivos policiales públicos argentinos" (117-144).
3. Emilio Crenzel, "La reconstrucción de un universo: desaparición forzada de personas en la argentina" (145).
4. The GAM digital archive (link forthcoming)

Week 3: Digitizing Sensitive Collections

1. Jeanette A. Bastian. "Taking Custody, Giving Access: A Postcustodial Role for a New Century." *Archivaria* 53 (2002). 76-93.
2. Christian Kelleher. "Archives Without Archives." *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies*. Volume 1, Number 2.
3. Javier Puente, "Archivos Campesinos: San Juan de Ondores, actas comunales e historias rurales en Perú, 1937-2012"
4. Ghaddar, JJ. "The Spectre in the Archive: Truth, Reconciliation, and Indigenous Archival Memory." *Archivaria* 82 (Fall 2016).
5. Harris, Verne. "Antonyms of our remembering." *Archival Science*. Volume 14, Issue 3-4. 215-229.

Week 4: Digital Approaches to Critical Archives

1. Elvia Arroyo-Ramírez. Invisible Defaults and Perceived Limitations: Processing the Juan Gelman Files." *Medium*.
2. Guberek, T. and Hedstrom, M. "On or off the record? Detecting patterns of silence about death in Guatemala's National Police Archive." *Arch Sci* (2017), pp. 1-28.

3. Klein, Lauren F. "The Image of Absence: Archival Silence, Data Visualization, and James Hemings." *American Literature* (2013) 85 (4): 661-688.
<https://doi.org/10.1215/00029831-2367310>
4. Punzalan, Ricardo, Stacy Wood, Kathy Carbone, Marika Cifor, and Anne Gilliland, "Mobilizing Records: Re-Framing Archival Description to Support Human Rights." *Archival Science* 14 (2014): 397-419.

Unit 3:

Week 1: Patrimony & Repatriation

1. Joshua A. Bell, Kimberly Christen, and Mark Turin, "After the Return: Digital Repatriation and the Circulation of Indigenous Knowledge Workshop Report," *Museum Worlds: Advances in Research* 6 (2013): 195-203. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016.
2. Bolfy Cottom, "Patrimonio cultural nacional: el marco jurídico y conceptual," (2001): 79-107.
3. Jane Anderson and Kim Christen, "‘Chuck a Copyright on it’: Dilemmas of Digital Return and the Possibilities for Traditional Knowledge Licenses and Labels," *Museum Anthropology Review* 7.1-2 (Spring-Fall 2013):105-126.
4. Lorlene Roy (Anishinaabe), "Indigenous Cultural Heritage Preservation: A Review Essay with Ideas for the Future," *IFLA journal* 41.3 (2015): 192-203.

Week 2: Empathy & Agency

5. Caswell, M. & Cifor, M. (2016). From Human Rights to Feminist Ethics: Radical Empathy in the Archives. *Archivaria* 81: 23-83.
6. Cvetkovich, Ann et al. "Queering Archives: A Roundtable Discussion." *Radical History Review* 122 (2015).
7. Horacio Tarcus, "Archivos, Bibliotecas y la memoria obrera, social y cultural de los argentinos" (305-338)

Week 3: Community Archives

1. Williams, Stacie M. and Jarrett M. Drake, "Power to the People: Documenting Police Violence in Cleveland," in "Critical Archival Studies," eds. Michelle Caswell, Ricardo Punzalan, and T-Kay Sangwand, Special issue, *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies* 1, no. 2 (2017): 1-27.
2. Jarrett M. Drake, "Seismic Shifts: On Archival Fact and Fictions," *medium.com*. August 20, 2018.
3. Michelle Caswell, Marika Cifor, and Mario H. Ramirez, "'To Suddenly Discover Yourself Existing': Uncovering the Impact of Community Archives," *The American Archivist* 79, no. 1 (2016): 56-81.
4. Anthony Cocciolo, "Community Archives in the Digital Era: A Case from the LGBT Community," *Preservation, Digital Technology and Culture* 45, no. 4 (2017): 157-165.