Course Outline

What is the archive? A set of papers? Of documents? An institution? We assume it holds the truth about how things really were, and provides evidence. The more archival evidence we hold, the closer we get to the truth—or so the story goes. We rarely interrogate “the archive” though it is foundational to the practice of the historical discipline, as well as to the constitution of states as well as individuals’ histories. Yet, as both object and practice, the archive is neither self-evident nor neutral. Its existence relies on historians’ understanding of and investment in the status of documents that are deemed proper archives. Archives come into being through institutions, regulations, and codes and are read through the assumptions embedded in historical writing regarding the notions of fact, evidence, and interpretation. While the writing of history often demands that practitioners ‘forget’ the making and production of archives, thinking about how and why we write history demands we explore the very foundations of our discipline. This course will not teach how to engage in archival research. It will explore how "archives around the world are policed, manipulated, experienced," and naturalized in order to investigate some of the central principles (objectivity, interpretation) that organize the historical profession and that have been the subject of debates, discussions, reflections and controversies.

Course Readings

Required Readings:

All other required readings (articles, chapters) will be available through electronic reserve (Bell Library). Some of the required books will also be on reserve at the library.

Please be aware this is a provisional course syllabus and may be subject to change

**Recommended Readings:**
I strongly encourage you browse, skim, read some of the following recommended readings

Anjali Arondekar. *For the Record: On Sexuality and the Colonial Archive in India* (Duke University Press, 2009)
Michelle Caswell. *Archiving the Unspeakable: Silence, Memory, and the Photographic Record in Cambodia* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2014)
Nupur Chaudhuri et al. (eds.). *Contesting the Archives: Finding Women in the Sources* (University of Illinois Press, 2010).

**Student Learning Outcomes**
- to read, become familiar with, synthesize and analyze scholarly work (evaluated by: presentation, leading class discussion, class participation)
- to produce critical essays reflecting on the assigned readings and the issues raised in class (evaluated by: response papers and final paper)

**Course Assignments**
Participation 15%
Presentation & Discussion 15%
Response Paper #1 10%
Response Paper #2 10%
Response Paper #3 10%
Response Paper #4 10%
Final Paper 30%

Guidelines for Course Assignments

**Participation:**
A graduate seminar is not one where the professor ‘teaches’ in the traditional manner. The discussion is driven by graduate students—you—and participation is therefore crucial. Participation is assessed in the following way:
you must make *substantial comments* in class and demonstrate you have knowledge of the reading.
You may have *insights, questions, queries, and reflections.*
(it is ok to have questions and be confused about the reading)
Please be aware that *the reading and writing load in a graduate class is intensive* and does not resemble that of an upper-level history class.
Additionally, you are to take charge of your work and of your participation.
Graduate classes require self-discipline and autonomy.

**Presentation & Discussion:**
For each class with reading (aside from the first two weeks: Sept. 02 and Sept. 09),
2 students will give a presentation and lead discussion on the readings assigned.
The presentation should outline:
- the argument (thesis) of the book or articles and major points of the readings
- situate them in a larger context of issues discussed and the historiography
- offer some critical analysis of the arguments. Useful questions: what sort of historical evidence does the author use? Is the argument convincing? What are its
- theoretical and/or methodological foundations and/or assumptions? What are its implications?

- Obviously these questions should relate to the overarching theme of our course, namely the object and practice of the archive.

**Leading Discussion should:**

- involve you preparing questions for discussion
- questions should suggest ways to relate the assigned readings to one another and to other issues discussed in class.
- questions should ask us to focus on particular aspects of the argument or of the demonstration that seem especially thought-provoking and interesting.
- There is never one right answer to a question or just one way of understanding the assigned readings. The idea is to suggest ways of thinking and confront different interpretations.

You are encouraged to come and see me ahead of time to discuss your plans for the presentation & discussion.

You will have to **email the questions for discussions to the entire class the day before before midnight**.

so that everyone can take a look at them and prepare accordingly for discussion.

**Response papers:**

You will be asked to hand in **6 response papers** on the weekly topics of your choice.

The syllabus indicates **9 sessions** during which you can hand in a response paper, but you must complete **only 6**.

You will be graded for all but only 4 will be recorded for your grade.

The paper will require you to bring in conversation **at least 2** out of the 4 articles you have read under one topic, or on the one book you have read, and to show how they can be understood.

In this paper, you should:

- have a short synopsis (summary of the argument)
- highlight the main issues that the work(s) bring(s) up
- make connections with larger issues discussed
- reflect upon the ways in which these contribute to the historiography
- offer your understanding of how this affects the writing of history.

The paper must be a **minimum of 3 double-spaced pages and no more than 4 double-spaced pages**.

You may write on any topic or frame of your liking.

**Peer-editing:**

You are all scholars in training, which means you should be able to engage each other’s written work.

For every response paper, you will have an assigned editor who will comment and provide feedback on how to improve your paper:
- You—the author—must send your paper to your editor—more than 24 hours ahead of time.
- The editor will read your paper and provide you with comments (on the content and the format).
- The author will staple the editor’s comments to their response paper and you will also be evaluated according to your ability to integrate comments and revise accordingly.

When taken seriously, this is a very productive exercise.
Scholarly work is always revised and is never produced in isolation.
This is not an optional exercise, and failing to do so (as author or editor) will affect your grade.

**Final Paper:**
You will be asked to write a lengthy critical & historiographical paper on a topic of your choosing using the materials read in class as well as independent research.
Guidelines will be distributed later on during the semester.

**Best Practices for a Graduate Seminar**

**Graduate Class structure:**
All classes will involve discussion. They will be student-led.
I may lecture if I deem it necessary but that will be very infrequent.
You must therefore do your reading regularly and consistently and be prepared to discuss your reading.

**Best Practices for Class participation:**
Participation in class is crucial.
Engaging with the material, being prepared for class and participating in class are essential for productive discussions:
- You will be expected to have done the reading.
- You are expected to bring the reading to class (book, online document)

Because a graduate seminar relies essentially on discussion where students engage one another and share their interpretation of the works read, the class space must be a pleasant, exciting, and rewarding one where all can participate equally.
This means that:
- students are expected to be respectful of each other in demeanor, tone, and behavior.
- You should not interrupt someone who is talking.
- Pay attention to others before you speak: be aware of the discussion.
- On the other hand, you are not speaking only to me, the professor, but to one another.
- The tone of the discussion can be animated and passionate but you should never be aggressive or dismissive of other peoples’ interpretations or remarks.
- Please turn off your cell phones before class.
- You are expected to stay in class while it is taking place (ie. no cigarette breaks outside of the official break).
- You are expected to come to class on time.

Rude or inconsiderate behavior and remarks will not be tolerated and I will ask you to leave if you exhibit such behavior.
I reserve the right to ask you to leave if I feel you are not following these best practices.
Following those indicates you being respectful towards your peers and myself.

**Class Attendance:**
Students are expected to attend all class sessions:
Attendance is part of your participation grade.
More than one unjustified absence will result in an F for your participation grade.
A justified absence is one due to illness, work conflict, jury duty, etc.:
please make sure to bring documentation.
Please be aware that irregular attendance usually makes it difficult to do well in this class.
*It is your responsibility to make sure you keep up with the work done when absent.*

*In general and for all matters, a policy of honesty is usually the wisest in communicating with me.*

**Academic Affairs:**

**Students with Disability and Veterans:** The Americans with Disability Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Disability Services Office: (361) 825-5816, or and visit the office: Corpus Christi Hall, Room 116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services for assistance.

**Academic Advisement:**
Academic advisors are available to assist students with course selection, degree plans, and other academic matters.
Each college has an academic advising center, staffed by full-time, professional advisors.
In our college, the undergraduate advisor is Linda Miller (825-3466, linda.miller@tamucc.edu). The graduate advisor is Rachelle Stanley (825-3466, Rachelle.stanley@tamucc.edu).
Both are located on the second floor of Driftwood.
Grade Appeal Process:
Students who feel they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course.
A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor.
For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website: cla.tamucc.edu/students/studentinfo.html.
For assistance and guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the CLA Associate Dean, Dr. Mark Hartlaub.

Course Outline

Week 1

Sept. 02
Discussion & Overview of the syllabus
Choice of discussion leaders for the semester (you may have to lead discussion twice)

Week 2

Sept. 09
Reading: Smith, *The Gender of History* (chapters)
Freud, Foucault, Ricoeur in: Merewether (ed.) *The Archive*

Week 3

Sept. 16
Reading: Derrida in: Merewether (ed.) *The Archive*
Ghosh, "Decoding the Nameless" (PDF)
Perry, "Finding Fatima," (PDF)
Sweets, "Mistaken Identities?" (PDF)
Response Paper due in class

Week 4

Sept. 23
Reading: Burton, *Archive Stories* (chapters to be assigned)
Response Paper due in class
Week 5

Sept. 30
Reading: Burton, Archive Stories (chapters to be assigned)
Response Paper due in class

Week 6

Oct. 07
NO CLASS

Week 7

Oct. 14
Reading: Burns, Into the Archives
Response Paper due in class

Week 8

Oct. 21
Reading: Stoler, Along the Archival Grain (chapters to be assigned)
Response Paper due in class

Week 9

Oct. 28
Reading: Weld, Paper Cadavers
Response Paper due in class

Week 10

Nov. 04
Reading: Struk, Photographing the Holocaust
Response due in class

Week 11

Nov. 11
Reading: Steedman, Dust
Response Paper due in class
Week 12

Nov. 17  Public Lecture by Dr. Lisa Leff, American University

Nov. 18  Meeting with Dr. Lisa Leff, “The Archive Thief”
You will have to read Dr. Leff’s article, and prepare questions and points of discussion with her.

Week 13

Nov. 25  Reading: Brian Connolly, Against Accumulation (PDF)
Assignment: you will have to bring to class a short abstract of what you plan to write on for your final essay as well as a list of readings you will use for your critical reflection.
You will be expected to comment on your classmates’ work.
(PLEASE BRING A HARD COPY OF THE RESEARCH ESSAY YOU WILL BE REFLECTING ON)

Week 14

Dec. 02  Reading:
Final class meeting

Dec. 08  EMAIL YOUR FINAL ESSAY BY 10AM.