

Alison Clemens & Lisa Conathan
L-60: Introduction to Archives for Special Collections Librarians, Booksellers & Collectors
4–9 June, New Haven, Connecticut

Narrative Course Evaluations

1) *Were the pre-course reading assignments useful? Are there any readings that you would like to see added or removed in future years?*

1. Yes. Perhaps the interface to the systems used by the course instructors.
2. Readings were excellent.
3. Yes.
4. Yes, all were useful.
5. Pre-course reading was a light introduction to the topic and will likely be of more use as reference as I apply what I learned this week to my profession.
6. Yes, there were a fair number of them and mostly review (but would have been more useful for someone totally unfamiliar with the topic); I feel like some of the shorter ones could have maybe been combined somehow.
7. Yes, the readings were useful. I would not remove any—they were all relevant.
8. Yes, I thought the reading list was very helpful as a foundation.
9. Yes, the pre-course readings were helpful. They gave me a foundation to understand where we were starting before class, which made the experience feel more approachable.

2) *What are your thoughts on the course workbook and/or other teaching materials distributed during class? Was the content appropriate and useful? Will it continue to be useful for you after the course?*

1. Very clearly organized. Easy to use. Yes, I plan to continue to use it.
My only critique: we could not delete materials we uploaded, which would be a useful authority to have in Google Drive, if possible.
2. Content was appropriate.
3. The course work was the exact amount. Not too much and not too little.
4. Extremely useful and appropriate.
5. Course workbook was all online in a Google Drive folder, which I found useful. All slide and lecture files were available for us to download, which cuts down on redundant note-taking. The list of online resources seemed comprehensive and likely to be of much use going forward.
6. Content was useful, instructors actively took feedback during instruction in places where terminology could be made clearer. I think if some of the ArchivesSpace

documents had included images (like the pre-class assignment did) that would have been helpful.

7. The course workbook was great! All of it directly related to the theme and goals of the course.
8. Yes, I thought it was awesome and will continue to be useful. I am hoping we will retain access to our class ArchivesSpace, as it would be really great for personal practice with the platform.
9. I was impressed by the array of hands-on opportunities. For instance, I had the opportunity to actually accession and process a collection. The combined instruction with real-world exercises made the class very immersive.

3) *Which aspects of the course were most intriguing and relevant for you as an individual? Did you walk away with any new insights, ideas, or project plans?*

1. The perspectives and workflows and methods of working archive librarians. As a scholar working at a college, it was particularly useful that both instructors work in academic library/archive settings. I also appreciated being in a room with people both starting and advanced in their careers, including collectors/dealers, archivists, supervisors, those thinking of a career in archival work, or advancing a career
2. I loved hearing from the instructors and other students about their work experiences and approaches to broad and specific archival issues.
3. Too much to process right now. Ask me again in a week.
4. All of the aspects of the course were both relevant and compelling for me. It came along at exactly the right moment, helping me synthesize multiple aspects of my professional and academic experiences while equipping me with practical tools for the future.
5. I was mostly interested in learning about the process of archival cataloging (though issues about access, preservation, born-digital materials, &c. were all interesting)—and I feel the class perfectly addressed my needs.
6. {no response}
7. I learned a lot in this class. It's exactly what was advertised: a very thorough introduction to archives. I have a much deeper understanding of—and respect for—the work that archivists do.
8. As a student, I feel like I have a much better sense of what archiving entails to make choices about more schooling. As a researcher, I feel empowered to approach archivists about research ideas.
9. Yes, I have a new found appreciation for born-digital archives. I've always leaned toward print with my background in print journalism, but I really saw a depth of understanding available in modern history. Additionally, I loved the sense of accomplishment I felt with the hands-on assignments we had throughout the class.

4) *Did the instructors help you to acquire all the skills and information promised in the course description? Did you learn what you had hoped to learn?*

1. Yes.
2. I learned what I hoped to learn.
3. YES!
4. Unequivocally yes.
5. Yes, absolutely (see above).
6. Yes.
7. Yes! Both LC and AC were very knowledgeable, and very generous with sharing their time and expertise.
8. Yes, I feel like I learned things I didn't even know that I didn't know.
9. Yes, I appreciated the instructors' attention to students. There were several times the conversation was so lively I had a hard time squeezing in on my own, but they always ensured I was heard during class.

5) *How do you plan to use the skills and knowledge acquired during your time here?*

1. In teaching and in engaging with archives/archivists in research and as an editor.
2. {no response}
3. By getting my Masters in the Archives track of the M.L.I.S. degree.
4. I am not yet sure how much I will be using some of the technical skills I acquired (or at least got familiarized with), but I will be putting both the conceptual and professional frameworks that the course provided into immediate effect.
5. {no response}
6. Hopefully this will help me either transition to archives work from library work or inform my work with special collections.
7. They will be useful to me for my own research and writing.
8. I hope to leverage this experience for an entry-level role that would allow me to get hands-on experience. I also will definitely be using it as a base for decisions about graduate school.
9. I plan to take these skills into my M.L.I.S. studies and my current cataloging project.

6) *Who might benefit the most from taking this RBS course?*

1. Faculty thinking of bringing archival processing workflows into classes/supervision of students. It's not designed for us, but that's a real plus.
2. Definitely a great course for anyone unfamiliar with archival work, or curious about archival work but hasn't had hands-on experience.
3. Me?
4. This seems like a case where almost anyone working in an institution that has archival

collections would benefit.

5. {no response}
6. M.L.I.S. students interested in archives work.
7. This is a great course for anyone considering going into archives as a profession, or who wants to better understand archives and archivists.
8. Historians! Learning the back-end of archives has inspired a lot of empowerment in me as a historian to pursue projects.
9. Anyone with an interest in archives would benefit from this class, whether you're debating pursuing an M.L.I.S. degree or you're looking to expand your current professional understanding.

7) *If applicable, what were the most powerful, or otherwise noteworthy educational moments in the course? Were there any "aha!" moments you'd like to share?*

1. {no response}
2. {no response}
3. Again, so many "aha!" moments, I can't pick just one.
4. I alternated between feeling extremely empowered and overwhelmed—and the course helped me feel a lot more comfortable with that overwhelmed feeling, in the best way possible.
5. {no response}
6. {no response}
7. I was very intrigued to learn that archivists actually spend a lot of time giving employees at their institutions permission to discard material! It's the opposite of what we might imagine, but it makes perfect sense once you have a better understanding of what archives are for.
8. What I loved the most was still our first stage, learning about collection development. I found all the logistics, emotional investment, and stories so fascinating. Working with ArchivesSpace and the physical collections was also SO valuable.
9. ArchivesSpace really clicked with me here. I previously was introduced to it in an online class, but the interactive approach of this class made the software connect so much more with me.

8) *Are there any other ways in which the course could have been improved?*

1. Include a discussion of archival exhibitions that makes use of the institution's on-site archival exhibits (sometimes co-curated by students).
2. {no response}
3. No.
4. A few specific things that I will email the instructors; nothing major.
5. {no response}

6. Instructors said that they really liked teaching it in person better than when it was online, but I really think that online would be fine. Also, I think having us do a little more homework between classes so that we're really coming to class with questions instead of rushing to finish a project during class would be good: I couldn't pay attention to them trying to show us something because I was supposed to also be editing something in ArchivesSpace.
7. {no response}
8. More time with physical processing, but I'm not sure because all the instruction was too valuable to cut out.
9. I just think that it should stay available in person because that really contributed to my experience overall.

9) *Do you feel that you got your money's worth? How likely are you to recommend this course to others? On a 1–10 scale, 1 would indicate that you disagree that you got your money's worth, 5 would indicate a neutral response, and 10 would indicate that you agree that you got your money's worth.*

1. 9
2. 8
3. 10
4. 10
5. 10
6. 8
7. 10
8. 8
9. 10

10) *If your course made any (virtual) field trips outside of the classroom or had guest speakers, do you feel that they enhance the course experience?*

1. The visit to Yale Library's off-site processing center, meeting with digital material archivists, photographers'/digitizers' workflow, &c., was really helpful.
2. We had great guest speakers, and a fantastic visit to the Beinecke tech services facility. Two thumbs up!
3. Yes (besides the 30 minute walk) it was a great experience to see where the archives are processed.
4. Yes.
5. {no response}
6. Yes.
7. We went on a great trip to Beinecke Technical Services, where we got to see a range of archivists at their daily work.

8. Yes! Hearing from people at different stages of archiving was super valuable.
9. Yes, I really appreciated the variety of additional instruction. Our instructors ensured that a variety of positions and perspectives were highlighted in class.

11) *Do you have any additional thoughts or advice for anyone considering taking this course in a future year?*

1. {no response}
2. {no response}
3. TAKE IT.
4. {no response}
5. {no response}
6. {no response}
7. This course does exactly what the description promises: it provides an excellent, very thorough introduction to the field of archives.
8. I wish there were more young people in this class with me, and I think it would be cool to see more outreach to them!
9. This is an excellent class to wet your toes in archives. If you'd like to broaden your foundation, work with and view exceptional collections and network with a host of wonderful people, it's for you; take the leap and learn.

12) *If you had to sum up your RBS experience with a single sentence, phrase, or a haiku, what would you say?*

1. {no response}
2. The best nerdy summer camp ever!
3. I would definitely take another class.
4. Among the most inspiring and fulfilling professional experiences I could imagine.
5. {no response}
6. {no response}
7. It was a great experience! Thank you. :)
8. Enriching/perfect for this point in my life.
9. Archives, Activism and Empowerment (my themes and feelings throughout the class and onward).