

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Title: Preservation and Representation of Cultural Heritage Information

Course Number: INF 327

Unique Number: 28270

Course Meeting Times: Mondays/Wednesdays, 12:00-1:30 pm

Course Location: UTA 1.204

Course Website: <http://www.INF327.weebly.com>

Office Hours: Mondays, 1:30-3:00 pm
Additionally, by appointment

Instructor: Virginia Luehrsen

TA: [redacted]

Course Description: This course will introduce students to methods of managing and displaying cultural heritage information. Students will participate in a semester-long project with a collection of cultural expressions and materials, learning methods and strategies for organization, preservation, and effective display of ethnographic information. At the end of the semester, students will share a website they have designed to showcase their project and their skills. Project examples may include working with information and/or materials related to folk music, storytelling, needle-art, and ethnomedicine. Some basic readings on ethnographic methods, organization, preservation, and website design will be assigned.

Pre-requisites: Some experience with website design or database design is recommended, but not required.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Outcomes: Students will complete this course with a better understanding of how to research ethnographic collections and assemble information related to these collections for public display and use. Students will also refine their website development skills and writing technique. The goals of the class include:

- Students will learn new strategies for conducting research on collections in libraries, archives, and museums.
- Students will explore different methodologies for interpreting and displaying information
- Students will acquire and develop skills regarding website design
- Students will learn to think critically about the role of libraries, archives, and museums within our society, and what responsibilities they carry in the collection and dissemination of information.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

Methods: This course will incorporate several instructional methods including lecture, readings, and in-class discussion. The second half of the semester will focus almost entirely on research and project development.

TEXTBOOK & MATERIALS

There is one required textbook, available at the University Co-op Bookstore:

Anito, M., & Peralta, E. (Eds.). (2010). *Heritage and Identity: Engagement and Demission in the Contemporary World*. New York, NY: Routledge. (\$41.95 new / \$31.45 used)

Apart from this book, the instructor and TA will post all additional articles or reports assigned as required readings on Blackboard. ***Most articles are short***, and are meant as an introduction to the topic – optional readings are listed as they may serve some students in their final projects. Please note that substitutions may be made to required readings based on students' needs and feedback throughout the semester.

TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS

This course will consist of four units that will allow the student to explore the relationship between Information Studies and cultural heritage.

Unit 1: Exploring cultural heritage, what it means to different people

Unit 2: Representations of cultural heritage information in popular media, social contexts, and research environments.

Unit 3: Conducting research on an existing ethnographic collection, or collecting ethnographic materials.

Unit 4: Development of cultural heritage website and presentations of students' work

SCHEDULE OF CLASS

The following is a listing of what topics will be covered in this course, class by class. While every effort will be made by the instructor to stay on schedule with this syllabus, if students feel more attention is needed in an area, the schedule may shift slightly. Any changes will be announced in class and through BlackBoard.

INTRODUCTION

January 14 - Review of syllabus and introductions

WHAT IS CULTURAL HERITAGE?

January 16 – Culture and Tradition – Some Definitions

January 23 - Culture and Tradition – Literature and Psychology

January 28 – Culture and Tradition – Folklore and Museum Studies

January 30 – Culture and Tradition - Information Studies

Assignment Due:

- *1st LAM report*

WHAT IS A COLLECTION?

February 4 - Defining collections

ORGANIZATION

February 6 - Methodologies for organizing information

Assignment Due:

- *FP #1*

February 11 - Tools for organizing information – citation management

February 13 - Labeling: Naming conventions for physical and digital materials

Assignment Due:

- *FP #2. Enter 5 sources for semester project into citation management software. At least two of these sources must be primary sources. Email the citation library to the instructor by the start of class.*

PRESERVATION

February 18 - Paper, Textiles, and Paintings

February 20 - Visit to the preservation labs

Assignment Due

- *2nd LAM Report*

In addition to class this week, each student will meet with the instructor for 30 minutes to discuss their projects and any questions or concerns they have. Available meeting times will be posted on Blackboard, and will include several times during the day and evening Sunday through Thursday.

February 25 - Problems and solutions for digital preservation

February 27 - Protecting digital records

Assignment Due:

- *FP #3*

March 4 - Problems and solutions for audio/visual preservation

March 6 - Visit the audio/visual classroom

Spring Break, March 11-16!!!

CURATION AND DESCRIPTION

March 18 – What do we need to describe?

March 20 – How do we describe collections?

Assignment Due:

- *3rd LAM Report*

CURATION AND INTERPRETATION

March 25 – The difference between description and interpretation

March 27 – Methodologies of interpretation

Assignment Due:

- *FP #4*

REPRESENTATION AND DISPLAY

April 1 – Space and design in digital exhibits

April 3 – Introduction website design: HTML and CSS

Assignment Due:

- *FP #5.*

April 8 – What You See Is What You Get: Software to build your site

April 10 – Visit to Computer Lab to work on website (pending space)

FURTHER DOCUMENTATION AND PRESERVATION

April 15 – Documenting Intangible Cultural Heritage

April 17 – Accessibility of the digitized and born digital object

Assignment:

- *4th LAM Report*

April 22 – Restricted Collections

IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS

April 24 – In Class Presentations

April 29 – In Class Presentations

May 1 – Evaluation and wrap – up

If there are any presentations left, we will do them at this time.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

All written assignments may be either submitted in person at the beginning of class, or emailed to the instructor at [redacted]. For each day that an assignment is late, the instructor will dock 5% of the points from the final grade for that assignment. No assignments will be accepted more than 5 days after the due date without an officially documented excuse. *Emailed assignments that have a time stamp later than 30 minutes after the start of class in which the assignment is due, will be considered one day late and docked 5% of the available points for that assignment.*

Below is a description of the different types of assignments and activities which will count towards your grade in the class. If you have any questions about these assignments at any time during the semester, please feel free to contact the instructor. The instructor will return assignments to students within one week, and all grades will be posted to BlackBoard.

This course uses a 500-point grading scale. Please note that students must complete all written assignments in order to earn a passing grade in this course. The following scale will be used to determine letter grades:

Points	Letter Grade
≥ 465	A
450-464	A-
440-449	B+
410-439	B
400-409	B-
390-399	C+
360-389	C
350-359	C-
305-349	D
<305	F

I. Library, Archive, and Museum Reports (LAM Reports) - 20% of final grade

These reports are meant to help you focus on different aspects of organization, preservation, and display of cultural heritage materials at local cultural institutions. For each report, you will visit a different library, archive, or museum and write a short report about your observations. The instructor will distribute a list of appropriate libraries, archives, and museums no later than two weeks before the reports are due. Some available LAM collections for review may be online. You may report on another institution only with the permission of the instructor. Reports should be no less than 400 words, and no more than 600 words, and are due at the beginning of class. For these reports, please do write in complete sentences, though you may choose to use bullet-point or numbered lists as necessary. You may include pictures as appropriate as well!

- Due Week 3 (January 30): LAM Report 1. For this report, please visit a local library, archive, or museum and focus on a particular collection of ethnographic materials or information. You may want to consider if objects can be touched or used, if there is a brochure or booklet available about the collection, how the labels are designed and displayed, and whether additional references are listed either in the exhibit or in an accompanying brochure or booklet. (5% of final grade)
- Due Week 6 (February 20): LAM Report 2. For this report, please visit a local library, archive, or museum and focus on how a particular collection or information about a collection is organized. You will want to pay close attention to how objects or reference sources are arranged, and what relationships objects or reference sources have to each other. For example, if you are visiting an archive, try to describe how the materials are organized by box/folder/envelope and what relationship objects have to each other that are in close proximity. If you are visiting a museum, you may want to consider if there is a specific order (chronological, color based, etc.) to the items on display. How does the exhibit space start? How does it end? (5% of final grade)
- Due Week 9 (March 20): LAM Report 3. For this report, please visit a local library, archive, or museum and focus on preservation issues or obvious past preservation work done for a collection. The in-class examples and exercises from weeks 8 and 9 will give you an idea what you may want to look for regarding preservation concerns. You might consider how objects feel, smell, look, or sound (in the case of audio collections). If you are reviewing a digital collection, you will want to focus on the file type, metadata, and quality of sound, image, or video. (5% of final grade)
- Due Week 13 (April 17): LAM Report 4. For this report, please visit a local or online library, archive, or museum and focus on how objects or information about objects is displayed. You may want to focus on spacing, colors, lighting, and font sizes. Include your assessment of how well the display communicates information, and why. (5% of final grade)

II. Final Project (FP) - 50% of final grade

The final project will be a way for students to demonstrate what they have learned in the course regarding the description, interpretation, organization, preservation, and display of cultural heritage information. Students will design a small web-site to communicate their findings. The final project has several smaller assignments meant to help students think through their work throughout the semester, and allow the instructor to provide suggestions or advice. Though each step is only worth a small percentage of your grade, it is important that these assignments are turned in on time so students may receive feedback from the instructor before moving to the next step:

- Due week 4 (February 6): FP #1. One paragraph summary of collection student will be working with this semester (5% of final grade)
- Due week 5 (February 13): FP #2. Five primary and/or secondary sources entered into citation management software (5% of final grade)

- Due week 7 (February 27): FP #3. Short paper (500 words, double-spaced) describing your collection and possible organizational strategies. Include any pictures if you have them. Please make sure pictures have captions. (5% of final grade)
- Due week 10 (March 27): FP #4. Short paper (500 words, double-spaced) discussing preservation concerns for your collection – some preservation concerns may just be things to watch for in the future based on materials, while some will reflect current problems in your collection. Include any pictures if you have them, along with captions. (5% of final grade).
- Due week 11 (April 3): FP #5. Medium length paper (900-1200 words, double-spaced) detailing methodologies you are using to research, organize, preserve, and describe your collection. Include an introduction and conclusion to summarize your work. Please use citations from class readings as appropriate. (5% of final grade)
- Due week 14 and 15: FP #6. In class presentations on final project. (10% of final grade)
- Due May 8: FP #7. Final project/website (15% of final grade)

III. In-class assignments –30% of final grade

Throughout the semester, there will be several in class assignments. These assignments may include lab exercises, group work, and hands-on learning with actual cultural heritage materials and information. Students will be graded based on their participation and effort. There will be no make-up work available for missed in-class assignments for unexcused absences. If you have an officially documented excuse that forces you to miss class (medical emergency), please contact the instructor to discuss optional out-of-class assignments you can complete for additional points.

IV. Extra Credit

At this time, there are no opportunities for extra credit.

POLICIES

Absences:

Occasionally, things do come up where someone will have to miss class. If you know in advance that you will not be able to attend for any reason, please email the instructor as soon as possible. You may also contact your fellow students to ask for notes regarding what we discussed in class. Class participation is mandatory, however, and the instructor will dock 10% of the overall grade for any student who misses more than three classes as unexcused. Students with excused absences will be given an opportunity to make up the missed class-time through written work or small projects; if this make-up work is not done, the 10% penalty will apply as if the absences were unexcused.

Special Needs

The University of Texas at Austin provides, upon request, appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. To determine if you qualify, please contact the Dean of Students at 471-6259; 471-4641 TTY.

Religious or Holy Day Observance

"A student who misses classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day should inform the instructor as far in advance of the absence as possible, so that arrangements can be made to complete an assignment within a reasonable time after the absence." From <http://www.utexas.edu/student/registrar/catalogs/gi04-05/ch4/ch4g.html>.

Email

"Electronic mail (e-mail), like postal mail, is a mechanism for official University communication to students. The University will exercise the right to send e-mail communications to all students, and the University will expect that e-mail communications will be received and read in a timely manner." From <http://www.utexas.edu/student/registrar/catalogs/gi04-05/app/appn.html>).

Academic Integrity:

Please abide by the University's policy on academic integrity. All work you submit must be your own. "Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating and plagiarism... Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. University policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced." From The University of Texas: General Information, Appendix C.

Cheating:

Any suspected incidents of cheating will be reviewed by the Instructor in conjunction with the Associate Dean of the School of Information. If evidence of cheating has been substantiated, a report will be filed with the Dean of Students office by the Instructor after consultation with the student and the Associate Dean of the School of Information.