PROCESSING MANUSCRIPTS COLLECTIONS  
ILS-Z S603 (16590)  
FALL SEMESTER 2015  
SYLLABUS  

TH/2:00-4:45 (August 27—October 15)  
LL105 (Lilly Library, Ellison Room)  
Credit Hours: 1.5  

Instructor: Craig S. Simpson (CA), Lilly Library Manuscripts Archivist  
Work Phone: (812) 855-3182  
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Office hours are by appointment.  
Prerequisite: None, but workshop limited to twelve students.  

Course Description: An introduction to the principles and practices of processing manuscripts collections. Applies current and competing theories and trends in the arrangement and description of modern manuscripts via in-class processing exercises with actual collections.  

Course Objectives: By the end of this workshop, students will be able to:  

• apply the standards of arrangement and description (DACS) to the processing of manuscripts collections;  
• compare and contrast the characteristics of manuscripts processing to the processing of institutional records;  
• identify, arrange and describe different types (i.e., series) of manuscripts materials (e.g., correspondence, writings, photographs, audio-visual);  
• apply different standards of arrangement to different collections, from minimum-level processing (MPLP) to “maximum processing”;  
• demonstrate understanding of the connection between EAD, digitization, and manuscripts processing;  
• demonstrate understanding of how processing affects cataloging, conservation, and the access of manuscripts collections;  
• arrange the physical content of a manuscripts collection and create an on-line description page and inventory.
Course Materials:

**Required Textbook:** Roe, Kathleen D. *Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts, Archival Fundamentals Series II* (Society of American Archivists, 2005). **On reserve at Wells Main Library and the Lilly Library.**

Assigned articles will be available on Canvas, e-reserve, and/or via web links.

Assignments and Grading:

**Attendance and Participation: 20% of final grade.** Because this is a workshop, regular attendance and participation will be essential to attaining our course objectives. Each student will lead class discussions (approx. 10-15 minutes apiece) on **TWO** of the assigned readings over the eight weeks of the workshop. (A sign-up sheet will be available on the first day of class.) Following the discussion leader’s summary, all students will be expected to contribute to the overall discussion of the readings. The final presentation/discussion on the last day class counts toward attendance and participation.

**In-Class Exercises: 50% of final grade (10% each).** FIVE in-class exercises pertaining to processing actual manuscripts collections will be conducted over the course of our workshop. Students will be divided into small groups (usually 2-3 students each), and each group will take an unprocessed Lilly Library collection through the key stages of arrangement and description. A brief summary of findings must be turned in following each exercise.

- **Exercise #1:** Describe a collection (e.g., what are its essential elements? biographical or historical background? size and scope? when and how did it become a Lilly Library collection?)
- **Exercise #2:** Establish series (e.g., by which “groupings” can the materials be arranged?)
- **Exercise #3:** Apply a level (or levels) of arrangement (e.g., should the collection be minimally-processed at series- or collection-level, or at folder- or item-level?)
- **Exercise #4:** Physically arrange the materials in the collection (e.g., what is the best order for each series? how should folders and boxes be labeled?)
• Exercise #5: Create an inventory (e.g., how would you convert the physical arrangement of your collection into an online description available for researchers?)

Final Paper: 30% of final grade. A final paper (10-15 pages, double-spaced) will be submitted by each student on the last day of the workshop. (Deadline: Thursday, October 15, at 5 p.m.) The paper will be a comprehensive overview of your experience in the workshop, and MUST include the following elements:

• An analysis of all five in-class exercises, including successes, challenges, problems, methods and questions as applied to your collection(s);
• An analysis of Kathleen Roe’s text as applied to your in-class exercises;
• An analysis of at least FIVE assigned readings as applied to your in-class exercises;
• A final description and inventory of your collection.

Calendar:

Week 1: August 27—Introduction

*Topics include:* unique characteristics of manuscripts; types of manuscripts collections; similarities and differences between processing manuscripts and institutional records; general overview of the course.

*Required Readings:*
Roe: Ch. 1, pp. 1-10; Glossary, 101-104

Week 2: September 3—Core Concepts

In-Class Exercise #1: Describe a collection

*Topics include:* A brief history of *respect des fonds*; provenance, original order, and their effects on manuscripts processing; functions of arrangement and description and their effects on other archival functions; the development of DACS standards; determining what gets processed in a repository and why.

*Required Readings:*
Roe: Ch. 2, pp. 11-31; Appendix A: *Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS)*, Statement of Principles, 111-118

Meehan, Jennifer. “Rethinking Original Order and Personal Records,” *Archivaria 70 (Fall 2010): 27-44*

**Week 3: September 10—Context of Arrangement**

**In-Class Exercise #2: Establish series**

*Topics include:* assessing arrangement scenarios; establishing different kinds of series; the case for “More Product, Less Process”; applying MPLP in pre-processing stages; investigating the current data on MPLP.

**Required Readings:**
Roe: Ch. 3, pp. 33-44; Appendix B: “Arrangement Scenarios,” 119-125


Oestreicher, Cheryl. “Personal Papers and MPLP: Strategies and Techniques.” *Archivaria 76 (Fall 2013): 93-110*

**Recommended Reading:**

**Week 4: September 17—Practice of Arrangement**

**In-Class Assignment #3: Apply a level (or levels) of arrangement**

*Topics include:* the case against minimum-level processing; finding patterns in arranging manuscripts collections; creating and applying levels of arrangement and description.
**Required Readings:**
Roe: Ch. 4, pp. 45-70; Appendix C: “Examples of Arrangement Patterns,” 125-130


**Week 5: September 24—Context of Description**

**In-Class Assignment #4: Physically arrange materials for description**

*Topics include:* the process from arrangement to description; types of descriptive tools; the role of the archivist in describing manuscripts collections; the issue of deaccessioning; archival ethics applied to arrangement and description.

**Required Readings:**
Roe: Ch. 4, pp. 71-97; Appendix D: “Finding Aids for Sample Records,” 131-145


**Week 6: October 1—Practice of Description**

**In-Class Assignment #5: Create an inventory**

*Topics include:* origins of descriptive standards; the development of Encoded Archival Description (EAD); devising subject headings in a processed collection.

**Required Readings:**
Roe: Appendix E: “Examples of Bibliographic Description, 146-174

Week 7: October 8—Digitizing Manuscripts Collections and the Future of Manuscripts Processing

*Topics include:* the role of manuscripts collections in a repository and/or academic environment; arranging and describing electronic records; arrangement, description, and archival certification; discussion about the Final Paper (due next week).

*Required Readings:*


Week 8: October 15

Final presentation/discussion of in-class processing projects.

*FINAL PAPER DUE BY THURSDAY EVENING, OCT. 15, AT 11:59 P.M.*

See *Assignments and Grading* (p. 2) for details.

*Grades and Academic Honesty at SLIS:* All ILS instructors have been asked to include the following information in their syllabi. Please take note of it.

**Grades:**

The following definitions of letter grades have been defined by student and faculty members of the Curriculum Steering Committee and have been approved by the faculty as an aid in evaluation of academic performance and to assist students by giving them an understanding of the grading standards of the School of Library and Information Science.

A  4.0 Outstanding achievement. Student performance demonstrates full command of the course materials and evinces a high level of originality and/or creativity that far surpasses course expectations.

A- 3.7 Excellent achievement. Student performance demonstrates thorough knowledge of the course materials and exceeds course expectations by completing all requirements in a superior manner.

B+ 3.3 Very good work. Student performance demonstrates above-average comprehension of the course materials and exceeds course expectations on all tasks as defined in the course syllabus.

B  3.0 Student performance meets designated course expectations and
demonstrates understanding of the course materials at an acceptable level.

B- 2.7 Marginal work. Student performance demonstrates incomplete understanding of course materials.

C+ 2.3 Unsatisfactory work. Student performance demonstrates incomplete and C 2.0 inadequate understanding of course materials.

C- 1.7 Unacceptable work. Coursework performed at this level will not count D+ 1.3 toward the MLS or MIS degree. For the course to count toward the degree, D 1.0 the student must repeat the course with a passing grade.

D- 0.7

F 0.0 Failing. Student may continue in program only with permission of the Dean.

**Academic Honesty:**
This course will follow Indiana University and School of Library and Information Science policies on academic dishonesty. Students found to be engaging in plagiarism, cheating, and other types of dishonesty will receive an F for the course. For further information, please see the Code of Student Ethics at [http://campuslife.indiana.edu/Code/index1.html](http://campuslife.indiana.edu/Code/index1.html).