

# INFO 7401: Archival Appraisal, Arrangement, and Access

Spring 2026

Wednesdays, 4-6:30 PM

In-person, RO-300j, Benjamin Rosenthal Library  
Instructor: Caitlin Colban-Waldron (she/her)

# Welcome!



# About the course



INFO 7401/LBSCI 730 is the introduction to archival practice, and is usually paired with or precedes INFO 7400/LBSCI 732.

- 7401/730 is practice, or the HOW (we do the job) and the WHAT (we do) of archiving
- 7400/732 is theory, or the HOW (we think about archives) and the WHY (we archive) of archiving

It is a broad course! We will move quickly and cover a lot of ground. It is intended to be the launch pad into other, more specialized work/courses.

Learning objectives:  
or, what are we trying to do here?

# **Understand the basics of archival practice.**

Learning objective #1

**Implement** foundational knowledge  
towards practical archival appraisal,  
processing, and access work.

Learning objective #2

**Discuss** and critically **engage** in  
current issues related to archival  
practice.

Learning objective #3

**Communicate** importance of archives  
in professional and external contexts.

Learning objective #4



# Course website

[www.introtoarchives.com](http://www.introtoarchives.com)

([info7401.common.gc.cuny.edu](http://info7401.common.gc.cuny.edu))

This is a Zero-Cost Textbook class. ALL readings will be accessible through the website.

## An introduction to archival practice

INFO 7401: Archival Appraisal, Arrangement, and Access is the first course in the core sequence for the [Advanced Certificate in Archives](#) at the Queens College [Graduate School of Library and Information Studies](#).

This site is both a [course tool](#) and an [evergreen hub for resources](#). You can return to it at any time as you start your careers in the archives and cultural heritage fields to revisit readings, check resources, and develop your own practice.

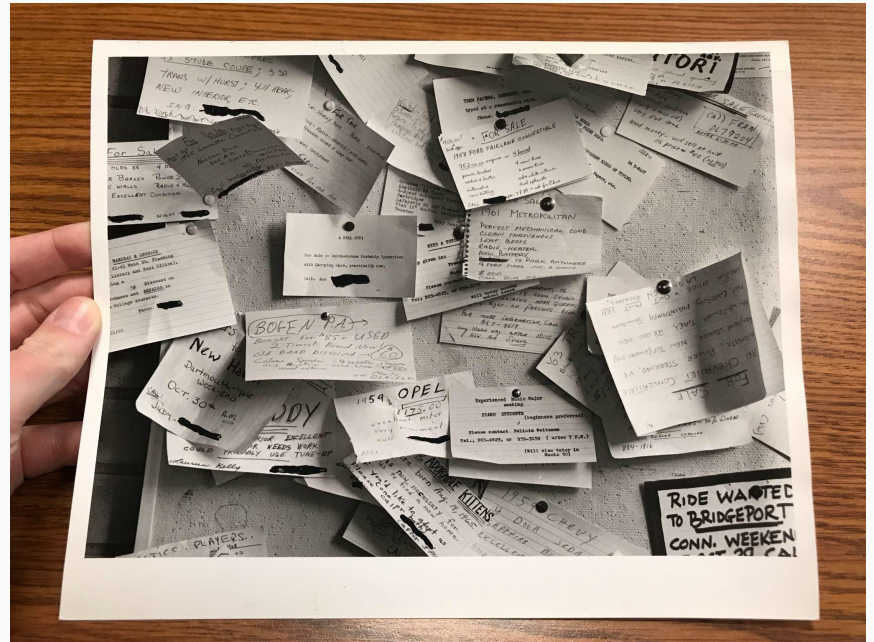
The site will be updated at the start of every semester with a new syllabus and course schedule; old [syllabi](#), [course materials](#), and [schedules](#) will be archived as [posts](#). New [resources](#) are updated regularly as needed.



# Course overview

14 class meetings, each class session covers a different topic

- Unit one: foundations
- Unit two: appraisal
- Unit three: arrangement
- Unit four: access



# Class structure

1. Lecture (30-50 minutes)
2. In-class discussion (45 minutes)
3. Practicum (remainder)



# Assignments

## Practicum: **20%**

4 hands-on exercises/deliverables in appraising and arranging materials, describing archival collections, and addressing hypothetical “real-world” scenarios re: archival management.

Each deliverable **REQUIRES** a 200-500 word reflection in addition to specific requirements. If you do not include a reflection you will automatically lose 3 points.

# Assignments

Papers and projects: **40%**

Finding aid analysis: 20 points

Access and use project: 15 points

Presentation (for access and use project): 5 points

# Assignments

## Annotations: **25%**

Using the annotation tool Hypothes.is, you will engage with the required readings listed in the course schedule (available through course website). You are required to contribute at least one comment of substance and at least one thoughtful reply on each week's **required** reading(s) for full points.

You have the option of utilizing ONE skip week with no penalty. You will still be required to complete the readings, but formal annotations (comments AND replies) will not be checked.

# Assignments

## Class participation: **10%**

Includes ungraded assignments like the welcome post, plus overall evaluation of the following areas:

- Preparation for class
- Frequency of participation in class
- Quality of comments
- Listening skills
- Classroom conduct and respect for others

# Assignments

## Discussion lead: **5%**

Each student will be responsible for leading one class discussion (due to class size, two students may be discussion leads at one time).

I will post the discussion lead schedule on the assignment page, and will not be reminding you before your selected time slot. Please be prepared!

A note on grading

# Course/GSLIS Policies

- Accessibility and accommodations
- Attendance and late work
- Office hours
- Respect
  - Recording and photography in the classroom
  - Name/pronoun statement
  - Safe zone/diversity/immigration resources statement
- Plagiarism, academic integrity, and AI

# Course/GSLIS Policies

1. Respect
2. Consideration
3. Reciprocity

# Contact

Email:

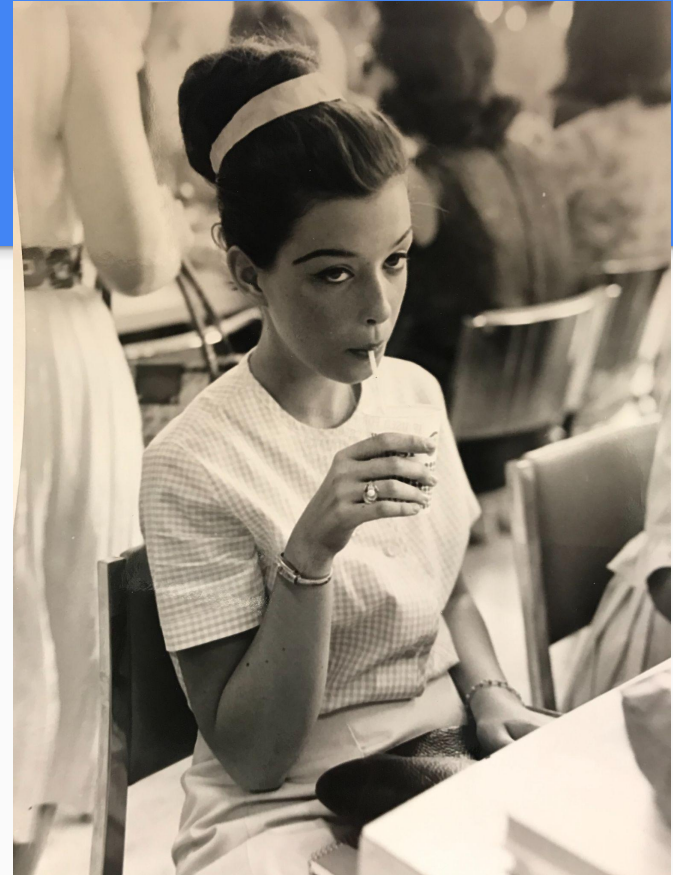
- [caitlin.waldron@qc.cuny.edu](mailto:caitlin.waldron@qc.cuny.edu)
- [caitlinmariewaldron@gmail.com](mailto:caitlinmariewaldron@gmail.com)

Phone:

- (516) 382-6632

Office hours: To book time with me, either email me directly or use my [Outlook Booking Page](#) (preferred)

- By appointment only and by phone, zoom, or in-person
- RO-317 in library
- Course questions, career, GSLIS, archives in general





# Hypothes.is annotation demonstration and set-up

# Hypothes.is annotation requirement–Week 2

Required reading #1:

Terry Cook's "Evidence, Memory, identity, and community: four shifting archival paradigms"

1 ORIGINAL annotation

1 REPLY annotation

Required reading #2:

Michelle Caswell's "'The archive' is not an archives': on acknowledging the intellectual contributions of archival studies"

1 ORIGINAL annotation

1 REPLY annotation

# Example original annotation

The image shows a digital reading interface. On the left, a document page is displayed with several lines of text highlighted in yellow. The text discusses archival collecting practices and the volume of records. On the right, a side panel is open, showing a search bar and a list of annotations. The top of the side panel displays 'LBSCI 730 - 2024 fall'. The first annotation is by 'danielgiovanniello' dated 'Sep 12, 2024' and is located on page 311. The annotation text reads: 'the 1970s and 1980s. Depractices as random, fragmented, noted that "the real cause of concern [that] More'. Below the text is a 'More' link. At the bottom of the annotation box are icons for back, up, and flag.

Automatic Zoom

LBSCI 730 - 2024 fall

danielgiovanniello Sep 12, 2024 p. 311

*the 1970s and 1980s. Depractices as random, fragmented, noted that "the real cause of concern [that] More*

This is a key point to me—the passive work of prior archivists/schools of thought wasn't "objective" the way the field maybe thought it was/espoused the (misguided) virtue of, but rather "random" and clumsy as a result of not thinking of the full scope of the record and the theory behind it, as Cook discusses in the other reading.

# Example reply annotation

The image shows a screenshot of a digital library interface. On the left, a document is displayed with several paragraphs of text. The right side of the interface shows a comment thread for a document titled "LBSCI 730 - 2024 fall". The comment thread includes a comment by "cristinagenao" and a reply by "megandelsey". A yellow rectangular box highlights the reply by "megandelsey".

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LBSCI 730 - 2024 fall

cristinagenao (edited Sep 11, 2024) Sep 7, 2024  
p. 311

g, maintainHam felt that "only by controlling wsolve the major  
problems in modemopment policies were not among tthat [More](#)

I am constantly surprised by the academic's fear of exploring real-world applications of their theories. Although this is not the case for all academics, we've already talked at length about how the schools of theory and practice are often separated by a vast ocean in archival (and librarianship at large). Although there is much to discuss in the theory sector, I think there is some fear from theorists in creating potential executions for their theory, in that they can be wrong. Part of the freedom of theory is that they're just thoughts and ideas, but to posit real-world plans based off of one's thoughts is maybe a scary prospect. I'd also like to point out that it took women's scholarship to posit executions of theory, the phrase that Ham 'left it to' those authors seems like a nice way of saying 'he couldn't do' what Reed-Scott and Phillips did.

Hide replies (1)

megandelsey Sep 11, 2024

I think what a lot of conversations like these miss is a critical analysis of what it means to work under a capitalist structure. I think a lot of professionals in fields that put theory to practice are burnt out and can become apathetic under the pressure of surviving and supporting families with pretty average pay, long hours, and very little autonomy.

# Practicum exercise

Sat. Sept 23 9pm

**PARTY**

bill creston  
727 ave. of the americas  
new york, n. y. 10010

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727 ave. of the americas

BARBARA ROSENTHAL  
727 Ave. of the Americas  
New York, New York 10010

924-4893

LET'S  
LOVE  
MR DADDY

Proven

