

SYLLABUS
INFO 7401 / LBSCI 730: Archival Appraisal, Arrangement, and Access
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION STUDIES

Queens College/CUNY

Spring 2026

Mode: in-person

Meeting days/times: Wednesdays, 4:00-6:30 PM

Classroom: Tanenbaum classroom, room 300i (in Rosenthal Library, third floor)

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Caitlin Colban-Waldron

Phone number: (718) 997-3652

Email: caitlin.waldron@qc.cuny.edu AND caitlinmariewaldron@gmail.com

- Note about QC email: please make sure you are sending messages to a @qc.cuny.edu address and NOT a @qmail.cuny.edu address. If you are sending an email from within the QMail client, it will autopopulate my old student email—I DO NOT check this email and will not see it. Please check before sending any messages.

- Please allow 2 business days for a response to any communications outside of class. For quickest response, please copy both my QC email and Gmail, provided above. Office Hours: available by zoom, in-person, or phone, but by appointment **only**. To book time with me, either email me directly or use my [Outlook Booking Page](#) (preferred).

A. BULLETIN DESCRIPTION

3 hr.; 3 cr. Prereq.: LBSCI 700, 701, 702, 703 / INFO 7000, 7001, 7002, 7003; or permission of instructor.

This in-person course provides an in-depth exploration of the archival principles of Appraisal, Arrangement, and Access. The key principles of this course represent the hierarchy of archival practice: access to archives is dependent on the description of archives, which in turn is dependent on the arrangement of archives. Before arrangement is archival appraisal, which represents the archivist's foundational intervention into the process of records management and disposition. The nature of the archival record is shaped by these processes, and by extension, our relationship with

history and the past. We will look closely at this process of shaping the archival record that takes place in the archive.

Within a practical and theoretical framework students will consider how recent advances in technology provide opportunities for more dynamic and interactive tools for archival access. Key concepts covered will include: the construction of archival finding aids, including content standards; the emergence of digital archives, including open-source software and metadata schemes; and modes of digital description, access, and repository management.

B. COURSE LEARNING GOALS & GSLIS STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Course Learning Goals	Assignments	GSLIS Student Learning Outcomes						
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1. Understand the basics of archival practice.	Finding aid analysis	X	X				X	X
2. Implement foundational knowledge towards practical archival appraisal, processing, and access work.	Practicum deliverables	X		X				
3. Discuss and critically engage in current issues related to archival practice.	Annotations Discussion lead		X		X	X	X	
4. Develop ability to communicate importance of archives in professional and external contexts.	Access/use project Presentation		X			X		X

GSLIS Student Learning Outcomes:

- A. Enable access to information and knowledge, including its creation, acquisition, organization and management, storage and retrieval
- B. Articulate the role and importance of ethics, values, lifelong learning and advocacy underlying the practice of the information professions

- C. Apply appropriate standards, policies, tools and practices in various specializations of information science, as articulated by representative professional organizations
- D. Analyze and critically assess the design, implementation and results of research and apply them to information practice
- E. Advocate for social justice, particularly in our metropolitan community, by understanding the needs, designing programs with, and amplifying the strengths of our underserved groups
- F. Identify, evaluate and implement current and emerging technologies to create, store, and present information in a way such that users can access it, process it, and experience it
- G. Explain and apply principles of effective management and leadership in the library and related information institutions in a rapidly changing society

C. REQUIRED TEXTS, TECH, AND SUPPLIES

This class follows a Zero-Cost Textbook model that will use various Open Educational Resources and/or library materials. You will not need to purchase a textbook for this class.

The course website is: www.introtoarchives.com.

All course reading materials will be available one of the following ways:

- Linked directly from [course website](#)
- Sourced through [QC Library](#) resources like databases and journals

Please [register for a CUNY Academic Commons account](#) before our first meeting and follow the class page. More information about [taking a course on the Commons](#) can be found in the Help section of the Commons website.

Additionally, we will be utilizing the annotation tool [Hypothes.is](#), which works as a Chrome extension or a bookmarklet, depending on your preferred browser. Instructions

on how to download and use the tool will happen in our first class session, and a course-specific [FAQ page](#) is available for more help.

Please use the [Hypothes.is group invitation link](#) to access highlights, notes, and discussions on the semester's readings.

Finally, you will be submitting all assignments through [Dropbox](#), directly on the course website. I prefer PDFs, but will accept Word documents. Please use the following file name convention when naming files:

Lastname_Assignment ##

D. TENTATIVE SCHEDULE SUMMARY

Week	Date	Topics	Assignments due
One	1/28	Introduction & course overview	none
Two	2/4	Archives and archivists; histories of archival practice	#1
Three	2/11	Archives building	none
Four	2/18	Making the appraisal decision	none
Five	2/25	Processing, or establishing control	#2
Six	3/4	Preservation	none
Seven	3/11	Arrangement	none
Eight	3/18	Description principles and standards	#3
Nine	3/25	Metadata and digital description	#4
NO CLASS	4/1	SPRING BREAK	none
NO CLASS	4/8	SPRING BREAK	none
Ten	4/15	Archival reference and research	#5
Eleven	4/22	Copyright, licensing, and intellectual property	#6, #7
Twelve	4/29	Archival literacy and teaching with primary sources	none
Thirteen	5/6	Advocacy and outreach	#8
Fourteen	5/13	Conclusion	#8
	5/22		#9, #10

TENTATIVE READING SCHEDULE

All readings, resources & details will be posted on the course website. Please check it at least weekly.

The below schedule is tentative; if the syllabus and the website are in conflict, **follow instructions on the website.**

Instructions: **Required** and **foundational** readings (and sometimes **further** readings) will be posted each week.

- **Required** readings MUST be read before the class they're assigned. The required readings are the ones we will be discussing during the discussion portion of the class, and annotations/replies are due only on each required reading.
- **Foundational** and **further** readings provide more context for each week's topic but are, ultimately, optional.

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UNIT ONE: FOUNDATIONS

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SESSION ONE: Introduction & course overview

Thursday, January 28

Required reading:

INFO 7401: Archival Appraisal, Arrangement, and Access Spring 2026 Syllabus

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SESSION TWO: Archives, archivists, & histories of archival practice

Thursday, February 4

Required reading-annotation and discussion:

Cook. (2013). Evidence, memory, identity, and community: four shifting archival paradigms. *Archival Science*, 13(2-3), 95–120. [https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-012-9180-](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-012-9180-7)

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Caswell, M. (2016). "The archive" is not an archives: acknowledging the intellectual contributions of archival studies. *Reconstruction* (Bowling Green, Ohio), 16(1).

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UNIT TWO: APPRAISAL

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SESSION THREE: Archives building

Thursday, February 11

Required reading–annotation and discussion:

Sauer, C. K. (2001). Doing the Best We Can? The Use of Collection Development Policies and Cooperative Collecting Activities at Manuscript Repositories. *The American Archivist*, 64(2), 308–349. <https://doi.org/10.17723/aarc.64.2.gj6771215231xm37>

Wexler, G., & Long, L. (2009). Lifetimes and Legacies: Mortality, Immortality, and the Needs of Aging and Dying Donors. *The American Archivist*, 72(2), 478–495.

<https://doi.org/10.17723/aarc.72.2.u84p72872w461264>

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SESSION FOUR: Making the appraisal decision

Thursday, February 18

Required reading–annotation and discussion:

Lutz, C. (2022). Making a Scene: A Scenes Approach to a Local Music Archives. *The American Archivist*, 85(1), 268–287.

Steinwall, S. D. (1986). Appraisal and the FBI Files Case: For Whom Do Archivists Retain Records? *The American Archivist*, 49(1), 52–63.

<https://doi.org/10.17723/aarc.49.1.hp6676j0611u0kh4>

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UNIT THREE: ARRANGEMENT

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SESSION FIVE: Processing, or establishing control
Thursday, February 25

Required reading–annotation and discussion:

Greene, M. A., & Meissner, D. (2005). More Product, Less Process: Revamping Traditional Archival Processing. *The American Archivist*, 68(2), 208–263.

<https://doi.org/10.17723/aarc.68.2.c741823776k65863>

Phillips, J. (2015). A Defense of Preservation in the Age of MPLP. *The American Archivist*, 78(2), 470–487. <https://doi.org/10.17723/0360-9081.78.2.470>

Dundon, K.; McPhee, L.; Arroyo-Ramirez, E.; Beiser, J.; Dean, C.; Eagle Yun, A., et al. (2020). Guidelines for Efficient Archival Processing in the University of California Libraries (Version 4). UCLA: Library. Retrieved from <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4b81g01z>

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SESSION SIX: Preservation
Thursday, March 4

Required reading–annotation and discussion:

Darms, L. (2009). The Archival Object: A Memoir of Disintegration. *Archivaria*, 67, 143–155.

Jedlitschka, R. “Together We Are Strong”: Emergency Associations for the Protection of Germany's Cultural Heritage. *The American Archivist* 85 (2): 334–358.

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SESSION SEVEN: Arrangement
Thursday, March 11

Required reading–annotation and discussion:

Heil, J. M. (2013). The Procrustean Bed: A History of the Arrangement of the Al Purdy Fonds. *Archivaria*, 76, 27-54.

Eason, J. A. (2015) When Narrative Fails: Context and Physical Evidence as Means of Understanding the Northwest Boundary Survey Photographs of 1857–1862. *Journal of Contemporary Archival Studies*, 2(2).

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SESSION EIGHT: Description principles and standards

Thursday, March 18

Required reading–annotation and discussion:

Archives for Black Lives in Philadelphia, metadata recommendations.

https://github.com/a4blip/A4BLiP/blob/master/Resources/5_Metadata.md

The Queer Metadata Collective. (2024). Best Practices for Queer Metadata (1.0). Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.12580531>

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SESSION NINE: Metadata and digital description

Thursday, March 25

Required reading–annotation and discussion:

Force, D. C., & Smith, R. (2021). Context Lost: Digital Surrogates, Their Physical Counterparts, and the Metadata that Is Keeping Them Apart. *The American Archivist*, 84(1), 91–118. <https://doi.org/10.17723/0360-9081-84.1.91>

Manis, K., & Wilde, P. (2024). Locating yourself in the historical record: challenges of provenance and metadata schemas in the library of congress's digital materials. *Archival Science*, 24(4), 897–922. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-024-09465-7>

UNIT FOUR: ACCESS

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SESSION TEN: Archival reference and research

Thursday, April 15

Required reading–annotation and discussion:

Radick, C. (2016). Romance Writers' Use of Archives. *Archivaria*, 81, 45-73. Retrieved from <https://archivaria.ca/index.php/archivaria/article/view/13558>

Treat, L., & Judkins, J. (2018). First there is the creative decision, then there is the dollar decision: Information-Seeking Behaviors of Filmmakers Using Moving Image Archives. *The American Archivist*, 81(2), 373–393. <https://doi.org/10.17723/0360-9081-81.2.373>

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SESSION ELEVEN: Copyright, licensing, and intellectual property

Thursday, April 22

Required reading–annotation and discussion:

Tsou, J., & Vallier, J. (2016). ETHER TODAY, GONE TOMORROW: 21ST CENTURY SOUND RECORDING COLLECTION IN CRISIS. *Notes (Music Library Association)*, 72(3), 461–483. <https://doi.org/10.1353/not.2016.0041>

Wilson, N., Battershill, C., Clarkson, H., Hannah, M. N., Nokhrin, I., & Willson Gordon, E. (2022). Digital critical archives, copyright, and feminist praxis. *Archival Science*, 22(3), 295–317. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-021-09384-x>

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SESSION TWELVE: Archival literacy and teaching with primary sources

Thursday, April 29

Required reading–annotation and discussion:

Quagliaroli, J., & Casey, P. (2021). Teaching with Drawings: Primary Source Instruction with Architecture Archives . *The American Archivist*, 84(2), 374–396. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.17723/0360-9081-84.2.374>

Emerling. (2018). Civics in the Archives: Engaging Undergraduate and Graduate Students with Congressional Papers. *The American Archivist*, 81(2), 310–322. <https://doi.org/10.17723/0360-9081-81.2.310>

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SESSION THIRTEEN: Advocacy and outreach
Thursday, May 6

Required reading–annotation and discussion:

Buchanan, Gruning, J., Gursoy, A., & Barker, L. (2017). Surveying Archivists and Their Work toward Advocacy and Management, or “Enterprise Archiving.” *The American Archivist*, 80(2), 268–295. <https://doi.org/10.17723/0360-9081-80.2.268>

McWhite. (2010). “So, Your Institution Is Hosting a Presidential Debate...”: A Case Study of 2008 Programming by the University of Mississippi Archives and Special Collections. *The American Archivist*, 73(1), 219–234. <https://doi.org/10.17723/aarc.73.1.n374578518678vk2>

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SESSION FOURTEEN: Conclusions
Thursday, May 13

Required reading–annotation:

INFO 7401: Archival Appraisal, Arrangement, and Access Spring 2026 Syllabus

E. ASSIGNMENTS, DUE DATES AND GRADING PLAN

The final grade for this course will be determined as follows:

- Practicum deliverables, 20%
- Annotations, 25%
- Finding aid analysis, 20%
- Access/use project, 20%
- Class participation, 10%

- Discussion lead, 5%

Listed below are summaries of most, but not all, of the major activities that will be required in this course. Additional detailed instructions will be provided on the course website for each of them by your professor.

Practicum deliverables (20%): This assignment addresses Course SLO 2.

Summary: 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, the maximum number of points you will receive is 2.**

DUE: throughout, see COURSE SCHEDULE (tentative outline below).

- Assignment #2: Appraisal report, February 25 (5 points)
- Assignment #3: Arrangement schema, March 18 (5 points)
- Assignment #4: DACS description elements, March 25 (5 points)
- Assignment #7: Reference request, April 22 (5 points)
- Assignment #10: Social media post (extra credit, 2 points), May 22

Annotations (Assignment #12) (25%): This assignment addresses Course SLO 3.

Summary: Using the annotation tool **Hypothes.is**, you will engage with the required readings listed in the course schedule. 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. If you are exercising this option, please comment “SKIP” on the reading’s associated page note with article information. No more than five students can skip one week’s readings at any point in order to preserve discussion material for the rest of the class. If all skips are taken for any one week, I will comment “SKIPS CLOSED” on the page note.

Please use the [Hypothes.is group invitation link](#) to access highlights, notes, and discussions on the semester's readings.

DUE: Before class assigned.

Finding aid analysis (Assignment #5) (20%): This project addresses Course SLO 1.

Summary: 1500-1800 word paper that analyzes and critiques two to three finding aids you locate online from different repositories, measuring them against professional standards.

DUE: April 15, 20 points

Access and use project (Assignments #6, #8, and #9) (20%): This project addresses Course SLO 4.

Summary: Write a 1500-2000 word (2300 word absolute maximum, not including title page/references) proposal for one access and use initiative for the Creative Services Video Collection, the Creative Services Photographs Collection, or another Queens College Special Collections and Archives collection. You are free to be creative in your application of our learning objectives in Unit Four towards this initiative.

In addition to a paper, you are required to present on your initiative. The presentation should be no shorter than 5 minutes and no longer than 10 minutes and must include a slide deck.

TOPIC DUE (assignment #6): April 22, 0 points (but required)

PRESENTATION DUE (assignment #8): May 6 or May 13, 5 points

PROJECT DUE (assignment #9): May 22, 15 points

Class participation (10%): This assignment addresses Course SLOs 3 and 4.

Summary: This class is in-person for a reason! Participation in discussions and in-class exercises is essential. Attendance, active engagement with the readings and class contributions are mandatory to receive a passing grade. Participation includes the welcome post (Assignment #1, due September 4).

Discussion lead (Assignment #12) (5%): This assignment addresses Course SLO 3.

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

DUE: throughout the semester, 5 points. Sign-up will happen during our first class.

Overall Course Grades

Evaluation will be on a percentage system as detailed above. Grade assignment will follow the scholastic standards in the [2020-2021 Queens College Graduate Bulletin](#), p. 28.

A	97-100
A +	
A	93-96
A -	90-92
B +	87-89
B	83-86
B -	80-82
C +	77-79
C	73-76
C -	70-72
F	0-69

Incompletes

An incomplete (Inc.) grade for the course will not be granted unless extenuating circumstances exist and with explicit, prior approval of the professor and in compliance with the rules of the College. See the [2020-2021 Queens College Graduate Bulletin](#), p. 29 for additional information.

Please note that falling behind in course work or receiving unsatisfactory grades do not, in themselves, constitute sufficient cause to receive an Incomplete. (In other words, do

not assume that you may simply choose to take an incomplete; this must be requested of the professor with ample justification in writing; it is not guaranteed.)

F. CUNY POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The Policy on Academic Integrity, as adopted by the Board is available to all candidates. Academic dishonesty is prohibited in the City University of New York and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion. Please consult <http://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/legal-affairs/policies-resources/academic-integrity-policy/> for the policy and other related information.

Copying the work of another author regardless of source, or the work of another student, is automatically grounds for failing the course. Using all or part of your own paper in multiple classes without prior permission is considered a form of plagiarism. This also includes asking people on professional lists-servs or working as professionals in the field to do your work for you.

From me and for this course, specifically: **AI, plagiarism and academic integrity**

The [Academic Integrity Policy](#), as adopted by the CUNY Board in 2011 and amended in 2022, is available to all candidates.

As per the policy: “Academic dishonesty is prohibited in The City University of New York. Penalties for academic dishonesty include academic sanctions, such as failing or otherwise reduced grades, and/or disciplinary sanctions, including suspension or expulsion. Academic integrity is at the core of a college or university education. Faculty assign essays, exams, quizzes, projects, and so on both to extend the learning done in the classroom and as a means of assessing that learning...Academic dishonesty confers an unfair advantage over others, which undermines educational equity and fairness. Students who violate academic integrity, or “cheat”, place their college’s accreditation and their own future prospects in jeopardy.”

In addition: “Cheating is the unauthorized use or attempted use of material, information, notes, study aids, devices, artificial intelligence (AI) systems, or communication during an academic exercise.”

MY CLASSROOM'S AI POLICY is that NO AI MAY BE USED FOR ANY ASSIGNMENT. As such, any AI use by you as the student, including and especially generative chat agents like ChatGPT and similar, is **unauthorized** and will be treated as “**cheating**” as per the definition above in the CUNY Academic Integrity Policy. You can review the policy linked above for further unauthorized use examples of AI.

The penalty for using AI in any of my assignments is failing the course. Not the individual assignment but the entire course.

I will not be considering arguments that AI will be integrated into archives or library work in the future—this is a *pedagogical* policy based on respect for you as learners and respect for me as your instructor. I engage with each of you in good faith, assuming that you are in my class to learn about archives and how to do this job successfully. In addition, I will never use any software to check for AI that also uses AI to do so. I think it's an unethical and morally bankrupt technology; I won't be holding you to standards to which I don't hold myself.

I expect that same good-faith consideration from you: I really strive to meet you all where you are as learners, encourage your growth and engagement with the material, and cheerlead your enthusiasm for the field. If you feel you need to use AI because an assignment is unclear, you are struggling with the readings, or you need more time to finish an assignment, etc., please contact me instead. It is extremely disrespectful and a waste of everyone's time to make me spend more time grading a robot's output than it took you to generate it as if it was yours, a real person whose experience I care about in this classroom. Do not do that! You will fail the course. Just reach out to me.

G. USE OF CANDIDATE WORK

All programs in New York State undergo periodic reviews by accreditation agencies. For these purposes, samples of candidates' work are made available to those professionals conducting the review. Candidate anonymity is assured under these circumstances. If you do not wish to have your work made available for these purposes, please let the professor know before the start of the second class. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

H. REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR CANDIDATES WITH DISABILITIES

Candidates with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Special Services Office, Frese Hall Room 111; (2) bring a letter to your professor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class. For more information about services available to Queens College candidates, contact Special Services Office, Frese Hall Room 111: Telephone: 718-997-5870; Email: QC.SPSV@qc.cuny.edu (Office/Testing Hours: Monday – Thursday: 8am – 6pm; Friday: 8am – 5pm; Saturday: 9am – 2pm).

I. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Queens College Writing Center

The Queens College Writing Center provides its services and resources offered at no cost to QC students. The Center stresses the importance of writing well. You are encouraged to take advantage of these services and resources. For more information about the available services and resources, please consult

<https://www.qc.cuny.edu/academics/wc/>

Writing

All papers submitted should be in Helvetica, 12 point font with one inch margins, a cover sheet, and a reference list. Papers should be written in competent, grammatically correct American English, using the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* style for organization, content, and citation format. Papers that do not meet these criteria will not be graded. Students should keep copies of all assignments submitted until they have been graded. Your instructor will discuss in class how to submit each paper.

Course Evaluation

Towards the end of the semester, access to online course evaluation will be enabled. Please remember to participate in the college online course evaluations. Your comments are highly valued, and these evaluations are an important service to fellow students and to the institution. Please also note that all responses are completely

anonymous; no identifying information is retained once the evaluation has been submitted.

Participation and Conduct

Faculty and students are expected to behave in a professional manner, including participation that is inclusive, community-building, active, considerate, collaborative and respectful. Respectful behavior includes addressing each other by our preferred names and pronouns.

Degrading, disrespecting, insulting or harassing another person or group will not be tolerated. This includes in person or online abuse or any persistent and unwelcomed action that another person has notified you is unwelcome. Examples include: expressions of White supremacist ideology; offensive comments related to gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, neuro(a)typicality, physical appearance, body size, race or religion; deliberate misgendering or use of dead names; threats of violence or incitements to violence or self harm; intimidation; sustained disruption of discussion; unwelcome sexual attention; continued one-to-one communication after requests to cease; and the publication of non-harassing private communication.

We value freedom of speech when practiced in good faith, including rational debate and discussion, genuine exchanges of ideas, and spreading useful or enlightening information. White supremacy, hate speech and spreading disinformation will not be tolerated in GSLIS.

Counseling

Queens College has a counseling service through which licensed psychologists, certified social workers, licensed professional counselors, and counseling interns supervised by professional staff offer individual counseling, groups, and referrals to appropriate college or community resources. All sessions are free and confidential. Students meet with counselors for many reasons, including:

- College adjustment
- Family/relationship conflict
- Career/life choices
- Poor academic performance
- Loneliness
- Life crisis

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Low self-esteem
- Sexual identity/orientation
- Sexual assault/harassment
- Interpersonal violence

For more information see:

<https://www2.gc.cuny.edu/StudentLife/services/counseling/counseling/Pages/default.aspx>

If you are distressed and are seeking help, you can text the crisis text line:

Text CUNY to 741741 or you can call the New York City Helpline at: 1-888-692-9355.

The number for the National Suicide Hotline is: 1-800-273-8255.