

ENGL 5360. Archives and Archival Theory. 3 Hours

Professor: C. May

Tuesday 6:00-9:00pm

Office Hours: T/Th 11:00-12:00 pm & by appointment

Location: 311 Preston Hall

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In this course we will study the histories and theories of archives and archival research while engaging in hands-on, practical work within regional archival collections. We will begin with the question, “What is an archive?” and proceed to think about various historical writings and cultural-studies approaches attempting to answer that query. We will begin our readings with Jacques Derrida’s essay, “Archive Fever: A Freudian Interpretation,” and then segue into Carolyn Steedman’s book, *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History*. We will read several more theoretical works and practical guides regarding archives, and then jump into doing original archival research. The ultimate goal of the course is completing a final seminar paper on a topic of your choosing. Your seminar paper will rely on the work you will do in various types of archives located around our geographical region. ***Students should expect to spend several hours a week deep in archival research at a number of usual (and unusual) places, such as university special collections, museums, city halls, state capitals—and possibly cemeteries!***—wherever your research questions may take you as you develop knowledge and skills of using archives and archival research.

Texts:

“Archive Fever: A Freudian Interpretation,” by Jacques Derrida

Dust: The Archive and Cultural History, by Carolyn Steedman

Working in the Archives: Practical Research methods for Rhetoric and Composition-Ramsey, etc.

Exploring the C-Span Archives: Advancing the Research Agenda

MLA Handbook (Eighth Edition)

Other Required Items:

wood pencils

white cotton gloves

magnifying glass

document scanner for smartphone

Instapaper account (instapaper.com)

C-Span account (<https://www.c-span.org/>)

*lots of patience

Assignments:

Commentaries (50%)

Students are expected to write a two-page commentary of the readings and out-of-class assignments due for that week. There will be a total of ten (10) commentaries over the course of the semester. The commentaries will be printed in 12-point Times new Roman font, single spaced.

Final Research Paper (50%)

The final research paper will be a full, 20-25 page research paper focused on a literary, rhetorical, or cultural studies topic of your choosing. The paper will rely heavily on support derived from original primary archival research performed at archives within the state of Texas and online.

Schedule**

T	8/29	Introduction to course objectives and materials
T	9/5	No Class
T	9/12	“Archive Fever”--Derrida & Dust: The Archive and Cultural History Brief: Derrida and Dust
T	9/19	Working in the Archives--Introduction & Part One Brief: First Archive Visit
T	9/26	Working in the Archives--Introduction & Part Two Brief: Slavery in the Archives
T	10/3	Working in the Archives--Introduction & Part Three Brief: Women and Daily Life in the Archives
T	10/10	Exploring the C-Span Archives--Forward & chapters 1,3 and 7 Brief: C-Span and Civil Discourse
T	10/17	Exploring the C-Span Archives--Chapters 8, 9, and10 Brief: Death and the Archive
T	10/24	Archives Power-chapter 3 (Handout) Brief: Instapaper as Archive Paper Topics Announced in Class
T	10/31	Brief: Archival research accomplished this week
T	11/7	Brief: Archival research accomplished this week
T	11/14	Brief: Archival research accomplished this week
T	11/21	Thanksgiving Break
T	11/28	Final Paper Due
T	12/5	(Last Day of Class) Return Final Papers

**Order and content of schedule is subject to change.