

Into the Archive: The Politics and Practice of Archival Research
JanPlan 2018 – Colby College

Jessica R. Mack

Office Hours: Tuesdays & Wednesdays, 3:30-4:30pm in Miller 257, or by appointment.

Course Description: This course brings students into a range of archives — paper and digital, past and present — to explore how to critically analyze primary sources and interpret evidence. Students will examine the history and politics of archives and deconstruct the narratives and silences inherent in them. They will investigate the ways in which archives have historically been used for political regimes, social movements, memory work, education, and scholarship, with an emphasis on case studies from the history of Latin America. Through in-class activities and two archive visits, students will gain interpretive tools, develop the ability to assess the reliability of information, and build an understanding of research practices. Readings, discussions in seminar and online, writing assignments and oral presentations will build students' skills in close reading, critical thinking and analysis, collaborative learning, and communicating complex ideas.

Course Website: web.colby.edu/intothearchive

Assignments:

Readings and Online Posts: The readings will be central to class discussions and activities. All readings and course materials are available on the course website or through the Colby Library website (ebooks and articles). Complete all reading assignments listed on the syllabus in preparation for each session (the readings are listed on the day they will be discussed). **By 10:00am on each class day, post a quote, a comment and a question from the readings on our course discussion page.** Come to class ready to address discussion questions and comment on your classmates' posts.

Source Analysis: Students will submit three (3) short primary source analyses (1200-1500 words), due on Friday at 5:00pm for the first three weeks of the course. Guidelines will be provided. Students will receive extra credit if they use the Farnham Writers' Center to work on drafts of these assignments.

Presentations: Students will practice oral presentation and collaboration skills by working in small groups to analyze and interpret primary sources provided in digital format and present their findings to the larger group.

Final: The final take home exam will be distributed on Wednesday, January 31 and will consist of a short essay question and a primary source analysis. The final is due via email by 12:00pm on the last day of JanPlan, Thursday, February 1. Class will meet that day but there will be no required reading.

Assessment:

25% - Participation: Includes attendance, completing the readings, submitting online posts, and active participation in seminar discussions and archive visits.

15% - Oral presentation of digital archive materials in class

30% - Source Analysis (3 in total)

30% - Final Exam (take home)

Week 1 – Archival Thinking

Monday, January 8, 2018:

Welcome and Introductions
What is an Archive? Guiding Concepts and Questions
Approaches to Primary Source Material

Tuesday, January 9, 2018: Power in the Archive

Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, Preface and Ch. 1.
Francis Blouin and William Rosenberg, *Processing the Past: Contesting Authority in History and the Archives*, Introduction: “On the Intersections of Archives and History.”
In-class exercise: Bring a source from your own personal archive to discuss

Wednesday, January 10, 2018: Silences and Omissions

Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, Ch. 3.
Rebecca Scott, “The Provincial Archive as a Place of Memory: The Role of Former Slaves in the Cuban War of Independence (1895-98),” *History Workshop Journal*, no. 58 (2004): 149-66.

Thursday, January 11, 2018: Institutional Archives and Contestation

Visit to the Colby College Archives – Miller Library, First Floor
Jarrett Drake, “Documenting Dissent in the Contemporary College Archive,” *On Archivy*, November 7, 2016.
Chase Hommeyer, “An Update on Archiving Student Activism at Princeton,” *Mudd Manuscript Library Blog*, March 25, 2016.

Due: Friday, January 12 by 5:00pm via email: Source Analysis #1

Week 2 – Archival Logics and Historical Memory

Monday, January 15, 2018: National and Colonial Logics in the Archive

Kathryn Burns, *Into the Archive: Writing and Power in Colonial Peru*, Introduction.
Dharma Ghosh, “National Narratives and the Politics of Miscegenation: Britain and India,” in Burton, ed., *Archive Stories*.

Tuesday, January 16, 2018: Contesting Authority and Reconstituting Loss

Blouin and Rosenberg, *Processing the Past: Contesting Authority in History and the Archives*, Ch. 2.
Eric Ketelaar, “Archival Temples, Archival Prisons: Modes of Power and Production,” *Archival Science* 2 (2002): 221-238.
Read a chapter of your choice from Burton, ed., *Archive Stories* (ebook).

Wednesday, January 17, 2018: Holocaust Testimony and Oral History

Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, Preface, Ch. 1.
Alessandro Portelli, *The Order Has Been Carried Out*, Introduction.
Watch: “116 Cameras,” *New York Times Op-Doc with Eva Schloss*.

Thursday, January 18, 2018: Archives as Sites of Memory

Trip to the Holocaust and Human Rights Center of Maine

Leave campus at 9:00am and return by mid-afternoon.

Blouin and Rosenberg, *Processing the Past: Contesting Authority in History and the Archives*, Ch. 6.

Due: Friday, January 19 by 5:00pm via email: Source Analysis #2

**Week 3 – Archives of Dictatorship, Questions of Human Rights:
Studies from 20th-Century Latin America**

Monday, January 22, 2018: Shifting Archival Logics: From Surveillance to Justice in Guatemala
Kirsten Weld, *Paper Cadavers: The Archives of Dictatorship in Guatemala*,
Introduction: “The Power of Archival Thinking”

Tuesday, January 23, 2018: Guatemala Police Archives and the Cold War Context
Weld, *Paper Cadavers*, Part I.

Wednesday, January 24, 2018: Archival Imperatives and Human Rights
Louis Bickford, “The Archival Imperative: Human Rights and Historical Memory in Latin America’s Southern Cone,” *Human Rights Quarterly* 21, no. 4 (1999): 1097-1122.

Thursday, January 25, 2018: Stories of a Dirty War
Verbitsky, *Confessions of an Argentine Dirty Warrior*, Selections.

Due: Friday, January 26 by 5:00pm via email: Source Analysis #3

Week 4 – Archival Turns

Monday, January 29, 2018: Archiving Secrets
Howard Zinn, “Secrecy, Archives and the Public Interest,” Address to the Society of American Archivists, 1970.
Kate Doyle, “The End of Secrecy: U.S. National Security and the Imperative for Openness,” *World Policy* 16, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 34-51.

Tuesday, January 30, 2018: Politics of Archival Custody
Theresa Polk, “Archiving Human Rights Documentation: The Promise of the Post-Custodial Approach in Latin America,” *Portal Magazine* (August 2016).
Society of American Archivists Statement on García Márquez Archive (November 2014).
Jennifer Schuessler, “Gabriel García Márquez’s Archive Available Freely Online,” *The New York Times*, December 11, 2017.

Wednesday, January 31, 2018: Digital Complications
Roy Rosenzweig, “Scarcity or Abundance? Preserving the Past in a Digital Era,” *American Historical Review* 108, no. 3 (June 2003): 728-762.
Final take home exam will be distributed.

Thursday, February 1, 2018: Conclusion

Final exam is due by 12:00pm. All work is due on February 1, according to Colby policy.