

Department of Information Science
INFO6875 History of Archiving and Archival Records
in Critical Perspective

Fall 2024

Course Type: hybrid synchronous course comprised mainly of weekly in-person seminar style sessions and some virtual open classroom sessions; all sessions take place on Thursdays from 11:35am to 2:25pm

Instructor name/title: Dr. J.J. Ghaddar, Assistant Professor

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Response time: Kindly note that I do not answer emails generally in the evenings and on weekends, and that it may take me up to 24h to respond during weekdays. Please plan accordingly.

Office hours: by appointment

Course website: Brightspace, <https://dal.brightspace.com>

The Dalhousie University Senate acknowledges that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People and pays respect to the Indigenous knowledges held by the Mi'kmaq People, and to the wisdom of their Elders past and present. The Mi'kmaq People signed Peace and Friendship Treaties with the Crown, and section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 recognizes and affirms Aboriginal and Treaty rights. We are all Treaty people.

The Dalhousie University Senate also acknowledges the histories, contributions, and legacies of African Nova Scotians, who have been here for over 400 years.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This reading-intensive course is deals with two major interrelated concerns of archivists and records managers: 1) the history of archiving and archival thought; and 2) the context of the creation and the characteristics of records. It covers a wide variety of international examples from ancient times to the present, with a focus on Canada/Turtle Island since the nineteenth century. The course begins with an introduction to key concepts, theories, methods, and practices that all archivists and records managers need to know (Unit 1). Against this backdrop, we will then examine milestone events and foundational texts in archival studies, and trace how these are taken up and altered with the development of the records management field in the mid-20th century. We will do so through an antiracist/anticolonial feminist lens that centers Indigenous, racialized, and marginalized voices, histories and perspectives (Unit 2). As part of that, we will interrogate the

assumptions and power dynamics embedded within the archives cannon and dominant recordkeeping practices/methods by drawing on relevant contemporary debates and literatures from across disciplines.

COURSE OVERVIEW

This reading-intensive course is organized around seminar discussions and virtual open classrooms of the history of archives and records, archival thought, and of the context of the creation and the characteristics of records that enable archivists and records managers to create records repositories and archives, or to appraise, arrange, describe, preserve, and provide access to the extensive bodies of documentation in various media that are the responsibility of modern repositories and archives. Topics of discussion may include: archives and records as forms of social memory; the influence of social, political, and intellectual currents on the creation and development of archives, on archival concepts, and on what is recorded and how; the impact of archiving actions on records, their uses, knowledge, and society; varied concepts of documentary interpretation; the relationship between the administrative context in which institutional records have been created and managed and their information content; personal and family records; the relationship between communication technologies (and media) and information content; the relationship between the functions of particular types of documents within these media and their information content; the internal features of individual documents that provide direction to related information; the rise of digital archiving and born digital records; and the current need for archival decolonization.

As per the official land acknowledgement statement of Dalhousie's Board of Governors,¹ our course is taking place through an institution that is "located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq", namely Kijipuktuk (Halifax, Nova Scotia) This course is designed with the recognition that the Mi'kmaq People are the past, present and future caretakers of this land, which has been the site of human activity since time immemorial. It engages with how Indigenous intellectuals and their allies theorize the ongoing nature of colonialism in Canada, and its recordkeeping infrastructures and archival institutions. It also acknowledges the connections between Canadian settler colonialism; the history of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and its many afterlives today (Hartman 1997, 2007); and the global expansion of the western knowledge/power enterprise over the last few centuries.

While learning the fundamental concepts, methods, processes and tools for recordkeeping, the course will also introduce students to some of the broad debates about records, archives, information, knowledge, media, human rights, equity, democracy, antiracism, anti-oppression, decolonization, gender equality and social justice to tackle questions like: What is the history of modern archival and recordkeeping thought and practice? What is the relationship between the development of modern archives and the archival and records management field(s), on the one hand, and the histories and contemporary structures of racism, colonialism, heteropatriarchy and western imperialism, on the other hand? What does it mean to decolonize archives and records? How do we practice antiracism in description? Or make records and archives accessible to communities depicted in the holdings? How can we provide equitable or liberatory services and programs to those deemed marginal? Who owns records and why? What is the political economy of archives and information? How are archives and records disputed or displaced in times of war, conflict and insecurity when the borders of states shift and jurisdictions change? How is archives repatriation, restitution or transfer negotiated, contested, and resolved? How does repatriation or the lack of repatriation involve the creation, recreation and/or reconfiguration of records – from the use of oral history testimonies and living archives to the use of digitization and gathering of "imagined records"?

¹ McNutt, Ryan. ["An Important Acknowledgement: Board Approves Indigenous Acknowledgement."](#) *Dal News* (June 29, 2018)

THE RELATIONSHIP OF THIS COURSE TO THE MI COMPETENCIES

Your learning experiences in this course will cover the entire spectrum of the MI competencies. Through our readings, discussions, exercises, and assignments, we will examine the development of information managers' **leadership** competencies in the following areas:

- the creation and maintenance of archives and records management (ARM) systems requires information managers to consult and use **evidence-based practices**, based on an awareness of trends in the profession and scholarly literature, as well as their own efforts to evaluate their systems.
- a commitment to **learning** and **adaptation** is crucial to ensuring that ARM systems continue to serve their communities effectively.
- **collaboration** with local communities, and an active commitment to **equity, diversity, inclusion, accessibility, and decolonization** are necessary to ensure that ARM systems, and particularly metadata, appraisal and access, reflect the needs and identities of the communities they serve.
- ARM systems need to be based on an excellent understanding of **user-centered design**, as well as strong **digital and technological literacy** and **management** competencies to ensure the effective and efficient operation of these systems.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of the course, students are expected to have gained basic knowledge or proficiency in the following areas:

- the role of archives and records repositories as crucial components of documentary heritage and social memory, and for the functioning and accountability of key institutions and structures.
- the history of archiving and archival thought, as well as context of the creation and the characteristics of records
- key concepts, theories, methods, and practices that all archivists and records managers need to know
- key milestone events and foundational texts in archival studies, and how these are taken up and altered with the development of the records management field in the mid-20th century.
- the core values (as well as sites of competing values) that underpin ARM professional practices, specifically the relationship between human rights, social justice, and emancipatory social change and unfettered access to information in all its forms.
- the use of tools and techniques associated with critical information studies and critical theory more generally to interrogate how race, gender, sexuality, power and privilege impact ARM praxis, and assess contemporary information policies.
- community engagement approaches and techniques to engaging effectively with a range of communities and communities within communities.
- practical methods by which to decolonize and diversify archives and records management theory, practices, and repositories, particularly in relation to description (metadata) and appraisal.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

This course will rely substantially upon digital resources, as well as available and relevant print resources to undertake a detailed study of the course themes. Brightspace online platform will be used for all interactions. We may have occasion to use Microsoft Teams, Collaborate or Zoom.

DESCRIPTION OF CLASS FORMAT

This reading-intensive course is organized around seminar discussions, lectures, and virtual open classrooms. Students are expected to attend all class sessions and engage actively. Through assigned readings, students

will prepare for and engage in discussion of concepts and ideas presented in the class material and seminar sessions. As a graduate seminar, this course is discussion-based and incorporates interactive elements, class exercises and other experiential learning components.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

Students are expected to attend weekly seminar sessions, lectures, and virtual open classrooms. Through assigned readings, students will prepare for and engage in discussion of concepts and ideas presented in the class material and seminar sessions. As a graduate seminar, this course is reading and discussion intensive, and incorporates interactive elements, class exercises and other experiential learning components.

LEARNING MATERIALS

There is no required textbook. The instructor will provide a seminar reading list that draws on a wide variety of digitally available books and articles. All course materials will be made available through Brightspace. The seminar reading list includes supplementary recommended readings and overviews of relevant literatures/disciplines, as well as required readings.

In addition, these resources are a helpful go-to for basic archival terms, concepts, methods, standards, etc. They are excellent reference material when you are not sure what an archival term means, or how we apply a certain method, etc.

- Society of American Archivists (2022) *Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology*, edited by Richard Pearce-Moses.
- Margaret Crockett (2016) *The No-Nonsense Guide to Archives and Recordkeeping*. 1st ed. (Facet Publishing).
- Elizabeth Shepherd and Geoffrey Yeo (2003) *Managing Records: A Handbook of Principles and Practice* (London: Facet).

METHODS OF EVALUATION

Assignment	Value	Due
Participation	20%	Ongoing over the semester
Semi-Weekly Journals (8)	40% (8x5%)	Sundays throughout the semester
Major Research Project	40%	Final class

Assessment of all assignments is directly related to attention to the instructions, clarity of expression and presentation, and evidence of significant analysis and reflection.

Please note that the passing grade is B- for assignments and the course. See below for the Grading Policy for graduate courses at Dalhousie University.

Assignments must be uploaded to the relevant course folder (under the Assignment tab) on Brightspace. All written work must be submitted as an MS Word file that is double-spaced, with regular margins and standard fonts. Please make sure your name is on the document. A title page is not required.

Participation (20%) – ongoing throughout the semester

This is a graduate-level seminar course that is structured around participation during class meetings. Participation marks will be based on class attendance and general contributions to the class discussions on a weekly basis throughout the course. Course contribution is measured by an individual's participation for the

benefit of the entire class. Discussion is a collective exercise: the purpose is for all members of the course to join comfortably in the process. Each of us is responsible for the culture of the classroom. In sum, participation is expected to be frequent, thoughtful, and always respectful of others. If you are concerned about your ability to attend class or participate regularly, please reach out to the instructor at any time.

Here's what I will be looking for:

- showing up to class on time and ready to participate having finished readings with no unexcused absences
- substance and quality of comments and participation
- frequency of participation
- interaction with others (for example: building on points raised by others; responding to others respectfully; not dominating the discussion; not leaving burden of carrying the discussion on others; not interrupting; demonstrating active listening, and so on)
- whether contributions address the readings and are on-topic
- willingness to learn and to be self-critical
- the extent to which you make references and connections to other readings and class discussions, as well as your professional and academic experiences

Remember, the purpose of course discussions are to stimulate academic and professional debate. Critical thinking is highly desirable! Of course, “critically” doesn’t mean that you are out to find everything negative about a particular reading or other course content. Rather, it is about evaluating and building on what’s been offered: What are the strengths and weakness of the reading? How can we build on the strengths and avoid the weaknesses to further out ability to think and act on a particular topic or issue?

Journal Entries (40%; 8 entries at 5% each) – due Sundays

By the end of the semester, you will hand in 8 weekly journals that reflect on and outline your views and perspective on the class material, including readings, lectures, guest speakers, workshops, tours, and/or class activities. Each reflection should engage with upcoming readings, i.e., when you submit on Sunday, you are handing in a reflection that takes up the readings that we will discuss later that week during our Thursday class.

Graduate studies in the humanities and social sciences provides a relatively rare opportunity to develop your reading and writing skills, which requires intensive and reflective engagement with a wide variety of texts and material. Essential to this process is to develop the habit of carefully and thoughtfully reading all assigned materials and taking critical notes in the process. This assignment is designed to encourage you to develop and advance this vital practice that is usually (implicitly) expected in graduate students. I will be reviewing and providing feedback on journal entries on a regular basis, as they come in.

All journal entries that meet the basic criteria below above will receive a full completion grade. Journals that do not meet the criteria will receive a grade of zero with the option of resubmitting. Here’s what I will be looking for in the weekly reflections:

- can take the form of a blog, academic report, story (fictional or non-fictional), personal diary, image, podcast or video
- can be written or narrated from a personal perspective, as an informal text or presentation for popular audiences, or in a more formal academic tone
- may be multimedia, i.e., it includes some mix of artistic, visual, textual, audio or video components

- may be of any length but not exceeding 500 words each (for text) or 3-4 minutes (for podcasts, videos)
- should be well written, reflect careful thought, and be properly cited when relevant
- must demonstrate your engagement with the relevant week, i.e., be clearly tied to the themes, issues, concepts, readings or material of a specific week
- can cite readings, guest speakers and resources from other weeks and from outside the course in addition to material from the relevant week
- can be reused in whole or part for your other assignments in this course if relevant

Final Project (40%) – Class of Week 6, Week 8, and Week 12 (Final Class)

Key dates:

- Week 6 class (October 10): deadline to propose an alternative option
- Monday, October 21: 1 page project outline due
- Week 12 class (November 28): project due

Major Research Paper option: Working individually, students will complete a research paper on any topic related to the course theme. The paper should be between 14-15 pages (double spaced; about 4,000 words) and draw on at least 20 sources, the majority of which should be from academic/peer reviewed journals. The research paper will allow students to focus in depth on a particular aspect of the course theme. Thorough presentation and critical evaluation of existing publications on the topic will be expected as well as the students’ original ideas. The paper will be graded on evidence of strong thesis or central argument; a critical analysis of the topic; relevant content; use of adequate sources; organization of the material into a coherent structure with a clear introduction and conclusion; and clear and appropriate style.

Other projects: Students are encouraged to propose an alternative final project directly to the instructor by the class of **Week 6**. Alternatives may include, for example, developing an antiracist LibGuide; doing a needs assessment of a community, organization, or system; reviewing and critically assessing an exhibition or collection; developing a how-to or best practices guide; critically assessing or revising a standard or schema; and so on. You are welcome to tie this project into your professional or community work/activism.

Class presentation of project: A brief 1 double-spaced project outline should be submitted to the instructor and peers by midnight on **Monday, October 21** ahead of our Week 8 session on our Discussion Board on Brightspace. We can “workshop” everyone’s projects together as part of the class participation grade. The proposal should include the following information:

- Title of project
- Topic of project
- Tentative thesis/argument
- Context: Why is this project important and to who, who/what does your project address; and what difference will it make in the world

Here is what I’ll be looking for in your assignment (the paper option):

Factor	Value
Range, depth and quality of literature research on the topic	25%
Critical analysis of the literature	25%

Intellectual contribution to the topic (new insights, recommendations, etc.) and evidence of a strong thesis statement	15%
Logical structure and organization of the paper	20%
Proper use of citation format, grammar, and syntax	15%

CLASS POLICIES

Attendance

Class attendance is required in all MI courses and is included in the participation mark. Attendance records will be kept by the instructor.

Citation Style

MI courses use APA as the default standard citation style. Unless the instructor provides alternative written instructions, please use the APA citation style in your assignments to briefly identify (cite) other people's ideas and information and to indicate the sources of these citations in the References list at the end of the assignment. For more information on APA style, consult Dalhousie Library website at <https://libraries.dal.ca/help/style-guides.html> or the APA's Frequently Asked Questions about APA

Late penalties for assignments

A penalty for late assignments will be assessed, unless prior permission has been given by the instructor to submit an assignment late, which normally will be for extended illness, medical, or family emergencies only (see below) Late submissions will be assessed a penalty of five percent per day, including weekends. Assignments will not normally be accepted seven days or more after the due date; in such cases the student will receive a grade of zero.

Missed or Late Academic Requirements due to Student Absence:

Dalhousie University recognizes that students may experience short-term physical or mental health conditions, or other extenuating circumstances that may affect their ability to attend required classes, tests, exams or submit other coursework.

Dalhousie students are asked to take responsibility for their own short-term absences (3 days or less) by contacting their instructor by phone or email prior to the academic requirement deadline or scheduled time **AND** by submitting a completed [Student Declaration of Absence form](#) to their instructor in case of missed or late academic requirements. Only 2 separate Student Declaration of Absence forms may be submitted per course during a term.

GRADING POLICY

A+	90-100	Demonstrates original work of distinction.
A	85-89	Demonstrates high-level command of the subject matter and an ability for critical analysis.
A-	80-84	Demonstrates above-average command of the subject matter.
B+	77-79	Demonstrates average command of the subject matter.
B	73-76	Demonstrates acceptable command of the subject matter.
B-	70-72	Demonstrates minimally acceptable command of the subject matter.
F	<70	Unacceptable for credit towards a Master's degree.

ACCOMMODATION POLICY FOR STUDENTS

The Student Accessibility Centre is Dalhousie's centre of expertise for student accessibility and accommodation. The advising team works with students on the Halifax campus who request accommodation as a result of: a disability, religious obligation, or any barrier related to any other characteristic protected under Human Rights legislation (NS, NB, PEI, NFLD). If there are aspects of the design, instruction, and/or experiences within this course that result in barriers to your inclusion please contact the Student Accessibility Centre. Please visit www.dal.ca/access for more information and to obtain the Request for Accommodation form. A note taker may be required as part of a student's accommodation. Visit https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/accessibility/accommodations-/classroom-accommodation.html for more details. Please note that your classroom may contain accessible furniture and equipment. It is important that these items remain in the classroom, undisturbed, so that students who require their use will be able to fully participate.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

At Dalhousie University, we are guided in all of our work by the values of academic integrity: honesty, trust, fairness, responsibility and respect. As a student, you are required to demonstrate these values in all of the work you do. The University provides [policies and procedures](#) that every member of the university community is required to follow to ensure academic integrity.

The commitment of the Faculty of Management is to graduate future leaders of business, government and civil society who manage with integrity and get things done. This is non-negotiable in our community and it starts with your first class at Dalhousie University. So when you submit any work for evaluation in this course or any other, please ensure that you are familiar with your obligations under the Faculty of Management's Academic Integrity Policies and that you understand where to go for help and advice in living up to our standards. You should be familiar with the [Faculty of Management Professor and Student Contract on Academic Integrity](#), and it is your responsibility to ask questions if there is anything you do not understand.

Dalhousie offers many ways to learn about academic writing and presentations so that all members of the University community may acknowledge the intellectual property of others. Knowing how to find, evaluate, select, synthesize and cite information for use in assignments is called being "information literate." Information literacy is taught by Dalhousie University Librarians in classes and through Dalhousie Libraries' online [Citing and Writing](#) tutorials.

Do not plagiarize any materials for this course. For further guidance on what constitutes plagiarism, how to avoid it, and proper methods for attributing sources, please consult the University Secretariat's [Academic Integrity](#) page.

Please note that Dalhousie subscribes to plagiarism detection software that checks for originality in submitted papers. Any paper submitted by a student at Dalhousie University may be checked for originality to confirm that the student has not plagiarized from other sources. Plagiarism is considered a very serious academic offence that may lead to loss of credit, suspension or expulsion from the University, or even the revocation of a degree. It is essential that there be correct attribution of authorities from which facts and opinions have been derived. At Dalhousie, there are University Regulations which deal with plagiarism and, prior to submitting any paper in a course; students should read the [Policy on Academic Dishonesty](#) contained in the Calendar.

Furthermore, the University's Senate has affirmed the right of any instructor to require that student assignments be submitted in both written and computer readable format, e.g.: a text file or as an email attachment, and to submit any paper to a check such as that performed by the plagiarism detection software. As a student in this class, you are to keep an electronic copy of any paper you submit, and the course instructor may require you to submit that electronic copy on demand. Use of third-party originality checking software does not preclude instructor use of alternate means to identify lapses in originality and attribution. The result of such assessment may be used as evidence in any disciplinary action taken by the Senate.

Faculty of Management clarification on plagiarism versus collaboration:

There are many forms of plagiarism, for instance, copying on exams and assignments. There is a clear line between group work on assignments when explicitly authorised by the professor and copying solutions from others. It is permissible to work on assignments with your friends but only when the professor gives you permission in the specific context of the assignment. University rules clearly stipulate that all assignments should be undertaken individually unless specifically authorised.

Specific examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Copying a computer file from another student, and using it as a template for your own solution
- Copying text written by another student
- Submitting the work of someone else, including that of a tutor as your own

An example of acceptable collaboration includes the following:

- When authorised by the professor, discussing the issues and underlying factors of a case with fellow students, and then each of the students writing up their submissions individually, from start to finish.

UNIVERSITY STATEMENTS

This course is governed by the academic rules and regulations set forth in the [University Calendar](#) and the Senate.

ACCESSIBILITY

The Student Accessibility Centre is Dalhousie's centre of expertise for matters related to student accessibility and accommodation. We work collaboratively with Dalhousie and King's students, faculty, and staff to create an inclusive educational environment for students. The Centre is responsible for administering the university-wide [Student Accommodation Policy](#) working across all programs and faculties.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Everyone at Dalhousie is expected to treat others with dignity and respect. The Code of Student Conduct allows Dalhousie to take disciplinary action if students don't follow this community expectation. When appropriate, violations of the code can be resolved in a reasonable and informal manner—perhaps through a restorative justice process. If an informal resolution can't be reached, or would be inappropriate, procedures exist for formal dispute resolution.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Every person at Dalhousie has a right to be respected and safe. We believe inclusiveness is fundamental to education. We stand for equality. Dalhousie is strengthened in our diversity. We are a respectful and inclusive

community. We are committed to being a place where everyone feels welcome and supported, which is why our Strategic Direction prioritizes fostering a culture of diversity and inclusiveness (Strategic Priority 5.2)

INTERNATIONALIZATION

At Dalhousie, “thinking and acting globally” enhances the quality and impact of education, supporting learning that is “interdisciplinary, cross-cultural, global in reach, and orientated toward solving problems that extend across national borders.”

RECOGNITION OF MI’KMAQ TERRITORY

Dalhousie University is located in Mi’kma’ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi’kmaq. We are all Treaty people. For more information about the purpose of territorial acknowledgements, or information about alternative territorial acknowledgements if your class is offered outside of Nova Scotia, please visit <https://native-land.ca/>.

The Elders in Residence program provides students with access to First Nations elders for guidance, counsel and support. Visit the office in the McCain Building (room 3037) or contact the programs at elders@dal.ca or 902-494-6803 (leave a message)

FAIR DEALING POLICY

The Dalhousie University Fair Dealing Policy provides guidance for the limited use of copyright protected material without the risk of infringement and without having to seek the permission of copyright owners. It is intended to provide a balance between the rights of creators and the rights of users at Dalhousie.

Course Schedule and Readings

*** The course schedule, readings and activities are subject to change. You will be informed via email of any changes and an updated syllabus post on Brightspace. Where there is discrepancy between the readings listed here and those on Brightspace, the latter should be followed. ***

Unit 1: Introduction to Archival Theory and History

Week 1, September 5 (in person) – 1.1 Introduction to the Course and Archival Studies

Week 2, September 12 (in person) – 1.2 Introducing Archival Concepts and Knowledge on Stolen Land

Week 3, September 19 (in person) – 1.3 Archival Views on Archives and Recorded Communication in Historical Perspective I

Week 4, September 26 (in person) – 1.4 Archival Views on Archives and Recorded Communication in Historical Perspective II

Week 5, October 3 (no class) – 1.5 Touring a Local Archives

Unit 2: Modern Archival Thought (Week 6-12)

Week 6, October 10 (virtual) – 2.1 Archival Origins and Provenance from the French Revolution (1789) to the Dutch Manual (1898)

Week 7, October 17 (in person) – 2.2 Meanwhile in Canada... Total Archives, Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Self-Determination/Land Back, Part I

Week 8, October 24 (in person) – 2.3 Race, Capital and Empire: Placing Hilary Jenkinson into History

Week 9, October 31 (virtual) – 2.4 Schellenberg's *Modern Archives*: From Modernism and Appraisal to the Visuality, Orality and Materiality of Records

Week 10, November 7 (virtual) – 2.5 White Supremacy, Abolition and the Black Atlantic Archive

Week 11, November 21 (virtual) – Meanwhile in the World...Displaced Archives, Repatriation and the Vienna Convention: Global South Perspectives

Week 12, November 28 (virtual) – 2.7 Multiple Provenance, Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Archival Protocols