

Proposal: Archival Arrangement and Description Independent Study

LBSC 709 Section 0401

Spring 2014

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BACKGROUND

Archival materials are different from other documents because they are the result of activities performed by individuals and organizations. Therefore, the organization of these unique documents must adhere to certain standards. The Society of American Archivists (SAA) document, *Describing Archives: A Content Standard* defines archival arrangement and description as the following:

Arrangement is the intellectual and/or physical processes of organizing documents in accordance with accepted archival principles, as well as the results of these processes.

Description is the creation of an accurate representation of the archival material by the process of capturing, collating, analyzing, and organizing information that serves to identify archival material and to explain the context and records systems that produced it, as well as the results of these processes.

The process of arrangement and description also gives archivists the opportunity to become intimately familiar with record creators' administrative structures and record-keeping practices, which aids in identifying archival fonds, subsequent parts, related records, and future user needs. The arrangement and description process is necessary for archival organizational and administrative purposes as well as providing access points for future users. Therefore, this subject is invaluable to any Archives, Information, and Records Management student in the University of Maryland iSchool MLS program.

OBJECTIVE

For the Spring 2014 semester, Kathryn Miller will be independently studying archival arrangement and description standards, contextual writings, and practical applications under the direction of Dr. Michael Kurtz. This independent study is an adaptation of Dr. Kenneth Heger's Fall 2013 Arrangement and Description Course, with the final project adjusted. The learning outcomes for this course are the following:

- To examine the principles underlying the arrangement of archival documents
- To develop the intellectual framework for the systematic identification and critical evaluation of an archival fond and its parts
- To understand the principles and methods for describing archival materials according to standards adopted by the archival community
- To understand the importance of empirical research in identifying user needs and evaluating the extent to which archival description meets those needs
- To demonstrate a working knowledge of key concepts by producing an inventory (finding aid) for Stacia Super's Personal Papers

ASSIGNMENTS

Semester Schedule

The following outlines the assignments and scheduled meetings for this independent study. Dr. Kurtz and Kathryn Miller will plan to meet the weeks of Jan 27, Feb 10, Feb 24, Mar 10, Mar 24, Apr 14, and May 5. Meetings will need to be scheduled after 3:30PM and specific days during those weeks will be agreed upon at a later date.

Topic	Date	Assignment Due
Introduction	Week of Jan 27 Meeting	None
Arrangement and Description in Context	Week of Feb 3	None
Archival Arrangement	Week of Feb 10 Meeting	Reflection 1 Due
Issues in Archival Arrangement	Week of Feb 17	Reflection 2 Due
Issues in Archival Arrangement	Week of Feb 24 Meeting	Reflection 3 Due
Studying the Users of Archives	Week of Mar 3	Document Description Exercise 1 Due
Archival Description	Week of Mar 10 Meeting	Document Description Exercise 2 Due
March 16-23: Spring Break		
Archival Description and Standards for Archival Descriptions	Week of Mar 24 Meeting	Inventory Deliverable 1: Records Context
Archival Description – Encoded Archival Description (EAD) Document	Week of Mar 31	Document Description Exercise 3 Due
Archivists Toolkit	Week of Apr 7	None
Access Points and Authority Files	Week of Apr 14 Meeting	Inventory Deliverable 2: Arrangement and Scope/Content Note
Issues in Archival Description	Week of Apr 21	None
Issues in Archival Description	Week of Apr 28	None
Emerging Issues	Week of May 5 Meeting	Inventory Deliverable 3: Finding Aid and Final Paper

Assignment Grading

Reflections 1-3	15%
Document Description Exercises 1-3	15%
Inventory Deliverable 1: Records Context	15%
Inventory Deliverable 2: Arrangement and Scope/Content Note	25%
Inventory Deliverable 3: Finding Aid and Final Paper	30%

Literature Review and Description Assignments

Reading Reflections (15% -- 3 papers, each one worth 5%)

Please note, this assignment is taken directly from Dr. Heger's syllabus. This assignment is designed to demonstrate the student's critical thinking skills and analysis of archival theory.

The student will submit **three** short papers (reflections), 1-2 pages double spaced on the required readings marked with a double asterisk (**). For the designated weeks, the student will provide a reflection on at least one of the readings, but you may also write about more than one reading or about all of them. The purpose of the assignment is to demonstrate critical thinking skills, exploring the issues raised in the reading(s); merely summarizing the readings is not sufficient. For example, the student might consider the following questions: What special thoughts or insights does this reading give? What is the one concept or theory that you agree with or disagree with? Has anything changed since the article was written? How would you apply a concept discussed in the readings in an institution? Do you have experience with archival arrangement that supports or contradicts a point in the reading?

Document Description Exercises (15% -- 3 papers, each one worth 5%)

Please note, this assignment is taken directly from Dr. Heger's syllabus. This assignment is designed to demonstrate, through practical application, that the student grasps basic archival description concepts.

In each of these exercises the student will apply basic concepts of arrangement and/or description that the student learns from the readings. The exercises will be in ascending order of complexity. In each exercise the student will be working with digitized records available through the National Archives and Records Administration's (NARA) on-line catalogue. The student can access the on-line catalogue through NARA's website through the "Research Our Records" link on the home page at www.archives.gov. Click on the search our records link and type the National Archives ID number (NAID) in the search box. The student can access the digital copies by selecting the person's name and the clicking on the "digital copies" tab, or by clicking on the icon to the left of the person's name [if you hover your cursor over the icon it will read "digital copies available."]

Exercise No. 1 – Access NAID Numbers 1086610 and 1086611. Provide a complete series title for both sets of records. The title should include the series name (e.g. Records relating to Jane Smith's Employment), the date span of the documents, and the volume, in this case the number of documents. This assignment should be a single page.

Exercise No. 2 – Access NAID Number 1097553, and ARC ID Number 1097537. Provide a complete series title for both series that includes the elements from Exercise No. 1, above. Write an arrangement statement, i.e. how are the files for each series arranged. Finally, list what user groups would be interested in these records and why. This assignment should be no longer than two pages.

Exercise No. 3 – Access NAID Number 1098000. Provide a complete series title for the records. Write an arrangement statement, i.e. how are the records arranged. Write a description of the records, including characterizing the kinds of documents included in the files, the document formats, and the major subjects about which the documents pertain. This assignment should be no longer than two pages.

Collection Inventory Assignment

Please note, this assignment is student-designed, but based on Dr. Heger's Wiesbaden Inventory assignment from his Fall 2013 syllabus. This assignment will demonstrate the student's thorough understanding of archival arrangement and description practices through developing a detailed finding aid for a personal family collection and an accompanying final paper.

Overview

The personal documents of Stacia Super (Kathryn Miller's Mother-in-Law) fill over 5 boxes, and have been moved multiple times, resulting in a loss of arrangement. Kathryn will be focusing on arranging and describing the records which document Stacia's biological family (the Minowitz family) and step-family (the Super family). This is a necessary project because the records of these two separate families are intermixed; the arrangement needs to adequately represent Stacia's complicated family tree. The arrangement and description of these records using archival content standards will aid Stacia and her son in finding and researching these records in the future.

Overall description of records to be used:

- 4 folders and 1 box of loose papers documenting Stacia Super's mother (Tilla Hyams), father (Sol Minowitz), and step-father (Arthur Super)'s finances, last will and testaments, correspondence, published works, government documents, and travels throughout Israel and South Africa
- Documents include (but are not limited to):
 - Tilla Hyams
 - Correspondence about estate, last will and testament
 - Obituary
 - Correspondence between Stacia and Tilla
 - Legal documents (deeds, official last will and testament)
 - Travel records (South Africa and Israel)
 - Government documents (Nationality papers, documents in Hebrew to be translated)
 - Minowitz Family
 - Family correspondence
 - Family newsletters
 - Sol Minowitz
 - Financial documents (assorted)
 - Correspondence about estate, last will and testament
 - Legal documents (deeds, official will)
 - Newspaper clippings
 - Arthur Super
 - Published letters
 - Newspaper clippings
 - Correspondence about Arthur Super's last will and testament
 - Government documents from Israel (Nationality documents, documents in Hebrew to be translated)
 - Box of loose records

- Correspondence between Stacia Super and Tilla and Arthur Super
- Arthur Super manuscripts
- Arthur Super dissertations
- Assorted legal documents in Hebrew to be translated
- FBI documents about Arthur Super and Tilla Super (nee Hyams)

Collection Inventory Deliverable 1 – Records Context (15%)

Understanding the context in which a records creator produced and used records provides crucial information to archivists as they arrange and describe records, as well as to researchers.

Kathryn will work with Stacia Super to get a detailed history of her family tree, the relationship amongst her biological and step-families, and the context in which these records were created. The student will then write a 3-5 page report on how this information helps archivists and researchers understand why the records creator produced the documents and how they used them, providing examples.

Collection Inventory Deliverable 2 – Arrangement and Scope/Content Note (25%)

Using the records context and literature, Kathryn Miller will develop an arrangement of the collection and write series-level scope and content notes. The student will present this in a draft, manually-created finding aid which will include:

- The series titles
- File units chronological lists
- Author/creators
- Date range
- Function and use
- Scope and content note (series-level)

Collection Inventory Deliverable 3 – Finding Aid and Final Paper – 30%

Kathryn Miller will finish processing the collection and finalize the finding aid, using Archivist's Toolkit. The finding aid will include all required and some added-value descriptive elements, as set forth by the SAA DACS document. The final finding aid will include descriptions at the file unit level. The final finding aids will be Part 1 of this deliverable.

Part 2 will be a final paper, documenting the student's arrangement and description process, and how it integrates (or clashes) with the theoretical literature studied throughout the course. This paper will also explain how the descriptive elements were developed with user needs in mind. This will be a 6-8 page paper, citing personal experience on this project and relevant literature.

READINGS

Week 1 – January 27. Intro

Readings:

- *Describing Archives: A Content Standard*. Chicago: SAA, 2007

- Hill, Edward E. *The Preparation of Inventories*. Staff Information Paper 14. National Archives and Records Administration, 1982.

Week 2 – Feb 3. Arrangement and Description in Context

Readings:

- Craig, Barbara. “Parameters with Fences? Or Thresholds with Doors? Two Views of a Border.” *American Archivist* 66:1 (Spring/Summer 2003): 96-101. (SAA Website)
- Deodato, Joseph. “Becoming Responsible Mediators: The Application of Postmodern Perspectives to Archival Arrangement and Description.” *Progressive Librarian* 27 (Summer 2006): 52-63. (on-line through UMD libraries Research Port)
- Schaffner, Jennifer. *The Metadata Is the Interface: Better Description for Better Discovery of Archives and Special Collections*. Dublin, OH: *OCLC Research*, 2009 (www.oclc.org/research/publications/library/2009/2009-06.pdf)
- Yakel, Elizabeth. “Listening to Users.” *Archival Issues* 26:2 (2002): 111-127. (on-line through UMD libraries Research Port)

Week 3 – Feb 10. Archival Arrangement. Reflection 1 Due.

Readings:

- **Abraham, Terry. “Oliver W. Holmes Revisited: Levels of Arrangement and Description in Practice.” *American Archivist* 54 (Summer 1991) 370-377. (SAA Website)
- **Meehan, Jennifer. “Making the Leap from Parts to Whole: Evidence and Inference in Archival Arrangement and Description,” *American Archivist* 72:1 (Spring/Summer 2009) 72-90 (SAA Website)
- Sweeney, Shelly. “The Ambiguous Origins of the Archival Principle of ‘Provenance.’” *Libraries and the Cultural Record* 43:2 (May 2008): 193-213 (on-line through UMD libraries Research Port)

Week 4 – Feb 17. Issues in Archival Arrangement. Reflection 2 Due.

Readings:

- ** Cook, Terry. “The Concept of the Archival Fonds in the Post-Custodial Era: Theory, Problems, and Solutions.” *Archivaria* 35 (Spring 1993): 24-37. (on-line e-Archivaria site)
- ** Currall, James; Michael Moss; and Susan Stuart. “What is a Collection?” *Archivaria* 58 (Fall 2004): 131-146. (on-line e-Archivaria site)
- ** Krawczyk, Bob. “Cross-Reference Heaven: The Abandonment of Fonds as the Primary Level of Arrangement for Ontario Government Records.” *Archivaria* 48 (Fall 1999): 131-149. (on-line e-Archivaria site)

Week 5 – Feb 24. Issues in Archival Arrangement. Reflection 3 Due.

Readings:

- ** Dryden, Jean E. “The Mackenzie King Papers: An Archival Odyssey.” *Archivaria* 6 (1978): 40-69. (on-line e-Archivaria site)
- Eastwood, Terry. “Putting the Parts of the Whole Together: Systematic Arrangement of Archives,” *Archivaria* 50 (Fall 2000): 93-116. (on-line e-Archivaria site)
- ** Fisher, Robert. “In Search of a Theory of Private Archives: The Foundational Writings of Jenkinson and Schellenberg Revisited.” *Archivaria* 67 (Spring 2009): 1-24. (PDF File as a course document)
- ** MacNeil, Heather. “Archivalterity: Rethinking Original Order.” *Archivaria* 66 (Fall 2008): 1-24. (PDF File as a course document)

Week 6 – Mar 3. Studying the Users of Archives. Document Description Exercise 1 Due.

Readings:

- **Lack, Rosalie. “The Importance of User-Centered Design: Findings and Methods,” *Journal of Archival Organization* 4:1&2 (2006): 69-86. (SAA website)
- Profitt, Merilee. “The How and Why of User Studies: RLG’s RedLightGreen as a Case Study,” *Journal of Archival Organization* 4:1&2 (2006): 87-110. (on-line through UMD libraries Research Port)
- Schaffner, Jennifer. *The Metadata Is the Interface: Better Description for Better Discovery of Archives and Special Collections*. Dublin, OH: OCLC Research, 2009. www.oclc.org/research/publications/library/2009/2009-06.html.
- **Yakel, Elizabeth, and Torres, Deborah, “AI: Artificial Intelligence and User Experience,” *American Archivist* 66:1 (2003): 51-78. (SAA website)

Week 7 – Mar 10. Archival Description. Document Description Exercise 2 Due.

Readings:

- Yakel, Elizabeth. “Archival Representation,” *Archival Science* 3:1 (2003): 1-25 (on-line through UMD libraries Research Port).
- MacNeil, Heather. “The Context is All: Describing Fonds and Its Parts in Accordance with the ‘Rules for Archival Description,’” In *The Archival Fonds: From Theory to Practice*, ed. Terry Eastwood. Ottawa: Bureau of Canadian Archivists, 1992. 198-225. (PDF File as a course document)
- Edgecombe, Jennifer. “Finding Aids.” In *Keeping Archives*, 2nd Edition, ed. Judith Ellis. Port Melbourne: Australia: Thorpe in Association with the Australian Society of Archivists, 1993, 248-272. (PDF File as a course document)

March 16-23: Spring Break

Week 8 – Mar 24. Date Archival Description and Standards for Archival Descriptions. DACS. Inventory Deliverable 1 Due.

Readings:

- *Describing Archives: A Content Standard*. Chicago: SAA, 2007. Preface and Chapter 1. (PDF File as a course document)
- Dryden, Jean. "Cooking the Perfect Custard." *Archival Science* 3:1 (2003): 27-42 (on-line through UMD libraries Research Port)
- Duff, Wendy M. and Haworth, Kent M. "Advancing Archival Description: A Model for Rationalising North American Descriptive Standards." *Archives and Manuscripts* 25 (November 1997): 194-217. (PDF File as a course document)

Week 9 – Mar 31. Archival Description – Encoded Archival Description (EAD). Document Description Exercise 3 Due.

Readings:

- Czeck, Rita L.H. "Archival MARC Records and Finding Aids in the Context of the End-User Subject Access to Archival Collections." *American Archivist* 61:2 (Fall 1998): 426-440. (SAA website)
- Encoded Archival Description Tag Library, v. 2002. Chicago: SAA. www.loc.gov/ead/tglib/index.html. Read: Preface, Tag Library Conventions, EAD Attributes: Introduction.
- Pitti, Daniel. "Encoded Archival Description: The Development of an Encoded Standard for Archival Finding Aids." *American Archivist* 60:3 (Summer 1997): 268-283. (SAA website)
- EAD Help Pages: www.archivists.org/saagroups/ead/ (especially the section on EAD implementors (www.archivists.org/saagroups/ead/implementors.html)) to see what different people are doing

Week 10 – Apr 7. Archivists Toolkit

Readings:

- Yun, Audra E. Using the Archivists' Toolkit: Hands-on practice and related tools. Slides developed for the Southern California Technical Processes Group. Available: <http://www.slideshare.net/librarchivist/aey-archivists-toolkit>
- CLIR/CIC. Introduction to Archivist's Toolkit. Available: http://clir.pacscl.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/07/AT-GUIDE_CLIRTraining.pdf
- Schwartz, Molly and Tillman, Ruth. Embracing Archivists' Toolkit to Implement EAD. Paper presented at the MARAC conference in Richmond, VA on October 27, 2012. S16. Available form:

<http://drum.lib.umd.edu/bitstream/1903/13327/1/schwartzillmanMARAC%20presentation.pdf>

- Yale University. Archivists Toolkit: Instructions/Tutorials. Available from: http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/at/at_instructions.html

Week 11 – Apr 14. Access Points and Authority Files. Inventory Deliverable 2 Due.

Readings:

- Evans, Max J. “Authority Control: An Alternative to the Record Group Concept,” *American Archivist* 49 (Summer 1986): 249-261. (SAA website)
- Light, Michelle. “Moving Beyond the Name: Defining Corporate Entities to Support Provenance-Based Access,” *Journal of Archival Organization* 5:1&2 (2007): 49-74. (on-line through UMD libraries Research Port)
- Reid, Lydia J., and Simmons, Jerry. “Authority Control in the National Archives and Records Administration,” *Journal of Archival Organization* 5:1&2 (2007): 95-120. (on-line through UMD libraries Research Port)
- Szary, Richard V. “Encoded Archival Context (EAC) and Archival Description: Rationale and Background,” *Journal of Archival Organization* 3:2&3 (2005): 217-227. (on-line through UMD libraries Research Port)

Week 12 – Apr 21. Issues in Archival Description.

Archival Description and Metadata

Reading:

- Gilliland, Anne J. “Setting in the Stage,” in *Introduction to Metadata*, 2nd Edition. Ed. Murtha Baca, www.getty.edu/research/conducting_research/standards/intrometadata/pdf.html.

Describing Electronic Records

Reading:

- Stollar, Catherine, and Kiehne, Thomas, “Guarding the Guards: Archiving the Electronic Records of Hypertext Author Michael Joyce,” in *New Skills for a Digital Era*, eds. Richard Pearce-Moses and Susan E. Davis, 2007. http://rpm.lib.az.us/NewSkills/Processing_Prepring.pdf.

Week 13 – Apr 28. Issues in Archival Description.

Readings:

- Green, Mark and Meissner, Dennis. “More Product, Less Process: Revamping Traditional Archival Processing,” *American Archivist* 68:2 (Fall/Winter 2005): 208-263. (SAA website)

- “The Rise of Crowdsourcing” www.wired.com/wired/archives
- Jeff Howe “Crowdsourcing: Why the Power of the Crowd is Driving the Future of Business” www.crowdsourcing.com

Week 14 – May 5. Emerging Issues. Inventory Deliverable 3 Due.

Readings:

- Dryden, Jean. “Standardizing Archival Arrangement? Are You Serious?” *Journal of Archival Organization* 3:1 (2005): 81-85. (on-line through UMD libraries Research Port)
- Samoulian, Mary. “Embracing Web 2.0: Archives and the Newest Generation of Web Applications.” *American Archivist* 72:1 (Spring/Summer 2009): 42-71. (SAA Website)
- Anderson, Ian. “Necessary but Not Sufficient.” *D-Lib Magazine* 14:1&2 (Jan/Feb 2008). (www.dlib.org/)