

You get an A!

Teaching Students to Process Archival Collections in the Classroom

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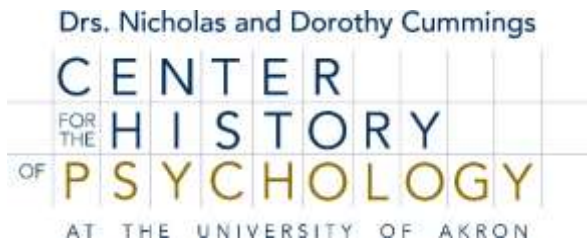
Assistant Processing Archivist

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Museums & Archives Certificate Program at the University of Akron

- Introduction to museums & archives.
- Provides undergraduate students with basic skills.
- Prepares them for work in museum & archives professions and for graduate study in these areas.
 - [Foundations of Museums & Archives I](#) (3 credits)
 - Foundations of Museums & Archives II (3 credits)
 - Capstone Experience (3 credits)
 - Specialization Electives (9 credits)

Foundations of Museums & Archives I

Week 1: Museums intro

Week 2-3: Museums: types, visitors, work, tasks, staff

Week 4: Archives intro

Week 5: Archives: types & contents

Week 6: Archives work, tasks, staff. Arrangement.

Week 7: Midterm

Week 8: Metadata

Week 9: Accessioning & appraisal

Week 10: Finding aids, storage, preservation

Week 11-12: Digitization

Week 13: Policies, donors, public relations

Week 14-15: Final project

Final project

- Process an archival collection (50%)
 - Group processing
 - 6-8 records storage boxes per group
- Blog post (25%)
- Summative reflection (25%)



Drs. Nicholas and Dorothy Cummings

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OF
PSYCHOLOGY
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON

Summative reflections

When I first opened the boxes and saw no organization I was overwhelmed.

I think it is very exciting to see all the materials and objects from history and actually handle them.

If I worked in an archive I think I would be involved in digitization.

By the end of this process, I am completely confident that archival work is something that I would love doing.

Creating an arrangement also proved somewhat difficult...I wonder if in the future I will become better at familiarizing myself with collections before processing them, or if this is the kind of problems that all archivists have to deal with.

I would simply be excited to be working in a place where you get to encounter pieces of history every day.

Personally, in reality, this is not what I would do for a job, either in Archives or Museums.

Is it worth it?

Processed
8 collections
housed in
130 document cases
described by
8 finding aids
during
4 semesters
by
32 students



Public History Concentration, Master of Arts in History, Wright State University

- Graduate students interested in archival administration or museum management careers
 - Undergrad backgrounds in history, anthropology, religion, others
- Both theoretical and practical training from working professionals
- Full graduate degree program (38 credit hours)
- Required courses include:
 - Academic core history courses (12 credits)
 - Intro's to: Public History (3), Archives (3), Museums (3)
 - Internship (1 credit) and capstone project (1 credit)
 - Advanced public history courses & electives (15 credits), including:
 - **HST 7800: Advanced Archives (3 credits)**

HST 7800: Advanced Problems in Archival Work aka Advanced Archives aka “The Processing Class”

- Arrangement schemes
- Processing plans
- Privacy and restrictions
- Preservation
- Challenging formats
- Finding aid elements (DACCS)
- Electronic records processing
- Additions processing
- EAD and MARC
- Controlled access headings
- Archives Space
- Backlogs and Reappraisal
- Prioritization
- MPLP
- Extensible Processing
- Post-processing tasks, such as
 - Dissemination
 - Donor relations

HST 7800 Assignments

- Processing plan and supply estimate (10%)
- Preliminary finding aid (10%)
- Electronic records processing (15%)
- Completed collection and finding aid (50%)
 - Typically 4-6 record center boxes per student (depending on year)
- Blog post visual aids (5%) & optional extra credit text
- Participation (10%) including
 - In-class discussions and hands-on processing work
 - Archives Space data entry (in-class activity)
 - Discards summary



Processing in a Classroom Setting: Considerations

	Archivists	Students	Volunteers, Student Asst's
Motivation	Appropriately processed collections ready for access	Learning, experience, <u>grades</u>	Genuine caring, meaningful work, paycheck
Interest	High! Eager to provide access	Varies: career goals, reasons for taking course (topic, schedule, coercion?), collection topic	Varies
Skill	High! We do this a lot	Varies: natural ability, interest	Varies
Education	Grad school training (+exp)	(Some) grad school training	Varies
Supervision	Depends: we do this with varying degrees of oversight	Much-needed, check often	Usually much-needed, check often
Collections	No need to do same size, type, or complexity	Should all have about the same difficulty/work	No need to do same size, type, or complexity



What We Accomplished

- 2x teaching the course
- 11 students
- 16 collections processed
 - 16 finding aids written
 - (17 counting the e-records exercise)
- Over 50 linear feet of new materials available
- Lots of learning (hopefully!)

Processing in the Classroom: *Give a Fish vs. Teaching to Fish*



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- Goal: Obtain a fish
 - Get collections processed
- Goal: Teach fishing
 - Teach students to process

- We want the “fish,” but we also want to teach the fishermen.
 - Everybody wins

Thank you!

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