

Dr. Jason Lustig
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Office hours: Fridays 10:00am–11:45am

Seminar Meetings: Fridays 12:00pm–3:00pm

Hoarders, Buried Alive in the Archive: History, Memory, and Archiving in Modern Times

In today's world, we live in an information age surrounded by the possibilities of seemingly unlimited storage and a ubiquitous culture of archiving that privileges the packrat and borders on the obsessive-compulsive. One does not delete an email: it is archived. We document our lives digitally under the pretense of "sharing" with friends and family, but the photos and status updates are stored permanently in the "cloud" even after one's passing, morphing into perpetual memorials. Almost every website has an "archive," which more often than not simply refers to anything older than the front page.

Archives are not only fundamental to the work in the discipline of history. They surround us daily in our contemporary life. In this seminar, the archive will be a focal point around which we will investigate a series of questions about the practice of history, the relationship between archives, history, and modern memory, as well as the history of archives within the context of the emergence of the state, bureaucracy, the public sphere, and the beginnings of the information age: What binds the processes through which history and memory are constructed, and how do institutions that foster historical scholarship, such as archives, play an active role in the formation of historical narratives and communal memory? What is the nature of the contemporary culture of collecting and hoarding, and what part does collecting take, both by professionals as well as by everyday people, in shaping perspectives on the past? How do we as historians make use of archives, and how should that inform our understanding of the nature of history and our conception of the past?

Course Requirements:

Course grade will consist of:

- 1) Preparation and active participation in seminar meetings, 40%**
 - a. The participation grade also includes a weekly 3-page reading response that synthesizes and critiques the assigned readings. You are expected to write a response for 8 out of the 10 weeks of the course. Please print and bring to class.
- 2) Research paper, 60%**
 - a. A substantial research paper on a topic of your choosing related to the seminar topic. The paper will demonstrate your ability to formulate a research topic, to locate and make use of primary and secondary sources, draw conclusions from historical material, and to compose a strong and significant piece of writing with a strong thesis, argument, and evidence to prove your point.

Academic integrity: Academic integrity is central to the mission of educational excellence of the university. Each student is expected to turn in work completed independently, except when assignments specifically authorize collaborative effort. It is not acceptable to use the words or ideas of another person—be it a world-class philosopher or your lab partner—without proper

acknowledgment of that source. This means that you must use footnotes and quotation marks to indicate the source of any phrases, sentences, paragraphs, or ideas found in published volumes, on the internet, created by another student, or from unpublished sources or archives.

Violations of University policies on academic integrity may result in failure in the course or on the assignment, or in suspension or dismissal from the University. If you are in doubt about the instructions for any assignment in this course, it is your responsibility to ask for clarification.

Disability: If you are a student with a documented disability on record and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you, please see me or have the Office of Student Disability contact me immediately. Please keep in mind that reasonable accommodations are not provided retroactively.

Course Schedule:

Week One

Introduction to the Course of Study

Big Questions:

What are archives?

Why are archives important? Why are they important to study?

How do archives intervene in society? How do archives wield power?

Readings:

What is an archive? What is the Role of the Archivist?

- V. H. Galbraith, *An Introduction to the Use of the Public Records* (1934), "Introductory," "The Approach to Research," pp. 1–14, 66–88
- S. Muller, J.A. Feith, R. Fruin, *A Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives* (1898), 13–48
- Hilary Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration, Including the Problems of War Archives and Archive Making* (1922), 1–115

- James O'Toole, "The Symbolic Significance of Archives," in *American Archivist* 56.2 (1993), pp. 234–255

Archives and Power

- Timothy Garton Ash, *The File*, 1-114, 141-146, 202-220
- Joan Schwartz and Terry Cook, "Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory," in *Archival Science* 2 (2002), pp. 1–19

Week Two

Archive Fever

Big Questions:

What is Archive Fever?

Readings:

- Jacques Derrida, "Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression," in *Diacritics* 25.2 (1995), 9–63 [also available as a book, published by University of Chicago Press]
- Yosef Yerushalmi, *Freud's Moses: Jewish History Terminable and Interminable*
- Sigmund Freud, "Beyond the Pleasure Principle"
- Sigmund Freud, "A Note upon the 'Mystic Writing Pad'"

Week Three

Archives, History, and Memory

Big Questions:

- What creates collective memory? Do archives have a role to play?
- What does history consist of? Is history to be found in the archive?
- How do societies come to depend upon archives?

Readings:

- Pierre Nora, "Between History and Memory: Les Lieux de Mémoire," in *Representations* 26 (1989), pp. 7–24
- Maurice Halbwachs, *Collective Memory*.
- Jacques Le Goff

Week Four

Archives and Modern Historical Practice

Big Questions:

- How do historians practice history?
- 19th century historians talked about "scientific" history; is history really a science?
- Does history have a method? Was this method discovered, or invented?
- Can one write history without archives?

Readings:

- Friedrich Beiser, *The German Historicist Tradition*, pp. 1–26
- Bonnie Smith, "Gender and the Practices of Scientific History: The Seminar and Archival Research in the Nineteenth Century," in *The American Historical Review* 100.4 (1995), pp. 1150–1176
- Kasper Eskildsen, "Leopold Ranke's Archival Turn: Location and Evidence in Modern Historiography," in *Modern Intellectual History* 5.3 (2008), pp. 425–453
- Leopold von Ranke, "Preface to the First Edition of *Histories of the Latin and Germanic Peoples* (Oct. 1824)," in *The Theory and Practice of History*, 85–88

Week Five

Historical Practice, In Practice

Big Questions:

- How do historians practice history?
- What is the allure of the archive?

What is the relationship between the roles of archives and archivists as purveyors and protectors of historical materials, and as gatekeepers?

What connection between the limits of the archive (what it contains and what it does not contain) and what historians write about?

Readings:

- Arlette Farge, *The Allure of the Archive*
- Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Series Z*, <http://www.psychomedia.it/jep/number3-4/yerushalmi.htm>
- Franz Kafka, "Before the Law," <http://www.kafka-online.info/before-the-law.html>
- Craig Robertson, "Mechanisms of Exclusion: Historicizing the Archive and the Passport," in *Archive Stories*, ed. Antoinette Burton, pp. 68–86

Week Six

Seeking Truth in the Archive

Big Questions:

How do we know what we know?

What is the relationship between truth and fiction in history?

How do archives relate to the issue of the attempt to approach historical truth?

Readings:

- Hayden White, *Metahistory*, pp. 1–42 ("Introduction")
- Francis X. Blouin Jr. and William G. Rosenberg, *Processing the past: contesting authority in history and the archives*, pp. 3–96
- Joan Schwartz, "'Records of Simple Truth and Precision': Photography, Archives, and the Illusion of Control," in *Archives, Documentation, and Institutions of Social Memory: Essays from the Sawyer Seminar* (2006), pp. 61–83

Week Seven

Archives and the Public Sphere

Big Questions:

How did archives transform in tandem with the creation of the modern state?

What does the case of archives in the French Revolution tell us about the relationship between archives and the public?

What is the relationship between the opening of archives and the development of civil society?

Readings:

- Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*
- Ernst Posner, "Aspects of Archival Development since the French Revolution," in *American Archivist* 3.3 (1940), pp. 159–172
- Judith Panitch, "Liberty, Equality, Posterity? Some Archival Lessons from the Case of the French Revolution," in *American Archivist* 59.1 (1996), pp. 30–47

- Patrick Joyce, “The politics of the liberal archive,” in *History of the Human Sciences* 12.2 (1999), 35–49

Week Eight

Archives and Nationalism

Big Questions:

- How do archives help construct national identity?
- What is the relationship between archives and the state?

Readings:

- Galit Hasan-Roken, “Folk Narrative Anthologies in Modern Israel,” in *Prooftexts* 17.3 (1997), pp. 71–82
- Peter Fritzsche, “The Archive and the Case of the German Nation,” in *Archive Stories*, ed. Antoinette Burton, pp. 184–208
- Trudy Peterson, “The Nasty Truth About Nationalism and National Archives”

Week Nine

Can One Own History? Archive Restitution and Ownership

Big Questions:

- Can one “own” history?
- Who do archives belong to?
- What is the importance of owning archives?

Readings:

- Ernst Posner, “Effects of changes of sovereignty on archives,” in *Archives and the Public Interest*, pp. 168–181
- Astrid Eckert, *The Struggle for the Files: The Western Allies and the Return of German Archives after the Second World War*, pp. 1–12, 99–218
- Charles Kecskeméti, “Displaced European Archives: Is It Time for a Post-War Settlement?” in *American Archivist* 55.1 (1992), pp. 132–140
- Michelle Caswell, “‘Thank You Very Much, Now Give Them Back’: Cultural Property and the Fight over the Iraqi Baath Party Records,” in *American Archivist* 74.1 (2011), pp. 211–240

Week Ten:

History and Hoarding in the Information Age

Big Questions:

- Is there something different about our contemporary culture of archiving from what has come before?

Readings:

- Daniel Lord Smail, “Neurohistory in Action: Hoarding and the Human Past,” in *Isis* 105.1 (2014), 110–122

- James Beniger, *The Control Revolution: Technological and Economic Origins of the Information Society*, pp. 1–30, 390–438
- Renée Sentilles, “The Archives of Cyberspace,” in *Archive Stories*, pp. 136-156
- David Craig, “The Ghost Files” (Columbia Magazine, Winter 2013–14) - <http://magazine.columbia.edu/features/winter-2013-14/ghost-files>