

INF STD 211-LEC1: Artifacts & Cultures

AKA “Introduction to Information Studies”

Fall 2024

The Information Studies Department at UCLA acknowledges the Gabrielino/Tongva peoples as the traditional land caretakers of Tovaangar (the Los Angeles basin and So. Channel Islands). As a land grant institution, we pay our respects to the Honuukvetam (Ancestors), 'Ahihirom (Elders) and 'Eyoohiinkem (our relatives/relations) past, present and emerging.

Professor: Thuy Vo Dang, Ph.D. (she/her)
Class Meetings: Mondays, 5:30 - 8:50 PM in Haines 220
Office Hours: by appt: calendly.com/thuyvodang
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Course Website: <https://bruinlearn.ucla.edu/courses/192952>
Special Readers:

Description

Lecture; 4 units. This course explores the intersection of artifacts and culture within the field of information studies. Students will examine how information artifacts (such as documents, technologies, systems, and media) influence and are influenced by cultural contexts. The course emphasizes critical analysis of theoretical frameworks, empirical research, and case studies to understand the roles artifacts play in shaping and reflecting cultural practices, identities, and power dynamics.

Learning Objectives: The goal of this course is to offer guidance and support to help students master the essential concepts, principles, and issues related to a set of practices involving the production, collection, organization, representation, access, and preservation of information artifacts within various overlapping cultures and disciplines.

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Critically analyze the relationships between information artifacts and cultural contexts.
2. Evaluate theories and methodologies for studying artifacts in information studies.
3. Apply theoretical concepts to analyze real-world examples of artifacts in information environments.
4. Synthesize interdisciplinary perspectives on artifacts and culture from information science, history, anthropology, sociology, and related fields.

Required Textbooks

- Greer, Roger C, Robert Grover, and Susan G Fowler. 2013. *Introduction to the Library and Information Professions* (Second edition). Santa Barbara, California: Libraries Unlimited, an imprint of ABC-CLIO, LLC.
- Hannan, Leonie and Sarah Longair. 2017. *History Through Material Culture*. Manchester University Press.
- Stauffer, Suzanne M. 2021. *Libraries, Archives, and Museums : An Introduction to Cultural Heritage Institutions through the Ages* . Rowman & Littlefield.
- Additional articles and book chapters will be provided via BruinLearn

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required: none

Course Policies

Grades will be calculated using a standard scale.: A+ =98-100%; A =93-97; A- is 90-92; B+ =88-89; B =83-87; B- =80-82, C+ =78-79, C =73-77, C- =70-72, D+ =68-69, D =63-67, D- = 60-62, and F = anything 59% or below. Late assignments will be penalized one-third letter grade for every unexcused day overdue (e.g., B to B-). Extensions must be requested in advance of the assignment deadline.

Class participation (ungraded) for a class of this size will be a challenge to track and grade, but I hope together we can foster an intellectually engaging community. I will post questions via the Discussion Board for you to consider as you read through the texts. I encourage you to start discussion threads of your own as well.

Assignments are designed to scaffold towards our learning objectives and help demonstrate growth throughout the quarter. The assignments for this course are broken into four parts, each worth 25% of the total course grade with some opportunity for collaborative work towards the end of the quarter.

Communication: I regularly use BruinLearn to communicate with you about this class, so be sure to check your student email address several times each week. I strive to reply to student queries within two business days. If you email me and do not hear a reply within two business days, please re-send your message.

Academic Integrity: UCLA is a community of scholars. In this community, all members including faculty, staff and students alike are responsible for maintaining standards of academic honesty. As a student and member of the University community, you are here to get an education and are, therefore, expected to demonstrate integrity in your academic endeavors. You are evaluated on your own merits. Cheating, plagiarism, multiple submissions without the permission of the professor, or other kinds of academic dishonesty are considered unacceptable behavior and will result in formal disciplinary proceedings usually resulting in suspension or dismissal. Additional information can be found on the website for the Office of the Dean of Students: <https://deanofstudents.ucla.edu/student-conduct-code>

Accessibility: Students needing academic accommodations based on a disability should contact the Center for Accessible Education (CAE) at (310) 825-1501 or in person at Murphy Hall A255. When possible, students should contact the CAE within the first two weeks of the term as reasonable notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. For more information visit www.cae.ucla.edu.

Schedule

**The professor reserves the right to modify this reading list and schedule to improve the learning outcomes for the class. Readings should be completed prior to coming to each class meeting.*

Week 1 (September 30) Introduction to Information, Artifacts, and Culture

Bring: an artifact that you think would have value for a cultural heritage institution as a record of some aspect of your/your family/your community's life in 2024.

Week 2 (October 7) Material Culture and Information Studies

Guest lecture by: Noopur Raval (7:00-8:30 PM)

Read:

- Hannan and Longair (all)
- Bawden, David and Lyn Robinson (2016). "Library and Information Science." In *The International Encyclopedia of Communication Theory and Philosophy*, edited by Klaus Bruhn Jensen and Robert T. Craig, Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 1-5.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118766804.wbiect113>.
- Jaeger, Paul T., Katie Shilton, and Jes Koepfler (2016). "[The Rise of Social Justice as a Guiding Principle in Library and Information Science Research](#)." *The Library Quarterly* 86:1, 1-9
- Gosden, Chris and Yvonne Marshall. "[The cultural biography of objects](#)." *World Archaeology* 31(2): 169-178.
- Winner, Langdon. "[Do Artifacts Have Politics?](#)" *Daedalus* Vol 109 No. 1 (Winter 1980): 121-136

Week 3 (October 14) Semiotics and Meaning-Making

Guest lecture by: Shawn Vancour (6:00-7:30 PM)

DUE: Assignment #1

Read:

- Stauffer, 1-80
- Jensen, Klaus B. "Semiotics." In *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, 2nd ed., Vol. 21, edited by James D. Wright, 592–597. Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2015.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-097086-8.95033-5>.
- Miltner, Kate M. "'One Part Politics, One Part Technology, One Part History': Racial Representation in the Unicode 7.0 Emoji Set." *New Media & Society* 23, no. 3 (2021): 515–534. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444819899623>.
- Chion, Michel. "[The Three Listening Modes](#)." *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994. Pp. 25-34.

Week 4 (October 21) Authority and Authorship

Guest lectures by: Cindy Nguyen (via Zoom at 5:45pm) & Greg Leazer (7:00-8:00pm)

DUE: Assignment #2

Read:

- Stauffer, 81-180
- Hilpinen, Risto. "[Authors and Artifacts.](#)" *The Aristotelian Society* 93 (1993): 155-178
- Nguyen, Cindy Anh. "[Introduction.](#)" *Bibliotactics: Libraries and the Colonial Public in Vietnam* [forthcoming from University of California Press]
- Rayward, W. Boyd. "The origins of information science and the International Institute of Bibliography/International Federation for Information and Documentation (FID)," *Journal of the American Society for Information Science* 1997, pp. 285-379
[https://doi.org/10.1002/\(SICI\)1097-4571\(199704\)48:4<289::AID-AS12>3.0.CO;2-S](https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1097-4571(199704)48:4<289::AID-AS12>3.0.CO;2-S)

Week 5 (October 28) Documents and Records

Guest lecture by: Anne Gilliland (6:00-7:00 PM)

Read:

- Stauffer, 181-260
- Gilliland, Anne J. "[Future Perfect? Affect-aware, History-informed, Future-oriented Archive-making.](#)" In Ilaria Scaglia and Valeria Vanesio, eds. *Archives and Emotions* (Bloomsbury Series on History of Emotions). In press.
- Duranti, L., Rogers, C., & Thibodeau, K. (2022). Authenticity. *Archives and Records*, 43(2), 188–203. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23257962.2022.2054406>
- Gorzalski, M. J. (2022). Reflections on "Authenticity." *Archives and Records*, 43(2), 204–206. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23257962.2022.2057457>

Week 6 (November 4) Digital Artifacts

Guest lecture by: Ramesh Srinivasan (5:30-6:30 PM)

Read:

- Greer, Grover, and Fowler, 1-97
- Srinivasan, Ramesh (2012) "Re-thinking the cultural codes of new media: The question concerning ontology," *New Media and Society* 15(2): 203-223.
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1461444812450686>
- Srinivasan, R. and Peter Bloom. "Tech barons dream of a better world--without the rest of us," *Salon*. June 30, 2020.
<https://www.salon.com/2020/06/30/tech-barons-dream-of-a-better-world--without-the-rest-of-us/>

- Srinivasan, Ramesh. "Opinion: The Global South Is Redefining Tech Innovation," *Wired*, November 7, 2019.
<https://www.wired.com/story/opinion-the-global-south-is-redefining-tech-innovation/>

Week 7 (November 11) HOLIDAY - NO CLASS

Rest & Rejuvenate

Week 8 (November 18) Power and Politics of Artifacts

Guest lecture by: Miriam Posner (6:00-7:00 PM)

DUE: Assignment #3

Read:

- Greer, Grover, and Fowler, 99-188
- Gochberg, Reed. "[Introduction.](#)" *Useful Objects : Museums, Science, and Literature in Nineteenth-Century America*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2021.
- Posner, Miriam. "[The Software that Shapes Workers' Lives.](#)" *The New Yorker*, March 12, 2029

Week 9 (November 25) Artifacts and Storytelling

Guest lecture by: Melissa Villa Nicholas (via Zoom, 6:00-7:00 PM)

Read:

- Jean Burgess (2006) "Hearing Ordinary Voices: Cultural Studies, Vernacular Creativity and Digital Storytelling," *Continuum*, 20:2, 201-214, DOI: 10.1080/10304310600641737
- Villa-Nicholas, Melissa. "[Chapter 5: The Stories We Tell: Storytelling for Data Borders.](#)" *Data Borders: How Silicon Valley is Building an Industry Around Immigrants*, Berkeley: UC Press, 2023. Pp. 111-144. ***DO NOT DISSEMINATE THIS EBOOK***

Week 10 (December 2) PRESENTATIONS

Week 11 (December 9) FINALS WEEK - NO CLASS

DUE: Assignment #4