**LIS 641**

**Community-focused Archives and Museums**

Professor Jamie A. Lee

**Acknowledgments:** *This course syllabus has been inspired by Professors Anne Gilliland (UCLA), Michelle Caswell (UCLA), Thuy Vo Dang (UCLA), and Kathy Carbone (Pratt) as well as community archivists and curators working on behalf of their communities.*

**Course Description:**

In this course, students will draw from critical scholarship and community memory practices; hands-on practices with documenting and preserving community stories and oral histories; classroom discussions; and community-focused assignments to develop an understanding of community-based archives and museums as knowledge domains. Students will be introduced to the concept of “research with respect” to develop practical strategies for working within community-focused archives and museum contexts to: identify records, artifacts, and their creation; document their activities; collect, manage, display, make accessible, and preserve records and other historical and cultural material.

Students will be required to reflect critically on questions that arise as part of their distinct engagement with communities, community-focused archival and museum projects, including but not limited to the following:

1 – What is a community?

2 – How do different communities conceive of records and cultural heritage?

3 – What is a community-focused archives? A community-focused museum? What foundations underpin their existence?

4 – What is political about community-focused archives and museums?

5 – Why is it important for communities to work with and for their own memory projects?

6 – Who is best qualified to engage in such projects?

7 – What methods can be used in community-focused archival and museum productions?

8 – What are short- and long-term priorities of a community archives? A community museum?

9 – How are community-focused archives and museums sustainable? And what are ethical

concerns of institutional/academic and community collaborations?

10 – To what extent, if at all, should archivists/museum specialists be ‘activists’ or ‘advocates’ for

particular communities?

11 – How can an archivist/museum specialist acquire the necessary cultural sensitivity to work

with communities with which they are less familiar? Or not a part of?

12 – Who speaks for a community?

And many more to be uncovered and discussed!

Students are expected to do all assigned readings and participate in classroom discussions. Discussions are an integral part of this class as we make sense of our readings and everyday practices together. Participation is necessary for success. Students are encouraged to integrate relevant prior classroom learning, and personal, professional, and research experiences and reflect upon how these might be utilized or translated in order to work with communities, their archives & museums, and digital and physical materials.

**Course Learning Outcomes:**

This course recognizes all of us as co-inquirers into the world(s) we live in. Together, we will focus on intensive theoretical engagement and sharing while we pull apart the big picture issues surrounding ambiguous definitions of communities, identity, belonging, information and relational literacies, along with the understandings of archives, archival records, museums, heritage and memory work, and professional and everyday archivists & information professionals more broadly conceived.

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to

1. Articulate and analyze different notions of communities and communities of records;
2. Identify and communicate shifting definitions of community through critical interrogations of identity, representation, and the roles of information;
3. Identify and discuss relevant protocols, agreements, and ethical requirements related to community engagement;
4. Outline a strategy for working with a specific community;
5. Understand how to initiate a plan for building and sustaining a community-focused archives and museum;
6. Understand how to design and implement a strategy for documenting a community;
7. Identify funding sources and strategies for community archives and museum;
8. Identify community-centric methods for archival and museum appraisal, description, access, and outreach;
9. Analyze the development of a methodological and analytical framework for collaborative work within communities (including through decolonizing methodologies (Linda Tuhiwai Smith), research with respect (Ally Krebs and Sandy Littletree), and emergent strategies (adrienne marie brown).

\*\*In addition, this course focuses primarily on these College of Information Science Competencies: A1, A2, A3, B5, B7, C8, and C9. To read more about each competency, please visit https://infosci.arizona.edu/ma-library-information-science/curriculum-specialties-courses

**Required Texts:**

Readings for specific class topics will be listed in the D2L site and accessible online as e-books through the UA Library website (library.arizona.edu).

*• Community Archives, Community Spaces: Heritage, Memory and Identity*, edited by Jeannette A. Bastian and Andrew Flinn. Facet Publishing, 2020.

*• Urgent Archives: Enacting Liberatory Memory Work*, Michelle Caswell. Routledge Press, 2021.

*• Producing the Archival Body*, Jamie A. Lee. Routledge Press, 2021.

*• The Representation of the Past: Museums and Heritage in the Post-Modern World*, Routledge Press, 1992.

• *Ephemeral Material: Queering the Archive*, Alana Kumbier, Litwin Press, 2014.

**Methods of Evaluation:**

20% or 200 points Core Concepts Reflection

20% or 200 points Field Visit + Critical Reflection

20% or 200 points Oral History Media + Critical Reflection

30% or 300 points Research Paper

10% or 100 points Research Presentation

Active Participation is required but is difficult to be quantified in the grading scheme. So, please be prepared for discussions, brainstorming, and deep conversations in our shared classroom spaces.

90 – 100 = A “exemplary, far beyond requirements/expectations”

80 – 89 = B “exceeds requirements/expectations”

70 – 79 = C “meets requirements/expectations”

60 – 69 = D “falls short of requirements/expectations”

below 59 = F “repeat course, if needed”

All written work will be evaluated for format, organization, style, grammar, and punctuation as well as content and argument. Select your most familiar formatting style such as APA, Chicago Manual Style, or MLA. Work and course requirements are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor with proper notice to students.

**Requirements for the Course:**

To succeed in this course, 2-3 hours of study time per hour of formal class time (or per unit) are required. This means that in addition to our ‘three hours’ of formal class time, 6-9 hours a week of study time are needed to meet course expectations. These hours should be spent on reading texts, writing papers, researching for new information, or thinking about course content. College-level reading and writing abilities are assumed.

To conduct oral history interviews, all students must complete the web-based CITI training program in human research subjects' protection.

[**CITI and Human Subject**: https://research.arizona.edu/compliance/human-subjects-protection-program/training-requirements]

[**IRB Training Modules**: https://research.arizona.edu/compliance/human-subjects-protection-program/hspp-training/hspp-training-opportunities]

**Course Assignments:**

**Core Concepts Reflection**

For this assignment, you will write a 5-page paper (DS, 12 pt font) that synthesizes ideas from the readings so far and makes an argument based on your own critical reflection of the readings. Please pick one of the following questions to answer.

* What is a community archives/museum?
* What is the relationship between identity and community archives/museums?
* How do community archives/museums challenge dominant professional archival/museum theory and practice?

Your reflection should have a thesis statement/make an argument and engage at least three readings from class. It should not just be a regurgitation of the readings; you should have your own critique of them. It may help you to ask yourself: What is missing from the readings so far? Or you may ask yourself: How do these concepts apply (or do not apply) to my own particular communit(ies)?

***WORTH 200 points***

**Critical Reflection on Field Visit**

Physical or Virtual Field Visit: Please identify and physically or virtually visit a community-based archives and/or museum in your local community. Schedule a phone or email exchange with archival staff and take ample time to review their online presence such as website, branding, mission/vision statements, collection policies, and social media networks.

For this assignment, you will write a 5-page double-spaced paper that reflects critically on the community-based archives and/or museum site you visited, putting the archives/museum site into the context of the literature and class discussion so far. Your reflection should have a thesis statement and engage at least three readings from class.

Questions you address may include:

* How does this particular site define community?
* What is the relationship between community, identity and archives/museum at this site?
* Why is remembering (or forgetting) important to this particular community?
* What practices does this particular community archives/museum site engage in and how does this practice relate to dominant archival/museum theory and practice?
* What is your positionality in relation to this community archives/museum and how did that impact your visit?

This is not a comprehensive list, nor are you expected to answer all of these questions.

***WORTH 200 points***

**Oral History Media + Critical Reflection**

For this assignment, you will work in groups of three to facilitate a hands-on oral history media project ~ from planning to documenting to editing to transcribing to archiving. As part of your small group participation and to ensure transparency in fulfilling group responsibilities, student grades will undergo a peer rating process (in addition to the instructor's evaluation).

Resources on Planning for and Implementing an Oral History Project:

https://guides.bpl.org/OralHistory/planning

https://oralhistory.org/best-practices/

https://www.mnhs.org/sites/default/files/library/research/oral-history/oral\_history\_general\_guidlines.pdf

https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/oral-history-resources-designing-a-project.htm

***WORTH 200 points***

**Final Research Paper**

(15 – 20 pages, DS, 12 pt font, select the formatting style you're comfortable with - Chicago Style Manual, APA, MLA)

**One-page paper proposal due 1 October 2024**

**Final Research Paper Presentation given in class on 10 December 2024**

**Final Research Paper due 6 December 2024**

**Final Research Project/Paper**

You are to write a single-authored paper that explores some aspect of community-based archives and museums that interests you. Your work should be thorough and scholarly, drawing upon appropriate theoretical, historical, cultural, or other texts (as appropriate) to support your argument. Please comment on what you have determined to be your source material as well as how and where you located your source material. Comment on the extent to which archival theory and practice, as you have learned in this class, address or may need to be extended to address issues arising from the topic you have selected. Grading will be based on critical analysis and reflection, relevance of the topic to the course, integration of written references from archival studies journals, and written quality and clarity.

Examples of potential paper topics may include, but please develop your own based on your interests:

1) Postcustodial Community Archives;

2) Digital Spaces in and with Community;

3) Affect and Community Archives & Museums;

4) Incarceration Archives;

5) Designing Participatory Collection Policies;

6) Storytelling in the Archives and Museums; and

7) Decolonizing Archives & Museums with/in Communities.

***WORTH 300 POINTS***

**Final Project/Paper Presentations**

Prepare a short presentation (approximately 10 minutes) of your research for your final paper. Use slides or other media in our shared classroom. Prepare for questions and conversations with your classmates. In your presentation, you will share an overview of your research while being explicit about your process throughout. Please include references to our course readings and discussions.

***WORTH 100 points***

**SEMESTER CALENDAR:**

**WEEK 1 | Introductions & Community Agreements**

*No readings due this week.*

**ACTIVITIES:** Community Agreements...who's in our class?

**WEEK 2 | Defining ‘community’**

**READ**

From the Heritage Sector:

Crooke, Elizabeth. “The Politics of Community Heritage: Motivations, Authority and Control.” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 16 nos.1-2 (Jan-March, 2010): 16-29.

Waterton, Emma and Laurajane Smith. “The Recognition and Misrecognition of Community Heritage,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 16 nos.1-2 (Jan-March, 2010): 4-15.

From the Archival Studies Discipline:

Flinn, Andrew. “Archival Activism. Independent and Community-led Archives, Radical Public History and the Heritage Professions,” *InterActions: UCLA Journal of Education and Information Studies* vol. 7, no. 2 (2011), <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/9pt2490x>

Flinn, Andrew, Mary Stevens and Elizabeth Shepherd, “Whose Memories, Whose Archives? Independent Community Archives, Autonomy and the Mainstream.” *Archival Science* 9 (2009): 71-86.

Caswell, Michelle, Joyce Gabiola, Gracen Brilmyer, Jimmy Zavala and Marika Cifor, “Imagining Transformative Spaces: The Personal-Political Sites of Community Archives,” *Archival Science* 18(1): 2018.

**WEEK 3 | Considering Identity and Community Formations**

**READ**

Kaplan, Elizabeth. 2000. “We Are What We Collect, We Collect What We Are: Archives and the Construction of Identity.” *American Archivist* 63: 126-151.

Lee, Jamie A., “Be/Longing in the Archival Body: Eros and the ‘Endearing’ Value of Material Lives,” *Archival Science* vol. 16, no. 1 (special issue on ‘Affect and the Archive, Archives and their Affects’), (2016: 33-51).

Caswell, Michelle. “Seeing Yourself in History: Community Archives in the Fight Against Symbolic Annihilation.” *The Public Historian* 36(4) November 2014: 26-37.

Daniel, Dominique. "Documenting the Immigrant and Ethnic Experience in American Archives," *American Archivist* 73 (2010): 82-104.

**WEEK 4 | The Politics of Community Archives**

**READ**

*Community Archives, Community Spaces: Heritage, Memory and Identity* [e-book]

Introduction - Jeannette A. Bastian and Andrew Flinn

CH 1  Archival optimism, or, how to sustain a community archives  
Rebecka Taves Sheffield

CH 2  Affective bonds: what community archives can teach mainstream institutions  
Michelle Caswell

CH 3  Community archives and the records continuum  
Michael Piggott

*Ephemeral Material: Queering the Archive*, Alana Kumbier, Litwin Press, 2014 [e-book]

Introduction

**ASSIGNMENT:** Core Concepts Reflection DUE Monday, 23 September by 10 pm in D2L Assignments

**WEEK 5 | Museums & Heritage**

Use this week to make your “Field” Visit!

**READ**

Kevin Walsh’s *The Representation of the Past: Museums and Heritage in the Post-Modern World*

CH 6 (Heritage Reconsidered)

CH 7 (A Sense of Place)

CH 8 (The Museum as Facilitator)

***MONTH OF OCTOBER IS A HANDS-ON PRACTICE MONTH!***

**WEEK 6 | Oral History Research & Production 1 of 4**

**READ**

Yow, Valerie Raleigh. Chapter 4 & 7, “Interviewing Techniques and Strategies and Interpersonal Relations in the Interview.” In *Recording Oral History*, 3rd edition.

Nan Alamilla Boyd, Ovie. "Who Is the Subject?: Queer Theory Meets Oral History." *Journal of the History of Sexuality 17*, no. 2 (2008).

Sheftel, Anna, and Stacey Zembrzycki. "Only Human: A Reflection on the Ethical and Methodological Challenges of Working with 'Difficult' Stories." *Oral History Review 37*, no. 2 (2010).

**ASSIGNMENT:** Research Paper Proposal DUE Tuesday, 1 October by class time in D2L Assignments

**WEEK 7 | Implications for theory and practice 2 of 4**

**READ**

Cook, Terry. “Evidence, Memory, Identity, and Community: Four Shifting Archival Paradigms.” Archival Science 12 (2012).

Wurl, Joel. “Ethnicity as Provenance: In Search of Values and Principles for Documenting the Immigrant Experience,” Archival Issues 29 no. 1 (2005): 65-76.

Gilliland, Anne J. and Sue McKemmish. “Rights in Records as a Platform for Participative Archiving,” Chapter 14 in Richard J. Cox, Alison Langmead and Eleanor Mattern, eds. Archival Education and Research: Selected Papers from the 2014 AERI Conference (Sacramento, CA: Litwin Press, 2015), pp.355-385.

**WEEK 8 | Storytelling in/for Archives 3 of 4**

**READ**

Mazé, Elinor A. "The Uneasy Page: Transcribing and Editing Oral History." Chap. 7 In *Handbook of Oral History*, edited by Thomas L. Charlton, Lois E. Myers and Rebecca Sharpless, **237-71**. Lanham, MD: Altamira Press, 2006.

Yow, Valerie Raleigh. “Chapter 12, Conclusion of the Project.” In *Recording Oral History*, 3rd edition, pp. **353-74**.

MacKay, Nancy. “Chapter 8, Transcribing… and More.” In *Curating Oral Histories: From Interview to Archive*. Practicing Oral History Series.  Vol. Second edition, Walnut Creek, CA: Routledge, 2015: **99-109**.

**ASSIGNMENT:** Critical Reflection on Field Visit DUE Monday, 21 October by 10 pm in D2L Assignments

**WEEK 9 | Activism. Power. Politics. 4 of 4**

**READ**

Stacie Williams and Jarrett Drake, “Power to the People: Documenting Police Violence in Cleveland,” Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies 2 (2017): <http://libraryjuicepress.com/journals/index.php/jclis/article/view/33>.

Tonia Sutherland, “Archiving Amnesty: In Search of Black American Transitional and Restorative Justice,” Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies (2017), http://libraryjuicepress.com/journals/index.php/jclis/article/view/42

Doria Johnson, Jarrett Drake and Michelle Caswell, “From Cape Town to Chicago to Colombo and Back Again: Towards a Liberation Theology for Memory Work,” Reflections on the 2016 Mandela Dialogues, <https://www.nelsonmandela.org/news/entry/reflections-from-the-2016-mandela-dialogues> [SCROLL DOWN].

**WEEK 10 | Working Week**

**Use our class time to work in your groups to finalize your media projects.**

**ASSIGNMENT:** OH Media should be in OMEKA for Professor to review; and submit your 1-page Reflection on Monday, 4 November in D2L Assignments

**WEEK 11 | Community Participation**

READ

Thorpe, Kirsten. “Transformative Praxis – Building Spaces for Indigenous Self-Determination in Libraries and Archives,” In the Library with the Lead Pipe, 23 Jan 2019: <http://www.inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2019/transformative-praxis/>

Flinn, Andrew. “Independent Community Archives and Community-Generated Content: 'Writing, Saving and Sharing our Histories'” Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies 16, 1 (2010): 39-51.

Bentley, Elizabeth and Jamie A. Lee, “Performing the Archival Body: Inciting Queered Feminist (Dis)locational Rhetorics through Place-Based Pedagogies,” Peitho: Journal of the Coalition of Feminist Scholars in the History of Rhetoric and Composition, vol. 21, no. 1 (Fall/Winter, 2018).

**WEEK 12 | Liberatory Memory Work**

READ

Michelle Caswell’s *Urgent Archives: Enacting Liberatory Memory Work*

Introduction: Community Archives: Assimilation, Integration, or Resistance?

CH 1  A Matter of Time: Archival Temporalities

CH 2  Community Archives Interrupting Time

CH 3  From Representation to Activation

CH 4  Imagining Liberatory Memory Work

Conclusion: Liberation Now!

**WEEK 13 | Community Archiving & Bodies**

READ

Jamie A. Lee's *Producing the Archival Body*

Introduction

CH 1 Archival Underpinnings

CH 2 Time

CH 3 Bodies

CH 4 Relational Reciprocity: Bodies as archives/archives as bodies

CH 5 Bodies producing archives producing bodies: The power of storytelling

CH 6 CODA: The moving body

**WEEK 14 | HOLIDAY. NO CLASS.**

**WEEK 15 | Reflective Essays**

READ

Ricardo L. Punzalan, “Dear Students: Becoming an Archivist in a Time of Uncertainty and Unrest,” Library Quarterly: Information, Community, Policy, vol. 87, no. 4. 2017: 303-305.

Danielle Geller, “Annotating the First Page of the Navajo-English Dictionary,” The New Yorker, November 7, 2017.

**ASSIGNMENT:** Final Research Paper DUE Friday, 6 December by 10 pm in D2L Assignments

**WEEK 16 | Final In-Class Presentations**

**Recommended (not required) Reading:**

*New Directions in Queer Oral History: Archives of Disruption,* Routledge Press, 2022.

Zavala, Jimmy, Alda Allina Migoni, Marika Cifor, Noah Geraci, and Michelle Caswell. ““A Process Where We're All at the Table”: Community Archives Challenging Dominant Modes of Archival Practice.” Archives and Manuscripts 2017: 1-14.

Caswell, Michelle, Marika Cifor, and Mario H. Ramirez. “’To Suddenly Discover Yourself Existing’: Uncovering the Affective Impact of Community Archives.” The American Archivist 79 (Spring/ Summer 2016): 56-81.

Caswell, Michelle, Alda Allina Migoni, Noah Geraci, and Marika Cifor, “’To Be Able to Imagine Otherwise’: Community Archives and the Importance of Representation.” Archives and Records 38(1) (2016) (special issue on public history): 1-20.

Ramírez, Mario H. “Being Assumed Not to Be: A Critique of Whiteness as an Archival Imperative,” American Archivist vol. 78, no. 2 (2015): 339-356.

Lee, Jamie A., “Beyond Pillars of Evidence: Exploring the Shaky Ground of Queer/ed Archives and Their Methodologies.” In Research in the Archival Multiverse, edited by Anne Gilliland, Andrew Lau and Sue McKemmish. (Social Informatics Monograph Series). (Melbourne, Australia: Monash University Press, 2016: 324-351).

Paschild, Cristine. 2012. “Community Archives and the Limitations of Identity: Considering Discursive Impact on Material Needs.” American Archivist 75:1: 125-142.

Ketelaar, Eric. “Cultivating Archives: meanings and identities,” Archival Science 12, 2012: 19-33.

"Before Smithsonian's Opening, Smaller African American Museums Grapple with a Behemoth in D.C." Washington Post, March 2, 2016, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/museums/before-smithsonians-opens-smaller-african-american-museums-grapple-with-a-behemoth-in-dc/2016/03/02/ed151ea8-d58d-11e5-be55-2cc3c1e4b76b_story.html>

Elizabeth Joffrion and Natalia Fernandez, “Collaborations Between Tribal and Nontribal Organizations: Suggested Best Practices for Sharing Expertise, Cultural Resources, and Knowledge,” American Archivist 87:1 (Spring/ Summer 2015): 192-237.

Michelle Caswell and Bergis Jules, “Integrating Community Archives into a National Digital Platform: Challenges, Opportunities, and Recommendations,” November 2017,

http://diversifyingthedigital.org/uploads/8/8/7/3/88738438/ddhr\_whitepaper\_jan\_2018.pdf

Stevens Mary, Andrew Flinn and Elizabeth Shepherd. “New Frameworks for Community Engagement in the Archives Sector: From Handing Over to Handing On International Journal of Heritage Studies 16 nos.1-2 (Jan-March, 2010): 59-76.

University of California, Irvine, “Defining Community Centered-Archives Since 1987,” <https://ocseaa.lib.uci.edu/community_archives>