

ENGL 282 Archive Theory

Andrea Denny-Brown

Thursdays 10-12:50

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An archive is simultaneously a collection of artifacts, a place where artifacts are held, and a practice of artefactual knowledge production.

This seminar will introduce students to the praxis of archival research and analysis, examining theories of the archive as well as practical strategies and methods for archival research. How do archives make meaning, and how do cultural forms of archival collecting, storage, and transmission affect those meanings? How does one think through different archival forms—the antiquated,



exclusive nature of some archives (for example, the Vatican Library in Rome) versus an archive held within a single body in performance, as in the work of dancer/choreographer Gesel Mason? We will discuss foundational texts alongside more recent studies. Topics will include archival relationships to truth, proof, and history; written versus embodied memory; archival desire and archival presuppositions; gaps, silences, and violence in the archive; social versus static archive; “dark archives” of the unread and unreadable; archive and/as death; premodern and postmodern record-keeping; affect and archive; links between archive, ark, and arcana; archival temporalities and microtemporalities; archives of taste, smell, and movement; archives of clothing and everyday objects; and pandemic archives.

This class is open to students outside of English, and fulfills one requirement for the Book, Archive, and Manuscript studies (BAM) designated emphasis.

Course Links:

Zoom every Thursday at 10am:

<https://ucr.zoom.us/j/96145444393?pwd=d3A1cWlqeDJyRmpBaXNjK05mZy9jQT09>

Meeting ID: 961 4544 4393

Passcode: 804484

Flipgrid for occasional postings & video assignments (must use UCR email):

<https://flipgrid.com/dennybrown6803>

Also check out:

UCR Special Collections [Archive Collections](#)

Huntington Library [Upcoming events](#):

Jan 13, “Cataloguing in the Time of Covid”

Stanford Center for Medieval & Renaissance Studies, [“Race in the Archives” Symposium](#):

Jan 27, Sierra Lomuto, “The Global Middle Ages at the Morgan”

Requirements:

As a graduate seminar, this course is rooted in class discussion and individual research. In order for the class to be successful, students must come prepared and ready to discuss the weekly reading assignments. While we will be covering a large body of material, students are encouraged to bring their own interests to the seminar as well as to their class presentations. In addition to attendance and course readings, the main requirements are:

- one 10-minute presentation on a course reading (pre-recorded video on Flipgrid), posted the Wednesday before class (by 11pm)
- a series of short, archive-based written exercises
- an individual research project of at least 15 pages. Students must discuss their final topic with me before beginning their project.

Grading:

Presentations, in-class participation, and short written assignments: 50%

Final Project: 50%

Calendar:

Week 1 Jan 7 --Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge*. Please read: 1) the Introduction; 2) pages 126-140 (part III.5 “The historical *a priori* and the archive” and part IV.1, “Archaeology and the History of Ideas”); and 3) the Conclusion. Download [here](#).
--“The Archives of Michel Foucault,” by Knut Ove Eliassen, in *The Archive in Motion*, edited by Eivind Røssaak (essay on pp 29-51). Download [here](#).

Week 2 Jan 14 --Derrida, *Archive Fever*. Download [here](#)
--Mario Telò, *Archive Feelings: A Theory of Greek Tragedy* (Introduction only). Download [here](#)
--Okwui Enwezor, “Archive Fever: Photography between History and the Monument” (iLearn)
[Suggested reading, with Enwezor: Allen Sekula, “The Archive and the Body” (iLearn)]
Guest speaker: Cherry Williams, UCR Special Collections

Week 3 Jan 21 --Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past* (E-book at Rivera via Hathi Trust))
--Ann Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain* (No E-book—need to purchase)
--Watch “The Digital Collection as a Tool for Close Examination” at [Huntington Library](#)

***Due:** find a digital archive in your field with which you would like to work

Week 4 Jan 28 --Marisa J. Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive* (E-book via Rivera Library) —Read Introduction and two chapters of your choice.
--Kim F. Hall, “I can’t love this the way you want me to: Archival Blackness” (iLearn)
--Mario Ramirez, “Being Assumed Not to Be: A Critique of Whiteness as an Archival Imperative” (iLearn)

Guest speaker: Sandy Enriquez, UCR Special Collections Public Services, Outreach & Community Engagement Librarian

***Due:** write a formal description of an object in your chosen archive

Week 5 Feb 4 --Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire* (No E-book; need to purchase)
--Simone Osthoff, *Performing the Archive* (No E-book; need to purchase)—read Introduction & section of your choice (Part I, II, or III)
--Gesel Mason dance archive: www.geselmason.com. Read about “No Boundaries” project and watch “No Less Black” (same page) and Mason’s original “No Less Black” and “Rain” [here](#) and [here](#). Also watch [this video introduction](#) to “No Boundaries” and “How to Watch a Modern Dance Concert” [here](#).
Guest speaker: Andrew Lippert, UCR Special Collections Processing Archivist

Week 6 Feb 11 --Mark Minch-de Leon, “Atlas for a Destroyed World: Frank Day’s Painting as Work of Nonvital Revitalization”; and “The California Indian Bone Game: Mis/Identification, Silence, and Human Rights at the Hearst Museum” (iLearn).
--Amy Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums* (E-book at Rivera via Proquest) — Read Introduction and a chapter of your choice.
Guest speaker: Robin Katz, Primary Source Literacy Teaching Librarian, UCR Library

***Due:** Write 1000-2000 words analyzing either the archive or objects within the archive of your choice

Week 7 Feb 18 --Sarah Elliott Novacich, *Shaping the Archive in Late Medieval England* (iLearn)—Introduction & Ch 2, “Ark and Archive”
--Randy Head, *Making Archives in Early Modern Europe* (iLearn)—Introduction & section of your choice
[suggested: Sven Spieker, *The Big Archive: Art from Bureaucracy* — download [here](#)]

Week 8 Feb 25 --Wolfgang Ernst, *Digital Memory and the Archive* (download [here](#))—Introduction & section of your choice
--Martin Foy, “Medieval Manuscripts: Media Archaeology and the Digital Incunabulum” (iLearn)

***Due:** submit & discuss with ADB the topic of final project

Week 9 Mar 4 --Abigail de Kosnik, *Rogue Archives: Digital Cultural Memory and Media Fandom* (download [here](#))—Introduction & two chapters of your choice
--Kjetil Jakobsen, “Anarchival Society,” in *Archive in Motion*, edited by Eivind Røssaak (same book from week 1), pp 127-54.

Week 10 Mar 11 Present projects in class; projects **due** by Friday, March 12 at midnight

Books to buy or find for our course:

As I emailed in advance, you will need to secure the following titles, listed below in the order we will read them. The ones I can find as complete books in free PDFs I've linked below; if you find others as full and free PDFs, please let us all know! Otherwise the books can be found on Amazon or your preferred online bookstore. Any edition or format is fine. Other readings will be on iLearn under "Course Materials."

Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* — download [here](#)

Mario Telò, *Archive Feelings: A Theory of Greek Tragedy* — download [here](#)

Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (E-book through Rivera)

Ann Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (No E-Book)

Marisa J. Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive* (E-Book through Rivera)

Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (No E-book)

Simone Osthoff, *Performing the Archive: The Transformation of the Archive in Contemporary Art from Repository of Documents to Art Medium* (No E-book)

Sven Spieker, *The Big Archive: Art from Bureaucracy* — download [here](#)

Wolfgang Ernst, *Digital Memory and the Archive* — download [here](#)

Abigail de Kosnik, *Rogue Archives: Digital Cultural Memory and Media Fandom* — download [here](#)