Issues and Problems in Preservation of Heritage Materials – IS 432
UCLA Department of Information Studies
Spring Quarter 2012
Tues 5:30-9:00 pm, unless otherwise indicated
GSEIS 121, unless otherwise indicated

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if you need a response within 24 hours)
Office hours: Mondays, 12:30-3:30 pm, or by appointment
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Catalog Description:
Introduction to methods used to promote preservation and access to Special Collections of various media working within an institutional framework. Letter grading.

CCLE: https://ccle.ucla.edu/course/view/12S-INFSTD432-1

Class meetings:
April 3, 10, 17, 24
May 1, 8, 15, 22, 29
June 5
Final projects due June 12 (electronic submission is encouraged)

Course Objectives:
By the completion of this class students will:
- Become familiar with the diverse physical elements and formats of heritage materials.
- Understand how various materials change over time, and how environment and storage conditions and preservation interventions influence rates of deterioration.
- Explore how aspects of culture may inform or affect heritage preservation decisions.
- Understand the specific—and often conflicting—demands of preservation and access for collections in a variety of formats.
- Understand and be able to apply preservation planning methods such as needs assessments and surveys on multimedia collections.
- Discover—and contribute to!—research literature and practical resources for preservation.

Course Outline:
Just as those who manage heritage collections must balance the concrete issues of preservation with the abstract imperative to provide access to the materials in their care, this course will balance the practical, tactical aspects of preservation work with more abstract concepts and strategies. Each week, we’ll spend about half the class time on something concrete—exploring a medium or category of materials and how it behaves from a preservation standpoint—and half the time on something more abstract, such as needs assessment or preservation ethics. Assignments and readings for each week will usually reflect this balance. Everyone’s experience in this course will be improved by your having read all assigned texts and resources before class each week, and coming to class prepared to engage fully with the readings and your classmates.
Site visits and tours of preservation-oriented institutions and facilities in the greater Los Angeles area will expose you to informational resources, professional networks, and practical knowledge that will be of great use to you. Note that because our class meets in the evening, most of these tours will occur outside of the scheduled class time—either earlier in the day, or on another weekday afternoon. **Attending your choice of at least two of these scheduled visits is required.** Attending three or more is strongly encouraged; attending five or more will earn you extra credit.

There will also be a certain number of hands-on projects and demonstrations during class time this quarter. If you have mobility issues, fine motor skills impairment, or chemical sensitivities/allergies of any kind, please notify me immediately so that I can ensure everyone’s safety during these learning experiences.

**Week 1 (April 3)**

*Introduction and overview – Definition of terms – We begin with the book*

What is preservation? – What is cultural heritage? – What is a book?

The book as tangible object – Anatomy and material components – Vulnerabilities – The book as a container of information – The paradox of preservation and access – What can we/could we/should we be trying to preserve?

*Readings:* Please complete before our first class meeting.


**Week 2 (April 10)**

*Beyond the book: paper and its peculiarities – Preservation planning and administration*


Different kinds of fibers (wood, cotton, linen, silk) – How they look and how they act – Coated and uncoated papers – Handmade and machine-made papers

*Readings:*

Be sure to read the Baker and Nadal pieces from the previous week if you did not already do so. You may also wish to explore some of the responses to Baker’s article, and his subsequent book *Double Fold,* from members of the archive, library, and conservation communities—the debate got pretty heated!


Calipr, A Collections needs assessment instrument for preservation planning, http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/CALIPR/


**Week 3 (April 17)**

*(Non-photographic) printing and coloring processes common in heritage collections – Disaster planning, preparedness, and response (part 1)*

Industrial printing methods (lithography, offset, typeset) – Art printing methods (lithography, silkscreen, etching, engraving, mezzotint) – Paint, pastel, pencil, and their problems

*Hands-on:* Up close and personal with printed matter

**Readings:**


**Week 4 (April 24)**

*Photographic and photochemical processes – Disaster planning, preparedness, and response (part 2)*

Basic principles of photography – A brief history of photographic processes – Prints, negatives, etc.

*Hands-on: Making cyanotypes*

*Homework: Fiber interactions (packets distributed in class)*

*Readings:*


**Week 5 (May 1)**

**Textiles and fiber media – Evolving aspects of conservation practice**

Fibers and their characteristics (animal, plant, synthetic) – Fabric constructions (weaving, knitting, felting) – How and where fibers and textiles are used – Textile conservation methods

**Hands-on:** Interaction of dyes, colorants, and fibers – Felting animal fibers

**Readings:**


(Read also *Errata: The Legacy of Anthropology Collections Care at the National Museum of Natural History.* (2006). *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation, 45*(3).)


**Week 6 (May 8)**

**Audiovisual media, part 1: Recorded sound – Digital representation of cultural heritage**

What is sound made of? – Preserving a waveform – Pitch, tone, and frequency – Kinds of sound (music, noise, language)

Carriers for sound recordings – Recognizing damage and decay in sound recordings – Looking at digital audio files – And what about the box it came in?

*Readings:*

Play video segments 2 & 3 from [http://www.ccaha.org/education/videos](http://www.ccaha.org/education/videos). (45 minutes)


**Week 7 (May 15)**

**Audiovisual media, part 2: Film**

What is film? – How motion pictures work – What they’re made of – Identifying nitrate and safety stocks – Identifying soundtracks and audio elements – Black-and-white and color processes -

Film technologies and the land grab in the 35mm frame

*Hands-on:* Handling and projecting 16mm film; Looking at lenticular

*Readings:*


**Week 8 (May 22)**

**Audiovisual media, part 3: Video (tape, digital, and optical media) – Contemporary mixed-media works**
What is video and why is it different from film? – What video is made of – Carriers and encoding – Machine-dependent media

**Hands-on:** Dismantling and re-assembling VHS cassettes

**Readings:**


**Week 9 (May 29)**

Far-out stuff – Thoughtful approaches to emergent challenges

Evaluating intangible qualities and affordances of various and items – What constitutes “the work” – Further discussion of the role of artist intent and contemporary documentation – Using our best judgment

Working with hair, skin, bones, nails, horns, and teeth

**Readings:**


**Week 10 (June 5):**

*Student research presentations*

**Assignments and Grading:**

*Short papers on materials and techniques* (3 papers, 10% each, total 30% of grade)

For these short papers, you must visit at least one museum, archive, or special collection in the greater Los Angeles Area. Look at the gallery labels, wall texts, or catalog entries, and find an item or items currently on display (or accessible for viewing, in the case of special collections) that incorporates a material, process, or phenomenon with which you are unfamiliar.

This might be a substance (ex: casein, polycarbonate resin), a technique (mouth-blown glass, ormolu, marquetry), or a kind of deterioration, damage, or aging (foxing, oxidation, vinegar syndrome, delamination)—but it should be something that intrigues you and about which you’d actually like to learn more. For each of your three selections, complete and turn in one “Exploring New Materials” worksheet.

*Research project and presentation* (50% of grade)

Your final research project/paper will address some aspect of preservation in a heritage materials collection. The exact topic is up to you, but should be submitted and approved by the instructor no later than the third week of classes (April 17). Some sample paper topics include:

- Preserving evidence of use (for artifacts such as clothing, masks, costumes, furniture, tools, etc.)
- Balancing access and preservation needs for specific materials, or in a specific context
- Preservation challenges for modern materials and bindings
- Evaluating research resources, information needs for preserving specific category(s) of material
- Documentation of treatments and restorations
- The concept of “reversibility” and its importance to preservation practice
- Effectiveness of digitization and digital surrogates for access and research use of specific media
- Needs assessment of a specific collection or sub-collection
Papers should be 12-15 pages in length, plus bibliography.

Class participation, readings, and hands-on activities (10% of grade)

Site visits to preservation facilities, homework assignments (10% of grade)
Site visits and tours of preservation facilities in the greater Los Angeles area will be scheduled throughout the quarter. You must attend at least two of these (see note on p. 2).

Guidelines for written materials:

- Please submit all assignments in hard-copy and electronic format (.pdf, .doc, or .docx).
- Papers should be double-spaced, paginated, and should include your name, the date, and the course number on the first page.
- Spelling, grammar, and punctuation should reflect your graduate-level writing abilities. PLEASE proofread your papers—or better yet, have someone else proof them—before turning them in!
- Use consistent and correct formatting for all citations; include URLs for electronic resources.
- Endnotes and in-text citations are preferred to footnotes for bibliographic references.
Paul Banks: 10 Laws of Conservation

Multiplication and dispersal increase chances for survival of information

Books and documents deteriorate all the time

Deterioration is irreversible

Use causes wear

No one can have access to a document that no longer exists

The physical medium of a document contains information

Authenticity cannot be restored

No reproduction can contain all the information contained in the original

Conservation treatment is interpretation

No treatment is entirely reversible
john cage: some rules for students and teachers

RULE ONE: Find a place you trust, and then try trusting it for awhile.

RULE TWO: General duties of a student - pull everything out of your teacher; pull everything out of your fellow students.

RULE THREE: General duties of a teacher - pull everything out of your students.

RULE FOUR: Consider everything an experiment.

RULE FIVE: be self-disciplined - this means finding someone wise or smart and choosing to follow them. To be disciplined is to follow in a good way. To be self-disciplined is to follow in a better way.

RULE SIX: Nothing is a mistake. There's no win and no fail, there's only make.

RULE SEVEN: The only rule is work. If you work it will lead to something. It's the people who do all of the work all of the time who eventually catch on to things.

RULE EIGHT: Don't try to create and analyze at the same time. They're different processes.

RULE NINE: Be happy whenever you can manage it. Enjoy yourself. It's lighter than you think.

RULE TEN: "We're breaking all the rules. Even our own rules. And how do we do that? By leaving plenty of room for X quantities." (John Cage)

HINTS: Always be around. Come or go to everything. Always go to classes. Read anything you can get your hands on. Look at movies carefully, often. Save everything - it might come in handy later.

(From http://www.alisant.net/cca/sitespecific/cage.html)