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Zero Textbook Cost Syllabus for LIB 3010 (Digital Traces: Memory in an Online World)

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CUNY Bernard M. Baruch College

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Digital Traces: Memory in an Online World
LIB 3010
Fall 2018
Tuesday and Thursday, 10:45am-12pm

Instructor: Professor Jessica Wagner Webster

Office:

Email:

Phone:

Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description:

This course will help students think critically about how our society uses digital archives. Students will learn about different kinds of digital materials prevalent in our society (such as photos, data sets, and social media), and explore how the obsolescence or longevity of digital records impacts academic scholarship, government, journalism, and personal recordkeeping.

Course Objectives:

After completing this course students will be able to:

- Identify types of electronic records and their respective longevity (with and without active maintenance)
- Explain theories and best practices of data migration
- Discuss how our creation and use of electronic records impacts society differently than our creation and use of analog records
- Describe how records are generated, stored, and accessed
- Discuss the pros and cons of electronic records, with respect to concepts like ease of access, ease of records creation, and data security
- Explain the impact of inexpensive, widely-available digital media creation tools on citizen journalism, social movements, and the historical record

Course Requirements:

Readings for each unit, class discussions, writing, and oral presentations will be required. There will be a midterm and a final paper. Students are also required to attend each class and participate regularly.

Readings are assigned below and due on the date listed. There is no textbook for this class; it is a zero textbook cost course, which means you will not have to purchase any



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materials. All materials will be available on the web (via our Blackboard site) and/or at the library.

Academic Honesty:

I fully support Baruch College's policy on Academic Honesty, which states, in part:

Academic dishonesty is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Cheating, forgery, plagiarism and collusion in dishonest acts undermine the college's educational mission and the students' personal and intellectual growth. Baruch students are expected to bear individual responsibility for their work, to learn the rules and definitions that underlie the practice of academic integrity, and to uphold its ideals. Ignorance of the rules is not an acceptable excuse for disobeying them. Any student who attempts to compromise or devalue the academic process will be sanctioned.

Academic sanctions in this class will range from an F on the assignment to an F in this course. A report of suspected academic dishonesty will be sent to the Office of the Dean of Students. Additional information and definitions can be found on the college website.

Services for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities may be eligible for a reasonable accommodation to enable them to participate fully in courses at Baruch. If you feel you may be in need of an accommodation, please contact the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities at (646) 312-4590.

Grading

<i>Assignments and Blog Posts</i>	<i>30%</i>
<i>Final Paper</i>	<i>24%</i>
<i>Class Participation & Attendance</i>	<i>26%</i>
<i>Midterm</i>	<i>20%</i>

Item	Points	Percentage	Notes
Assignments	150	15	Three homework assignments, each worth 50 points
Blog posts	150	15	Five blog posts, each worth 30 points
Class participation	156	15.6	6 points awarded per session for participation (out of 26 sessions)

Attendance	104	10.4	4 points awarded per session for attendance; 1 point will be deducted for a lateness of more than 10 minutes (out of 26 sessions)
Midterm	200	20	
Final paper	240	24	
Total	1000	100	

Course units:

- 1) **Intro: What are archives?**
- 2) **Formats, migration, and obsolescence**
- 3) **Photographs, memory, and social media**
- 4) **Citizen Journalism and Surveillance**
- 5) **Metadata, information security, and power**

Attendance, Participation, and Classroom Courtesy:

This course is largely discussion-based, and as such, you are required to attend each session and participate regularly. Please be ready to discuss the assigned texts for each class. Attendance and participation make up a large percentage of your grade (26%).

Since this class will address the role of archivable digital content in our current world, we will be discussing a number of topics currently in the news, some of which may be controversial. I would like for each student to feel comfortable sharing their perspectives on the assigned readings, so I ask all of you to respond civilly and thoughtfully to me and to your classmates, and to keep an open mind. Civil discourse will be factored into your grade for the course. Please feel free to see me with any particular issues you may have with readings or topics presented in this course.

Discussion Board Posts:

As part of your homework, you will be asked to write brief responses to the assigned readings at least five times over the course of the semester and post them to our class discussion board, accessible via the Blackboard site. You may select which readings you'd like to write about.

For each post, please write a 200-300 word response to the assigned readings. You may discuss one reading on its own, or more than one. Please include and discuss at least one quote from the readings (the quote does not count toward your 200-300 word

total). Respond to anything you found surprising, insightful, or particularly interesting, and feel free to connect the week's readings with other readings for this class. You may also choose to respond to another student's post, but make sure to follow the format above. Also, please include any questions you might have or issues you would like to discuss in class.

Assignments:

There will be three longer homework assignments distributed throughout the semester. These may involve basic research, writing, and/or group presentations. Assignments will be handed out in class ahead of their due dates.

Midterm and Final Paper:

There will be a midterm exam given in this class on October 12. I will also be assigning a final paper due in class on December 12. Details about the midterm and final paper will be given in class several sessions in advance of the date.

Course Calendar:

Unit 1. Intro: What are archives?

28-Aug

- Introductions

30-Aug

- Are Archivists Today's Real Peacemakers? (The New Yorker)
- Using Archives Guide (SAA)
- Various definitions (SAA glossary)
- What are Archives? (Society of American Archivists [SAA])

4-Sep

- "Building a Digital Society" (from Adrian Athique, *Digital Media and Society: An Introduction*, Chapter 1, on reserve)
- Processing a Box, Parts 1 and 2 (Institute of Public Administration Blog)

6-Sep

- Making Media Work (Downey)
- Digital and Binary (Mr. Ford's Class (video)- Note, you can stop watching when he gets to the Binary and Hexidecimal Table, unless you want to watch it.)

Unit 2. Formats, migration, and obsolescence

13-Sep

- Digital Dark Age (On the Media) *Note: please plan ahead, as this is an hour-long podcast

- Videotapes Are Becoming Unwatchable as Archivists Work To Save Them (NPR)

20-Sep

- Managing the Long-term Preservation of Electronic Archives or Preserving the Medium and the Message (Archivaria)
- Planning Digital Obsolescence (St. Louis Public Radio)

25-Sep

- Activists Rush to Save Government Science Data — If They Can Find It (NY Times)
- Calling for Back Up (On The Media)
- The Library of Congress Wants to Destroy Your Old CDs (for Science) (The Atlantic)

Unit 3. Photographs, memory, and social media

27-Sep

- From Family Snapshots To NASA Photos, Archivists Aim To Solve Preservation Puzzles (NPR)
- In The Digital Age, The Family Photo Album Fades Away (NPR)
- The End of Forgetting (NY Times Magazine)

2-Oct

- The Cobweb (New Yorker)
- Why archivists are scrambling to back up the internet (Deseret News)
- The Death and Life of Digital Archives (Slate)

4-Oct

- The Archive Team (WNYC)
- The Archive Team website
- Here's how The New York Times is trying to preserve millions of old pages the way they were originally published (NiemanLab)
- Preserving History on the Web: How Does the Library of Congress Help? (Perspectives on History)
- For the Love of Culture (The New Republic)

9-Oct

- About Facebook (The Nation)
- "Ephemeral Data Is the Future": The Rise of Self-Destructing Social Media (Perspectives on History)

11-Oct

- History and the Digital Image: Introduction (Perspectives on History)
- Contested Archives, Contested Sources (Ch. 7 from the book *Processing the Past: Contesting Authority in History and the Archives* by Francis X. Blouin, Jr. and William G. Rosenberg)

Unit 4. Citizen Journalism and Surveillance

16-Oct

- Preserving the Voices of Revolution: Examining the Creation and Preservation of a Subject-Centered Collection of Tweets from the Eighteen Days in Egypt (American Archivist)

18-Oct

- "Ocular Proof": Photographs as Legal Evidence (Archivaria)

23-Oct

MIDTERM

25-Oct

- Activists Build Human Rights Abuse Cases With Help From Cellphone Videos (WNYC)
- Doing Right Online: Archivists Shape an Ethics for the Digital Age (Perspectives on History)

30-Oct

- **Guest Lecture via Skype:** Yvonne Ng, Senior Archivist, Witness
- Witness Video Archive Guide
- Preserving Human Rights Media for Justice, Accountability, and Historical Clarification (Genocide Studies and Prevention)

1-Nov

- With Rise of Body Cameras, New Tests of Transparency and Trust (NY Times)
- Jurors Find Video Isn't Providing 20/20 Vision in Police Shooting (NY Times)
- Assessing the Evidence on Police Video Evidence (On The Media)

6-Nov

- Access to Police Body-Worn Camera Videos (Reporters' Committee for Freedom of the Press)
- Police bodycam videos: The Wild West of open records requests (RCFP)
- Police Worn Body Camera Footage a Public Record? Part 1 and Part 2 (SAA Issues and Advocacy)

8-Nov

- The Police Body Cam Conundrum (On the Media)
- NY Archivists Roundtable Letter
- Going Public With the Nixon Tapes (Daily Beast)
- Feds confirm investigation of APD body cam allegations (New Mexico In-Depth)

13-Nov

In Class Debate Assignment

Unit 5. Metadata, information security, and power

15-Nov

- "Under Scrutiny" (Athique, Chapter 14, on reserve)

20-Nov

- Senators propose reforms to wide-reaching surveillance law (Engaget)
- "Surveillance, Privacy, and Security" (Andrew Chadwick, from *Internet Politics: States, Citizens, and New Communication Technologies*)

22-Nov

- The Whole Haystack (The New Yorker)
- NSA collecting phone records of millions of Verizon customers daily (the Guardian)
- NSA Prism program taps in to user data of Apple, Google and others (the Guardian)

27-Nov

- **Guest Lecture via Skype:** Arian D. Ravanbakhsh, Supervisory Records Management Policy Analyst at US National Archives
- 5 facts feds should know about email
- Secretary Clinton Emails- Dept. of State
- National Archives Bulletin 2015-02: Guidance on Managing Electronic Messages
- National Archives Bulletin 2013-02: Guidance on a New Approach to Managing Email Records
- National Archives Memo: Guidance on Managing Email
- National Archives Memo: Managing Government Records Directive
- Presidential Memorandum: Managing Government Records

- National Archives Bulletin 2013-03: Guidance for agency employees on the management of Federal records, including email accounts, and the protection of Federal records from unauthorized removal
- National Archives Releases State Department Letter re: Email Recordkeeping

4-Dec

- Our Privacy Delusions (On The Media)
- Digital Insecurity Is the New Normal (NY Times)

6-Dec

- In Surveillance Debate, White House Turns Its Focus to Silicon Valley (NY Times)
- Like a Wood Chipper on Steroids' (Allegro)
- The More You Use Google, the More Google Knows About You (Altnet)