Instructor: Kyle R. Triplett, Adjunct Professor
kyletriplett@nypl.org

Availability
During this course, I will be available from approximately 9:30-5:30 every day as we move from one site to another and during site visits. I can be reached by email at kyletriplett@nypl.org. (Please do not use my temporary LIU email address.) During the week of visits, you can contact me via my cell phone: 917-648-3914.

Dates
Monday through Friday, variably 9:30-5:30 every day; June 16 through June 20, 2014.

Places
Locations vary for eleven collection visits and our classroom sessions. Complete schedule is below. Directions for travel between sites are included below via subway but you may wish to seek out additional or alternate routes that suit you.

Palmer School Manhattan
NYU’s Bobst Library, Room 707, 70 Washington Square South, New York NY 10012. Note: Please do not attempt to communicate with me, or to leave materials for me, at the CW Post campus. Submit final papers in hard copy either to the Palmer School’s Bobst Library office at NYU, or to me at my office in New York Public Library. The Bobst Library Palmer office: 212-998-2680 (Alice Flynn, Program Director).

Course description
This course introduces students to special collections in a variety of significant research institutions in New York City. It does so through guided visits to repositories where the class will meet curators, see representative examples, and hear from professional staff about issues associated with the institutions visited. In the class sessions and in assignments, students will review trends and issues in special collections. The course is largely experiential and participatory. This class is particularly valuable to those planning to pursue rare book librarianship or curatorial careers in special collections, but would also benefit those interested in research libraries in general. The course will give valuable access and exposure to important New York institutions, while challenging the students to think critically and creatively about the roles of special collections.
‘Special collections’ is the term given to library materials that have been segregated from general collections because of their need for protection and special handling. Reasons for concern might be rarity, fragility, costliness, and vulnerability to theft or mutilation. Special collections in libraries typically include rare books but might also include photographs, prints, trade cards, historical audio-visual formats, manuscripts, realia, and printed ephemera. Such materials are collected largely because of the evidential value of their physical properties although aesthetic values and associations may play a part in their selection. Such collections are often housed in historic or architecturally significant structures such as the ones that will be visited by students in this course. Their use and nature vary significantly depending to a large extent on the history, mission, and orientation of the parent institution. For further information on “special collections,” see the publications and website of the Rare Book and Manuscript Section of the American Library Association, Association of College and Research Libraries, which is in the reading list of this syllabus.

Course objectives
This course acquaints students with a set of major special collections located in New York City. It exposes students to both general theoretical issues and site-specific concerns of special collections units. The course is designed to provide students with the opportunity to meet and hear from curators of those collections and benefit from unprecedented access to collections and staff.

Learning outcomes
By the end of this course, students will have made tangible/visual acquaintance with some of the most famous special collections libraries in New York City, will have met and heard from leaders in this subfield, and will have an understanding of the curatorial issues associated with managing libraries within these institutions. In particular, a focus will be on use and access to collections.

Palmer School Learning Objectives
This course addresses the following objectives:
1c, explain, compare and contrast different types of collections, libraries and information centers; and
4b, explain and apply management principles, processes and practices including those relating to innovation and strategic planning as well as human resources, financial, and operational functions of a library or other type of information organization.
Assignments

Daily
Students will attend five days of visits to rare book/special collections libraries throughout New York City. Included in this will be attendance and in-class activities. Required readings should be done before the session it is listed for on blackboard. Ancillary reading can be done as students prepare the final paper following the conclusion of the visits to collections.

Students will receive detailed instructions on the form of the final paper and the in-class assignments. There will be two short written assignments during the week. It is expected that students will do a substantial amount of reading on their own, beyond the required reading list, while preparing their final paper. A reading list for the class is included in this syllabus.

Short assignments
Thought Piece on Visits
Future of Special Collections.

Final Paper
This is an opportunity to synthesize your knowledge of our visits, coupled with readings and discussions in class. We will cover issues such as access vs. preservation, instruction, relevancy, and concepts of special collections and how they make physical libraries unique. The final paper will be a research paper based on observations of the collections that we have been shown, but also an exploration of new and innovative use of special collections in the framework of management. You will need to have consulted works (readings from the course can be used) on your own to add a research element but also take a leap and develop ideas. As part of this, I encourage you to visit a collection in order to develop further thoughts on this as well. Students will produce critical analyses of issues discussed in special collections and propose potential future uses of these collections with an eye toward outreach, use, and instruction. The analyses will be based upon first-hand observations, upon class discussion, and upon extensive reading of both assigned sources and self-selected sources.

The final project will be due on Friday July 11, no later than 5pm.
You will receive detailed instructions in class.

Commitment of time, grading, and expectations
Students must attend ALL sessions to get credit for the course.

Grading
Final Project: 50%
class participation: 30%
in-class assignments/thought pieces: 20%
Pay attention to grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Also, proofread your work. Spellcheck will not catch omitted words, repeated words, etc. Always reread the instructions before submission of an assignment to make sure that all the required components are included.

The State of New York requires that the instructor provide an estimate of the time that this course should require from students. We therefore provide this estimate: daily touring (37.5 hours), general reading (50 hours), preparation for and writing of the final paper (62.5 hours). The total is 150 hours, representing a typical graduate course as envisioned by the State.

**Reading List**
To benefit fully from the library visits and to participate fully after the initial session, students should do the readings posted or sent. All required readings are available via Blackboard.

**Course Readings and Recommended Exit Reading List**
We will be reading selections from this list during the class, but also keep this as a supplement as you research your final paper or for further study. This list includes seminal articles and works in special collections research - do keep the list through your student careers as well, it will be useful for reference.


Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records [ASLAPR], Collection Development Training. “Selection: Defining and Managing Special Collections.”


Jones, Barbara M. “Special Collections for the Twenty first century” *Library Trends*; Vol. 52 No. 1 Summer 2003.

Kirschenbaum, Matthew G. *Matthew G. Kirschenbaum website* http://mkirschenbaum.wordpress.com/


McKenzie, DF. “Pritners of the Mind: Some Notes on Bibliographical Theories and Printing


Traister, Daniel. "Public Services and Outreach in Rare Book, Manuscript and Special Collections" Library Trends, Vol. 52 No.1 Summer 2003.


Vandegrift, Micah. “What is Digital Humanities and What’s it Doing in the Library?” [Discussion.] www.inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2012/dhandthelib/


“Your Old Books.” A guide sponsored by the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section [RBMS] of the Assoc. of College and Research Libraries [ACRL], the Antiquarian Booksellers’ Association of America [ABAA], and the Rare Book School at the Univ. of Virginia. rbms.info/publications/your_old_books_compact/YourOldBooksCompact2.pdf


Various specialized guidelines for special collections


Guidelines: Competencies for Special Collections Professionals http://www.al.org/acrl/standards/comp4specollect

Rare Books and Manuscripts Section. ACRL/ ALA http://www.rbms.info/
General instructions for visits
The course provides students unique and welcome access to a fascinating group of institutions and individuals. I have allowed for travel time and breaks around our visits. As indicated on the schedule, below. Note that this is largely an intensive “walking course” that takes place physically from variably 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on five consecutive days. Students must attend all sessions to receive credit for the course. Your participation grade will include not only attendance, but engagement and questions, not only to me as the instructor but to the various guest speakers. Please give the curators and librarians the respect that they deserve for devoting time and energy to showing us their great collections and sharing their knowledge.

Daily schedules
We will begin each day at some time between 9:30 and 10 a.m. We will end no later than 5:30 p.m. each day. Plan to spend the whole day with the group. In order to receive credit for this course, you must attend every day’s sessions. You will not have time for personal errands, checking email, lunch dates, etc., during the days when this course meets.

Out and About
On Monday, we will begin with a discussion at Bobst Library. On other days, we will meet at the first library that we will be visiting for that day. It is your responsibility to get yourself to the libraries, especially to the first appointment of the day, on time. You will find directions below. Plan to pick up a subway map. Fill up your Metro card and/or buy train tickets, if necessary, before the course begins.

Timeliness: You must be on time for every appointment! Plan to arrive early for the first appointment of the day. It is your responsibility to get yourself to the first appointment of the day. Assume trains will be late and plan accordingly. We cannot wait for you for each appointment and you might not be admitted to the institution after the group has entered the rare book room because of local security policies. We will move between sites either together or in small groups. Please do not go off on your own between visits; experience tells us that people get lost when they do so. Plan to travel between visits with some or all of the group.
Downtime between library appointments: Use this time for transportation, refreshment, and making notations on the visits. Discussion with colleagues en route will also be helpful to you.

Attendance: You must attend every day’s sessions to get credit for this course. If you become ill and cannot attend a day’s sessions, we expect that you will withdraw from the course. This course is experiential; reading about the institutions will not substitute for visits.

Equipment: Bring folding umbrellas and small backpacks or totes that you can leave outside rare book areas. Also bring very small purses or wallets for valuables that you can keep with
you at all times. Also bring small notepads or journals and PENCILS for jotting down impressions (although you may not be able to take papers into the rare book areas). If you are not familiar with Manhattan, you may find a small compass to be helpful since many directions refer to “east,” for example. Realize if you do bring laptops or iPads, etc. we may have to leave backpacks in semi-secure places and you may not bring them into some rooms we are visiting. Please do not use cell phones during class; turn them off during class visits. Try to stay “in the moment” with the group.

Dress: We will be making visits to libraries every day and will be hosted by professional staff in those libraries. Choose respectful but still comfortable attire. Be sure to wear comfortable walking shoes. Be prepared to walk considerable distances both indoors and outdoors. Please understand that some, and probably most, library spaces are not handicapped accessible. A light jacket or sweater would be advisable in case as usually reading rooms are chilly. Sun glasses, sun caps, and sun block are a good idea.

No visitors: We cannot accommodate visitors to the class because of security concerns in the rare book rooms. In many cases, the library will have a list of our class members and will admit no others. In many cases, the collections cannot accommodate more than the number of the class.

Eating: We will usually pause for a full lunch hour or half hour. Please bring snacks or lunches or plan on what you will find nearby. You may want to look up the locations before we arrive to plan a place that you might want to grab a bite. Please bring substantial snacks and water as needed. Please do not chew gum during library visits.
Schedule of Visits
Monday-Friday June 16 / June 20

Monday June 16
10-12 Class orientation and discussion. NYU Bobst Library, 2nd floor, Avery Fisher Center, West Classroom.

1-3 Fales Library & Special Collections. NYU Bobst Library. Host: Charlotte Priddle, Librarian for Printed Books.

3-5 Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives. NYU Bobst Library. Host: Chela Scott Weber, Associate Head.

Tuesday June 17
10:15 Meet at New York Society Library lobby. Take the 6 train to 77th st stop and walk up to 79th st, the library is between Park and Madison.

10:30-12 New York Society Library. 53 E 79th St, New York, NY 10075. Host: Erin Schreiner, Special Collections Librarian.

2-3 Grolier Club. 47 E 60th St, New York, NY 10065. Host: Barbara Bieck, Asst. Librarian. Take the 6 train from 77th stop to 59th st stop. The library is on 60th between Park and Madison.

4-5:30 Library for the Performing Arts. 40 Lincoln Center Plaza, New York, NY 10023. Host: Bob Kosovsy, Curator of rare books and manuscripts. We will walk through Central Park to the west side of the park from Grolier. We will do this as a group and we will conduct a discussion en route.

Wednesday, June 18
9:30 Meet in Bryant Park behind New York Public Library. 5th Ave at 42nd St, New York, NY 10018. Take BDFM to Bryant Park-42nd st. Or Take 7 train to 5th Ave. We will spend the whole day in NYPL special collections, visiting three major divisions.

10-11:30 Prints and Photographs Division. Host: David Christie, Prints Specialist.
1-2:30 The Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division. Host: Matt Knutzen, Curator and Geospatial Librarian.

2:30-3:30 Discussion in Bryant Park or classroom.

3:30-5 Rare Book Division. Host: Kyle R. Triplett, Rare Book Librarian

Thursday, June 19

9:30 Gather just inside Central Park at corner of 77th and Central Park West. Take B or C train to 81st st-Museum of Natural History stop.


1-2:30 Morgan Museum and Library. 225 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016. Hosts: John McQuillen, Assistant Curator, Printed Books and Bindings and Carolyn Vega, Assistant Curator, Literary and Historical Manuscripts. Take B train to Bryant Park-42nd St stop and walk to Madison and 37th.

3:30-5:30 NYU Bobst Library, 2nd floor Avery Fisher Center, West classroom. Lecture and discussion. Take BDFM from Bryant Park to W. 4th St. near Washington Square Park. Walk to Bobst.

Friday June 20

9:30 Gather in front of Butler Library, Columbia University. Take the 1 train to 116 st-Columbia University. Walk east into campus toward the open area known as South Lawn. To the right, or south, is the Butler Library. We will meet in front of the library.

10-12 Columbia Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University. Butler Library 535 W 114th St, New York, NY 10027. Host: Jane Siegel, Rare Book Librarian.

1:00-5 Wrap-up session. Lecture and discussion. Final Project discussions. NYU Bobst Library West classroom, 2nd floor, Avery Fisher Center. We will have lunch and meet again at the front of Butler at 1pm. We will all walk together over to the BC 116th St stop and take the train to W. 4th St near Washington Square Park and walk to Bobst.