Contact Information
Palmer School of Library and Information Science, Long Island University
Instructor: Dr. Deirdre C. Stam
Office hours: During this course, I will be available from 9-5 every day as we move from one site to another. After that week, office hours are Thursdays 2-5, after class on Thurs. night, and other times by appointment. It’s always best to make an appointment, even for posted times.
(Email is the best way to reach me; I do not check telephone messages at Bobst Library every day.)
Places: Locations vary. See the schedule below. On Tuesday, Jan. 12, Bobst Library, 2nd floor (Avery Fisher Center); see monitor in the Fisher Center for the room number.
My office address: Bobst Library Room 707, NYU, 70 Washington Square South, New York NY 10012. Note: I do not have an office on the CW Post campus.
Contact information: NYC Tel: 212-998-2681; FAX 212-995-4072; deirdre.stam@liu.edu
During the week of visits, you can contact the instructor by cell phone: 646-238-1434 (except during visit times and other transit times when the phone will be turned off or will not be accessible.) Note that the main office for the Palmer School is in Brookville NY, C.W. Post campus, at 516-299-2866; the instructor does not have a telephone at that site.

Note that information will be provided through an email distribution list before the course begins. If you have not been notified that you are on this list, please let the instructor know as soon as possible. Tests of the list will occur during December.

Course description
This course introduces students to issues surrounding the curation of special collections in architecturally or historically significant physical spaces in New York City. It does so through guided visits to repositories representing a range of historical types of libraries. During the course of these visits, students will see spectacular examples from major collections, become aware of the contexts of these collections, and develop an understanding of the “sense of place” associated with each collection. Their own observations will be enriched by the explanations of curators about opportunities and limitations of these special settings in regard to collection care, preservation, and services.

Amplification of the basic course description
“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. 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.
(Note that “special collections” are not the same as “special libraries.” The latter term refers to any highly specialized research collection that usually limits its access to adult members/staff of the sponsoring organization. The format and indeed the “place” of the latter can largely lack physicality and might consist largely, these days, of electronically formatted information. See the Special Libraries Association for information about the latter concept. For “special collections,” see the publications and website of the Rare Book and Manuscript Section of the American Library Association.)

Students will maintain an informal journal to record their impressions as they visit these sites with the instructor during an intensive week of visits to twelve libraries. (The journal is due during the week following the course.) They also will produce a critical analysis of curation issues associated with a subset of these sites. (This paper is due two months after the week of visits is over). Their analysis is based upon their first-hand observations, upon extensive reading about the “library as place,” and upon reading about the evolution of American libraries (and especially about the concept of the “special collection”) Types of libraries visited will include the special research library, the membership library for working people, the membership library for “society,” the public library, the museum library, the public archive, the university library, the college library, and more.

**Method**
Learning experiences will include readings before the course begins about the libraries to be visited and about the evolution of American physical library structures, first-hand guided visits to twelve significant “special collections” in libraries in New York City (Jan. 11 through 15, 2010), discussions with curators of these libraries, the articulation of impressions in a journal, and the writing of a critical analysis of issues associated with curating a special collection within a selection of historically or architecturally significant structures that were visited. The analysis will take the form of a research paper of significant length. (In pedagogic terms, this course is designed more to deepen understanding of basic library issues rather than to build specific library-related skills.)

This course is largely experiential and emphasizes first-hand learning. It will be particularly valuable to those planning to pursue curatorial careers in special collections, but would be valuable also for those interested in library history and the library as place. 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, will have a sophisticated understanding of the curatorial issues associated with managing libraries within these collections and spaces, and will be able to articulate well-founded suggestions for improving collections care, building care, and library services within the special collections located in the historically or architecturally significant structures.

**Meeting times and place**
As indicated on the schedule, below. Note that this is largely a “walking course” that takes place physically from ca. 9 a.m. to ca. 5 p.m. on five consecutive days. Students must attend all sessions to receive credit for the course.
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 paper (57.5 hours), writing of the journal (5 hours). The total is 150 hours, representing a typical course as envisioned by the State.

**Assignments, grading and expectations**

Students must attend all sessions to get credit for the course. Grades: Journal: 20% (due on or before January 22nd); and a research paper: 80% (due two months after the conclusion of the course.) Students will receive detailed instructions on the form of the final paper. 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.

**Readings**

To benefit fully from the library visits, these readings should be completed before the course begins. Almost all are (or will be) available electronically, as indicated below. Some are also available in paper form and a few are in paper form only which can be found in most larger libraries.

Arenson, Adam. “Libraries in Public before the Age of Public Libraries: Interpreting the Furnishings and Design of Athenaeums and Other ‘‘Social Libraries,’ 1800-1860,” in John E. Buschman and Gloria J. Leckie, eds., *The Library as Place; History, Community, and Culture* (Westport CT and London: Libraries Unlimited, 2007), 41-60. LIU E-reserve. Note that because this article is longer than allowed on LIU e-reserves, half of this article will be available on LIU e-reserves from Dec. 28th-Jan. 4th and the other half from the Jan. 5th-12th. If you plan to print the article, keep this in mind. I would suggest that you purchase this book since other readings in it are pertinent to the course.


Hutchinson, Nancy G., “Beyond Compliance: Redefining Accessibility,” *American Libraries* 32, No. 6 (June/July 2001), 76-78. Available through Library Literature online from LIU and from other libraries.


Special Collections of New York City
Dr. Deirdre C. Stam   Email: dcstam@liu.edu    Cell: 646-238-1434
Palmer School of Library and Information Science, Long Island University (LIS 901-01), Spring 2010
Contents:
-- General instructions
-- Daily schedules for January 2010 listing libraries to be visited
(Directions to sites and capsule histories of the libraries will be provided in a separate document.)

General instructions

Daily schedules: We begin each day at some time between 9 and 10. See the schedule (below). We will end no later than 5:00 p.m. each day. Plan to spend the whole day with the group. (We’ll divide into smaller groups for transportation.) 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.

Locations: On Tuesday, we will begin with a discussion at Bobst Library. On other days, we will meet at the libraries themselves. It is your responsibility to get yourself to the libraries, especially to the first appointment of the day, on time. You will be given directions via email in a separate document before the course begins. If you do not get these directions before January 1, contact the instructor at Deirdre.stam@liu.edu. Plan to pick up a subway and bus map, and train schedule if necessary, well 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, on time. 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.

Downtime between appointments: Use this time for transportation, refreshment, and making notations in your journal. Discussion with colleagues will also be helpful to you. More information about the journal appears in the Syllabus itself. This document will be brief. You will receive instructions about the journal format on the first morning of the course.

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, 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 for jotting down impressions (although you will not be able to take papers into the rare book areas). Do not bring laptops (we may have to leave backpacks in semi-secure places). Fill up your Metro card before the course begins. Please do not use ipods and cell phones during class hours, even in transport unless absolutely necessary. Try to stay “in the moment” with the group.

**Dress:** Respectful, professional, but still comfortable attire. Wear comfortable walking shoes or boots. (Be prepared to walk considerable distances outdoors.) **On Monday, January 11,** we will visit the University Club which has a dress code. **On that day gentlemen must wear jackets and ties; ladies should wear professional dress of comparable formality.** Dress slacks are fine on all days but no sweat suits, hoodies, jeans, gaudy or obvious sneakers, or other active sports attire. **Dress warmly; Manhattan can be very cold and windy in January and we will be outside a good deal.**

**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 some cases, the collections cannot accommodate more than the number of the class.

**Eating:** We will not usually pause for a full lunch hour. You might be able to get a hot beverage or soup en route. Please bring substantial snacks (even a sandwich) and a beverages as needed.

**Due date for final project:** The final project will be due two months after the last class day (March 15).

**Schedule of Visits**
**Monday through Friday, January 11-15, ca. 9:15a.m.-5:00 p.m. daily**

(Directions to these sites will be provided in a separate document along with capsule histories of the libraries.)

**Monday, January 11 – West side, north of 42nd street**

1. Meet at 9:15 -- Columbia University, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Butler Library, 6th floor. Meet at the entrance to the RBML. (9:30 a.m. appointment). Getting past the front door guard takes time. You need to get to Columbia and to Butler Library on your own! Allow time.
2. Meet at 11:45 -- Museum of Modern Art, Library. Meet at 54th Street, just inside the entrance. (12 noon appointment)
3. Meet at 2:45 -- University Club, 1 West 54th Street. Meet in the lobby, after leaving your coats and bags in the cloak room. (3:00 p.m. appointment)

Tuesday, January 12 -- West side below 42nd St.

1. Meet at 10:00 a.m. Bobst Library, NYU. Second floor. Discussion session. See the monitor for room assignment.
2. Meet at 12:45 -- Center for Jewish History, 15 West 16th Street. Meet just inside the front entrance. If you can leave coats and bags there, do so. (1 p.m. appointment). You’ll be guided to this site.
3. Meet at 3:45 -- National Archives (New York); 201 Varick. Enter between Varick and Houston; meet on the 12th floor just inside the entrance to the Archives. Leave coats, etc., as directed before 4. (4 p.m. appointment)

Wednesday, January 13 -- Midtown

1. Doors open at 10:00 a.m. -- New York Public Library, Berg Collection (3rd floor, north side of the building). Leave coats and bags in the main floor coat room, near central entrance area (Astor Court). Meet outside the Berg collection. (appointment at 10:10 a.m.) You need to get there on your own.
2. Meet at 12:45 p.m.-- General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen. Meet inside the entrance. View the Small Press Center in the lobby if you are early. (1:00 p.m. appointment)
3. Meet at 3 pm. -- Grolier Club, 47 East 60th Street. Meet inside the front door. Leave coats and bags in the cloak room on that floor. (If you arrive early you can view the exhibition on the 1st floor if there is one currently available.) (3:15 appointment)

Thursday, January 14, Lincoln Center area; West side above Columbus Circle

1. Meet at 9:10 a.m. -- American Museum of Natural History, Library. 79th Street and Central Park West. Meet inside the doors, on the Central Park Side, near the ticket booths. You will definitely not be admitted if you are late; access is very complex. (9:30 appointment) Again you need to get to the first appointment on your own. Allow time!
2. Meet at 12:45 p.m. -- Juilliard School, Library. Meet inside the entrance to the Library. (1:00 p.m. appointment)
3. Meet at 3:00 p.m. -- American Bible Society and Museum of Biblical Art. 1865 Broadway (West side of the street; just below Lincoln Center). Meet inside the entrance to the Society. (3:15 p.m. is the first of two appointments)

Friday, January 15, Upper East Side

1. Meet at 9:45 a.m. (Allow plenty of transportation and walking time – it’s about 5 blocks, partly uphill -- from the 103rd St. subway.) New York Academy of Medicine, Library, 1216 Fifth Ave. at 103rd St. Meet inside the front door. And again you need to get to the first appointment of the day on your own.
2. Meet at 12:15 pm. New York Society Library, 53 East 79th Street. (12:30 p.m. appointment)
3. Meet at 2:45 p.m. – Morgan Library and Museum. Madison Avenue at 36th Street. Enter on North side of new section about 60 feet eastward from Madison Ave., just inside the door (staff entrance). (3:00 p.m. appointment) Do not wait in the public entrance on Madison Ave.; you will miss us if you wait there. Declan Kiely will be waiting for us at the staff entrance.
- End -