Contact Information
Instructor: Dr. Deirdre C. Stam, Adjunct Professor
   Availability: During this course, I will be available from 9-5 every day as we move from one site to another and during site visits. After that week, I can be reached by email (which is best) or by phone: deirdre.stam@gmail.com or 315-446-5923. (Please do not use my temporary LIU email address.) During the week of visits, you can contact me via my 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. At other times, please use the “315” phone number listed here.)

Dates:  Monday through Friday, 9-5 every day; July 30 through August 3, 2012.

Places: Locations vary for twelve library visits and two class sessions. On Monday and Friday, when we meet in NYU’s Bobst Library (see the schedule of visits, below), we will meet on in the Avery Fisher Center on the 2nd floor. The classroom will be indicated on a monitor within the AFC. Directions for travel between sites is included below, but you may wish to use hopstop.com for additional or alternate routes.

Palmer School Manhattan address: 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 via surface mail (2400 Euclid Ave., Syracuse NY 13224). The Bobst Library Palmer office tel.: 212-998-2680 (Alice Flynn, Program Director).

Course description
This course introduces students to issues relating to the curation of 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 generic trends and issues in the curation of special collections, and will compare these theoretical concerns with the concerns of specific collections in their institutional contexts. Emphasis this year will be on services in collections and the importance of context in their definition. The course is largely experiential. The course is particularly valuable to those planning to pursue curatorial careers in special collections, but would also benefit those interested in research libraries in general and in the development of services to specialized clientele.
Amplification of the basic course description and terminology

“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.

(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 “special libraries” 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 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.)

Course objectives

This course acquaints students with a set of major, national institutions located in New York City that have collections of rare books and special collections. It exposes students to both general theoretical issues and site-specific concerns of special collections units. The emphasis this year is on services, including the digital mode, in rare book/special collections. The course is designed to provide students with the opportunity to meet and hear from curators of those collections in situ. The course is largely experiential. The course is particularly valuable to those planning to pursue curatorial careers in special collections, but would also benefit those interested in library history and research/special collections libraries in general.

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 a sophisticated understanding of the curatorial issues associated with managing libraries, and especially services, within these institutions. They will be able to articulate well-founded plans for establishing and improving collections services that would balance general professional standards with specific contextual needs.

Palmer School Learning Objectives

This course addresses the following objectives (openlib.org/home/krichel/liu_admin/pslo.html):

1C. Students will use effective communication techniques and critical thinking skills, such as problem solving and decision making skills.
3C. Students will be able to utilize and assess both existing and emergent resources, systems and services and develop new ones.

4C. Students will demonstrate principles and guidelines for assessment and evaluation of information services.

4D. Students will demonstrate methods of outreach for information services, such as developing partnerships, collaborations, and networks.

(Also, variation on 5E. Students will learn in this experiential course from information professionals in their own library contexts about the relationship of theory to practice, especially in relation to library services.)

Assignments
- Students will attend five days of visits to rare book/special collections libraries throughout New York City.
- Students will prepare for class discussions and exercises dealing with trends and issues in special collections services and with the effect of context on generic approaches in this area. Required readings should be done before the course begins. Ancillary reading can be done as students prepare the final paper following the conclusion of the visits to collections.
- Students will produce critical analyses of service issues associated with a subset of these sites. (This paper is due on Sept. 15, 2012). Their analyses will be based upon their first-hand observations, upon class discussion, and upon extensive reading of both assigned sources and self-selected sources. The form of these analyses will be a “consultant’s report” on recommended expansion of services in the libraries visited, based on a hypothetic increase in resources. Detailed instructions on the form of this report will be distributed in class at the beginning of the course.

Commitment of time, grading, and expectations
Students must attend all sessions to get credit for the course. Grades: Research paper (in the form of a “consultant’s report,” 80% (due on September 15, 2012); class activity: 20%.

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. A reading list for the first session will is included in this syllabus.

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.

Meeting times and place
As indicated on the schedule, below. Note that this is largely an intensive “walking course” that takes place physically from ca. 9 a.m. to ca. 5 p.m. on five consecutive days. (Students will travel also by bus and subway between sites.) Students must attend all sessions to receive credit for the course.
Blackboard (LIU online course resource)
We are in the process of setting up a Blackboard site and will use this mode of communication if possible. Otherwise we will have a distribution list. Keep an eye on KIOSK for now.

Readings/sources

To benefit fully from the library visits and to participate fully in the initial session, students should complete these readings before the course begins. All are available electronically. Please come to the initial class session (in Bobst Library) with notes on these readings. Pay particular attention to trends and issues, and to new needs for services.

Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records [ASLAPR], Collection Development Training. “Selection: Defining and Managing Special Collections.”
www.lib.az.us/cdtslrspec.aspx


Dimunation, Mark. “Red Wine and White Carpets: What We Didn’t learn in Library School, or when the Dog and Pony Goes Bad.” RBM 7 (Spring 2006), 73-84, especially 76.


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 Va.
rbms.info/publications/your_old_books_compact/YourOldBooksCompact2.pdf

Also see various specialized guidelines and ethics statements, especially the following:

Useful for writing the final paper, but not necessary to read before the course begins, are these paper-only sources:


Special Collections of New York City

Instructions and Schedule of Visits

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Palmer School of Library and Information Science, Long Island University
(Based at Palmer School’s Manhattan site at New York University’s Bobst Library)
(LIS 901-01), Summer, 2012

Contents:
– General instructions
– Readings
– Daily schedules for library visits and class session
General instructions for visits

Preface to instructions: Although this document, and the course itself, might appear overly structured, we have found that students in the past have wanted such specific information, especially as they travel from library to library within a very tight schedule. The reality is less rigid than the syllabus might indicate. Although somewhat exhausting, the course typically provides students unique and welcome access to a fascinating group of institutions and individuals and it often fosters positive collegial interactions within the student group. To achieve this within one week takes careful planning and strict adherence to the schedule.

Daily schedules: We will begin each day at some time between 9 and 10 a.m. 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 Monday, 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 find directions below. Plan to pick up a subway and bus map, and train schedule if necessary, well before the course begins. 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. Do not bring laptops or ipods (we may have to leave backpacks in semi-secure places). Fill up your Metro card before the course begins. Please do not use cell phones during class hours, even in transit unless absolutely necessary; 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, often directors, in those libraries. Choose respectful, professional, but still comfortable attire. Be sure to wear comfortable walking shoes or conservative sandals (please, no flip-flops or very high heels). Be prepared to walk considerable distances both indoors and outdoors. Please understand that some, and probably most, library spaces are not handicapped accessible. Neat jeans and “office attire” are acceptable on most days (but, please, no sweat suits, hoodies, gaudy or obvious sneakers, extremely short skirts, short shorts, skimpy camisoles, or other active sports attire). A light jacket or sweater would be advisable in case of overly active air conditioning or cool street temperatures. 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 not usually pause for a full lunch hour. You might be able to get a beverage, snack, or quick sandwich en route. Please bring substantial snacks and water as needed. Please do not chew gum during library visits.

Due date for final project: The final project will be due on September 15, 2012. We will “practice” writing an example of the final papers during class on Friday afternoon. You will receive details instructions at that time.
2012 Schedule of Visits and Travel Directions

Monday through Friday, July 30 through August 3, ca. 9:15 a.m.-5:00 p.m. daily

Monday, July 30

9:30-12: Class orientation and discussion. NYU’s Bobst Library, 2nd floor, Avery Fisher Center.
1-2:30: Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives. NYU’s Bobst Library. Host: Chela Scott Weber, Acting Head. chela.weber@nyu.edu
3:45-4:45: Center for Book Arts, 28 W. 27th St. (Walk west on Wash. Sq. So. (W. 4th) to 6th Ave. for the bus north, get off just before 27th St., walk west on 27th St. about a half block; CBA is upstairs, south side of the street. (Easy to miss.) Meet at CBA in the exhibition area. Host: Alex Campos. acampos@centerforbookarts.org

Tuesday, July 31

9:15, gather together. Visit is 9:30-10:45: Berg Collection, NYPL. Enter NYPL’s on W. 42nd Street, just off Fifth Avenue. Go to 3rd floor, using the nearby elevator. Meet in the hall outside of the Berg Collection. Host: Isaac Gewirtz. isaacgewirtz@nypl.org
11:30-1: Pfortzheimer Collection, NYPL. Located across the hall from the Berg Collection. After a comfort stop and snack (in the library), meet outside the Pfortzheimer Collection in the hall. Host: Elizabeth Denlinger. elizabethdenlinger@nypl.org
2:00-3:30: New-York Historical Society. Central Park West and 79th Street; take the C subway north (uptown) to the west of Bryant Park behind the library. Meet just inside the front door. We must enter as a group for free admission to the library (but not, unfortunately, free to the museum itself). Host: Eric Robinson. erobinson@nyhistory.org
3:30-4:30: Time and weather permitting we will have a brief class discussion in a nearby park.

Wednesday, August 1

9:15, gather together. Visit is 9:30-11: Columbia University, Rare Books and Manuscripts. 535 W. 114th Street, just east of Broadway. From midtown, take the #1 Broadway subway line to 116th St. (which stops often and is slow), enter the gates of Columbia, look for Butler Library (a large brick-shaped building) on your right (not the “rotunda” building marked Low Library, to your left, at the top of many steps). Meet in front of Butler Library. We will go to the 6th floor together. Host: Michael Ryan. Mtr2109@columbia.edu
12:10, gather together. Visit is 12:30-1:45: American Museum of Natural History, Library. Central Park West and 79th-81st Streets. Immediately take the #1 subway line from 116th St. (Columbia stop) downtown to 79th St. Exit and walk west toward Central Park. There are many entrances; to avoid confusion, we will meet at the corner of 81st Street and Columbus Avenue (which is beside a little park) before entering as a group. We must be early since access to the library can be complex and time-consuming. Host: Tom Baione, Director of Library Services. tbaione@amnh.org

3:15, gather together. Visit 3:30-5:00: Poets House. 10 River Terrace (on the Hudson River) at Murray Street. This is way downtown and involves a significant walk after the subway (which will make 11 stops); leave the AMNH area immediately to allow sufficient time. Get off the subway at Chambers St. Station. Walk west from Chambers St. to the end of the street (toward the river); then turn left for 2 blocks along the Hudson River to Murray Street. Hosts: Mike Romanos and Christiana Lem. Christina@poetshouse.org.

Thursday, August 2

9:30, gather together for brief update. Visit is 10-11:30: New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center. Best way to get there from midtown: #1 subway Broadway line uptown to 66th Street (but there are many other ways, including the Broadway bus, and various subways to 59th St.). We will meet at 9:30 in the park/reflecting pool area of Lincoln Center, nearest to the entrance to the Library which is, from Broadway, (west) beyond the fountain, then a little to the right past the Metropolitan Opera building, then back (west) toward the Library which is beside the theatre. If it is raining, we’ll meet under the sheltered area just to the north of the Lincoln Center fountain (which is Philharmonic Hall). Host: Bob Kosovsky and George Boziwick. bkosovsky@nypl.org. georgeboziwick@nypl.org.

12:15-1:30(?). American Bible Society and Museum of Biblical Art. 1865 Broadway (West side of the street; a few blocks south of Lincoln Center on Broadway). Meet just inside the entrance (which is near rest rooms). Host: Dr. Liana Lupas. llupas@americanbible.org.

3:15 gather just inside the entrance, Visit is at 3:30, Grolier Club. 47 East 60th St., just west of Park Avenue on the north side of the street. Host: Meghan Constantinou, Librarian. mconstantinou@grolierclub.org.

There are several ways of getting to the Grolier Club. You can take the cross-town bus M66 at 65th and 9th Ave. through Central Park to Madison Ave. and then walk the few blocks south and part of a block eastward to the Club.

Or take the M5 bus at Broadway and W. 66th St. (LTD SO FERRY VIA 5TH AVE & BROADWAY), get off at Fifth Ave. (just on the East side of Central Park), and then walk the few steps north to 60th St., and a the few steps more, eastward, to the Club.

Or (highly recommended) walk on well populated walking paths through the southern end of the Central Park (the southern end of which is at 59th St.); once on the East side of the Park, walk north a few blocks to 60th St. (depending on where you emerge) and then a block eastward to Madison on 60th St., and then continue a half-block or so on 60th St. toward Park Ave. (eastward). The buses run about every 12-15 minutes and the trip is short.
Please be aware that the Grolier Club is a private bibliophilic club with an unwritten but serious dress code. Save the jeans for another day. Conservative clothing is appropriate, although “summer-casual office attire” would be entirely suitable.

Friday, August 3.

9:40, arrival. Go through security individually (where there is sometimes a line) and we will gather just inside the security area. Visit is at 10-11:30: Center for Jewish History. 15 West 16th Street. This is just off Fifth Avenue, toward the west side, on the north side of the street. From Penn Station: subway entrance near W 33RD ST (PENN PLZ), take the #1, 2, 3, or 9 train heading Downtown / toward Brooklyn College. Get off at 14th Street which is at 7th Ave. Exit subway, walk one block north, and then one and a half-blocks east. Or, from Penn Station, take F or V, which are on the 6th Ave. line, to 14th Street, walk one block north, and a half-block east. Hosts: Michael Glickman and Laura Leone. mglickman@cjh.org. (You may want to view the CJH library exhibitions and museum on your own after the tour/visit.)

1:30-5: Wrap-up session. Practice in composing a sample “consultant’s report” (group exercise). NYU’s Bobst Library classroom, 2nd floor, Avery Fisher Center. From CJH, you could walk 10 blocks south on Fifth Avenue, through Washington Square for the final few blocks, to the Bobst Library of NYU. Alternately you could take a bus on Fifth Avenue that is heading south, but you’d have to get off at 8th Street (where buses turn off Fifth) and walk through Washington Square to Bobst Library which is another 4 blocks from 8th St.

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