General Information

Department: History
Course Title: History of Recorded Communication
Course Number: HIST: 7370
Instructors: Professors Tom Nesmith and Greg Bak
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Office Hours: For Nesmith: Thurs. 1:30 to 4:30 P.M. during fall and winter academic sessions or by appointment; for Bak: Thurs. 9:30 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.

Course Information

Objectives and Content: This course is one of three full courses taken by Master's students in Archival Studies. The other two full courses are HIST. 7380, Selected Problems in Archival Studies, and a graduate-level history course. Archival studies students also take a half course, HIST. 7390, Internship in Archival Studies, usually in the summer following the three full courses, and a further half course typically in the following fall term (2012) on specialized topics. Archival students also write a Master’s thesis on an archival topic. Archival Studies students are preparing to enter the archival profession. This course (HIST. 7370) deals with one of the main concerns of archivists -- the context of the creation and the characteristics of recorded communication. The course deals with a wide variety of examples from ancient times to the present, but focuses on Canadian ones since the nineteenth century.

Required Textbook(s): There is no required textbook in this course. The instructors will provide an extensive seminar reading list (and research bibliography) at the beginning of the course that draws on a wide variety of books and articles.

Recommended Readings: The seminar reading list and research bibliography mentioned above provide recommended as well as required readings. Students are advised to become student members of the Association of Canadian Archivists in order to receive the association's scholarly journal Archivaria.

Tentative Outline and Topics to be Covered: This course is organized around seminar discussions of those aspects of the context of the creation and the characteristics of recorded communication that enable archivists to administer archives, or to appraise, arrange, describe, preserve, and provide access to the extensive bodies of documentation in various media that are the responsibility of modern archives. Topics of discussion include varied concepts of documentary interpretation, the influence of social and intellectual currents on what is recorded and how, the relationship between the administrative context in which institutional records have been created and managed and their information content, the relationship between recording technologies or media and information content, the relationship between the functions of particular types of documents within these media and their information content, and the internal features of individual documents that provide
direction to related information. The history of archival institutions and leading archival thinkers on these changes in recorded information will also be explored.

Referencing Style Guide: The style guide for Archivaria (available at the website of the Association of Canadian Archivists) is used in this course. See: http://www.archivists.ca/sites/default/files/Attachments/Communications_attachments/Archivaria/Archivaria_Style_Guide-Jan2010.pdf

Method of Evaluation

Test(s): There are no tests.

Assignments: The written assignments in this course are: an essay of 12-15 double-spaced, typed pages, due at the end of the fall term on 7 December and worth 20% of the final grade; short written reports on certain assigned seminar readings (worth 25%) (these reports will be presented orally in the related seminar); and a second-term essay of 25-30 double-spaced, typed pages (worth 30%) and due at the end of that term on 5 April. A written evaluation of an assignment will be given prior to the voluntary withdrawal date (16 March 2012).

Class Participation: It is worth 25% of the final grade. Class participation includes the oral presentation of the written seminar reports mentioned above.

Final Examination: There is no final examination.

Late Assignments: One mark will be lost for each day the assignment is overdue.

The grade scale for this course is as follows:

A+ 85 and over;  A 80-84; B+ 76-79; B 70-75; C+ 66-69; C 60-65; D 50-59; F less than 50.

Students who wish to appeal a grade given for term work must do so within 10 working days after the grade for the term work has been made available to them. Uncollected term work will become the property of the Faculty of Arts and will be subject to confidential destruction.

Academic Dishonesty: The University of Manitoba's policy on plagiarism and cheating is available online in the Academic Calendar and Catalog, General Academic Regulations, Section 8, “Academic Integrity” and in the Faculty of Arts regulation "Academic Integrity." The latter reads: "The common penalty in Arts for plagiarism on a written assignment is a grade of F on the paper and a final grade of F (DISC) (for disciplinary action) for the course. For the most serious acts of plagiarism, such as the purchase of an essay and repeat violations, this penalty can also include suspension for a period of up to five years from registration in courses taught in a particular department in Arts or from all courses taught in this Faculty. The Faculty also reserves the right to submit student work that is suspected of being plagiarized to Internet sites designed to detect plagiarism or to other experts for authentication."