

# I 320C Topics in Cultural Heritage Informatics

## Archives As Data

Unique Number 27465

Fall 2024. Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:30-5:00pm, SZB 2.418

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**Instructor:** Amelia Acker. I prefer to be addressed as "Dr. Acker" or "Professor Acker" in email correspondence and in seminar discussion.

Pronouns: she/her/hers

Office: UTA 5.434

**Office hours:** By appointment, please email me three times and days when you are able to meet. I endeavor to offer 5-10 contact hours a week for students outside of class.

Email: [aacker@ischool.utexas.edu](mailto:aacker@ischool.utexas.edu)

### WELCOME MESSAGE

I am an Associate Professor and the Master's Program Director at the School of Information. I have been working at UT Austin since 2016 and I direct the Critical Data Studies Lab. If graduate school or advanced information studies research sounds interesting to you, please come to office hours so we can chat more.

Some more of my background: My undergraduate degrees are in Comparative Literature and Women's studies. My dissertation was a history of the text message. Before becoming a professor, I worked as an archivist, an arts cataloging librarian lifeguard, and information advocate for underserved youth. I'm originally from southern California and I live in West Campus. I like to bike, swim, and run.

### LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to acknowledge that we are meeting on the Indigenous lands of Turtle Island, the ancestral name for what now is called North America. Moreover, I would like to acknowledge the Alabama-Coushatta, Caddo, Carrizo/Comecrudo, Coahuiltecan, Comanche, Kickapoo, Lipan Apache, Tonkawa and Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo, and all the American Indian and Indigenous Peoples and communities who have been or have become a part of these lands and territories in Texas.

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

### UNIVERSITY CATALOG COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces digital archival collections that can be accessed and used as data for research and inquiry. Topics will focus on the transformation, analysis, and interpretation of digital cultural heritage in archival contexts, including digitization, web archiving, software emulation, and data archiving. From text messages, Spotify playlists, to the President's tweets--how are digital traces collected, preserved and managed by archives? What are the ethics of managing digital archives and making them accessible to researchers, the public, and machines?

PRE-REQUISITES FOR THE COURSE: Informatics 310C.

### COURSE SUMMARY

The 'Archives as Data' course provides a comprehensive introduction to the digital transformation and analytical techniques applied to digital cultural heritage collections and archives. From text messages, early net art, and Presidential social media, students will explore archival access issues in digitization, web archiving, software emulation, and the ethical dimensions of archives that are used as data. The course emphasizes practical experience and critical thinking with collections of digital materials, empowering students to apply critical data studies perspectives and contemporary digital preservation approaches. Archives as Data serves as an introduction to cultural heritage informatics by focusing on the stakes of preserving current trace data and digital heritage from the recent past. Participants will also be introduced to the ethical issues in preserving digital archives, responsible data management, and providing access to digital cultural heritage as data for future scholarship and public engagement.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course will introduce participants to the foundations, challenges and innovations inherent in accessing, preserving archives, and interpreting digital cultural heritage as data. By integrating archival theories and critical data studies, with digital scholarship, participants will build skills to navigate various digital preservation techniques, such as emulation, web archiving, and digital curation. They will also be encouraged to critically reflect on the ethical dilemmas associated with the management of digital archives, particularly concerning issues of access, privacy, and the rights of data owners. Additionally, participants will develop their scholarly identity by engaging with archival practices and digital studies that emphasize public discourse and scholarly contributions, helping to bridge the gap between theory, practice, and public engagement.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of this course, you will:

1. Develop skills in identifying and critically reflecting on both the principles of archival theory and digital archives as memory technologies and data, with careful attention to their cultural, social, and political implications.
2. Integrate theoretical and methodological approaches from information studies (including archival science, information science, critical data studies, and digital humanities) to produce original research on archives as data.
3. Learn to navigate ethical challenges in digital preservation by analyzing case studies and developing frameworks for responsible data stewardship.
4. Engage with a range of digital archival methodologies (e.g., digitization, web archiving, software emulation) and evaluate their application across different scholarly and public contexts.
5. Complete a term-paper length project that synthesizes their understanding of digital preservation techniques, ethical considerations of archival data use, resulting in a narrative accessible to both public and scholarly audiences.

## HOW WILL YOU LEARN?

1. From sustained engagement through reading and discussing the assigned readings (as well as secondary readings that you evaluate) that will cover many epistemologies, forms of evidence and methods of analysis.
2. From participating in seminar discussion, whether contributing comments, active listening, asking questions, or leading focused conversations amongst your peers.
3. By proposing, preparing, and writing a final term paper that engages with materials assigned in class and secondary sources you have gathered independently.

## Statement of Learning Success

Your success in this class is important to me. We all learn differently, and everyone struggles sometimes. You are not, ever, the only one having difficulty. If there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or exclude you, please let me know as soon as possible. Together we will develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. I also encourage you to reach out to the student resources available through UT and I am happy to connect you with a person or Center if you would like.

## ASKING FOR HELP

Please make an appointment with me to discuss your concerns as you have them and as matters arise. Given the few assignments in this course, it is always better for us to meet earlier than after a deadline or duty has passed.

## TEACHING MODALITY INFORMATION

Barring inclement weather or COVID-19 issues, this course will be held in-person. We will meet each week for ~90 minutes on Tuesdays and Thursdays. This requires in-person attendance. **There is no**

**alternative to in-person attendance**, but you may ask your colleagues for notes and discussion updates.

## **COMMUNICATION**

The course Canvas site can be found at [utexas.instructure.com](https://utexas.instructure.com). Please email me through Canvas. You are responsible for ensuring that the primary email address you have recorded with the university is the one you will check for course communications because that is the email address that Canvas uses. **You are responsible for reading and responding to email and Canvas messages in a timely manner** (approximately 24-48 hours\*).

## **DISABILITY & ACCESS (D&A)**

The university is committed to creating an accessible and inclusive learning environment consistent with university policy and federal and state law. Please let me know if you experience any barriers to learning so I can work with you to ensure you have equal opportunity to participate fully in this course. If you are a student with a disability, or think you may have a disability, and need accommodations please contact Disability & Access (D&A). Please refer to the D&A website for more information: <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>. If you are already registered with D&A, please deliver your Accommodation Letter to me as early as possible in the semester so we can discuss your approved accommodations and needs in this course.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING**

### **REQUIRED MATERIALS: READINGS**

There will be 1-4 readings assigned each week. Most of the readings will be available on the course Canvas site, unless otherwise noted, in which case they can be accessed through UT Libraries as an e-book. If you have any issues accessing the assigned readings, please inform me as soon as possible.

### **METHODS**

Each week we shall discuss a small set of readings, all of which are required. It is important that everyone comes to class well prepared and having read the material ready to discuss the week's readings. After discussing the readings, 1-2 students will present a question related to reading from that week. We will have a group discussion after to discuss the use, need, and future possibilities of these ideas. Course participants are expected to be involved in these group discussions. A portion of your grade will be based on your preparation for and participation in the class discussions. We will regularly participate in group activities or skills labs, no extra materials will be required to bring.

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

There are 7 assignments and participation for this class that your grade will be based on:

- Class attendance, preparation and participation in discussion throughout the term (30%)
- Two short papers (2-3pps/500-750 words) due in Week 6 (10%) and in Week 10 (10%)
- A final term paper (8-10pps/2000-2500 words) due in Week 16 (20%)

- A class discussion question of one of the readings in the syllabus, to be presented between weeks 3-13 (5%)
- A campus exhibition review with a small group, presented in Weeks 8 or 9 (10%)
- Participating in an active peer review activity evaluating colleagues' final paper abstracts in Week 13 (10%)
- A final class presentation in Week 15 that briefly presents your final term paper's topic and evidence (5%)

Rubrics, directions, and resources related to each of these assignments will be discussed in class and posed to the Canvas course website.

### Assignment % Due date

<b>% OF GRADE</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>DUE DATE</b>
30%	Attendance/Participation	Passim*
20%	Final Term Paper	Dec 12
10%	Archives short paper	Oct 2
10%	Data short paper	Nov 1
10%	Campus exhibition review	Wks 8-9
10%	Peer review	Nov19&21*
5%	Class discussion question	Rolling sign up
5%	Final presentation	Dec 3&5*

**\*Full credit involves class attendance.**

### ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCES

Ideally you will be able to attend class every meeting, each class is worth about 1.2% of your final grade. If you miss more than three classes your participation grade will drop by one grade level for each missed class. For example, if you miss 3 classes, the highest participation grade you will be able to achieve is a 26.4%, and that assumes that every day you attend class you are actively engaged and making valuable contributions. If you need to miss more than two classes for medical reasons, I will need a doctor's note and you should definitely get in touch with me to discuss plans for addressing the impact of missing multiple classes on your semester grade.

### LATE WORK AND MAKING UP MISSED WORK

There are two types of assignments in this course, individual and group. Each student begins the semester with an extension time bank of 120 hours (or 5 days) which may be spread out among individual assignments over the course of the semester as needed with no need to seek permission, but all semester assignments are due by 5 pm on the last class day (December 5, 2024). Assignments submitted before the student has exceeded their 120-hour extension timebank will be graded for full credit with no late penalty. Any assignment submitted late after you have exceeded your 120-hour

extension time bank will receive a grade of 0. Be sure to notify me when you have completed an assignment after the due date so that it will be graded if you are still under your 120 hours. Paper extensions are only offered religious observance or notification from student emergency services in the office of the dean of students.

For group work involving in-class presentations, if a team member is unable to participate on the day of the presentation, the remaining members are expected to present without them. It is the team's responsibility to renegotiate roles and responsibilities to ensure the presentation proceeds smoothly. Extensions for group presentations will be considered in extenuating circumstances with proper notification from student emergency services, however the 120 time bank for individuals cannot be applied for group work extensions.

**NO EXTRA CREDIT**

There is no policy or plan to offer extra credit in this course.

**Grading Scale**

This class employs a plus/minus grading system. For more information on this system, please consult the University's *General Information Catalog*. Below is the grade scale the University employs and which will be used in this class:

Meets major requirement		Does not meet requirement	
Grade	Points	Grade	Points
A	≥93.00	C-	70.00-72.99
A-	90.00-92.99	D+	67.00-69.99
B+	87.00-89.99	D	63.00-66.99
B	83.00-86.99	D-	60.00-62.99
B-	80.00-82.99	F	<60.00
C+	77.00-79.99		
C	73.00-76.99		

## **INSTRUCTOR'S POLICIES AND COURSE EXPECTATIONS**

**Instructor Communication:** E-mail is the official mode of communication for the university and the most reliable means of contact for me. It is always helpful if your e-mail includes a targeted subject line that begins with "I 320C". Please allow a 24-hour window for email responses and plan accordingly. Please limit emails to 5 sentences or less. If your query about a reading or an assignment for the class takes more than 5 sentences to express, please come see me face to face in office hours. If you do not receive a sufficient answer to a question in more than one follow-up email (that is, a total of 2 personal emails from me) about the same question, please come meet with me. If you cannot make office hours, please email me to arrange an appointment. These policies are based on my belief in the sanctity and value of high-bandwidth communication (that is, face to face conversations).

**Behavior expectations in the classroom:** Please come on time to class prepared, bringing soft or hard copies of readings for reference; bring appropriate tools for writing and note taking. Bring personal machines powered up, or plug them in before class begins, silence phones. Small snacks and drinks are welcome but meals are not. To maintain an engaging and distraction-free learning environment, the use of earbuds or headphones is not permitted during class sessions. Please ensure they are removed and put away at the start of each class.

**Habits of mind:** Respect for others; imagination; wonder; willingness to try and fail in front of others; empathy for others—in the past, present and future. I will discuss what I mean by habits of mind on throughout the course.

**Copyright Notice:** These materials may be protected by copyright. United States copyright law, 17 USC section 101, et seq., in addition to University policy and procedures, prohibit unauthorized duplication or retransmission of course materials.

**Statement on Classroom Recording:** To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.

**On original work:** cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. If an assignment turned in for credit is found to have been plagiarized, you will receive a grade of 0 points and a formal reprimand in your student file. You will be subject to the University's disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course.

## **Course Policies and Disclosures**

### **HONOR CODE**

The University of Texas at Austin strives to create a dynamic and engaging community of teaching and learning where students feel intellectually challenged; build knowledge and skills; and develop critical thinking, creativity, and intellectual curiosity. As a part of this community, it is important to engage in assignments, exams, and other work for your classes with openness, integrity, and a willingness to make mistakes and learn from them. The UT Austin honor code champions these principles:

I pledge, as a member of the University of Texas community, to do my work honestly, respectfully, and through the intentional pursuit of learning and scholarship.

The honor code affirmation includes three additional principles that elaborate on the core theme:

- I pledge to be honest about what I create and to acknowledge what I use that belongs to others.
- I pledge to value the process of learning in addition to the outcome, while celebrating and learning from mistakes.
- This code encompasses all of the academic and scholarly endeavors of the university community.

The honor code is more than a set of rules, it reflects the values that are foundational to your academic community. By affirming and embracing the honor code, you are both upholding the integrity of your work and contributing to a campus culture of trust and respect.

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY EXPECTATIONS**

Students who violate University rules on academic misconduct are subject to the student conduct process. A student found responsible for academic misconduct may be assigned both a status sanction and a grade impact for the course. The grade impact could range from a zero on the assignment in question up to a failing grade in the course. A status sanction can range from a written warning, probation, deferred suspension and/or dismissal from the University. To learn more about academic integrity standards, tips for avoiding a potential academic misconduct violation, and the overall conduct process, please visit the Student Conduct and Academic Integrity website at: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct>.

### **TEXAS SENATE BILL 17**

[SB-17](#) the recent law that outlaws diversity, equity, and inclusion programs at public colleges and universities in Texas, does not in any way affect content, instruction or discussion in a course at public colleges and universities in Texas. Expectations and academic freedom for teaching and class discussion have not been altered post-SB 17, and students should not feel the need to censor their speech pertaining to topics including race and racism, structural inequality, LGBTQ+ issues, or diversity, equity, and inclusion.



### **POLICY CLASS RECORDINGS**

To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor and every class session participants, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use. Class recordings are reserved only for students in this class for educational purposes and are protected under FERPA. If recordings are approved in advance they should not be shared outside the class in any form. Violation of this restriction by a student could lead to Student Misconduct proceedings.

### **SHARING OF COURSE MATERIALS IS PROHIBITED**

No materials used in this class, including, but not limited to, lecture hand-outs, videos, assessments (quizzes, exams, papers, projects, homework assignments), in-class materials, review sheets, and additional problem sets, may be shared online or with anyone outside of the class without explicit, my written permission. Unauthorized sharing of materials may facilitate cheating. The University is aware of the sites used for sharing materials, and any materials found online that are associated with you, or any suspected unauthorized sharing of materials, will be reported to [Student Conduct and Academic Integrity](#) in the Office of the Dean of Students. These reports can result in initiation of the student conduct process and include charge(s) for academic misconduct, potentially resulting in sanctions, including a grade impact.

### **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE**

The creation of artificial intelligence tools for widespread use is an exciting innovation. These tools have both appropriate and inappropriate uses in classwork. The use of artificial intelligence tools (such as ChatGPT) in this class shall be permitted on a limited basis. You will be informed as to the assignments for which AI may be utilized. You are also welcome to seek my prior approval to use AI writing tools on any assignment. In either instance, AI writing tools should be used with caution and proper citation, as the use of AI should be properly attributed. Using AI writing tools without my permission or authorization, or failing to properly cite AI even where permitted, shall constitute a violation of UT Austin's Institutional Rules on academic integrity. If you are considering the use of AI writing tools but are unsure if you are allowed or the extent to which they may be utilized appropriately, please ask.

### **RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS**

By [UT Austin policy](#), you must notify me of your pending absence for a religious holy day as far in advance as possible of the date of observance (by week 2 for standing religious holidays and at least a week in advance for events like wedding, celebration of life service, baptism). If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

## Important Safety Information

### **CARRYING OF HANDGUNS ON CAMPUS**

Students in this class should be aware of the following university policies related to Texas' Open Carry Law:

- Students in this class who hold a license to carry are asked to [review the university policy regarding campus carry](#).
- Individuals who hold a license to carry are eligible to carry a concealed handgun on campus, including in most outdoor areas, buildings and spaces that are accessible to the public, and in classrooms.
- It is the responsibility of concealed-carry license holders to carry their handguns on or about their person at all times while on campus. Open carry is NOT permitted, meaning that a license holder may not carry a partially or wholly visible handgun on campus premises or on any university driveway, street, sidewalk or walkway, parking lot, parking garage, or other parking area.
- Per my right, I prohibit carrying of handguns in my personal office. Note that this information will also be conveyed to all students verbally during the first week of class. This written notice is intended to reinforce the verbal notification and is not a “legally effective” means of notification in its own right.

### **TITLE IX DISCLOSURE**

Beginning January 1, 2020, Texas Education Code, Section 51.252 (formerly known as Senate Bill 212) requires all employees of Texas universities, including faculty, to report to the [Title IX Office](#) any information regarding incidents of sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, or stalking that is disclosed to them. Texas law requires that all employees who witness or receive information about incidents of this type (including, but not limited to, written forms, applications, one-on-one conversations, class assignments, class discussions, or third-party reports) must report it to the Title IX Coordinator. Before talking with me, or with any faculty or staff member about a Title IX-related incident, please remember that I will be required to report this information.

Although graduate teaching and research assistants are not subject to Texas Education Code, Section 51.252, they are [mandatory reporters](#) under federal Title IX regulations and are required to report [a wide range of behaviors we refer to as sexual misconduct](#), including the types of misconduct covered under Texas Education Code, Section 51.252. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex – including pregnancy and parental status – in educational programs and activities. The Title IX Office has developed supportive ways and compiled campus resources to support all impacted by a Title IX matter.

If you would like to speak with a case manager, who can provide support, resources, or academic accommodations, in the Title IX Office, please email: [supportandresources@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:supportandresources@austin.utexas.edu). Case managers can also provide support, resources, and accommodations for pregnant, nursing, and parenting students.

For more information about reporting options and resources, please visit: <https://titleix.utexas.edu>, contact the Title IX Office via email at: [titleix@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:titleix@austin.utexas.edu), or call 512-471-0419.

### **CAMPUS SAFETY**

The following are recommendations regarding emergency evacuation from the [Office of Emergency Management](#), 512-232-2114:

- Students should sign up for Campus Emergency Text Alerts at the page linked above.
- Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus must evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside.
- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and building you may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building.
- Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors. Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the following: Austin Fire Department, The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office.
- For more information, please visit the [Office of Emergency Management](#).

### **University Resources**

For a list of university resources that may be helpful to you as you engage with and navigate your courses and the university, see the [University Resources Students Canvas page](#).

## Course at a Glance

<b>Week, Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Note or Deadline</b>
Week 1, Aug 27	Introduction	
Week 1, Aug 29	Archival Power	
Week 2, Sept 3	Archival Theories	
Week 2, Sept 5	Recordkeeping	
Week 3, Sept 10	Born Digital Records	
Week 3, Sept 12	Born Networked Records	
Week 4, Sept 17	Personal (Digital) Archives	
Week 4, Sept 19	Archivists	
Week 5, Sept 24	Critical Digital Archives	
Week 5, Sept 26	Archival Infrastructure	
Week 6, Oct 1	Conceptualizing Data	<b>Short paper due Oct 2*</b>
Week 6, Oct 3	Small group field work	Campus exhibition, meet at site
Week 7, Oct 8	Small Data, Big Data	
Week 7, Oct 10	Small group field work	Campus exhibition, meet at site
Week 8, Oct 15	Data Archives	
Week 8, Oct 17	Data Brokers + Collections	Exhibition presentations*
Week 9, Oct 22	Ethics, Policy, I	
Week 9, Oct 24	Ethics, Policy, II	
Week 10, Oct 29	Mobile Media Data	
Week 10, Oct 31	Social Media Data	<b>Short paper due Nov 1*</b>
Week 11, Nov 5	Web Archiving	
Week 11, Nov 7	Net Art	
Week 12, Nov 12	Software Emulation	
Week 12, Nov 14	Platforms	
Week 13, Nov 19	Archives and AI	Peer reviews, in class*
Week 13, Nov 21	AI Archives	Peer reviews, in class*
Week 14, Nov 26	FALL BREAK	NO CLASS
Week 14, Nov 28	FALL BREAK	NO CLASS
Week 15, Dec 3	Wrap up	Final class presentations*
Week 15, Dec 5	Course conclusions	Final class presentations*
Week 16, Dec 9		<b>Final paper due Dec 12*</b>

\* Denotes an assignment due date or important in-class session.