

**LIS 681: Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Special Collections**  
**University of North Carolina at Greensboro**  
**Fall 2023 Syllabus**  
**Class Time: Mondays, 5:30-8:20 PM (Eastern)**  
**Class Location: Online (via Teams)**

**Instructor Information:**

Professor: Dr. Colin Post

Email: [ccpost@uncg.edu](mailto:ccpost@uncg.edu)

Office: SOE 352

Office hours (via Teams): By appointment, schedule using [my calendar](#)

*UNCG is located on the traditional lands of the Keyauwee and Saura. Let us venture to honor them with our work together.*

**Communication:**

*To me:*

If you have a problem, concern, or question, please communicate with me. The sooner you come to me with any concern, the sooner we can resolve the issue. Don't hesitate to bring up any issue—major or minor. I'll be checking in with the whole class periodically to make sure the course is going smoothly on all fronts. I will also provide time for general questions during each class session.

The best way to get in touch with me is via email ([ccpost@uncg.edu](mailto:ccpost@uncg.edu)). I will typically respond to all emails within 24 hours during the week and within 48 hours during the weekend. I will also create a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) thread on the Canvas discussion forum. If I receive several similar questions, I'll post a generalized and anonymized version of the question there.

For more detailed questions about assignments, grades, and so on, I will want to schedule a meeting (via Teams) to discuss in-depth. You can schedule an appointment by visiting [my calendar](#).

*From me:*

You can expect to hear from me via email and through Canvas. I will send individual emails (to your UNCG email account) regarding things like specific questions about an assignment or following up on something from a class session. I will make general class announcements through Canvas, and we will all be engaging in ongoing discussion through the forums (more on this below).

**Teaching Philosophy:**

I believe that my role as a teacher is facilitating a collaborative and active process of knowledge construction. I don't have all (or even most) of the answers. My role is not to pass a clearly defined body of information directly to you, the student. While there is some foundational information relevant to professional practice that we will work through in this course, my main goal is to inspire inquiry, critical reflection, and creative thinking launching off from this

foundational information. I also hope to establish a space for us to all share in this inquiry, a space where we can all contribute and where everyone's contributions are valued.

**Course Description:**

Covers the fundamental skills, tools, and approaches involved in the management of rare books, manuscripts, and other special collections materials. Focuses on special collections in libraries and archives, contextualizing these institutional collections in longer histories of collecting rare and unique materials.

**Student Learning Outcomes (SLO):**

Upon successful completion of this course students will:

1. Articulate the history, purpose, and value of special collections in a range of information institutions
2. Demonstrate core knowledge and skills required for describing and organizing special collections materials
3. Discuss critical and emerging issues impacting special collections
4. Demonstrate skills needed to conduct outreach, instruction, and advocacy with special collections materials

**Teaching methods:**

During our weekly synchronous class sessions, we will engage in discussions and participate in activities that will help you to achieve the learning outcomes for the course. These weekly sessions will also provide time and space for us to build a community supportive of everyone's learning and growth. I will provide some introductory remarks and slides highlighting key concepts each session, but my formal lecturing will be limited. I want to reserve the bulk of our class time for interactive and engaging discussions and activities. You will also have a stake in leading class discussions through in-class presentations that will occur throughout the semester.

**Attendance:**

Attending the synchronous online class sessions each week will be a foundation for your success in the course. Because your and your classmates' learning in the course depends on these synchronous meetings, you will be expected to attend all synchronous sessions. I also understand that everyone has busy schedules and many commitments outside of class, so let me know ahead of time if you need to miss a class session for any reason and we can make accommodations.

Classes will be recorded to assist those that need to miss a synchronous session, as well as to provide an easy way to review class lectures and discussions. However, these recordings should not be circulated to anyone outside of the class.

**Discussion forums:**

Along with our weekly synchronous meetings, we will be using the discussion forums to discuss key concepts and think through real-world applications and situations for ideas from the readings. Each week, I will post questions or prompts to think about as you read, and I will share other relevant items (e.g. stories on current events, links to interesting videos) to expand our

conversation. Each week, you should make substantive and thoughtful contributions to the discussions. These contributions can be responses to my questions, comments on other students' posts, or your own questions that you'd like to pose to the class. The goal is to sustain engaging discussions among the class on the forums and NOT for each student to make one post directly responding only to my questions.

Participation in the discussion forums constitutes 20% of your overall class grade, based on points assessed each week. There is no strict quota or requirement for discussion forum posts, though you need to post *something* to the forum every week. For grading purposes, discussion posts need to be made **before the class meeting for a given week**, but you are welcome to continue ongoing discussions from previous weeks.

**Assignments:**

Assignments are listed in the Assignment Table and in the Course Schedule below. Each assignment will ask you to perform tasks, create examples, and/or provide analysis related to topics covered in this class. All assignments are due by the beginning (5:30 PM) of class on the date listed, unless otherwise noted. **Assignments need to be turned in via Canvas.** I am generally accommodating in receiving late work, though I appreciate if you let me know as soon as possible if you are not able to complete an assignment by the deadline.

Rubrics and full descriptions for all assignments may be found on Canvas.

Assignment	Due Date	Percent of Final Grade
Lead In-class Activity	9/4 (sign up)	15%
Special Collection Dossier	9/18	15%
Book Analysis	10/9	15%
Annotated Bibliography, Prospectus, and Final Paper	10/23; 11/13; 12/4	35%
Discussions	Weekly	20%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>

**Grading:**

A = 95-100%, A- = 90-94  
 B+ = 87-89, B = 84-86,  
 B- = 80-83  
 C+ = 75-79, C = 70-74  
 F = 0-73

**Accommodations:**

UNCG seeks to comply fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students requesting accommodations based on a disability must be registered with the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS) in 215 Elliott University Center, 334-5440, oars.uncg.edu (<http://ods.uncg.edu/especially-for-faculty/>)

If you will need any accommodation in order to successfully complete the course, please contact OARS as soon as possible. I will be happy to work with you and OARS to make sure you are able to fully participate in the course.

**Academic Integrity Policy and Student Ethics Statement:**

Students are expected to uphold the Academic Integrity Policy, which you can find here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B0rFGGhJvbDHUExSZmFFaWFmb00/view>. Each student has the responsibility (1) to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity in the student's own work, (2) to refuse to tolerate violations of academic integrity in the university community, and (3) to foster a high sense of integrity and social responsibility on the part of the university community.

Each student is required to sign the Academic Integrity Pledge as part of the admissions and/or orientation into the program. **UNCG recommends each new student sign the Academic Integrity Pledge during new student orientation:** <https://osrr.uncg.edu/academic-integrity/the-pledge/>

Students should recognize their responsibility to uphold the *Academic Integrity Policy* and to report apparent violations to the appropriate persons. Students who do not understand the *Policy* or its application to a particular assignment are responsible for raising such questions with their faculty member.

**UNCG Plagiarism Policy:**

- Plagiarism- Representing the words of another, as one's own in any academic exercise.
  - Plagiarism may occur on any paper, report, or other work submitted to fulfill course requirements. This includes submitting work done by another, whether a commercial or non-commercial enterprise, including web sites, as one's own work.
- Types and Sanctions
  - Failure to Cite References: Intentional or obvious failures to properly cite sources. Recommended sanctions range from requiring the student to re-do the paper to a zero on the paper
  - Submitting, as one's own, work done by or copied from another: Includes work done by a fellow student, work done by a previous student, or work done by anyone other than the student responsible for the assignment. Recommended sanctions range from F on assignment to a recommendation for expulsion
- **UNCG Acceptable Use of Computing and Electronic Resources Article 10-** (Anti-plagiarism policy: [https://policy.uncg.edu/university\\_policies/acceptable-use/](https://policy.uncg.edu/university_policies/acceptable-use/))

Students agree that by taking courses at UNCG, all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to an anti-plagiarism service for the detection of plagiarism. **I will not be conducting these reviews on all papers, but I will use this tool if it is warranted** All submitted papers may be included as source documents in the reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. UNCG's anti-plagiarism service is maintained by ITS. The currently used service can be identified by contacting 6-TECH at 336-256-TECH (8324) or 6-tech@uncg.edu.

**UNCG Copyright Ownership and Use Policy:**

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro is dedicated to its mission of instruction, research and service. It is the policy of this University that its faculty, staff and students carry out their scholarly work in an open and free atmosphere, and that consistent with applicable laws and policy they publish the results of such work without restraint. Additionally, this University is administratively committed to providing an environment that maximizes the creative potential of its faculty, staff and students.

To that end, the University believes that support for and ownership of creative works should be given to the creator or creators of those works subject to the retention by the University of rights for internal educational use and research. Ownership of Copyright by the University is reserved for those works created at the direction of the University or pursuant to negotiated agreements. Additionally, the University supports the responsible, good faith exercise of full fair use rights by employees and students in furtherance of their teaching, research, service and other educational activities. This Policy implements these principles and commitments (<http://policy.uncg.edu/university-policies/copyright/>)

**Contrapower Statement:**

As your instructor, I am committed to creating a productive and non-discriminatory learning environment of mutual respect. Title IX and UNCG’s school policy prohibit gender-based harassment, sexual harassment, and sex discrimination for all members of the University community. Harassment can come in many forms - both direct and indirect - and can occur in subtle or overt ways. Traditionally, harassment is seen from a formal power-over structure. However, harassment can occur without a formal power structure. Contrapower, when a student harasses an instructor or peer, is a type of behavior that can create an intimidating environment in and outside of the classroom. Either form of harassment can include direct or indirect comments, physical intimidation, emails, anonymous notes, and course evaluations. Both Contrapower and traditional forms of harassment are prohibited and subject to the same kinds of accountability applied to offenses against protected categories, such as race, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, etc.

If you experience or witness such instances of harassment, please seek out the following resources:

- UNCG Counseling Center (non-reporting agency/confidential): 336.334.5874
- Murphie Chappell, Title IX Coordinator (reporting agent): 336.256.0362 or [mechappe@uncg.edu](mailto:mechappe@uncg.edu)
- University Police (reporting agent): 336.334.4444

For more information on UNCG’s policies regarding harassment, visit [UNCG Sexual Harassment Policy](#)

**Health and Wellness:**

Health and well-being impact learning and academic success. Throughout your time in the university, you may experience a range of concerns that can cause barriers to your academic success. These might include illnesses, strained relationships, anxiety, high levels of stress,

alcohol or drug problems, feeling down, or loss of motivation. Student Health Services and The Counseling Center can help with these or other issues you may experience.

You can learn about the free, confidential mental health services available on campus by calling 336-334-5874, visiting the website at [Student Health Services](#), or visiting the Anna M. Gove Student Health Center at 107 Gray Drive. For undergraduate or graduate students in recovery from alcohol and other drug addiction, The Spartan Recovery Program (SRP) offers recovery support services. You can learn more about recovery and recovery support services by visiting [Spartan Recovery Program](#) or reaching out to [recovery@uncg.edu](mailto:recovery@uncg.edu).

**Technology Support:**

6-TECH ITS Service Desk: [6tech@uncg.edu](mailto:6tech@uncg.edu), (336) 256-TECH, [\(336\) 256-8324](tel:336-256-8324), Open 24/7

[6-TECH Online](#), a web-based central access point for all of your technical needs! [6-TECH Online](#) will allow you to search for your own solutions from a global knowledge base, submit and view your own tickets, and more. All of these services available 24x7.

Note: [As a UNCG student you have access to Microsoft 365 products.](#)

**Schedule:**

Week	Topic	Reading for this class	Assignments due
1: 8/21	What's special about special collections?	Traister; Pick one	
2: 8/28	Special collections and special collectors	Basbanes; Daston	
3: 9/4	No class: Labor Day		Sign up for leading in-class activity
4: 9/11	Medieval manuscripts	De Hamel	
5: 9/18	Literary manuscripts	Cloutier; Kirschenbaum	Special Collections Dossier
6: 9/25	Bibliography	Tanselle; Attar	
7: 10/2	Cataloging and classification	Meyer; de Groat; Russell	
8: 10/9	No class: Fall break		Book analysis
9: 10/16	Collecting popular culture	Wood and Carter; Robb; SFS Showcase (browse)	
10: 10/23	Artist's books and manuscripts	McClelland; Taylor; Brett	Annotated bibliography
11: 10/30	Digitization	Conway; Lapworth and Chung	
12: 11/6	Preservation	Starmer; Rachman; Fisher	

13: 11/13	Access and outreach	Jones; Heyliger; O'Sullivan	Final paper prospectus
14: 11/20	Metrics and Assessment	Carter; Dupont and Yakel; Rossman	
15: 11/27	Sustainability	Mazureczyk; Moustafa	
12/4	Final assignment due		Final paper

**Readings:**

All resources will be made accessible via the Canvas site.

Attar, KE. 2013. "Modern Special Collections Cataloguing: A University of London Case Study." *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science* 45 (2): 168–76.

Basbanes, Nicholas A. 2012 (1995). *A Gentle Madness: Bibliophiles, Bibliomanes, and the Eternal Passion for Books*. Chapel Hill, NC: Fine Books Press.

Brett, Jeremy. 2015. "'Deep in the Heart of Texzines:' Developing an Archival Zine Collection." *Technical Services Quarterly* 32 (4): 390–401.

Carter, Lisa R. 2012. "Articulating Value: Building a Culture of Assessment in Special Collections." *RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage* 13 (2): 89–99.

Cloutier, Jean-Christophe. 2019. *Shadow Archives: The Lifecycles of African American Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Conway, Paul. 2015. "Digital Transformations and the Archival Nature of Surrogates." *Archival Science* 15 (1): 51–69.

Daston, Lorraine J. 1988. "The Factual Sensibility." *Isis* 79 (3): 452–67.

Dupont, Christian, and Elizabeth Yakel. 2013. "'What's So Special about Special Collections?' Or, Assessing the Value Special Collections Bring to Academic Libraries." *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice* 8 (2): 9–21.

Fisher, Katherine. 2017. "Barriers to Digital Preservation in Special Collections Departments." *Preservation, Digital Technology & Culture* 45 (4): 180–85.

Groat, Greta de. 2015. "A History of Video Game Cataloging in U.S. Libraries." *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly* 53 (2): 135–56.

Hamel, Christopher de. 2017. *Meetings with Remarkable Manuscripts: Twelve Journeys into the Medieval World*. New York: Penguin Books.

Heyliger, Sean, Juli McLoone, and Nikki Lynn Thomas. 2016. "Moving Toward 'Mega-Choice':

- The Evolution of Access Technologies in Special Collections.” *RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage* 17 (1): 17–31.
- Jones, Barbara M. 2005. “Hidden Collections, Scholarly Barriers: Creating Access to Unprocessed Special Collections Materials in America’s Research Libraries.” *RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage* 5 (2): 88–105.
- Kirschenbaum, Matthew. 2021. *Bitstreams: The Future of Digital Literary Heritage*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Lapworth, Emily, and Su Kim Chung. 2021. “The Archives at the Tip of Their Fingers: Exploring User Reactions to Large-Scale Digitization.” *Journal of Archival Organization* 18 (1–2): 1–36.
- Mazurczyk, T., N. Piekielek, E. Tansey, and B. Goldman. 2018. “American Archives and Climate Change: Risks and Adaptation.” *Climate Risk Management* 20: 111–25.
- McLeland, D. Courtenay. 2017. “Artists’ Books Collection Development: Considerations for New Selectors and Collections.” *RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage* 18 (2): 80–92.
- Meyer, Matthew. 2019. “Batter Up: Classifying Pre-World War II Baseball Cards Using Dewey Decimal.” *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly* 57 (7–8): 507–29.
- Moustafa, Laila Hussein. 2016. “Cultural Heritage and Preservation: Lessons from World War II and the Contemporary Conflict in the Middle East.” *The American Archivist* 79 (2): 320–38.
- O’Sullivan, Kevin M., and Gia Alexander. 2020. “Toward Inclusive Outreach: What Special Collections Can Learn from Disability Studies.” *RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage* 21 (1): 11–25.
- Rachman, Yeni Budi, Tamara Adriani Salim, Margareta Aulia Rachman, and Wiwit Ratnasari. 2022. “Dluwang Manuscripts from Royal Surakarta, Indonesia: Deterioration Phenomena and Care Practices.” *Studies in Conservation* 67 (5): 289–301.
- Robb, Jenny. 2017. “The Librarians and Archivists.” In *The Secret Origins of Comics Studies*, edited by Matthew J. Smith and Randy Duncan, 71–87. New York: Routledge.
- Rossmann, Jae Jennifer. 2020. “Investigating the Perceived Value of Special Collections in the Academic Library.” *Journal of Library Administration* 60 (6): 631–44.
- Russell, Beth M. 2003. “Description and Access in Rare Books Cataloging: A Historical Survey.” *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly* 35 (3–4): 491–523.

“SFS Showcase: Library Collections and Archives of SF and Related Materials.” *Science Fiction Studies* 37 (2): 161–90.

Starmer, Mary Ellen, Sara Hyder McGough, and Aimée Leverette. 2005. “Rare Condition: Preservation Assessment for Rare Book Collections.” *RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage* 6 (2): 91–106.

Tanselle, G. Thomas. 1992. “A Description of Descriptive Bibliography.” *Studies in Bibliography* 45: 1–30.

Taylor, Marvin J. 2002. “‘I’ll Be Your Mirror, Reflect What You Are’: Postmodern Documentation and the Downtown New York Art Scene from 1975 to the Present.” *RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage* 3 (1): 32–51.

Traister, Daniel. 2000. “Is There a Future for Special Collections? And Should There Be?: A Polemical Essay.” *RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage* 1 (1): 54–76.

Wood, Kelli, and David S. Carter. 2018. “Art and Technology: Archiving Video Games for Humanities Research in University Libraries.” *Art Libraries Journal* 43 (4): 185–95.