

Graduate Certificate in Archives and Special Collections

Final Paper (100 points)

School of Library and Information Science, The University of Southern Mississippi

After successfully completing the required coursework, students are required to write and submit a 2,500- to 4,500-word paper on an approved topic related to archives and special collections. (The research paper required for British Studies 587 may be used as the certificate assessment if it is on an archival or special collections-related topic.)

Although this paper is not linked to any specific course or class, students are strongly encouraged to make their paper's topic related to their archival practicum placement (LIS 648) since the practicum provides students with a chance to work with archival materials first-hand.

Submit your completed paper to Dr. Matthew Griffis, matthew.griffis@usm.edu.

Directions:

Choose an archival-related topic such as a special collection or archive or an historical topic that has related materials in a special collection or archive to be the focus of the study. The topic should be approved by the certificate advisor (Dr. Matthew Griffis) via phone or email (matthew.griffis@usm.edu).

The study is an historical research study. The focus of the study should be documentation of historical archival materials. While you will not be able to formally interview anyone (since any human study requires IRB approval), you may request materials or ask reference questions from librarians and archivists just as any other patron may do.

One image related to the topic is required (this may be an image you take or one that is available on the Web if proper attribution and link are provided). The image may be on the cover page or within the text as appropriate; more than one image is not required but is permissible. The required length of the paper is 2,500-4,500 words.

Paper Format:

- Double-spaced; indent paragraphs
- Center and bold main topics, left-align subtopics (bold and italicize)

Title Page

Begin with a title page with appropriate title, student name and email, date. Use the topics and subtopics below to organize the body of the paper.

I. Introduction

Introductory paragraph(s) with a general background description of the topic.

Purpose of the Study

General research problem (purpose of the study) such as:

The purpose of this study is to document the mission, history, and content of ____ collection.

Research Questions

Examples of research questions *related to a specific collection or archive* may include:

- R1. What is the mission of the collection?
- R2. What is in the collection and how is it organized?
- R3. How much of the collection is digitized and available online?

Use general background info on the history of the collection or archive in the introductory paragraphs and more detailed information in the Lit Review.

Examples of research questions *related to historic, archival materials on a particular topic* may include:

- R1. Which archives or special collections contain archival materials related to ____?
- R2. What archival materials are available related to ____ are available in each collection in this study?

... and other research questions as appropriate to the topic.

Limitations and Assumptions of the Study

State something like.... "This study was limited to documentation and information furnished by the special collection or archive, on their Web site, and in the scholarly literature (or wherever scholarly source that documentation or information is found). It is assumed that the information provided by these resources is accurate."

Importance of the Study

Closing paragraph of Intro should articulate the importance of the study – what this research may add to the body of LIS research; how it may be useful to scholars, archivists, or librarians.

II. Literature Review

A review of related literature places the study within the context of the literature related to the methodology of historical research or archival studies (check for similar studies in *American Archivist* indexed in *JSTOR*). May also review and cite archival paper by Ballard (<http://aquila.usm.edu/slisconnecting/vol2/iss1/8/>) or Birzer (<http://aquila.usm.edu/slisconnecting/vol2/iss2/8/>) published in *SLIS Connecting*.

Review previous similar historical studies or case studies of archives or special collections (these lit reviews should be written as a narrative with logical flow within each subtopic to show a progression of the research that leads up to this research).

III. Methodology

Methodology may include historical narrative, which tells a story in proper order, and descriptive analysis. If you can find multiple sources of information, you may cite data source triangulation as a methodology. If you can find only one source of information and it seems reliable, then go with what you have. Triangulation is preferable but not always possible (<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fy394>).

Detail methods of data collection and analysis. Data collected for this type of study could include gathering of descriptive data from archival materials, scholarly literature, or other scholarly resources. No direct human survey research will be done, but students may request documentation or information from an archivist or librarian just as any other patron.

IV. Results

Restate each research question then relate and discuss the answers to that question (see Ballard's paper).

V. Discussion and/or Conclusion

A summary of findings and discussion of possible implications, including recommendations for future study (could recommend further study using in-depth interviews with related site or information specialists).

Works Cited or Bibliography

Students may use APA, MLA or Turabian (if using footnotes).

Note: Use scholarly, third person style (no first-person or second person pronouns). Use correct grammar with no contractions.

(Note: This assignment will be graded on content and format. The work for this paper should be original and Turnitin software may be used to check for plagiarism.)

If you have any questions about the paper, please email Dr. Griffis.

Archival Research Paper Rubric (100 points)

Criteria/Levels	Excellent Consistent	Satisfactory	Requires Improvement	Unacceptable
<p>2500-4500 word paper on an approved topic</p> <p>Content: Use of required topics with appropriate sub-topics:</p> <p>Introduction Literature Review Methodology Discussion/Conclusion</p> <p>It is expected that content will be based upon archival materials and scholarly sources.</p>	<p>Assignment content meets all criteria and is complete and well-developed.</p>	<p>Assignment content meets most criteria and is acceptably developed</p>	<p>Assignment content meets some criteria but requires improvement.</p>	<p>Assignment content meets few criteria and is poorly developed</p>
<p>Writing style and presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper is formatted as instructed • Paper is organized logically with subtopics • Paper is free of typos, punctuation errors, spelling errors, and grammatical errors. • Writing flows smoothly with good transitions between major topics, paragraphs, etc. • Writing incorporates varied, interesting, appropriate vocabulary and sentence structure. • Written in third-person, objective, gender-free style • Assignment shows judicious, applicable use of quotes and paraphrases. • Quotes and 	<p>Assignment meets all criteria for writing style, quotes, paraphrases, and citations</p>	<p>Assignment meets most criteria with not more than 3 typos or other errors</p>	<p>Assignment meets some criteria, but there are several instances of typos or other errors</p>	<p>Assignment has a large number of errors (more than 10)</p>

<p>paraphrases add to the discussion of the subject, but do not overwhelm it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quotes are in the correct format. • Sources in the Bibliography are reflected in the text. • Bibliographic citations are in the correct format. 				
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--	--	--	--

100 Point Grading Scale:

- Excellent = 93-100 points
- Satisfactory = 84-92 points
- Requires Improvement = 70-83 points
- Unacceptable = <70 points