



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

School of Information  
Faculty of Arts

We acknowledge that we are on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the hən̓q̓əmin̓əm̓ speaking Musqueam people.

**School Mission: Through innovative research, education and design, our mission is to enhance humanity's capacity to engage information in effective, creative and diverse ways.**

### **ARST 515 – Arrangement and Description of Archives – Course Syllabus (3)**

**Program:** MAS

**Year:** 2021-22, Winter Term 1

**Course Schedule:** Tuesdays, 2:00-4:50pm

**Location:** TBD (to be determined)

**Instructor:** Dr. Jennifer Douglas

**Office location:** IKBLC 487

**Office phone:** 604-827-5905

**Office hours:** TBD (to be determined)

**E-mail address:** jen.douglas@ubc.ca

**Learning Management Site:**

<https://canvas.ubc.ca/courses/11039>

**Course Goal:** The goal of this course is to provide students with the fundamental theoretical and methodological knowledge needed for the arrangement and description of archival documents.

Additional information: This course prepares you to undertake arrangement and description in a variety of archival institutions. As a core course, it focuses on **foundational** theories and methodologies of arrangement and description. The course also introduces a critical lens on arrangement and description as an archival function and on the principle of provenance that is more fully explored in ARST 545 – Advanced Arrangement and Description.

**FNCC specialization:** The assignments in this course can serve the requirements of the First Nations Curriculum Concentration (FNCC), though you will be more prepared to critically engage with ideas about and practices of archival arrangement and description in ARST 545 – Advanced Arrangement and Description. If you would like to take this course for FNCC credit, I invite you to contact me to discuss this option.

**Learning Outcomes:**

#### **Upon completion of this course students will be able to:**

1. Demonstrate understanding of the characteristics of aggregations of archival documents and their interrelationships. [1.2, 2.1, 5.1]
2. Demonstrate understanding of the principles underlying the arrangement of archival documents and their historical evolution. [1.2, 2.1, 5.1]
3. Undertake the systematic identification and critical evaluation of an archival aggregation and its parts. [1.2, 1.4, 5.1]
4. Demonstrate understanding of the principles and methods of archival description, and apply these according to standards adopted by the archival community. [1.2, 1.4, 5.1]



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5. Demonstrate understanding of the principles and methods of establishing name access points to archival descriptions according to standards adopted by the archival community. [1.2, 1.4, 5.1]

### Course Topics:

- Archival aggregations: what are they and why do archivists work with aggregates?
- The principles of provenance, respect des fonds and respect for original order
- Purposes of and best practices for accessioning records
- Methods for analyzing the internal and external structure of a fonds or record group
- Types of finding aids and other descriptive instruments
- The development of descriptive standards in North America and internationally
- The structure, content and application of *Rules for Archival Description* (RAD)
- The structure, content and application of other national and international descriptive standards (e.g. DACS, ISAD(G), ISAAR(CPF), RIC, EAD, EAC, etc.)
- Introduction to challenges posed to the paradigmatic theory and practice of archival arrangement and description by records created in diverse contexts (e.g. digital archives, personal archives, non-textual archives, non-Western archives, etc.)

**Prerequisites:** MAS and Dual students take this as part of the MAS core. Core courses in the MAS program can only be taken by students registered in the MAS program.

**Format of the course:** Classes will consist of lectures, discussion and in-class activities.

Estimated number of weekly hours students should dedicate to this class (preparation activities + class activities): 10 hours

### Required and Recommended Reading:

Please refer to the ARST 515 Course Readings by Week handout, available in Canvas and passed out in class first day. All readings will be available through UBC Library's online catalogue or through the Library Online Course Reserves in Canvas. We will review how to access readings in class on the first day. If you need further assistance accessing readings, please ask in class or come see me promptly (please don't let yourself fall behind out of fear of asking!).

NOTE: You will be required to refer to the Bureau of Canadian Archivists *Rules for Archival Description*, the Canadian archival descriptive standard. The text is available online at <http://www.cdncouncilarchives.ca/archdesrules.html>. You can use this online, print it yourself, and/or order a paper copy of the text for \$40.00 from the Canadian Council of Archives (<http://www.cdncouncilarchives.ca/public.html>) Most students find it helpful to have a paper copy; if you work in Canada at any point in time, a paper copy will continue to be extremely useful.



**Course Assignments:**

Detailed instructions for all assignments will be distributed on the first day of class and available in Canvas.

Assignment Name	Due Date	Weight	Graduate Competencies
Guided critical reflection on course readings #1	October 5	15%	1.4, 4.1
Arrangement analysis in-class activity and write-up	October 26	20%	1.4, 2.1, 3.1
Description Portfolio 1. External and internal analysis of your fonds 2. RAD compliant fonds, series, file and item descriptions of your fonds 3. ISAAR(CPF) authority record for your fonds 4. ISAD(G) fonds-level description for your fonds 5. Critical reflection on the process	November 30	35%	1.2, 1.4, 2.1, 5.1
Guided critical reflection on course readings #2	December 10	15%	1.4, 4.1
Participation in regular class activities (e.g. drafting a positionality statement; creating an accession record; description case studies; creating AToM records; creating name access points; etc.)	Throughout	15%	1.4, 2.1, 3.1, 4.1

**Course Schedule:**

Topic	Date
Topics: Archives and Positionality; Introduction to Arrangement and Description and their Context(s), from the Dutch Manual to a Reconciliation Framework  At the end of this week, you will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Demonstrate</b> initial understanding of the purposes and contexts of archival arrangement and description</li> <li>• <b>Articulate</b> the relationship between arrangement and description and other key archival functions</li> <li>• <b>Recognize</b> an archival finding aid and begin to read it critically</li> <li>• <b>Define</b> positionality and <b>begin to articulate</b> 1) why it is important to think about positionality in archival work and 2) your own positionality in this work</li> </ul>	WEEK 1 – Sept 14



<p>Records and Aggregations</p> <p>At the end of this week, you will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Demonstrate</b> understanding of the characteristics of records and record aggregations</li><li>• <b>Demonstrate</b> understanding of the different institutional and cultural contexts in which records are created and preserved</li><li>• <b>Discuss</b> different ideas about the definitions of 'record' and 'archives'</li></ul> <p>In-class activity: draft a positionality statement</p>	WEEK 2 – Sept 21
<p>The Principle of Provenance</p> <p>At the end of this week, you will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Demonstrate</b> initial understanding of the principle of provenance and its sub-principles (the principle of respect des fonds and respect for original order)</li><li>• <b>Explain</b>, at an introductory level, why archivists adhere to the principle of provenance</li><li>• <b>Identify</b> potential weaknesses or shortcomings of the principle of provenance</li></ul>	WEEK 3 – Sept 28
<p>Analyzing fonds (Part 1)</p> <p>At the end of this week, you will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Explain</b> the importance of establishing initial control over archives</li><li>• <b>Identify</b> the types of information about records that need to be captured and recorded during accessioning</li><li>• <b>Produce</b> a simple accession record</li><li>• <b>Identify</b> and <b>apply</b> the structure and key elements of the Canadian Archival Accession Information Standard (CAAIS)</li></ul> <p>In-class activity: perform a donor interview and draft an accession record</p>	WEEK 4 – Oct 5
<p>Analyzing fonds (Part 2)</p> <p>***This week half the class will meet in the teaching classroom in Rare Books and Special Collections (bottom floor of IKBLC from 2-4pm to work with original archival materials on an arrangement analysis. The other half of the class will not need to attend class this week. Please arrive 10 minutes early to RBSC; you will need to check in with your UBC ID and store any belongings other than a notebook, pencil and laptop in a locker.</p> <p>At the end of this week, you will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Understand</b> how and why archivists identify fonds and their internal structure (series, files and items)</li></ul>	WEEK 5 – Oct 12



<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Apply</b> this understanding by <b>analyzing</b> a fonds in its general outlines</li></ul> <p>In-class activity: Fonds analysis in Rare Books and Special Collections (RBSC)</p>	
<p>Analyzing fond (Part 2)</p> <p>***This week half the class will meet in the teaching classroom in Rare Books and Special Collections (bottom floor of IKBLC from 2-4pm to work with original archival materials on an arrangement analysis. The other half of the class will not need to attend class this week. Please arrive 10 minutes early to RBSC; you will need to check in with your UBC ID and store any belongings other than a notebook, pencil and laptop in a locker.</p> <p>At the end of this week, you will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Understand</b> how and why archivists identify fonds and their internal structure (series, files and items)</li><li>• <b>Apply</b> this understanding by <b>analyzing</b> a fonds in its general outlines</li></ul> <p>In-class activity: Fonds analysis in Rare Books and Special Collections (RBSC)</p>	WEEK 6 – Oct 19
<p>Introducing Descriptive Standards</p> <p>At the end of this week, you will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Demonstrate</b> familiarity with the history of the development of descriptive standards in Canada and internationally</li><li>• <b>Discuss</b> some benefits and limitations of standardization of archival description</li><li>• <b>Identify</b> and <b>discuss</b> the principles upon which archival descriptive standards are based</li></ul>	WEEK 7 – Oct 26
<p>Descriptive Standards I (RAD)</p> <p>At the end of this week, you will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Identify</b> key areas and elements of RAD and <b>navigate</b> its structure</li><li>• <b>Apply</b> the use of RAD areas for title, dates, and physical description</li><li>• <b>Identify</b> and <b>discuss</b> some of the ways RAD succeeds as a descriptive standard</li></ul> <p>In-class activity: Description case studies</p>	WEEK 8 – Nov 2



<p>Descriptive Standards I (RAD cont.)</p> <p>At the end of this week, you will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Apply</b> the use of RAD areas for archival description and notes</li><li>• <b>Identify</b> and <b>discuss</b> the ways in which RAD could be improved as a descriptive standard</li></ul> <p>In-class activity: Description case studies</p>	WEEK 9 – Nov 9
<p>Descriptive Standards II (the ICA Standards)</p> <p>At the end of this week, you will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Identify</b> key elements of the various ICA standards</li><li>• <b>Apply</b> these standards at an introductory level</li><li>• <b>Discuss</b> the similarities and differences between RAD and ISAD(G)</li><li>• <b>Understand</b> the concept of archival authority control at an introductory level</li></ul> <p>In-class activity: Description case studies</p>	WEEK 10 – Nov 16
<p>Descriptive Standards III (DACS and AToM)</p> <p>At the end of this week, you will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Identify</b> key elements of the DACS standard</li><li>• <b>Compare</b> DACS, RAD and the ICA standards</li><li>• <b>Discuss</b> the values of the open-source descriptive software movement</li><li>• <b>Create</b> descriptive records using AToM</li></ul> <p>In-class activity: Description case studies and creating AToM records</p>	WEEK 11 – Nov 23
<p>Reconciliation, Decolonization and Indigenization in Arrangement and Description</p> <p>At the end of this week, you will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Identify</b> and <b>discuss</b> at an introductory level the colonial contexts in which Canadian archival institutions are situated and participate</li><li>• <b>Articulate</b> how and why reconciliation, decolonization and Indigenization relate to archival arrangement and description</li><li>• <b>Identify</b> and <b>discuss</b> some strategies for addressing colonial and settler harm in arrangement and description theories and practices</li></ul>	WEEK 12 – Nov 30
<p>Challenges to Traditional Principles and Practices and Some Future Directions</p> <p>At the end of this week, you will be able to:</p>	WEEK 13 – Dec 7



- **Understand** at an introductory level the development and features of the 'series system' of description
- **Identify** and **discuss** the primary ways in which digital archives challenge 'traditional' principles and methods of arrangement and description
- **Identify** and **discuss** emerging digital arrangement and description practices

In-class activity: Critical Reflection workshop

**Attendance:** This class has a significant participation mark that is assessed based on participation in and completion of in-class activities that help to reinforce specific course learning objectives. As we are still in the midst of a global pandemic, and while we are all required by BC public health orders to stay home if sick, I expect that there will be absences. Please let me know as soon as possible if you will miss a class and we will work together to be sure your absence does not negatively affect your learning or performance in the class.

**Evaluation:** All assignments will be marked using the evaluative criteria given on the [iSchool web site](#).

Late assignments:

If you find yourself in need of an extension for an assignment, please contact me *as soon as possible* by email or in office hours to make arrangements.

While I am willing to consider extensions, and especially as we all continue to experience the effects of the Covid19 global pandemic in different ways, please remember that assignment deadlines are there in part to help you manage your time; the core involves meeting many different deadlines, and consideration of your overall workload and ability to complete the term should be part of any of your thinking about an extension. Ideally, extensions should only be used in cases of illness, emergency or other unavoidable situation, but please contact me if at any point you are running into trouble with deadlines and assignments.

Missed in-class assessments:

Students, staff and faculty are advised to stay home if they are sick (<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/info/restart#step-four>). If you need to miss a class where there is an in-class activity listed in the course timetable, please contact me *as soon as possible* so that we can determine how you can a) achieve the learning objectives the activity relates to and b) when relevant, earn assigned marks. Since types of in-class activities vary considerably, different solutions will be required depending on the activity that is missed. We will work this out on a case-by-case basis; no one will be penalized for following Public Health Office guidance.

**Required Materials:** All required materials will be made available to you via the UBC Library Catalogue or Online Course Reserves through Canvas. There are no costs for materials associated with this course. As stated above, you have the option to purchase RAD (\$40), but can also use the free PDF version of the standard. If at any point you have trouble accessing course readings, please let me know right away so I can help.



**Academic Concession:** If you miss marked coursework for the first time (assignment, exam, presentation, participation in class) and the course is still in-progress, **speak with me immediately** to find a solution for your missed coursework. Any concessions that will result in a change to the student record (such as late withdrawal from the course) will be referred to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for evaluation. If this is not the first time you have requested concession or classes are over, please consult the [Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies' webpage on academic concession](#), and then contact me where appropriate.

**Policies and Resources to Support Student Success:** UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious and cultural observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions. Details of the policies and how to access support are available here (<https://senate.ubc.ca/policies-resources-support-student-success>)

**Academic Integrity:** The academic enterprise is founded on honesty, civility, and integrity. As members of this enterprise, all students are expected to know, understand, and follow the codes of conduct regarding academic integrity. At the most basic level, this means submitting only original work done by you and acknowledging all sources of information or ideas and attributing them to others as required. This also means you should not cheat, copy, or mislead others about what is your work. Violations of academic integrity (i.e., misconduct) lead to the breakdown of the academic enterprise, and therefore serious consequences arise and harsh sanctions are imposed. For example, incidences of plagiarism or cheating may result in a mark of zero on the assignment or exam and more serious consequences may apply when the matter is referred to the Office of the Dean. Careful records are kept in order to monitor and prevent recurrences. A more detailed description of academic integrity, including the University's policies and procedures, may be found in the [UBC Calendar: Student Conduct and Discipline](#). Academic misconduct includes cheating, plagiarism, and self-plagiarism <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,959> (§7)

UBC instructors/faculty, must report all incidents of suspected academic misconduct.

"Every case of academic misconduct, whether in coursework, comprehensive exams, a thesis, or a dissertation, must be brought forward to the Dean (or designated Associate Dean) of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies." <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/faculty-staff/policies-procedures/dealing-academic-misconduct-graduate-students>

**Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:** Academic accommodations help students with a disability or ongoing medical condition overcome challenges that may affect their academic success. Students requiring academic accommodations must register with the [Centre for Accessibility](#) (previously known as Access & Diversity). The Centre will determine that student's eligibility for accommodations in accordance with [Policy LR7: Accommodation for Students with Disabilities \(Joint Senate and Board Policy\)](#). Academic accommodations are not determined by your instructors, and instructors should not ask you about the nature of your disability or ongoing medical condition, or request copies of your disability documentation. However, your instructor may consult with the Centre for Accessibility should the accommodations affect the essential learning outcomes of a course.





## Other Course Policies:

**Pronouns and Names:** I will do my best to treat all students with respect in this course. I will gladly learn to pronounce your name correctly and honour your request to address you by a name different than what appears on the class list. I will also create opportunities for students to share their pronouns if they wish to do so. I use she/her pronouns and you are perfectly welcome to call me Jennifer. If you find it easier to address me more formally, that is also just fine.

**Course Use of Canvas:** We will use Canvas as a repository for course materials and information about assignments and as a means of communicating with each other:

- Each week lecture slides and other class materials will be posted to Canvas
- Course readings that are not available online directly through the UBC catalogue or otherwise will be made available to you through the online course reserves, which you can access through Canvas
- I will use Canvas announcements to communicate with you outside of class, so please ensure you have notifications turned on to receive announcements
- You are welcome at any time to use the course discussion forum to chat about concepts, follow up on class discussions, share archives stories, etc.
- There is also a course q&a discussion thread that you can use to ask general questions about the course format, requirements and expectations, assignments, etc.; I will check this thread regularly
- Assignments will be submitted and returned through Canvas

**Office hours and contacting me:** I'll hold regular weekly office hours [time and location (in-person in my office, on zoom, or options for both) to be determined]. You can come to office hours with questions about assignments, or about the course more generally, or even if you just want to pop in and say hi and have a chat. If the scheduled office hours are at a time that doesn't work for you, please feel free to email me to set up an alternate time. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any concerns about the course or about your own performance. These days, I receive a high volume of email. I will try to respond to emails within 24 hours; if you haven't heard from me within 48 hours please don't hesitate to re-send your message.

**A Note on Reference Style:** Archival studies is a trans- and interdisciplinary area of study. As such, there is no default referencing style associated with the field. Preferred styles include APA, MLA and Chicago. You are free to choose an accepted reference style; please use it consistently and accurately!

## **Assume good intentions and treat each other with kindness and respect:**

Fall 2021 promises to be yet another interesting term! We face significant uncertainty about the return to full in-person teaching and participation in campus life, and I think we must expect some disruptions – I am not anticipating perfectly smooth sailing for 13+ weeks! We are going through this together and if something does happen to disrupt course plans and schedules, we will figure it out. When I reflect on my experience of the last many months, one thing I can say with certainty is that coping with disruptions, anxiety and fear is easier when we treat each other with kindness and respect and assume that we all come to our shared spaces with good intentions. We're in this together!