

Archival Methods and Historical Approaches in Political Science

PLSC 522/778 (SOCY 503)

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Rosenkranz Hall 202

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Introduction

Historical methods and evidence have always been important to Political Science. In some ways understanding these methods has become even more important in recent years, as scholars collect and use more historical material in statistical and GIS analysis. There is usually very little training given in political science departments to help us to carry out historical and archival research ourselves, and assess its quality when done by others. This course is designed to help fill that gap. The course has four goals. First, I want us to think about what is in the archive, and what is not, how this happened, and how that affects the conclusions we can draw from the materials we find. Second, I want to introduce the class to the different kinds of archives, the catalogs and finding guides we use to navigate them, as well as how to read files and documents, and how best to collect and manage data along the way. Third, because most of what we learn in life is by doing, this course will give you some hands-on experience in using archives, on-line, here at Yale, and in nearby repositories. Yale has some of the country's best librarians and archivists and they will help us to navigate Yale's superb archival resources. Fourth, I want us to think about how we and others use particular archival data to support our arguments.

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The readings and assignments support these four goals. First we examine the generation of archival materials, their partial nature, and issues of access, with reference to major historical archives from the Papacy to the U.K. Public Record Office (e.g. Trevor-Roper 1979; Parry, 2016; Badger 2012). Second, we will explore *how* to use an archive, drawing from my own experiences working in Indian and British archives such as the National Archives of India, Uttar Pradesh State Archives, Nehru Memorial Library, and British Library, as well as by following the advice of historians such as Farge (2015). Third, we will learn by doing, with assigned projects using resources from the Yale archives as well as one other archive of your choice. Fourth, we will put the archives together with the political outcomes we wish to explain: reflecting on how well others have used the archive (e.g. Dahl's 1961 analysis of New Haven politics in *Who Governs?*); and how we might do things differently.

Grading and Assignments

There are 3 assignments, each worth a third of the grade:

1. Assignment 1: Report on a file in a Yale archive or manuscript collection, *due at noon on March 9th 2018*. This will require you to first, come up with a question or questions you want to ask of a file or files in the archive. The Yale Manuscript and Archive staff have come up with an excellent guide to get you started, as well as contact people to help you in your search, at [Yale research guide](#). Second, you should discuss how the archive was formed, how complete or incomplete it is, the usefulness of finding guides and catalogs, what's in the files you look at, how useful it is in answering your question (and why), and which leads or other archives you identify as a result of your research. You should select an archive relevant to your main field of research. The report should be no more than 10 pages.
2. Assignment 2: Report on a file or files in a non-Yale archive or manuscript collection, *due April 13th 2018 at noon*. The goal of this assignment is to get you out of the Yale comfort zone, both in terms of the depth of library support and cataloging, as well as physically, in order to replicate some of the skills you will need when you conduct your own archival research. The archive therefore should not be a major university archive collection, but should be a federal, state, local government, or private collection. Once you identify the archive you should, as with the first assignment, discuss how the archive was formed, how complete or incomplete it is, the usefulness of finding guides and cataloging, what's in the files you look at, and which leads or other archives you identify as a result of your research. This report should be no more than 10 pages, and you will also have to make a verbal presentation on this project in class on April 23rd.

Archives to consider using for this assignment include:

- Connecticut State Library, State Archives <https://ctstatelibrary.org/state-archives/>.
- Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, <https://chs.org/research/research-tools/>.
- Cornwall Historical Society, Cornwall CT, <http://www.cornwallhistoricalsociety.org/>.
- Jewish Historical Society of Greater Hartford, <http://www.jhsggh.org/>.
- Litchfield Historical Society, Litchfield, CT <http://www.litchfieldhistoricalsociety.org/>.
- [New Haven Museum, New Haven CT](#)
- Fairfield Museum and History Center, Fairfield CT, <https://www.fairfieldhistory.org/library-collections/collections/manuscripts/>.
- [Historic New England, Cambridge MA](#) .

There is a quite comprehensive list of CT State Archives and Historical societies –including many not on the list above–at <https://www.raogk.org/connecticut-genealogy/ct-society-archives/>. There are also some good guides to using archives at the Society of American Archivists website <https://www2.archivists.org/usingarchives/afinalword>.

3. Assignment 3: This final assignment, *due April 30 2018 at noon*, is designed to make you reflect on the fit between archives, data and our eventual political science research output. You should select one archival source at Yale, on-line, or in another archive to which you have access, for which there is substantial research output in political science or a related discipline such as economics, history or sociology. Then you should delve into the archival record at Yale or elsewhere to assess how well or badly, completely or partially, the research record reflects the archive, and how the findings might be verified or challenges, and how future research on the topic might be improved. This report should be no more than 10 pages.

Any assignment that is late will be graded down a third of a grade for each day it is late, e.g. an assignment due at 5pm that is submitted one day late will go down from an A to an A-, or a B+ to a B (or the Grad School grade equivalents). An assignment that is two days late will go down from an A to a B+, or a B+ to a B-, and so on.

All readings will be in Yale’s on-line *Canvas* system, under the *Files* tab, unless otherwise listed in the syllabus.

1 Weekly Topics and Readings

January 16 (Week 1) Introduction

- Scope of the course; assignments; major topics; how it relates to your own research goals; student survey.

January 23 (Week 2) What's in the archive and *who* is in the archive?

- Carr, E.H. (1961) *What is History?* (London: Penguin), pp.14-21.
- Wisam Alshaihi (2017) *Remembering for Others: Archives, Intelligence, and Memory in the New Iraq*. Manuscript on *Canvas*.
- Marc Parry (2016) "Uncovering the brutal truth about the British empire" *The Guardian* August 18. *Canvas*.
- Ian Cobain and Richard Norton-Taylor (2012) "Sins of Colonialists lay concealed for decades in secret archive," *The Guardian*, 18 April.
- Anthony Badger (2012) "Historians, a legacy of suspicion and the migrated archives," *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, 23:4-5, 799-807. *Canvas*.
- Hugh Trevor-Roper (1979) "The Papal Papers," *New York Review of Books* May 31. *Canvas*.
- Rachel Donadio (2007) "The Iron Archives," *The New York Times*, April 22. *Canvas*.
- David Zeitlyn (2012) "Anthropology in and of the Archives: Possible Futures and Contingent Pasts. Archives as Anthropological Surrogates," *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 41, pp. 461-80.

January 30 (Week 3) Archival accessibility and organization

- Mark A. Greene and Dennis Meissner, "More Product, less Process: Revamping traditional archival processing," *The American Archivist*, 68, (Fall/Winter 2005), pp.208-263. .
- Terry Cook (2013) "Evidence, memory, identity, and community: four shifting archival paradigms," *Archival Science* 13, pp. 95-120. *Canvas*.

One especially good resource for learning about the practicalities of using foreign archives, as well as their holdings, is the website "Fresh from the Archives," which contains dozens of recent reviews of foreign archives in Europe, Asia, Latin America and North America written by faculty and graduate students. You should read at least two of the reviews at <http://dissertationreviews.org/fresh-from-the-archives>.

For a sense of how detailed finding guides from deeply resources archives can be, read *one* of the following finding guides from Yale and (in *Canvas*) the John Rylands Library:

- Margaret M. Wright, "The Military Papers 1940-48, of Field-Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck, A Calendar and Index" *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, Manchester, 70, 2, (1988). *Canvas*

- Thomas Thistlewood Papers 1750-86 (Jamaica Plantation owner) Finding Guide at <http://drs.library.yale.edu/fedora/get/beinecke:thistle/PDF>
- David Low Papers (GEN MSS 96) Finding Guide at <http://drs.library.yale.edu/fedora/get/beinecke:low/PDF>.
- Rochambeau Papers (GEN MSS 146) Finding Guide at <http://drs.library.yale.edu/fedora/get/beinecke:rochamb/PDF>
- Richard Charles Lee Papers (GEN MSS 318) Finding Guide at <http://drs.library.yale.edu/fedora/get/mssa:ms.0318/PDF>
- Dean Gooderham Acheson Papers (GEN MSS 1087 <http://drs.library.yale.edu/fedora/get/mssa:ms.1087/PDF>)
- John Lindsay Papers (MSS 592) <http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0592>
- Chester Bowles Papers (MSS 628) <http://drs.library.yale.edu/fedora/get/mssa:ms.0628/PDF>

I also recommend you read *two* of the following reviews to get a sense of some of the challenges that exist in gaining access to archives in some countries, as well as issues of preservation and organization:

- Ali Usman Qasmi, “A Review of Three Archives in Pakistan,” <http://dissertationreviews.org/archives/12520>
- Samuel Aniegye Ntewusu, “The Banana and Peanut Archive of Ghana,” *History in Africa*, 44, June 2017, pp.285-94
- Alois Maderspacher “The National Archives of Cameroon in Yaounde and Buea,” *History in Africa*, Vol. 36 (2009), pp. 453-460 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/40864530.pdf>.
- Kathryn Barrett-Gaines and Lynn Khadiagala “Finding What You Need in Uganda’s Archives,” *History in Africa*, Vol. 27 (2000), pp. 455-470 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/3172127.pdf>.

February 6 (Week 4) How to use the Yale Archives and Manuscripts: Tutorial Session with Yale Archivists

- *Location: Gates Classroom in Manuscripts and Archives is reserved from 9:15 to 11:30.*
- The session will be led by Michael Brenes, Yale’s Senior Archivist for American Diplomacy. Look at this site in advance: [Yale research guide](#).

This class will use the following archives:

- Right Wing Pamphlet Collection
- State Department Related: House, Polk, Edward, Bullitt and Vance
- War Posters Collection (Spanish American War)
- Kissinger Archives (with permission).

The format for the class will be as follows:

- 20 minute presentation on how to find archival collections, finding aids etc., at Yale University
- 1 hour for students to work with individual finding aids and a box from that collection
- 40 minutes for students to give a quick presentation or sharing of what they found, what was interesting, what was unexpected, etc.

February 13 (Week 5) Finding your archives and files remotely and using your time in the most productive way possible

An increasing number of archives are available remotely and digitally. Many finding guides and secondary works can also increase the efficiency with which you use your scarce time in the archives. This session will focus on how to make use of these resources. Good sites to start include:

- Digital Archival Search Resources UK Archives Hub This is a cooperative enterprise that lists, in greater (multi-level) or lesser detail, the holdings of 330 UK Archives, in a searchable format <https://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/>
- Archives Library Information Center (ALIC) This is a clearinghouse and searchable set of databases describing US National Archives Records. <https://www.archives.gov/research/alic/tools/online-databases.html>
- David J. Mengel, Access to United States Government Records at the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, *Access to US Records*.

February 20 (Week 6) How to actually do archival research, record what you do, and collect and record data

- How to use finding binders/records, request materials and record data
- Andrew Moravcsik, “Transparency, the Revolution in Qualitative Research,” *PS* January 2014, pp.48-53 <https://www.princeton.edu/~amoravcs/library/transparency.pdf>.
- Evan S. Lieberman (2010) “Bridging the Qualitative-Quantitative Divide: Best Practices in the Development of Historically Oriented Replication Databases,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 13, pp. 3759.

- Arlette Farge, *The Allure of the Archives* (New Haven: Yale 2015), Extracts on *Canvas*.

February 27 (Week 7) Student Presentations on First Assignment

- Students will present, for 15 minutes each, on their main findings from the first assignment.

March 6 (Week 8)

- Students will present, for 15 minutes each, on their main findings from the first assignment.

–Yale Spring Break March 9-25 2018–

March 27 (Week 9) Big Data and Using Digital Archives ¹

One excellent resource on this issue is the History Lab Site hosted at Columbia University <http://history-lab.org/>.

- Michael Weaver, Manuscript using Big Data on racial violence in the USA. *Canvas*
- Michael S. Moss and Tim J. Gollins, “Our Digital Legacy: an Archival Perspective,” *Journal of Contemporary Archival Studies*, 4,3, (2017) pp.1-29. *Canvas*.
- Renato Rocha Souza, Flavio Codeo Coelho, Rohan Shah, Matthew Connelly, “Using Artificial Intelligence to Identify State Secrets,” manuscript 2017 <https://arxiv.org/ftp/arxiv/papers/1611/1611.00356.pdf>.
- *The Trump Twitter Archive*.
- [Perma.cc](http://perma.cc) and [Wayback](http://wayback.org) archive website content that may no longer be “live.”
- Documenting the Arab Spring at *Vox Populi, Archiving a Revolution in the Digital Age*
- *The Total Archive*, *Limn*, 6, March 2016

April 3 (Week 10) How the same archives and files can generate different research findings

- Daniel Goldhagen. 1996. *Hitler’s Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf). *Canvas*.
- Browning, Christopher. 1998. *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*. 1st ed. with a new afterword (New York: Harper). *Canvas*.
- US Holocaust Memorial Museum, “The Ordinary Men/Hitler’s Willing Executioners” debate, Selections from the Symposium April 8 1996.

¹My thanks to Liam Andrew at *The Texas Tribune* for some of the digital archive suggestions.

- Kreuzer, Markus. 2014. “The Structure of Description: Elements of Analyzing and Criteria for Evaluating Historical Evidence.” Paper prepared for Presentation at the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C. August 27-31, 2014. *Canvas*.

April 10 (Week 11) (Second tutorial session on non-Yale archives and Digital Archives)

- Session with James Kessenides, Yale’s Kaplanoff Librarian for American History, focusing especially on digital resources.
- Exploration of Kissinger Archive (requires permission)

April 17 (Week 12) How much history and archival research is enough?

- Steven Wilkinson, “Identifying the Effects of Colonial Institutions: The Role of History,” Manuscript presented at American Political Science Association annual conference, 2016. *Canvas*.
- Abhijit Banerjee and Lakshmi Iyer, “History, Institutions and Economic Performance: The Legacy of Colonial Land Tenure Systems in India,” *The American Economic Review*, Vol. 95, No. 4 (Sep., 2005), pp. 1190-1213 *Canvas*.
- *APSA Section on International History and Politics Newsletter* 2016, 1,2, “Roundtable Discussion on the DA-RT,” *Canvas*.
- Extracts from *Life and correspondence of the Right Hon. Sir Bartle Frere, bart., G.C.B.F.R.S., etc.* (1927), by John Martineau including “Foreign Department Minute by Sir Bartle Frere on the subject of adoption as affecting successions in Native States,” *National Archives of India*, Foreign Department Proceedings June 1860 No.261 Part A

April 23 (Week 13)

- Student presentations on assignment three: archives meet data findings.
- Robert Dahl, *Who Governs?* (Yale University Press, 1961), extracts on *Canvas*.
- Extracts from Richard Charles Lee Papers (GEN MSS 318) Finding Guide at <http://drs.library.yale.edu/fedora/get/mssa:ms.0318/PDF>

–Yale Spring Classes End April 27 2018–