Course Syllabus

Time: tbd (3 hours/week)
Location: tbd
Instructor: Fiorella Foscarini
Office Phone: (416)-978-8295
Office Hours: Room BL 638 – tbd
Email Address: fiorella.foscarini@utoronto.ca

Course Description:
This course builds on the records management and archival principles and methods introduced in INF1330H and INF2175H. Based on concepts derived from diplomatics, genre studies, and structuration theory, the course aims at enabling students to understand the specific characteristics of records and their aggregations, the relationships between records creators, records forms and functions, and the evolution of the structure of information objects as socially constructed communicative actions. Digital preservation issues, with particular regard to strategies to protect the authenticity of electronic records, will also be central to the course. Students will also be exposed to different methodologies to study a record’s procedural context, from traditional functional and process analysis methods to more user-centred design approaches. In this regard, they will examine the main ideas involved in ‘Soft’ Systems Methodology and Adaptive Structuration Theory.

Course Goal and Objectives:
This course aims at providing students with an understanding of the formal and functional characteristics of records, their evolution through time, and the context of records creation and use.
Upon completion of the course, students will be able to demonstrate:
- understanding of the properties of records and their aggregations;
- ability to analyze documentary forms in relation to the functions performed by the records;
- ability to analyze organizational functions and work processes;
- understanding of how records creators and users change the structure of information objects while using them;
- knowledge of digital preservation issues;
- understanding of the course topics listed below.

Course Topics:
- diplomatic concepts and methods, including:
  - nature and characteristics of records and records aggregations,
  - juridical system, facts and acts,
  - persons concurring to the formation of records,
  - elements of documentary form,
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• relationship between form and function,
• business procedures and documentary processes;
• diplomatics of contemporary records, including:
  o characteristics and typologies of digital records,
  o digital preservation challenges and current strategies;
• evolution of documentary structures as genres;
• function and business analysis:
  o ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ methodologies;
• relationship between technology and organizational change.

Format of the Course:
The class meets for three hours each week. The format of the course consists of lectures, class discussions, in-class activities, guest-speaker presentations, student presentations, and other assignments.

Course Website:
Course documents are available electronically through Blackboard. Please check Blackboard periodically for newly posted materials including syllabus updates, lecture notes, assignments, or announcements.

Textbook:

Evaluation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. In-class test (review of diplomatic concepts)</td>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Student presentations</td>
<td>Weeks 9-10</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Final paper</td>
<td>Week 12</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Class Participation</td>
<td>Throughout</td>
<td>10%</td>
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Assignment 1:
The in-class test will be based on all diplomatic concepts and methods covered in the first five weeks. Students will be asked to provide definitions and to make a diplomatic analysis of the basic structure of a record.

Evaluation criteria: Accuracy, logic, and comprehensiveness.

Length: 3 hours
Requirements: Students are not allowed to use any examination aids.

Assignment 2:
Students will make in-class presentations (either individual or in pairs, depending on the number of students) on a topic covered to date.

Evaluation criteria: Presentations will be graded on each presenter’s ability to summarize the topic logically and concisely, to make connections with other topics
discussed in class, to demonstrate critical analysis of the issues involved, and to generate interest in the topic. The grade will be specific to the individual. If presentations are made in pairs, a Statement of Responsibility summarizing the contributions made by each group member to the assignment will be drafted and signed off by both group members. 

**Length:** 15 minutes, including set-up time and time for questions. 

**Format and other requirements:** Students are free to choose the format of their presentation. Students are expected to make their individual contributions available to the entire class as handouts on the day they are presenting.

**Assignment 3:**
Students will agree on the topic of their final paper with the instructor, based on the issues discussed in class or any other issue that may have emerged from their readings. The instructor will provide suggestions for topics if students require so. 

**Evaluation criteria:** The paper will be graded on evidence of a critical analysis of the topic, relevant content, use of appropriate sources, organization of the material into a coherent structure, and clear style. 

**Length:** 2,500-3,500 words. 

**Format and other requirements:** The paper should be submitted in hard copy. The font to be used is 12-point and pages should be double-spaced. Students are expected to provide references for all sources/quotes they may include in their papers, and to comply with the University policy on plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty.

**Class Participation:**
Regular participation in class activities and discussions are expected.

**General Rules**

**Format of Written Assignments:**
Papers must be formatted in 12-point font, double spacing with one-inch margins.

**Submission of Assignments:**
Please submit your assignments in paper format. Electronic submissions are acceptable in exceptional circumstances (e.g., illness).

**Late Assignments:**
Unless the instructor and student have reached a prior agreement, late assignments will be reduced by one grade point (e.g., from A to A-, from B+ to B) for each week to a maximum of two weeks. Thereafter assignments will not be accepted.

**Extensions within the Term:**
Requests for extensions must be submitted to the instructor by email before the due date. The instructor may ask that requests for extensions be supported by appropriate documentation.

**Extensions beyond the End of Term:**
Extensions beyond the term in which the course is taken are subject to guidelines established by the School of Graduate Studies (SGS). Please see: http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/informationfor/students/track/extsn.htm.

Grading:
Please consult the iSchool’s official interpretation of letter grades and the University’s policy on Graduate Grading and Evaluation Practices. These will form the basis for grading in the course.

Writing support:
The SGS Office of English Language and Writing Support provides writing support for graduate students. The services are designed to target the needs of both native and non-native speakers of English and include non-credit courses, single-session workshops, individual writing consultations, and website resources. These programs are free. Please avail yourself of these services, if necessary.

Academic Integrity:
Please consult the University’s site on Academic Integrity. The iSchool has a zero-tolerance policy on plagiarism as defined in section B.I. 1. (d) of the University’s Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. You should acquaint yourself with the Code and Appendix “A” Section 2. Please review the material you covered in Cite it Right and, if necessary, consult the site How Not to Plagiarize.

Accommodation of students with disabilities:
Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability or health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Accessibility Services Office as soon as possible. The Accessibility Services staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations. The sooner you let them and/or me know your needs, the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.
## Course Outline

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<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic:</strong></td>
<td>Introduction to the course. Review of concepts of records and archives.</td>
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<td><strong>Readings:</strong></td>
<td>No readings assigned.</td>
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<th>Week 2</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Topic:</strong></td>
<td>Diplomastics: Nature and characteristics of records and records aggregations.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Readings:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Required:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Recommended:</strong></td>
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<th>Week 3</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Topic:</strong></td>
<td>Diplomastics: Juridical system, facts and acts; Persons concurring to the formation of records; Public and private records.</td>
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<td><strong>Readings:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Required:</strong></td>
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<th>Week 4</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Topic:</strong></td>
<td>Diplomastics: Elements of documentary form; Structure of traditional records.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Readings:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Required:</strong></td>
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### Week 5
**Topic:** Diplomatics: Relationship between form and function; Business procedures and documentary processes.

**Readings:**

### Week 6
**Topic:** In-class Test: Review of diplomatic concepts.
**Readings:** No readings assigned.

### Week 7
**Topic:** Diplomatics of contemporary records. Digital preservation issues.

**Readings:**

**Recommended:**

### Week 8
**Topic:** Genre theory: Genres as communicative actions and their evolution

**Readings:**

**Recommended:**
**Week 9**

**Topic:** Functional analysis / Process analysis: ‘Hard’ approaches.

**Presentations (group 1)**

**Readings:**
- **Required:**

**Week 10**

**Topic:** Alternative approaches to the study of the records context: ‘Soft’ Systems Methodology.

**Presentations (group 2)**

**Readings:**
- **Required:**
- **Recommended:**

**Week 11**

**Topic:** Analysis of the relationship between technology and organizational change. The structurational approach.

**Readings:**
- **Required:**
Week 12
Final paper due

Readings: Required:

Recommended:

Week 13
Topic: Course wrap-up.
Readings: No readings assigned.