INF 389E: Introduction to Records Management

INSTRUCTOR:
Professor: Ciaran B. Trace
Email: cbtrace@ischool.utexas.edu
Phone: 512-232-3508
Office: 5.452
Office Hours: Thursday, 12:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

TEACHING ASSISTANT:
Michael McFarlin, mcfarlin@ischool.utexas.edu

COURSE MEETING TIMES:
Thursdays, 9:00 am to noon, UTA 1.204

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:
Records Management is the “field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records…” (ISO 15489-1:2001, clause 3.16). This course will provide an introduction to the principles and practices involved in managing records (both paper and electronic) in private and public sector organizations.

By the end of the course students will be able to:
• Articulate what records are (whether in paper or in electronic form)
• Understand and analyze why people, organizations, and governments create and keep records
• Understand and analyze the impact (practical, economic and social) that records management has in organizational environments and government settings
• Identify traditional and emerging roles and responsibilities of the records manager, and articulate the similarities and differences between a records manager and other information professionals (such as archivists, librarians, digital curators)
• Understand and analyze the practical, legal, and ethical issues involved in implementing a records management program
• Understand and articulate policies and procedures for managing active and inactive records (in paper and in electronic form)
• Gain firsthand experience of designing an effective electronic record keeping system
• Understand the tools and national and international standards that enable records managers to carry out their job in a competent and comprehensive manner.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Class Lectures/Discussion

Students are expected to complete all course requirements and readings, meet stated deadlines, and attend all scheduled classes. Students are expected to be knowledgeable about the topic being discussed on the basis of readings and to participate in discussion. Students are encouraged to share any additional references to recent literature that they have found useful with the class.

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Record Keeping Report

The DIRKS (Designing and Implementing Recordkeeping Systems) methodology is an 8-step process designed to help organizations improve their management of records and information.

- preliminary investigation (Step A)
- analysis of business activity (Step B)
- identification of recordkeeping requirements (Step C)
- assessment of existing systems (Step D)
- identification of strategies for recordkeeping (Step E)
- design of a recordkeeping system (Step F)
- implementation of a recordkeeping system (Step G), and
- post-implementation review (Step H)


In this assignment you will work in groups of 3 or 4 to use the National Archives of Australia’s DIRKS methodology to examine, document, and suggest improvements for the personal electronic record keeping systems of one of the members of your group. In using the DIRKS approach your ultimate goal is to develop products and tools to support good recordkeeping including:

- documented recordkeeping requirements
- a “functions source document” for each function
- a business and records classification scheme
- a records disposal schedule, and
- guidance on the development of appropriate policies and procedures to support personal records and information management

For the purposes of this assignment each group is expected to complete the first
six steps only (A-F). At each step you should document your research in a structured fashion to help you in writing the final report. As the DIRKS methodology has been created as a tool for organizations and not individuals, you will need a certain amount of flexibility and creative thinking to adapt these steps for your assignment. The ability of the group to grapple with, and think through, these issues will form a part of the final grade for this assignment. Further details about this assignment will be provided the first week of class.

Sections of the DIRKS report should be completed according to the following timetable:
• DIRKS blueprint - finish by week 3 (February 4th).
• Preliminary investigation (Step A) - finish by week 5 (February 18th).
• Analysis of business activity (Step B) AND identification of recordkeeping requirements (Step C) - finish by week 8 (March 11th).
• Assessment of existing systems (Step D) - finish by week 10 (March 25th).
• Identification of strategies for recordkeeping (Step E) - finish by week 12 (April 8th).
• Design of a recordkeeping system (Step F) - finish by week 14 (April 22nd).

Due Date for final report: Week 16 (May 6th)

Grading Criteria for the DIRKS Assignment:
• Ability of the group to grapple with, and think through, DIRKS to come up with a final product
  o Level of engagement with the process of undertaking the first 6 steps of DIRKS such that the final report covers all the key content
  o Ability to plan specifically for electronic records and to investigate the use of technology as a tool to help undertake the DIRKS assignment
  o Depth of analysis demonstrated in the final report
  o Level and quality of work each individual contributed to the assignment
  o Flexibility and creative thinking in adapting DIRKS to a personal electronic recordkeeping environment
• Research documented in a thorough and structured fashion with good use of visuals and tables as necessary.
• Writing style and mechanics (clarity of expression, good sentence structure, grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc).

2. Book Review
Students will individually write a review of a book that relates to the theme of this class -
records and recordkeeping. A good place to look for appropriate books is the SAA (http://www.archivists.org/catalog/index.asp) and ARMA publications catalog (http://www.arma.org/bookstore/). By the beginning of class in week 2 please email me the name of the book you want to review. Please note that you cannot review a book that you have already read for another SI class. The book review should conform to the Society of American Archivists’ guidelines for writing a book review:

- Reviews should be approximately 1,500 words in length
- Reviewer must identify title, author or editor(s), city of publication, publisher, date of publication, numbers of pages, ISBN number (properly formatted), cloth or paper, and price
- **Short** summary of the book
  - Briefly discuss the author’s credentials and background
  - Describe the contents of the book - do not retell the story but provide an overview and summary
- Critical discussion and conclusion
  - Discuss your reaction to the book
  - Evaluate the book’s strengths and weaknesses
  - Discuss the book within an archival and records management context, its relationship to archives and records management and its significance for the discipline
  - Compare the book to similar works
  - Respond to the author’s thesis and opinions
  - Evaluate the book as a whole in terms of its usefulness to archivists and records managers and users of records and archival materials
- Do not focus on minor typographical or factual errors unless the work is significantly compromised

**Grading Criteria for the Book Review Assignment:**
- Structure and coherency
  - Inclusion of the required components of a book review as listed above (including an introduction, a short summary of the book, a substantial critical discussion, and a conclusion)
  - Coherent paragraphs and good transitions.
- Depth of analysis
  - Discussion of both strengths and weaknesses of the book (content and approach), as well as what is new in the book
  - Arguments well supported and the analysis clear and logical
• Writing style and mechanics
  o Clarity of expression, good sentence structure, grammar, spelling, punctuation
• Ability to personalize the review as well as apply it to the archives and records management field in general

**Due Date:** (Week 6 – Thursday, February 25\(^{th}\)).

3. **Class Participation**

This is an introductory class covering all aspects of the records management profession and will be mostly lecture based. However, opportunities will be provided in class for students to discuss the material and the instructor will call upon students in class to summarize key aspects of the weekly readings. Students will also be given time in most of the weekly classes to work on the DIRKS assignment. In grading for class participation I will take into consideration student attendance, and each individual’s contribution to class discussions, use of the resources posted to Blackboard, and engagement with the process of working on the DIRKS assignment during class time.

**EVALUATION:**

DIRKS: 70% (grade will be equally split between individual contributions submitted during the semester AND the final grade given at the end of the semester for the overall group project)

Book Review: 20%

Class Participation: 10%

I will use the following schedule as the basis for calculating grades: A = 95-100, A- = 89-94, B+ = 84-88, B = 79-83, B- = 74-79, C+ = 69-73, C = 64-68, C- = 60-63, F = <60. For each day that an assignment is late, ten percent of the possible points will be deducted from the score.

**EXTRA CREDIT:** Students have the opportunity to earn up to an additional 5 points (5%). Extra credit can be earned in two ways. (1) Students can earn extra credit by completing an additional individual mini-project for the DIRKS assignment. This mini-project involves using the InterPARES “Creator Guidelines: Making and Maintaining Digital Materials: Guidelines for Individuals” and the PARADIGM “Guidelines for Creators of Personal Digital Archives” as the inspiration and as the basis for creating your own short recordkeeping guidelines for any one application that relies on cloud computing (such as Google Docs, Gmail, Twitter, Facebook, etc). (2) During the semester the students who turn in the best individual assignment for each step of the DIRKS project will also gain an
extra 1%. The most extra credit that any one student can earn during the course of the semester is 5 points (5%).

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:

RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOKS:

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

University of Texas Honor Code
The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

Documented Disability Statement
The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 232-2937 (video phone) or http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd

Use of E-Mail for Official Correspondence to Students
E-mail is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, you are responsible for reading your e-mail for university and course-related information and announcements. You are responsible to keep the university informed about changes to your e-mail address. You should check your e-mail regularly and frequently—I recommend daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-critical. You can find UT Austin’s policies and instructions for updating your e-mail address at http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php
Religious Holy Days

By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week One (Thursday, January 21st)

*Introductions, course objectives, assignments and expectations. The Records Environment.*

Questions for class this week: What are records and why are they important? How do records differ from other information objects? What is meant by the term “recordkeeping”? What is meant by the term “records management”?


Week Two (Thursday, January 28th)

*Understanding Records in More Depth – An Introduction to Diplomatics.* Questions for class this week: What are records? What do archivists consider to be the essential components and characteristics of records?

Week Three (Thursday, February 4th)

Electronic Records and the Changing Nature of Organizations, Technology and Communication. Questions for class this week: How and why has the changing nature of organizations, technology and communication impacted records and recordkeeping? What are electronic records? What are considered to be the essential components and characteristics of an electronic record? Why? How do electronic records differ in a structured environment, unstructured environment, and web environment? Why?


Week Four (Thursday, February 11th)

The Role of Records and Records Professionals in Society. Questions for class this week: Why are records professionals important to society? How long has the profession of records management been in existence? What are the differences and similarities between records managers and other information professionals? What does it mean to be an ethically responsible records manager?


industry standards and codes of practice that impact the practice of records management? Why are they important? What tools can records managers use to understand the context of their work?


**Week Six (Thursday, February 25th)**

**Creating and Capturing Records** – Including Selecting and Implementing Automated Records Management Systems. DoD5015.2-STD, UK Public Records Office *Functional Requirements for Electronic Records Management System*, and European Commission *Model Requirements for the Management of Electronic Records*). Questions for class this week: What is the difference between an electronic document management system, an electronic records management system, and an electronic content management system? What are the essential components of an ERMS from a records management perspective? What low tech solutions exist for managing electronic records if a company does not have an ERMS?


**Other Resources:**

- International: JISC’s (Joint Information Systems Committee) Electronic Records Management System Implementation Toolkit. [http://www.jiscinfonet.ac.uk/InfoKits/edrm](http://www.jiscinfonet.ac.uk/InfoKits/edrm)
Week Seven (Thursday, March 4th)

Classifying Records and Documenting their Context. Business classification schemes and records classifications schemes. Questions for class this week: What is meant by classification? Why are records classified and organized? What are the similarities and differences between the architecture of a paper based records system and an electronic records system? Why? What are the differences between a business classification scheme and a records classification scheme?

- Elizabeth Shephard and Geoffrey Yeo, Managing Records: A Handbook of Principles and Practice (Chapter 3: Classifying Records and Documenting their Context), pp. 72-100.

Other Resources:

Week Eight (Thursday, March 11th)

Making Appraisal and Retention Decisions. Appraisal theory, appraisal criteria, and retention decisions. Questions for class this week: What is a records retention/disposition program and how is it implemented? What are the benefits of having a records retention/disposition program? How does appraisal in the records management realm differ from appraisal as it is discussed in the archival literature?

Week Nine (Thursday, March 18th)

BREAK

Week Ten (Thursday, March 25th)

More about Metadata and Managing Email and Web Resources. Questions for class this week: What standards exist for recordkeeping metadata? Why are these standards important? Why is metadata such a key part of any recordkeeping system? Why is it important for organizations to have an email, IM, and web resources policy? What are the necessary components of such a policy? How can email, IM, and web resources be managed as a record?

• National Archives of Australia. Australian Government Email Metadata Standard.  

Other Resources:

Week Eleven (Thursday, April 1st)

Providing Access to Records. Questions for class this week: What principles, tools and techniques of information retrieval do records managers have to know in order to provide access to records? Why are these principles, tools, and techniques important? What are the legislative and other internal and external constraints that can govern access to records?


Week Twelve (Thursday, April 8th)
**Managing the Integrity of Records:** Including storage and preservation of records, records centers, vital records and disaster planning and recovery. Questions for class this week: Why is it important to safeguard the integrity of records? What steps can be taken to ensure the integrity of records? What are the advantages and disadvantages of the various imaging technologies we will be looking at in class today?


**Other Resources**


**Week Thirteen (Thursday, April 15th)**

**Running a Records Management Program.** Including the challenges of electronic records management, and the placement of records management services within organizations. Questions for class this week: What are some of the basic challenges involved in establishing and running a records management program? How can these challenges be overcome? What are the necessary components in the establishment of a records management program?

Week Fourteen (Thursday, April 22nd)

Records Management, Good Governance and Accountability. Questions for class this week:
What role does records management play worldwide in helping to empower people and to ensure good governance and accountability in a government and organizational context?


Week Fifteen (Thursday, April 29th)

Records Management and the Notion of the Archive (Corporate Archives and Long-term Preservation)

Corporate Archives and Digital Preservation. Questions for class this week: What is a corporate archive and what are its defining features? What current projects, standards and best practices do records professionals need to be aware of in order to be knowledgeable and ready to deal with digital preservation issues? Why are these projects, standards and best practices important?


Other Resources:


*Week Sixteen (Thursday, May 6th)*

*Class Wrap-up.*