

LIBR 2695: Introduction to Archives & Museums (Spring 2026)

Course section: W01 (online)

Term: January - April 2026

Platform: Brightspace

Instructor: Guy Robertson

Credits: 3

Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to the major aspects of archival and museum work. The approach to different topics will be practical and up-to-date, with respect to current employment standards and employers' expectations. Students will be made ready to deal with the challenges that archives and museums face, including physical and environmental risks and evolving economic circumstances. Course materials will encourage a strong service ethic.

Students will learn through 13 online sessions and the completion of assignments including memos, a portfolio, and a term paper. There will be a final examination.

General learning outcomes

Having completed this course, the student will be able to:

1. Identify and describe different kinds of archives and museums, including National Archives and Museums
2. Identify and work with different kinds of manuscripts
3. Appraise archival accessions and identify different kinds of museum artefacts
4. Arrange and describe archives in different organizations
5. Perform basic conservation of archival materials
6. Identify secure and environmentally appropriate storage containers and facilities for archives and museum artefacts
7. Organize photographic collections for conservation and display
8. Provide reference and research services in archives and museums
9. Assist in outreach and PR programs for archives and museums
10. Work with specialized museum collections to provide organization, cataloguing, and captioning of artefacts

Specific Learning outcomes and critical elements

1. Identify and describe different kinds of archives and museums, including National Archives and Museums

- Through course notes and readings, students will learn to recognize different kinds of archives and their purposes
- Through course notes and readings, students will learn to recognize different kinds of museums and their purposes
- Through course notes and assignments, students will determine the ways that they could work in archives and museums

The term paper and portfolio assignment can support these activities.

2. Identify and work with different kinds of manuscripts

- Through course readings and online searches, students will learn about manuscripts and their special features
- Through course readings and online searches, students will learn basic conservation measures for manuscripts and related fragile materials

One memo will support these activities.

3. Appraise archival accessions and identify different kinds of museum artefacts

- Through course notes and readings, students will learn the basic forms of archival appraisal, including historical and financial
- Through course notes and readings, students will develop skills in artefact identification and valuation

The portfolio and possibly one memo will support these activities.

4. Arrange and describe archives in different organizations

- Through course notes and readings, students will learn to arrange and describe archival materials

- Through course notes and readings, students will learn to describe archives for the purposes of different kinds of researchers

Preparation for the final examination will support these activities.

5. Perform basic conservation of archival materials

- Through course notes and readings, students will learn to identify standard conservations problems and challenges

- Through course notes and readings, students will learn to stabilize the condition of damaged archival and museum materials, and to assist in continuing conservation programs

The portfolio and possibly the term paper will support these activities, as will the preparation for the final examination.

6. Identify secure and environmentally appropriate storage containers and facilities for archives and museum artefacts

- Through course readings and online searches, students will learn to select proper storage containers (including acid-free files, etc.) for archives and museum artefacts

- Through course readings and online investigations, students will learn to identify secure long-term physical storage facilities for archival materials and museum collections

The portfolio and preparation for the final examination will support these activities.

7. Organize photographic collections for conservation and display

- Through course notes and readings, students will learn the basics of conserving photographs displayed in different venues

- Through course notes and readings, students will learn appropriate security measures for photographs on display

Preparation for the final examination will support these activities. It is possible that the Term Paper and the Portfolio assignment could do so as well.

8. Provide reference and research services in archives and museums

- Through course notes and readings, as well as online discussions, students will learn to provide basic (or ready) reference services in archives, including those in municipal and special institutions

- Through course notes and readings, students will learn to provide basic research services in archives and museums

Participation in online discussions and preparation for the final examination will support these activities.

9. Assist in outreach and PR programs for archives and museums

- Through course notes, readings, and participation in online discussions, students will learn basic forms of outreach for archives and museums

- Through readings and online discussions, students will learn basic public relations (PR) measures for archives and museums

Participation in online discussions and preparation for the final examination will support these activities. As well, some students may choose aspects of outreach and public relations for their Term Paper or Portfolio.

10. Work with specialized museum collections to provide organization, cataloguing, and captioning of artefacts

- Through course notes, readings, and online searches, students will learn about different kinds of specialized museums, e.g. science, natural history, design, art, and medical

- Through course notes, readings, and online searches, students will learn about the challenges and risks that specialized museums face

Participation in online discussions and preparation for the final examination will support these activities. Some students might elect to write about a specialized museum for their Term Papers.

Assignments and assessment

Students will be assessed on the basis of:

- Participation (10%)
- Term paper (25%)
- 2 memos (20%)
- Archival or museum equipment portfolio (20%)
- Final examination (25%)

Note: Students must submit **all** assignments and the final examination to receive credit for LIBR 2695.

Policies:

As a student at Langara College, you are responsible for familiarizing yourself and complying with the following policies:

[E1003 - Student Code of Conduct](#)

[F1004 - Code of Academic Conduct](#)

[E2008 - Academic Standing - Academic Probation and Academic Suspension](#)

[E2006 - Appeal of Final Grade](#)

[F1002 - Concerns about Instruction](#)

[E2011 - Withdrawal from Courses](#)

[B5003 - Copyright Compliance](#)