INF 393C: Introduction to Paper Conservation
Spring 2021
Unique Number: 28545

Instructor: Sarah Norris
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Course Meeting Times
Tuesdays, 9 AM - 12 PM

Course Description
Conservation is the practice of prolonging the lifetime of cultural materials, often with a focus on physical intervention. This course will introduce ethical principles of conservation; conservation documentation; and hands-on treatment techniques. Students will become familiar with conservation materials and tools. Decision-making exercises will explore the practical application of conservation ethics in paper-based collections. Hands-on treatment techniques will focus on methods offering the greatest and most accessible benefit with minimal materials. These will include dry cleaning, humidification and flattening, mending, and others.

Learning Objectives
By the end of this course, students should be able to:

● Practice basic lab protocol
● Become familiar with conservation materials and tools
● Understand conservation ethical tenets and philosophical dilemmas
● Engage in treatment decision making
● Create written and photographic treatment documentation
● Build customized item enclosures
● Practice hands-on treatment skills, such as dry cleaning, humidification and flattening, and mending
Course Requirements
There are no prerequisites for this class. Students are expected to attend all classes and complete all reading assignments before each class meeting. There will be at least one off-site class meeting.

Tools and Materials
Students will be provided with a tool kit for use during the semester. The tool kit must be returned in good condition at the end of the semester. Treatments will be performed on a variety of collection and non-collection materials. Most materials will be provided by the instructor, but students are welcome to bring in materials from their personal collections to augment class assignments. Students may be responsible to supply some materials, such as small books for enclosures.

Lab Use
Students will have key card access to 1.506 (lab anteroom) at all times UTA is open. Please use this room respectfully. It is recommended as a quiet place to read, study, or hold small meetings. Please do not remove reading materials from the room.

Students are welcome to use the Paper Lab (1.506B) during lab hours and office hours. These hours will be posted on the doors to the anteroom by the end of the first week of class. The lab has equipment, microscopes, and tools. Students may use these with the explicit permission and training from the instructor.

Lab Rules
Labs can pose physical and chemical dangers. For the safety of yourself, your classmates, and the collections materials, please observe the following rules:

- No food or drink is allowed in the lab.
- Do not touch your face, especially your eyes, while working in a lab.
- Do not put your hands in your mouth when working in a lab.
- Closed-toed shoes must be worn at all times.
- No high heels.
- Shorts are discouraged.
- Small children are not allowed in labs. Older, well-behaved, supervised children are allowed to visit for tours.
- Personal protective equipment must be worn as appropriate.
- Eye protection must be worn when working with power tools. Failure to adhere to this rule will result in an F for the course.
- Loose clothing and long hair must be tied back when working with power tools or blades.
- Do not use any equipment unless you have been properly trained and have received permission.
- The first aid kit is on top of the flat files to the right of the utility sink in the paper lab. It has band-aids.
- Eyewash stations are mounted on the utility sinks in the paper and book labs. They are flushed weekly.
- Emergency showers are located near the utility sinks in both labs.
- Do not open any cabinet or drawer unless you have been given permission.
- Do not borrow tools without permission.
- All tools must be cleaned and all materials put away before leaving the lab area.
- The lab should be cleaner when you leave it than it was when you arrived. You may not have made the mess, but you are responsible as part of your class team for keeping the labs clean.
- Please use pencil, not pen, for writing and note-taking. (Just like you would in a special collections reading room.)

**Assignments**

Please submit all assignments via Canvas unless otherwise instructed. All assignments are due by the beginning of class on the due date. If you have a legitimate reason for an assignment to be late, please discuss with me as early as possible.

*OH 201 Lab Safety course (%)*  
View online at [https://ehs.utexas.edu/training/training-courses.php](https://ehs.utexas.edu/training/training-courses.php)

*Treatment Proposal (%)*  
The treatment proposal is the first section of your treatment report. Include title and identifying information for your item; item description; item condition; treatment objectives; treatment proposal, and proposed testing, if needed.

*Before Treatment Photodocumentation (%)*  
Before treatment photodocumentation visually documents the condition of your item before treatment. This is the reference by which you will evaluate whether your work creates the intended (and only the intended) impact. These photographs may also be examined by collections managers and patrons to understand an item’s previous condition. Photos will be evaluated for clarity and completeness in their depiction of condition issues.

*Sink Mat (%)*  
Students will build a sink mat appropriate for long-term storage of an artwork with depth or dimensionality. In addition to modeling a useful housing structure, this assignment introduces conservation materials and hand skills. Assignment evaluation will consider squareness and alignment of closed mat, opening action, squareness and alignment of filler boards, fit of filler boards around artwork, attachment of artwork to backing board, and overall clean workmanship and aesthetic presentation.

*Final Treatment Report (%)*  
Building upon your treatment proposal and before treatment photodocumentation, this report should serve as the full document of your work on your treatment item. New material in this assignment includes any testing required, treatment description, treatment assessment, during treatment photography, and after treatment photography.

*Participation (%)*
Students are responsible for participating in class discussions and engaging in hands-on practice. Students should initiate discussions to clarify technical skills and should make efforts to learn from the experiences of fellow classmates working on different physical materials.

**Evaluation**

I will use the following schedule as the basis for calculating grades:  
- A=95-100, A-=89-<95, B+=84-<89, B=79-<84, B-=74-<79, C+=69-<74, C=64-<69, C-=60-<64, F=<60. Grades will be reduced by 2 points for every day they are late unless prior arrangements have been made.

**Required Texts**

There are no required texts for this class.

**Announcements**

**University of Texas Honor Code**

Every student is expected to abide by The University of Texas Honor Code, which should be read and understood before taking any class. It can be found here:  

**Policy on Academic Integrity**

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. You may fail the course, and/or be dismissed from the School of Information and/or the University if you are found plagiarizing. UT has a tutorial describing plagiarism here: [http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/learningmodules/plagiarism/](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/learningmodules/plagiarism/)

**Documented Disability Statement**

A student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 512-471-6259 (voice) or 512-232-2937 (video phone) or [http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/](http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/) Please let me know about anything that will help you succeed whether or not it is related to any disability.

**Use of email for official correspondence**

Email is recognized as an official mode of University correspondence. You are expected to maintain ongoing, current familiarity with class communications via email, and to contact me for any needed clarification.

**Land Acknowledgement**

We acknowledge that the iSchool sits on indigenous land. The Tonkawa lived in central Texas and the Comanche and Apache moved through this area. Today, various indigenous peoples from all over the globe visit Austin and/or call it home. We are grateful to be able to study and learn on this piece of Turtle Island. Since some of our classes are online, you may be contributing from other tribal lands. Here is a map that may help you in identifying the indigenous peoples of the land on which you study: [https://native-land.ca/](https://native-land.ca/)

**Religious Holy Days**

You must notify me at least 14 days in advance of any absence or accommodation for a religious holy day. We will determine an appropriate substitute on a case by case basis.
Title IX Reporting
Beginning January 1, 2020, Texas Senate Bill 212 requires all employees of Texas universities, including faculty, report any information to the Title IX Office regarding sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking that is disclosed to them. Texas law requires that all employees who witness or receive any information of this type (including, but not limited to, writing assignments, class discussions, or one-on-one conversations) must be reported. If you would like to speak with someone who can provide support or remedies without making an official report to the university, please email advocate@austin.utexas.edu. For more information about reporting options and resources, visit http://www.titleix.utexas.edu/, contact the Title IX Office via email at titleix@austin.utexas.edu, or call 512-471-0419.

Class Recordings
Online class sessions will be recorded in Zoom. Class recordings are reserved only for the use of members of this class (students and the instructor) and only for educational purposes. Recordings should not be shared outside the class in any form. Violation of this restriction could lead to Student Misconduct proceedings.

Sharing of Course Materials is Prohibited
No materials used in this class, including, but not limited to, lecture hand-outs, videos, assessments (quizzes, exams, papers, projects, homework assignments), in-class materials, review sheets, and additional problem sets, may be shared online or with anyone outside of the class unless you have my explicit, written permission. Unauthorized sharing of materials promotes cheating. It is a violation of the University’s Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty. I am well aware of the sites used for sharing materials, and any materials found online that are associated with you, or any suspected unauthorized sharing of materials, will be reported to Student Conduct and Academic Integrity in the Office of the Dean of Students. These reports can result in sanctions, including failure in the course.

COVID-19 and Our Class
To help control the spread of COVID-19, this class will meet almost totally online. Two campus visits will be required: one at the beginning of the semester, to pick up a supply kit; and one at the end of the semester, to return the supply kit. We will schedule curbside pickup and drop-off sessions. Please remember to wear a mask when you visit campus.

Online class sessions will take place on the Canvas platform (canvas.utexas.edu), where class meetings are scheduled in Zoom. Please familiarize yourself with Canvas and Zoom before the first day of class. Please also observe the following guidelines to help Zoom sessions go smoothly:

- Close applications that will distract you during class (e-mail, social media, etc.)
- Use a headset or earbuds with a microphone, if possible.
- Mute yourself when not speaking.

Safety and Class Participation/Masks
We will all need to make some adjustments in order to benefit from in-person classroom interactions in a safe and healthy manner. Our best protections against spreading COVID-19 on
campus are masks (defined as cloth face coverings) and staying home if you are showing symptoms. Therefore, for the benefit of everyone, this means that all students are required to follow these important rules.

_Every student must wear a cloth face covering properly in class and in all campus buildings at all times._ If a student is not wearing a cloth face covering properly in the classroom (or any UT building), that student must leave the classroom (and building). If the student refuses to wear a cloth face covering, class will be dismissed for the remainder of the period, and the student will be subject to disciplinary action as set forth in the university’s Institutional Rules/General Conduct 11-404(a)(3). Students who have a condition that precludes the wearing of a cloth face covering must follow the procedures for [obtaining an accommodation](#) working with Services for Students with Disabilities.

For the safety of our community, every student is strongly encouraged to do daily symptom screening, which is available using the Protect Texas Together app. Once the symptom screening is completed, it will inform students whether they are cleared to come to campus. Students should only come to campus if the symptom screening app clears them to do so. Otherwise, students should isolate and contact a medical professional for further guidance before coming to campus again.

Information regarding safety protocols with and without symptoms can be [found here](#).

**COVID Reporting**
To help keep everyone at UT and in our community safe, it is critical that students report COVID-19 symptoms and testing, regardless of test results, to [University Health Services](#), and faculty and staff report to the HealthPoint Occupational Health Program (OHP) as soon as possible. Please see this [link](#) to understand what needs to be reported. In addition, to help understand what to do if a fellow student in the class (or the instructor or TA) tests positive for COVID, see this [University Health Services link](#).

**Course Schedule** [https://registrar.utexas.edu/calendars/20-21](https://registrar.utexas.edu/calendars/20-21)

**Week 1: week of 1/19**

_**Introduction**_
- Assign OH201 Lab Safety Course, due Week 2
- Introduce class and syllabus
- Tour lab; become acquainted with lab safety and protocol
- Inspect tool kits and discuss usage and safety of included tools
- Dexterity test

_**Readings**_
Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum. “A Conservator’s Tools.” Accessed August 2020 at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bonOsv1i3Ns](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bonOsv1i3Ns)


Week 2: week of 1/26
Assignment due: Complete OH 201 Lab Safety course
Historical Papers and Media; Item Description
-Assign Treatment Proposal, due Week 5
-View examples of handmade and machine-made papers
-View examples of writing and printing inks
-View examples of basic print processes
-Introductory examination of students’ items for treatment; begin drafting item description section of Treatment Proposal (due Week 5.)

Readings


Image Permanence Institute. *Graphics Atlas*. Viewed September 2020 at http://www.graphicsatlas.org/ Select the “Identification” tab and focus especially on the pre-photographic processes (intaglio, planographic, and relief.) Feel free to read more about the photomechanical and photographic processes of interest to you.

Week 3: week of 2/2
Philosophy and Decision Making; Treatment Objectives
-Reversibility
- Minimal intervention
- Restoration vs. conservation
- Case studies
- Brainstorm treatment objectives for students’ items for treatment; begin drafting treatment objectives section of Treatment Proposal (due Week 5.)

Readings


Week 4: week of 2/9
Written Documentation; Item Condition; Treatment Proposal
- Written documentation terminology and formats
- Assessing deterioration and damage
- Students work in pairs on their treatment proposals (new sections this week: item condition and treatment proposal.)

Readings
van der Most, Peter et. al. *Archives Damage Atlas: A Tool for Assessing Damage*. The Netherlands: Metamorfoze, 2010. This will be our primary resource for condition assessment.

Ash, N., Homolka, S., & Lussier, S. *Descriptive terminology for works of art on paper* (R. Wolcott, Ed.) Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2014. This is a reference source to refine your item description. Skim Parts 2 and 3, and Appendix 2, with special focus on applicability to your treatment item.


Barron, Sonya. Iowa State University Library Conservation Documentation. Unpublished, 2018. An example of treatment documentation and workflow (vellum manuscript.)


**Week 5: week of 2/16**

*Assignment Due: Treatment proposal for your item, including description, condition, treatment objectives, treatment proposal, and testing, if needed.*

**Photodocumentation**
- Demonstrate photodocumentation processes in photo studio
- Students begin taking photos and/or planning studio schedule

**Readings**
- Nikon camera manual. (In Paper Lab; may be signed out.) Consult as needed during photo sessions.

**Week 6: week of 2/23**

*Assignment Due: Before Treatment Photodocumentation*

**Housings**
- View examples of archives housings; discuss advantages and disadvantages of designs
- Discuss materials for archives housings
- Build a sink mat for a document with texture or depth

**Readings**


Week 7: week of 3/2
Dry Cleaning
-Using brushes, eraser crumbs, soot sponges, and vinyl erasers
-Cleaning fragile paper and media
-Evaluating cleanliness of historical paper

Readings


Week 8: week of 3/9
Assignment Due: Custom Enclosure - should they drop these off?

Introduction to Humidification and Flattening
-Spot testing
-Spot humidification
-Humidification through a membrane
-Drying

Readings


**Spring Break: 3/15 - 3/20**

**Week 9: week of 3/23**

**Special Topics in Humidification and Flattening**
- Humidification chambers
- Trash can humidification
- Batch work
- Iron gall ink, tracing paper, and other challenging materials

**Readings**


include and build upon those studied in this class. Of special relevance to our current topics is the section “Flattening in a Hard-Soft Sandwich.”


**Week 10: week of 3/30**

**Mending, pt. 1**
- Making wheat starch paste
- Choosing repair tissues
- Feather-tearing, applying, and drying mends
- Evaluating success
- Practice

**Readings**


**Week 11: week of 4/6**

**Mending, pt. 2**
- Making and using heat-set tissues
- Evaluating appropriate conditions for use
- Practice all mends as desired

**Readings**

Week 12: week of 4/13
Tape: The Conservator's Nemesis
-identifying types of tape
-identifying stages of deterioration
-mechanically removing carrier
-mechanically removing adhesive that remains sticky
-practice on relatively modern, acrylic-based tape
-caution about other tapes

Readings
Elissa O’Loughlin & Linda Steiber 1992
Conservation Wiki

Week 13: week of 4/20
Open labs, or discuss another treatment method of the class' choice

Readings
Encourage class to look through and/or present treatment papers in Journal of American Institute for Conservation, Studies in Conservation, Journal of the Institute of Conservation, etc.


Week 14: week of 4/27
Open labs or discuss another treatment method of the class' choice

Readings
-Encourage class to look through and/or present treatment papers in Journal of American Institute for Conservation, Studies in Conservation, Journal of the Institute of Conservation, etc.

Week 15: week of 5/4: Last class day
Assignment Due: Final Treatment Report. May also drop off treated item for evaluation.