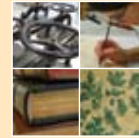




# PRESERVATION EDUCATION CURRICULUM



NORTHEAST  
DOCUMENT  
CONSERVATION  
CENTER

## STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS

### Suggested Graded Assignments

#### General

- Preservation is a field filled with technical terms and concepts. Distribute a glossary during the first class and give a vocabulary quiz halfway through the semester.
- Have students find five instances of preservation in the news and write a short paper summarizing and critiquing them. The five examples can be reports about the same news story, or they can be five different stories. Are the articles accurate? If not, point out the errors. Is there bias? Why? Include copies of the articles.
- Provide a list of preservation-related Web sites for students to review (e.g., summarize and critique content and presentation). If this assignment is given to the whole class, sign students up for each site so there is no overlap.
- Have students rewrite the "preservation" entry in Wikipedia.
- Assign a "Trends and Issues" paper: students should compare and contrast historical and current articles on a preservation topic.
- Write a short critique of a journal article, ideally one that pertains to the student's research paper or other term project.
- Write an annotated bibliography on a preservation topic.

#### Class 1: Introduction

- Choose a preservation-related video or DVD to view, and write a critique. At what audience is the presentation aimed? What message is it trying to convey? Is the message accurate? Is it conveyed effectively? How might it have been done differently? See **Resources for the Teacher** for references to videos and DVDs (e.g., *Slow Fires*, *Into the Future*, and presentations on book-binding, library binding, conservation, papermaking, deacidification, reformatting).
- Describe the collections (or a subset of the collections), their use, and existing collecting policies at the student's workplace or a local institution of interest. Make a list of materials that need to be evaluated for possible deaccessioning, and indicate those that might be a priority for preservation based on the institution's mission.
- Summarize current preservation activities at the student's workplace or a local institution of interest. What are they and who is responsible for them? Are existing preservation activities directed at collections that support the institution's mission and collecting policies? If not, what changes are needed?

## Class 2: Context for the Cultural Record

### The Importance of Context

- Tanselle states: “There is no way that reproductions—regardless of what technology is developed in the future—can ever be the equal of originals as documentary evidence, for there is no way of getting around the fact that they are one step (at least) removed from those originals.” Have students consider—perhaps in a discussion board venue—the implications for documents of cultural importance produced only in digital form. What is the “original” of such a document?
- In McCorison’s article, Cathy Davidson recounts her experiences with the novel *Charlotte, a Tale of Truth* (known as *Charlotte Temple*). Each copy she examined “contained its own story about authorship, readership, and publishing in America.” Choose a couple of modern examples and have the students discuss how electronic publishing (e.g., e-books) affects this type of contextual study.

### Physical Aspects of Context

- A good assignment would be to compare the three Web sites in their presentation of historical bindings. What does each site emphasize? How might each be used as a resource in the study of cultural context? As a resource for the study of format and structure?

### Preservation of Context

- Divide the class into four groups and assign each group *one* of the following. Allow opportunities for them to discuss and prepare their reports (perhaps in an online venue).
  1. Draw up a basic model plan for the selection and treatment of special collections materials for exhibition.
  2. Draw basic guidelines for digitization of special collections materials.
  3. Draw up guidelines for a scholar’s use of fragile 19<sup>th</sup>-century ephemera, especially dime novels and pulp fiction.
  4. You are writing an ad for a new conservator position. Draw up a list of duties and treatments.

## Class 3: Structure and Deterioration of Paper-based Materials

- Examine a discrete collection at the student’s workplace or a local institution of interest, and determine the most vulnerable elements. Identify the general types of materials and the most likely problems that are evident or will be likely to develop.

Examples:

1. Historical book collection
2. Archival collection
3. Photographic print collection
4. Collection of maps, plans, and/or architectural drawings
5. Scrapbook collection
6. Collection of art on paper

## Class 4: Structure and Deterioration of Multimedia Materials

- Ask students to comment on the Web sites listed in the **Resources** for this lesson. How helpful are they? How accurate? How do they compare with one another? What additional information

might have been included?

- Divide the class into groups and assign one or more of the case studies presented in this lesson outline. Groups should discuss what steps they would take to address the issues in the case study and present them to the class.
- Arrange for students to visit a library, archives, or museum with multimedia collections, interview a curator there, and produce a written summary. What specific types of collections are held, and what issues and challenges are of greatest concern to the curator?

### **Class 5: Building-wide Concerns**

- If the instructor can secure “loaner” equipment, ask students to monitor temperature, humidity, and light levels in their homes, and report the conditions to their classmates by the time of **Class 7: Surveys and Assessments**. This will familiarize them with equipment to be used in that class, and give them practice in using the equipment and reporting to colleagues on environmental conditions in their workplace.
- Write a memo to an imaginary library director regarding the condition of collections in a library, arguing for environmental improvements to increase the life span of collections.
- For students working in an institution, design a customized building maintenance schedule for that institution, assigning responsibilities for periodic inspection and maintenance of building components (roof, drainage, plumbing, electrical, etc.) and building systems (HVAC, fire detection, etc.).
- For students working in an institution, design an environmental monitoring program for that institution. Indicate what types of monitors will be used, where they will be located, and who will be responsible for maintaining them, recording the data, and analyzing the data.

### **Class 6: Collections Care**

- Distribute sample preservation quizzes used in preservation staff and user education programs. Ask students to take the quiz and then discuss the answers and benefits of incorporating such a quiz into staff and user education programs.

Examples include the following:

- UCSD Libraries Preservation quiz, <http://orpheus.ucsd.edu/preservation/pquiz.html>
- Memorial Library, Mankato State University Libraries quiz, <http://lib.mnsu.edu/services/preservation/quiz.html>

- Devise a motto, design, or other strategy for educating users and/or staff about a preservation principle.
- Choose a collection in need of rehousing at the student’s workplace or a local institution of interest. The student should describe the collection, estimate the number and type of enclosures needed, and research prices and availability.
- Evaluate existing storage furniture at the student’s workplace or a local institution of interest. Determine what should be replaced and/or how current furniture could be reconfigured to improve storage conditions. Have students research furniture types and prices, and draw up a floor plan for rearranging/replacing furniture.
- Prepare a presentation on preservation basics and preservation activities to be presented to the Board of Trustees at the student’s workplace or a local institution of interest.

- Ask each student to visit two separate locations that have archival materials on exhibit and evaluate them. Compare and contrast the two spaces and the exhibit techniques from the perspective of preservation.

### **Class 7: Surveys and Assessments**

- Compare two survey instruments for the same function and write a short paper comparing and contrasting their strengths and weaknesses.

### **Class 8: Treatment Options**

- Prepare a written institutional policy for selecting materials for binding, repair, and/or conservation treatment at the student's workplace or a local institution of interest.

### **Class 9: Preservation Reformatting**

- Prepare general guidelines for preservation microfilming projects at the student's workplace or a local institution of interest. These should specify standards to be followed, as well as procedures for preparing materials, filming materials, and ensuring quality control.
- Evaluate two or more collections at the student's workplace or a local institution of interest to determine whether and how they should be reformatted for preservation. Students should provide specific reasons for their decisions.

### **Class 10: Creating Sustainable Digital Collections, Part 1: Digital Issues**

- See **Part I: Defining Digital Objects**, In-Class Activities in this lesson. Whichever in-class activity is not done in class could be given as a graded assignment (e.g., analysis of the Hoagy Carmichael Web site, or of a university Web site).
- See **Part III: Copyright**, In-Class Activities in this lesson. If there is not enough time in class, ask students to look at the Creative Commons Web site and analyze its approach to copyright as a graded assignment.
- Evaluate two or more collections at the student's workplace or a local institution of interest to determine whether they should be digitized. Students should provide specific reasons for their decisions.

### **Class 11: Creating Sustainable Digital Collections, Part 2: Digital Preservation**

- Write a short paper defining and distinguishing digital repositories, digital archives, and institutional repositories.
- Write a short paper summarizing the various technical strategies for preserving digital objects.

### **Class 12: Disaster Planning**

- Conduct a risk-management survey of a library, archives, or other institution. Students should use the **Risk Assessment Checklist** (attached). Walk through (and around the outside of) the

building with the checklist and identify any risks that apply. Also make notes about prevention/mitigation efforts—consider each risk identified and discuss actions needed to lessen those risks in the “Notes” column. Discuss the results of the survey activity in class. How does a survey affect the ability to respond to disasters?

- Evaluate a sample disaster plan. How easy would it be to use in an emergency? Should extraneous material if any go into a separate file and not in the plan itself? What recommendations would you make to improve the usability of the plan?
- Create specific emergency response procedures for one or more natural or human-made disasters. For information on specific types of disasters, see FEMA’s *Get Disaster Information* Web site, at <http://www.fema.gov/hazard/>.
- Using the Minnesota Historical Society’s “Emergency Salvage Procedures for Wet Items” (at <http://www.mnhs.org/preserve/conservation/emergency.html>) as a starting point, prepare detailed salvage instructions for one or more types of collections.
- View *Disaster Planning: Soaring to Excellence* (video recording). Chicago: American Library Association, 2000. Discuss and evaluate this training video with reference to readings and class discussion.

### **Class 13: Building a Preservation Program**

- Before class, send groups of students to different types of libraries and/or archives. Provide each group with the same questions to ask of staff about funding, staffing, and the like, and have them report back to the class. This should be prearranged with preservation administrators at the various institutions.