



Research Fellow

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PS 15132 Archival research as a method for political science

Sommersemester 2021

Freie Universität Berlin

Otto-Suhr Institut für Politikwissenschaft

Instructor: Sophia Hoffmann

Tuesdays, 10-12

Online

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Summary

This very practically oriented course will introduce students to archival research as a method for academic enquiry. At the end of the course, students will have a good idea about how to approach archives as a source for empirical material, how to look for specific information in archives and how to organize and analyse archival documents. The course will combine shorter, weekly Webex-sessions with individual and group exercises that students can carry out at their own pace. Luckily, many archives offer digital collections, of which we will make ample use. The course will introduce students to many different archives and will also provide participants with the know-how required to look for additional archives, out there, in the vast, international archival universe. In addition to practical skills, which will be taught via frequent hands-on exercises, students will also receive theoretical training in archival methodology, and gain an understanding of why archives are always an expression of power relations and often the result of conflict and struggles. The course takes a critical, power-aware approach to archives and will also include some of the more theoretically-complex, post-colonial writings about archives. Archives are the closest that humans have gotten to inventing the time machine, and this course aims to convey some of the magic and glory, as well as the tragedy and shame, that archival researchers may experience.

Practical Information

If you have a question: CONSULT THE SYLLABUS FIRST!

Attendance: This is a weekly seminar with compulsory attendance.

Readings and other texts:

All essential and some additional readings will be available on Blackboard. For your assignments/homework, you will be required to do various forms of online research, listen to podcast, consult the FU library catalogue PRIMO and the library itself to find additional material.

This syllabus is also available on Blackboard.

Obtaining your credits (“Schein”) at the end of the course:

I can only give credits to students who are registered via Campus Management.

You decide whether you want to complete a "Teilnahmeschein" (3 ECTS) or a "Leistungsschein" (7 ECTS).

Criteria for a Teilnahmeschein (3 ECTS)

1. Regular attendance (you can miss up to three classes). Exceptions can be made for students with care responsibilities or similar, exceptional circumstances. You need to see me about exceptional circumstances as soon as the situation arises. I will not accept explanations in retrospect.
2. Completion of weekly assignments. Students will be given short assignments every week, which will be submitted on their Blackboard journal. Assignments may consist of a short reflection on the week’s reading or of a specific research exercise.

Criteria for a Leistungsschein (7 ECTS)

A Leistungsschein requires all criteria for a Teilnahmeschein (see above), plus an additional written assignment called a Hausarbeit:

Hausarbeiten

- **4500 word count** (incl. footnotes, excl. bibliography); +/- 10%, Seminar papers that are too short, too long or formally incorrect will not be accepted.
- Hausarbeiten need to have a clear relation to the seminars’ topic.
- Further information about academic writing you find here: https://www.polsoz.fu-berlin.de/polwiss/forschung/international/europa/studium_lehre/hinweise_downloads/index.html and on blackboard.
- There will be a special session on “how to write a hausarbeit” and on what I expect from a hausarbeit towards the end of the seminar.

A note on reading for this seminar

To make the most of this seminar, I strongly encourage you to read, in the course of these 14 weeks, one entire book that makes use of archival resources. I recommend that you obtain this book as a physical hardcopy, either from a library or buy purchase. Please browse the FU catalogue for books you can check out from the library and/or look at <https://www.abebooks.de/>, where you can buy many second-hand books cheaply, both in English and German.

Depending on your interests and level of pre-existing knowledge, this can be a more or less academic book, with a more or less intensively theoretic approach. Below is a list of suggestions, but feel free to pick a different book not on this list.

The reason I recommend reading an entire book, is that this is a complex learning experience that teaches many different useful skills that will serve you throughout your life. Experiencing how an author develops an argument over a long text, using archival documents as evidence, teaches us, for example,

- how archival material is used as evidence to make an argument;
- how to structure a longer text coherently;
- what we think works well, and less well, in longer texts;
- to concentrate for a long period, on a complex subject;
- to develop in-depth knowledge about one particular, ideally fascinating subject
- the amount of passion and tenacity many scientists/authors put into their work (make sure to read the acknowledgements!).

Suggested books:

There is an entire world of books that make amazing use of archives. Below please find a quite random list of books, which all have to do with archives and politics in one way or another, which I have read and found interesting, some are very, some are less famous.

- Krug, Nora, *Heimat*. Graphic novel, available in German and English.
- Guilbert, Emmanuel, *The Photographer*. Graphic novel, makes use of archival images.
- Paget, Karen, *Patriotic Betrayal*. Huge book about the CIA and the US student movement.
- Garton Ash, Timothy, *The File A Personal History*. About encountering your MfS file.
- Verdery, Katherine, *My life as a Spy*. About encountering your Securitate file.
- Blaydes, Lisa, *State of Repression Iraq under Saddam Hussein*.
- Khalili, Laleh, *Sinews of War and Trade Shipping and Capitalism in the Arabian Peninsula*.
- Davis, M. and Wiener, J., *Set the Night on Fire, LA in the Sixties*.
- James, CLR, *The Black Jacobins*. Life-changing, world-famous master piece on the Haitian Revolution.
- Stonor Saunders, Frances, *Who paid the Piper, The CIA and the Cultural Cold War*.
- Feldman, Ilana, *Governing Gaza, Bureaucracy, Authority and the Work of Rule 1917-67*.
- Mitchell, Timothy, *Carbon Democracy: Political Power in the age of oil*.
- Bsheer, Rosie, *Archive Wars: The Politics of History in Saudi Arabia*.
- Brown, Vince, *Tacky's Revolt: The Story of an Atlantic Slave War*.
- Barkawi, Tarak, *Soldiers of Empire: Indian and British Armies in World War II*.

More orientated towards theoretical reflection on the (post)-colonial powers of archives:

- Stoler, Anne, *Along the Archival Grain Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common*. Very influential book.
- Trouillot, M., *Silencing the Past, Power and the Production of History*. Also very influential.
- Fuentes, Marisa, *Dispossessed Lives, Enslaved Women, Violence and the Archive*.
- Steinmetz, George, *The Devil's Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa and Southwest Africa*.

DEADLINES FOR WRITTEN WORK

Weekly assignments: Fridays, 17:00
Hausarbeiten/Referatsausarbeitung: 30.9.2021

Deadline extensions will be only approved with a doctor's note, or unless you have discussed your exceptional circumstances (see above) early on in the course.

Relevant journals, websites and magazines for this course:

..again, there is a world of material, and this is but a small selection

The American Archivist

<https://meridian.allenpress.com/american-archivist>

Review site of *The American Archivist*

<https://reviews.americanarchivist.org/>

The Journal of Contemporary Archival Studies

<https://elischolar.library.yale.edu/jcas/>

Archives & Records Association UK & Ireland

<https://www.archives.org.uk/>

Archive 20 in German.

<https://archive20.hypotheses.org/>

Archiv Camp

<https://archive20.hypotheses.org/category/veranstaltungen/konferenzen-archivcamp>

Archivar. Zeitschrift für Archivwesen

<https://www.archive.nrw.de/landesarchiv-nrw/wir-ueber-uns/der-archivar>

Society of American Archivists Podcast Series

<https://archivesincontext.archivists.org/>

List of Seminar Sessions

1. 13th April: Introduction and overview of course
2. 13th April: Why archival research for political science?
3. 27th April: Getting to know the topic: reading with and about archives I
4. 4th May: Getting to know the topic: reading with and about archives II
5. 11th May: Getting to know the topic: reading with and about archives III
6. 18th May: The universe of archives: from the British National Archives to private papers
7. 25th May: Working with archives and archival documents: the basics I
8. 1st June: Working with archives and archival documents: the basics II
9. 8th June: Working with archives and archival documents: archival gatekeepers
10. 15th June: Working with archives and archival documents: managing archival data
11. 22nd June: Working with archives and archival documents: answering questions
12. 29th June: Working with archives and archival documents: writing
13. 6th July: Archives as an expression of power relations: (dis)empowerment I
14. 13th July: Archives as an expression of empowerment: (dis)empowerment II

Description of seminar sessions and readings

1. Di, 13.04.2021 Introduction and overview of course

No assignment.

Please print out this syllabus and have it ready for class.

2. Di, 20.04.2021 Why archival research for political science?

Today we learn about and discuss 1) the opportunities that archival research offers to political science, 2) the universe of archives itself.

Reading Assignment: Frisch, Scott and Kelly, Sean, 2012, "Political Science and Archival Research", in Frisch, Scott et al (eds), *Doing Archival Research in Political Science*, 2012, Amherst, NY: Cambria Press.

Podcast/Writing Assignment:

- Please listen to this episode of "Archives in Context", the podcast of the Society of American Archivists. <https://archivesincontext.archivists.org/2020/03/03/season-3-episode-1-elevator-going-up/>
In this episode (13 min), many different archivists answer the questions "What are archives?", "What are archivists?", "Who uses archives?" and "Isn't everything online?".
- Please write into your Blackboard journal: What were the three most interesting things you heard.

Research/Writing assignment:

- Have a look around this list of archive podcasts: <https://archivespublishing.com/podcasts/>
- Please look at a minimum of 3 of these podcast series more closely and read about them.
- Write into your journal: What have you learned about archives and archivists from looking at these podcast series? Was there anything that you found especially interesting or amazing? Please note down at least 3 facts and write about 400 words.

3. Di, 27.04.2021 Getting to know the topic: reading with and about archives I

Today we start studying how an author makes use of archival resources, and start to learn about how to approach archives as a learning and research resource.

Reading assignment: Kindervater, Katharine Hall. „The Emergence of Lethal Surveillance: Watching and Killing in the History of Drone Technology“. *Security Dialogue* 47, Nr. 3 (1. Juni 2016): 223–38.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010615616011>.

Research/ Writing assignment:

Find the national archives of your state of residence or citizenship on the internet, and write down the following information into your Blackboard journal:

- Where are the archives located? Perhaps more than one location?
- When were they founded?
- How can you access the archives, do you need to register, book an appointment etc?
- Is there any material available in digital form? If so, register for remote access and download 1-2 documents.

4. Di, 04.05.2021 Getting to know the topic: reading with and about archives II

We continue our quest to understand archives as a source of research and learning.

Reading assignments:

1) Truth, Silence and Violence in Emerging States, Edited by Aidan Russell, Introduction: Regimes of Silence.

2) Walter, Alissa. „Petitioning Saddam : Voices from the Iraqi Archives“. In *Truth, Silence and Violence in Emerging States*, 127–46. Routledge, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351141123-7>.

Optional reading: "Diaries of Iraqi Soldiers: Views from Inside Saddam's Army," *International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies*, with co-author Joseph Sassoon, 12, no. 2 (Summer 2018)

Research assignment: Look at/Browse around: Hoover Institution, Iraq Subject Collection, Ba'th Party Records.
<https://www.hoover.org/library-archives/collections/hizb-al-bath-al-arabi-al-ishtiraki-records-bath-party-records>

Written Assignment: Write a minimum of 400 words into your journal: what is the point of Alissa Walter's article? Why does she think it is important to look at these petitions?

5.Di, 11.05.2021 10:00 - 12:00 Getting to know the topic: reading with and about archives III

Reading assignments:

Khalili, Laleh. *Time in the Shadows: Confinement in Counterinsurgencies*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013. Intro and Chapter 1.

Optional: Laleh Khalili, Paper Trails Pedagogy <https://merip.org/2019/09/paper-trails-pedagogy/>

Optional: New Texts out Now, Laleh Khalili, <https://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/27597/New-Texts-Out-Now-Laleh-Khalili,-Time-in-the-Shadows-Confinement-in-Counterinsurgencies>

Research assignment: Browse around the British National Archives website, take a look at the collections and the self-presentation of the archive. <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>

Here are the archives online exhibitions: <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/with-love/>

And here are the collections: <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/?letter=&search=&research-category=online>

Written Assignment: Write at least 400 words into your journal: Look at the endnotes for Khalili, Chapter 1. You will find three references to archival sources. From which archive/collection are they? What is the main other type of source she references?

6. Di, 18.05.2021 10:00 - 12:00 The universe of archives: from the British National Archives to personal papers

This session will focus on 'your' archive - an archive of your choice, in which you will work for the next few weeks. Importantly, we will also start to learn about the structural conditions that shape an archive, e.g. why an archive is not simply a record of what has happened. Where are an archive's gaps and silences, and how did they come about?

Reading assignment : Richard Dunley (2020) The Archive of the Edwardian Foreign Office: The Archaeology of a Collection and Its Use, *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 31:3, 429-449, DOI: 10.1080/09592296.2020.1782672

Podcast/Writing assignment: History of the World in 100 objects, Aboriginal Shield. This mind-blowing, 2010 radio program, which achieved world-wide fame, narrates the history of 100 objects housed in the British Museum, in chronological fashion. Please listen to this episode and, in at least 400 words, tell me what thoughts you have about it on your Blackboard journal. Feel free to turn this into a free-writing or creative-writing exercise.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/b00v3x6v>

Research assignment I: Click through and browse the list of archives provided on Blackboard. Ask yourself: what kind of institutions house these archives? How do these websites present the archival content? What is a collection? When were these archives founded and with what purpose? What ideas does this list give you about where else to look for archives?

Research assignment II: Building on this list and your pre-existing knowledge about archives, including in your own country, choose an archive of your choice that offers digital content for download. This will be the archive that you will work with in the next weeks, so choose something that interests you. In this session, you will choose a topic or a question that you will research on in this archive in the next weeks.

Aside from the obvious, large, national archives, please find below examples of smaller, specialist archives - designed to give you an idea of the large variety of archives that exist.

Arizona State University, Community Archives

<https://lib.asu.edu/communityarchives>

Collections housed at the International Institute of Social History

<https://iisg.amsterdam/en/search?search=&facet=type%3AFILTER%3Ahttp%3A%2F%2Fschema.org%2FCollection&page=0>

University of Warwick Modern Records Collection

https://warwick.ac.uk/services/library/mrc/holdings/main_archives

Digital Feminist Archives of the Barnard Center for Research on Women

<http://bcrw.barnard.edu/digital-feminist-archives/>

British Library South-East Asia Collections

<https://www.bl.uk/collection-guides/southeast-asia-collections#>

Amnesty International USA Archives

<https://www.amnestyusa.org/tools-and-reports/archives-project/>

Sound Archives of the Humboldt-University Berlin

<https://www.lautarchiv.hu-berlin.de/en/introduction/>

BBC Archives Collections

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/collections-politics/zrjx8xs>

Archives of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Archive

<http://auschwitz.org/en/museum/archives/>

Yad Vaschem Remembrance Centre Archives

<https://www.yadvashem.org/archive.html>

Conservative Party Archiv at the Bodleian Library, Oxford

<https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/cpa>

Archives in the Music Department of the Staatsbibliothek Berlin (see also the archival parts of the library's various special departments)

<https://staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/en/about-the-library/departments/music-department-and-mendelssohn-archive>

New York City Municipal Archives

<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/records/about/municipal-archives.page>

Archives of the Gay Museum, Berlin

<https://www.schwulesmuseum.de/bibliothek-archiv/?lang=en>

Deutsches Literaturarchiv

<https://blog.dla-marbach.de/>

Stadtarchiv Erfurt

<https://www.erfurt.de/ef/de/leben/bildung/stadtarchiv/index.html>

Writing assignment: Name of “your” archive, where it is located, when it was founded, some of the collections it houses (if more than one), what the registration procedures are. You may email one of the archivists about your project, asking them for advice on what kind of documents are good to use in digital form. Explain why you have chosen this archive.

Note: you may also work with private archival papers from your family, e.g. documents from your parents, grandparents or earlier ancestors.

7. Di, 25.05.2021 10:00 - 12:00 Working with archives and archival documents: the basics I

Reading assignment: Brown, Vincent (2020), *Tacky's Revolt*, Cambridge: Harvard UP. Prologue

Research assignment I: Look at and engage with the interactive map of the Slave Revolt in Jamaica, 1760-1761. It is a very interesting example of the things that can be done with archival documents. <http://revolt.axismaps.com/> What can you understand better from the map, than from a written text? Think about the steps required to transform written archival documents into visual material.

Research assignment II: Access the archive you have chosen and download 3 documents to analyse in class. Make sure to print out these documents or have them accessible on a second monitor.

Please print out the three document analysis worksheets provided on Blackboard and bring them to class.

Document analysis worksheets

<https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets?fbclid=IwAR1BirkRb64R9IVfWNGP4XbytwtwCShPqs6dixq1gfaN37v-o1aCFwIoM0A>

8. Di, 01.06.2021 10:00 - 12:00 Working with archives and archival documents: the basics II

Reading assignment: Barrett, David, 2012, "Rummaging through the attics of the CIA and Congress", in Frisch, Scott et al (eds), *Doing Archival Research in Political Science*, 2012, Amherst, NY: Cambria Press.

Research/Writing assignment: Continue working on your chosen archive, to understand its internal architecture. Have a look on the internet and write down the following pieces of information into your journal

- has the archive ever been in the news?
- Does it have a social media presence?
- What collections does it have?
- Identify three collections and describe them on your journal.

Print out document analysis worksheet again from Blackboard and bring to class:

Document analysis worksheets

<https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets?fbclid=IwAR1BirkRb64R9IVfWNGP4XbytwtoCShPqs6dixq1gfaN37v-o1aCFwIoM0A>

9. Di, 08.06.2021 10:00 - 12:00 Working with archives and archival documents: archival gatekeepers

Research assignments: 1) Make contact with a gatekeeper at your archive, 2) Choose a research question that you will address via research in your chosen archive.

What do archivists do?

Journal of contemporary archival studies

<https://elischolar.library.yale.edu/jcas/>

Journal Archival Science

<https://www.springer.com/journal/10502>

Blog Publishing in the Archives Profession

<https://archivespublishing.com/>

Archives in Context Podcast Series about Archives and the People behind them

<https://archivesincontext.archivists.org/>

10. Di, 15.06.2021 10:00 - 12:00 Working with archives and archival documents: managing archival data

This week we will address the question of how to manage archival documents. Imagine having two weeks time to go through an important archive of 1000 documents. How do you secure and manage your findings, so that you can navigate them in six months time, when you will actually have time to write your paper?

Video assignment:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zZhBcnVNhgM&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR19gF6JDKNewoiUoCs8G-R2CuWbfTR0_LaqryKw6dGUtidQcIkE3aoXtj8

Research assignment: Download 20 documents from your archive and organise them into an Excel sheet, taking inspiration from Robert Karl's videos.

11. Di, 22.06.2021 10:00 - 12:00 Working with archives and archival documents: answering questions

Research assignment: Keep looking in your archive for documents pertaining to your research question and sort them into your excel sheet.

Reading and writing assignment: Read your documents and write into your diary: Did your documents help you answer your research question? If so, what is the answer they provided? If not, why not? What kind of information was easily available? What kind of information was not available? What was the most interesting document you found?

12. Di, 29.06.2021 10:00 - 12:00 Working with archives and archival documents: writing

In this session we discuss 1) how to write on the basis of archival documents and 2) how to write a good 'Hausarbeit'. If you already have an outline for your planned Hausarbeit, please bring it with you to class.

Reading Assignment: Trouillot, Michael-Rolph, 1995, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press. Chapter 1, The Power in the Story.

Additional guidance on how to write a Hausarbeit and good academic writing is available on Blackboard and on the relevant websites of the FU.

13. Di, 06.07.2021 10:00 - 12:00 Archives as an expression of power relations: (dis)empowerment I

The last two sessions of our course focus explicitly on the question of how archives create lasting silences and gaps in our remembrance and narration of history. Most archives have been created by, and benefit the perspective of those people, whose violence and racism gave them power over others, whose absence from, or wholly negative presence in the archives, has a lasting effect on contemporary power relations. Important efforts exist to counter this disempowering effect of archives and to wrest the historical narrative from the victors.

Reading assignments

- 1) Duncan, Vikki, "Hold Yer Tongue", National Trust Stories, 8th March 2021, <https://www.nts.org.uk/stories/hold-ye-tongue>
- 2) Fuentes, Marisa, 2018, *Dispossessed Lives, Enslaved Women, Violence and the Archive*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, Introduction. 1-13.

Research assignment: Browse the website of the Arizona University Community Driven Archives Initiative <https://lib.asu.edu/communityarchives>

Writing assignment: Please write a minimum of 400 words on how the Community Driven Archives Initiative relates to Marisa Fuentes' arguments.

14. Di, 13.07.2021 10:00 - 12:00 Archives as an expression of power relations: (dis)empowerment II

Reading Assignments:

- 1) Trouillot, Michael-Rolph, 1995, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press. Chapter 2 The three faces of Sans Souci.
- 2) Farmer, Ashley (2018): Archiving While Black. In: *CHE*, 23.07.2018.