COURSE SYLLABUS

Archival and Documentary Practices
Offered by the Vera and Donald Blinken Open Society Archives

Open Learning Initiative, Weekend Program (OLIve-WP)
Central European University (CEU)
Session September 2017 – February 2018

Instructor (s):   Anikó Kövecsi
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Minimum number of students: 5
Maximum number of students: 15
Minimum level of English: lower intermediate
Number of sessions (maximum 15): 4
Additional eligibility criteria for students: high
school education

Course Description

The Vera and Donald Blinken Open Society Archives (Blinken OSA), an organizational
unit of CEU, is an international archival, research and educational institution committed
to collect, preserve, provide open access to and actively interpret records on recent
history, and human rights movements and violations. Blinken OSA is also the records
management provider for and the final repository of the historic records of the Central
European University and the Open Society Foundations. The archives' holdings, coming
from three dozen countries in over 30 languages and in all media and formats, are
frequently used in teaching and outreach activities, public programs, including physical
and virtual exhibitions, film screenings, artistic performances, as well as lectures,
workshops and seminars. Blinken OSA organizes yearly the Verzio International Human
Rights Documentary Film Festival.

The course offered by Blinken OSA staff is part of the institution's recently launched
project tentatively entitled *Archives and Refugees*, which seeks to find ways in which
human rights archives can professionally assist people who had to leave their homes due
to political (armed conflict, oppression, expulsion), environmental, economic, or other
reasons in preserving their official (identity, property) or personal (photos, memorabilia)
documents and memories.

The course aims at familiarizing students with the possibilities of using a contemporary
archive for documenting and understanding various stages of the global refugee
experience through a set of hands-on, practice oriented sessions. It will seek to introduce
and discuss 20th century examples of forced displacement and migration through archival

documents and projects, and explore ways of documenting and publishing personal memories of the participating students' current experiences. Using Blinken OSA as a model, the course will bring the structure, database, catalogs, and documents of a modern archive closer to the students and give specific and practical examples on how to trace and research primary archival and other relevant sources, as well as evaluate the findings. Thus, the course will provide students with basic research and analytical skills, which will come in handy should they wish and have the opportunity to pursue further academic careers.

The course consists of four parts: an introduction to Blinken OSA, an English language practice using visual thinking technique, a workshop on the basics of archival research, and a creative workshop on preserving and publishing personal memories.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, beyond advancing their English language proficiency, students will be able to:

- Find their way in a contemporary (analog and digital) archival environment, and handle recent historical sources
- Differentiate between googling and informed, advanced online search, and find and use trusted search engines, databases and online repositories
- Evaluate the authenticity, reliability, integrity and usefulness of their findings
- Use their newly acquired visible thinking skills in human rights and artistic contexts
- Design and develop their own memory projects by using own historical sources, own documentation and personal memories and memorabilia

Course Requirements

Attendance (70% of the final grade): students are expected to attend all of the four sessions.

Class participation (30% of the final grade): students are expected to actively participate in the workshops.

Course schedule (orientative)

September 23, 2017

Introduction to Blinken OSA: presentation and guided tour (100 min)

Overview of Blinken OSA's mandate, archival collections, educational and research activities, as well as its public and outreach programs. With special focus on projects related to the refugee experience (thematic cataloging, exhibitions, and dedicated online platforms + film screening.)

Guided tour of the building from the stacks in the basement to the roof.

www.osaarchivum.org

Time TBD

English language practice (100 min)

The language practice session will employ visible thinking activities to explore human rights issues in a visual-archival context. We will look at the Hungarian refugee crisis following the 1956 revolution, as well as the correlation of art and human rights in an exercise that aims at challenging stereotypes, and look at trades and jobs that are traditionally not perceived as related to the arts.

For more on visible thinking in archival context see:
http://www.osaarchivum.org/blog/Visible-Thinking-Archives

Time TBD

Finding and evaluating online sources (150 min)

This workshop on the basics of archival research will consist of three parts: trusted search tools and repositories (Blinken OSA's Digital Repository and Parallel Archive); research methods and strategies; and evaluation of findings, especially originating from user generated and social media sources. The workshop will include a thematic search into Blinken OSA's Film Library, with special focus on documentaries dealing with migration and refugees.

Time TBD

Preserving and publishing personal memories – digital storytelling (100 min – to be continued on demand)

This workshop will look at best practices in preserving participants' documentation, as well as recording and publishing their personal memories, and encourage them to develop their own memory project. It does not necessarily have to be an individual project – it could be a collaborative effort, and take the form of photo-documentary blog, but we are also open to ideas from the students.

Since we would like the creative project to run during the whole length of the training, we will introduce it during the first session and give some time for the students to brainstorm and consider participation.