What is an archive? Is it a library, a cultural legacy, a genetic inheritance, a school of thought? For that matter, what does each of these terms mean? Derrida’s *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (1995) has provoked intense conversations among archivists, philosophers, historians, psychoanalysts, and social scientists about the archive and its relation to questions of memory. But what is he actually arguing? In this seminar we will read *Archive Fever* and the literary, philosophical and other works that underlie and are necessary to understand it, including Freud’s controversial *Moses and Montheism* (1939) and Yusef Yerushalami’s discussion of psychoanalysis of what it would mean to consider psychoanalysis as “a Jewish science” in *Freud’s Moses: Judaism Terminable and Interminable* (1993). Our aim is to learn to read both Freud’s and Derrida's writing accurately and with pleasure while thinking deeply about the “impossible” concept of the archive.

Class format and requirements
This seminar meets once a week for two and a half hours. Each meeting will be conducted as a group discussion (professor will not lecture) and participation in the conversation is required. **No prior knowledge of any of the reading is expected.** But reading Freud, (one of the great experimental thinkers of the twentieth century) is difficult, and reading Derrida is harder still, so seminar members must be prepared to commit real energy to the task! You must come to each meeting with the reading easily accessible, having done the reading, and **prepared to discuss the reading even if you have not understood it!** (The struggle to understand is what will build your intellectual muscle). **Some of this reading is hard, and takes considerable time and effort: on such weeks we will be tackling less than the usual 60-100 pages.** Since our syllabus is designed to prepare the way to an informed reading of *Archive Fever* missing class meetings will surely have a negative impact on your final grade. Requirements: three short papers (5 pages) (each 20% of final grade); one final project (30% of final grade); and informed participation and one in-class presentation (10% of final grade). This seminar is designed to produce rapid growth for those students who want to work hard, so each of the two first papers may be re-written for an improved grade.

**Disability Disclosure Statement:** Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. The Moses Center website is [www.nyu.edu/csd](http://www.nyu.edu/csd). Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance. Please do not hesitate to talk to me about any struggles you are having with the material or with any other circumstances that are impacting your progress in the seminar.
The following 3 books should be purchased in hard copy for the class. All other materials will be posted on our classes website and should ideally be printed out in hard copy for study.

Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*
Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Freud's Moses: Judaism Terminable and Interminable.*

September 3
Freud, ‘Letter to Romain Rolland (A Disturbance of Memory on the Acropolis)’ (1936); ‘Why War?’ (Letter to Einstein, 1932),

September 10

September 17
Nicholas Royle, ‘What is Deconstruction?’ (2000); Derrida, ‘Letter to a Japanese Friend’ (1983); Discussion of student writing

September 24

October 1

October 8
Freud, "Two Principles of Mental Functioning" [1911] (8pp), "Recollecting, Repeating and Working Through" [1914] (9pp), A ‘Note on the Mystic Writing Pad’ (1925); Laplanche and Pontalis, from *The Language of Psychoanalysis* (10pp).

October 15
Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* [1914] (50 pages)

October 22

October 29 Freud,
from *Moses and Monotheism* [1939] (100 pages)
November 5

November 12

November 19
Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, pp. 33-81

**November 26, Thanksgiving break**

December 3 **Projects due.**
Freud, *Delusions and Dreams in Jensens’ Gradiva* (1906-7).


December 13 **Final paper due** [10 pages]