Cultural heritage informatics (CHI) is an emerging field of interdisciplinary research and practice concerned with the role of information and computing technologies (ICTs) to support the creation, capture, organization, and pluralization of culture, in whatever form, as heritage.

Cultural heritage stewardship encompasses numerous allied disciplines including archival studies, librarianship, preservation of heritage materials, and museum studies. They share a common goal of the protection of cultural heritage in all forms, both tangible and intangible.

While there is a focus on existing data, datasets, and metadata and ways to link them, CHI also necessarily includes identification and exploration into appraisal, data capture, preservation, data processing, curation, forensics and reconstruction, visualization, documentation, access and discoverability, as well as development of innovative technologies to empower and support engagement with ICTs as tools for communication and remembering of culture.
Archival Studies
Archivists are information professionals who assess, collect, organize, preserve, maintain control over, and provide access to records and archives determined to have long-term value. The records maintained by an archivist can consist of a variety of analog and digital forms and documentary genres, including letters, diaries, logs, various other writings, official documents, photographs and other visual materials, sound recordings, and moving images. According to archival scholar Laura Millar, “these records are kept because they have continuing value to the creating agency and to other potential users. They are the documentary evidence of past events. They are the facts we use to interpret and understand history.” Archival material can be found in many institutions and organizations, as well as in personal collections, thus archivists work in a wide variety of environments.

For further information on this area, please consult the advising sheet for the Archival Studies pathway.

Special Collections
In library science, special collections are libraries or library units that house materials requiring specialized security and user services. Special collections can also be found in archival and museum environments, although they may not be described as such. Materials housed in special collections can be in any format (including rare books, manuscripts, photographs, archives, ephemera, and digital records), and are generally characterized by their artifactual or monetary value, physical format, uniqueness or rarity, and/or an institutional commitment to long-term preservation and access. They can also include association with important figures or institutions in history, culture, politics, sciences, or the arts. Individual libraries, archival institutions, and other cultural heritage organizations determine for themselves what materials constitute their own special collections.

For further information on this area, please consult the advising sheet for the Special Collections pathway.
Museum Studies
There is no agreed-upon single word to describe all museum workers. For lack of that word, here we use museum professional. But this field-wide disagreement perhaps arises because there is not one profession, but several museal professions that consist of a range of activities undertaken in a museum (e.g., collections work, administration, visitor services, exhibit design). In this program, we approach the education of museum professionals in a holistic way, from a museological perspective, that provides education in the whole range of activities, skills, and theory about/in museums. This is done in the broader context of information science, rather than from a specific content area; that is, the framework is from LIS but specific knowledge and skills are museum-focused. Students are taught within a broader context, one that understands that LIS is about the interaction of people and information and this foundation cuts across all types of information institutions and information work. The intent of this specialization is to embed and integrate the thinking and training across information institutions such as libraries, museums, and archives. For this reason, there are many pathways a student can take that includes museum studies.

For further information on this area, please consult the advising sheet for the Museum Studies pathway.

Faculty Supporting the Cultural Heritage Informatics & Stewardship Area and Associated Pathways Include:

Full-Time Faculty
• Karen F. Gracy, Ph.D.
• Kiersten F. Latham, Ph.D.
• Heather Soyka, Ph.D.
• Marcia L. Zeng, Ph.D.

Adjunct Faculty
• Sarah A. Cole, M.A.
• Patricia Condon, Ph.D.
• Rebecca K. Elder, M.S.I.S., C.A.S.
• Joanne Fenn, M.L.I.S.
• Erin Hetrick, M.A.
• Dana Kay Nemeth, M.A., M.L.I.S.
• Edith Serkownek, M.L.S., M.Ed., M.A.
• John E. Simmons, Ph.D.
• Julia Skinner, Ph.D.