

personal files—such as your contract, documentation about sexual harassment, journal notes about a difficult colleague—at home in a safe place. In the event of a legal challenge, you will still have access to them.

Use whatever method works for you—different colors for different topics, various kinds of files depending on the items, perhaps an accordion file or a three-ring binder for a class. File early and often rather than face the mountains of paper that accumulate in a semester. Periodically toss what you have not touched in years, being careful to preserve things that might go into an archive of your work. Now that historians are interested in the progress in our field, archives are increasingly interested in our materials.

The same care needs to go into computer files, keeping backups in a separate place in case of emergency, purging and compacting e-mail files on a regular basis. For every one message you delete and need again you will get rid of thousands that clog your system and your life.

A good address book system is worth its weight in gold so you can access immediately those people you need. A good calendar system, whether it is on your computer, in a hand-held electronic organizer, or on a good ol' paper calendar, is crucial to ease in scheduling. Double scheduling yourself or missing appointments happens to everyone on occasion. Done regularly, it is a sure sign that your life is out of control.

If you can live with a higher level of disorder than represented here, feel well accompanied. If you need someone to help you declutter once and for all, or need simple ways to streamline the “stuff” of life, give some thought to new systems of organization and file, file, file.

Forerunners

This guide would not be possible if some phenomenal women had not paved the way. They include our personal ancestors as well as our foresisters in the field of religious studies. Rather than name them, and for fear of leaving any out, just use this entry as a reminder to thank them often and to do them proud.