

Teaching in the Archives: Engaging Students and Inverting Historical Methods Classes at The Historic New Orleans Collection

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AS HISTORY PROFESSIONALS, we are innately aware of the value of primary documents in classrooms and other learning centers, as well as the primacy of archives and special collections to the work of history. Significant research has documented the benefits of using primary materials in the classroom, and for a long time, textbook authors and scholars have collected such materials for in-class student use. As teachers and researchers, we regularly engage with physical and digital archives as resources for our own research and for classroom materials. At the same time, pedagogy research has begun to explore the benefits of the “flipped” or “inverted” course model, in which content is delivered outside of class time and hands-on learning occurs in the actual classroom. In two connected projects, teachers of advanced secondary and early college-level historical methods courses have conducted their classes for an entire semester in a local archive. These collaborations, each now over four years old, illustrate the value of a pedagogical

approach that intersects knowledge and praxis surrounding inverted teaching and hands-on engagement with primary materials in the history classroom and beyond.

In this article, we discuss the course collaborations of Xavier University of Louisiana (XULA) and Bard Early College New Orleans (BECNO) with The Historic New Orleans Collection (THNOC).¹ Instructors Elizabeth Manley (at Xavier) and Rien Fertel (at Bard) worked with THNOC staff members Becky Smith and Robert Ticknor (from the Williams Research Center) and Daphne Derven and Jenny Schwartzberg (from the Education Department) to create weekly, semester-long classes held in the archives that engaged archival materials, generated discussion around historical research methods, and resulted in a final presentation of research projects by individual students. In both of these collaborative courses, “Introduction to Historical Research and Writing” at XULA and “Stacks on Stacks on Stacks: From Archival Research to Museum Exhibit” at BECNO, the instructors and THNOC staff have found teaching directly in the archives to be of immense value. We argue that this model provides a highly effective way to (1) impart the value of primary documents to students; (2) inculcate students in proper research methods and practices and empower them as knowledge-producers; and (3) expose students to the careers and praxis of the history graduate.

In engaging with this collaborative model, the teachers of these classes and the archive staff have posed three central questions. First, how do we teach research methods to early-stage history students effectively? Second, what are the benefits of the inverted archival classroom model? Finally, how can museums, archives, and teachers use the allure of on-site visits to create academically rigorous educational programs? We have found that students not only become decidedly better researchers as a result of this collaboration, but also become much more engaged in both the practice and the content of historical research and methods. In this article, we first discuss briefly the pedagogy scholarship that guides our teaching in these collaborations, explain how the courses were started and have worked over the span of three to four years to provide a potential model for other instructors, and, finally, describe the lessons we have gleaned from the experience and expand upon how this model could be applied in other contexts.

I. Challenges to Inverting a History Methods Course

The challenge of teaching historical research and writing in the advanced secondary or early undergraduate classroom has long been recognized by educators as one of the central challenges of the profession. As Robert Bain writes, it is not enough to rescue history teaching from a linear retrieval of facts model; we must transmit to students the skills of historical thinking so that they may reconstruct the past on their own.² Yet methods classes often remain mired in the stodgy muck of historical theory or, less damning, in the nuts and bolts of constructing a historical argument.³ These methods courses do generally introduce students to the idea of archives, and may conduct a class or two in university special collections, but they rarely *fully* immerse students in the real hands-on practices of historians during class time. Instructors tend to expect that students will self-motivate (as we ourselves did) to enter archives independently, begin exploring primary sources, and conduct research for their final paper “homework” outside of class time and with minimal guidance. However, particularly at the secondary level or in college classes with first-generation and disadvantaged students, such an expectation—that students will waltz into the seemingly elite rooms of archival research—is extremely unrealistic. Moreover, it leaves the most exciting and impactful part of historical research for students to figure out on their own.

Several key obstacles prevent a more engaged approach. A traditional classroom remains the most common setting for teaching historical methods for a variety of reasons, including received wisdom and logistics. And even when opportunities arise to collaborate with special collections, instructors are often reticent to plunge full time into the archives due to a lack of confidence in their ability to teach others the skills they taught to themselves (in the archives, in the process of learning our trade), not to mention a dearth of pedagogical research on how to do this teaching. We refer to these challenges as the “transition from classroom to archive model” and “lack of training” obstacles; both of which will be addressed below.

The first major challenge in engaging in a flipped model for a historical methods course, the transition from classroom to archival model, lies precisely in making the physical and logistical move out of the classroom. Despite our awareness of the power of primary

documents discovered in the archives, and the power of that search process, we continue to teach methods classes in a traditional format, focusing on topics like historical theory, deconstructing primary documents, critiquing sources, constructing a thesis statement, and drafting a research paper.⁴ Many books are dedicated to this endeavor, and we expect students will consult archives as a byproduct of learning about the practices and procedures of the historian's craft.⁵ Traditionally, we have left the most interesting and empowering component in the research process for last, to be completed as homework rather than centered in the course.⁶ In describing an archival collaboration with graduate-level writing and composition students, Jonathan Buehl, Tamar Chute, and Anne Fields argue that in “interact[ing] with archivists, struggl[ing] through finding aids, and comb[ing] through boxes and folders,” students benefit in intellectual, technical, and self-reflective ways.⁷ In other words, the primary documents become less a practice of interpretation and more of an epistemological journey. However, as Buehl, Chute, and Fields note, while there is a significant amount of literature on “doing” in the archives, there is little on “*teaching and learning* in the archives,” which can further stymie an instructor seeking to take his or her class to the document source.⁸ Given that there are few guides on how to make this leap, that received wisdom tends to favor the classroom setting, and that finding appropriate archival sites can be challenging—particularly in smaller and more rural settings—flipping the methods classroom seems daunting.

A second major obstacle to flipping any history methods classes to the archives, the lack of training, lies in our thoughts about our own training as historians. We often assume that archive-based training is a project for the graduate-level classroom, feel reticent to engage directly with archival methods at the secondary or undergraduate level due to lack of formal training, or (correctly) believe there is not sufficient pedagogical literature to support such a radical move. First, we often think that archival skills are not fully applicable until the graduate level and assume training will happen at that stage in a student's career. Yet the skills of archival-based research can be incredibly useful at the undergraduate level. Moreover, with the exception of some Ph.D. cohorts in the last five to ten years, most history graduates admit that they never received direct instruction in archival research, but rather learned by doing as they worked their

way through their own research. The idea of teaching something that we have never formally “learned” can be extremely intimidating. To complicate matters, the idea of flipping a methods class means that we lose time that might be spent explaining historiography, discussing theory, or helping students understand different kinds of historical analysis. However, in “giving up” that classroom time and turning it over to the archives, as well as being willing to fumble through (with the right help) some practices that we simply taught ourselves, there are significant benefits that accrue for our students (and ourselves) in both practical skills and individual empowerment, despite any lack of training.

At both the secondary and university levels, a number of educators have begun experimenting with the flipped or inverted classroom. According to the Flipped Learning Network, flipped or inverted teaching is a “pedagogical approach in which direct instruction moves from the group learning space to the individual learning space, and the resulting group space is transformed into a dynamic, interactive learning environment where the educator guides students as they apply concepts and engage creatively in the subject matter.”⁹ As Jeremy Strayer notes, a flipped classroom engages “a specific type of blended learning design that uses technology to move lectures outside the classroom and uses learning activities to move practice with concepts inside the classroom.”¹⁰ The scholarship on inverted teaching and learning has demonstrated that the model can improve mastery of skills, increase cooperation and team-building abilities, and build confidence in students, among other things.

In a study in the *American Archivist*, Barbara Rockenbach argues that the archives can serve as antidote to both the problem of a classroom-only approach to historical methods and an uncertainty about teaching historical research in a hands-on manner. The archives, she argues, can serve as a “laboratory” and “experiential space where hands-on experience in analyzing, asking questions of, and telling stories with primary documents” is not only possible, but also exciting.¹¹ In order for such a laboratory to take shape, however, we must engage with it on a regular basis, inviting our students to spend the time it takes to discover the same things that energized us as students. In embracing the possibilities of the flipped methods class, “archival training should be conceived in broad terms, and archives should be viewed as training sites where research skills and

habits of mind can be taught and strengthened.”¹² As Bain argues, “making visible the ‘invisible’ cognitive work of historians... creates a richer, more nuanced picture of cognition.”¹³ Viewing the archive as a laboratory in which students learn this “invisible” work (and transforming our classrooms so that “direct instruction” in skills such as historical theory, note-taking, citation protocols, and secondary source engagement occurs outside of class time, replacing the former lecture or discussion space with hands-on research) creates a model that engages primary sources regularly and directly, forces us to teach research skills through example rather than theory, and makes for a highly relevant use of the flipped classroom.

Through the two collaborative projects discussed in this article, archivists and educators willingly dove into the territory of archive as laboratory. In the process of flipping these two classes, we have found that many of the promises (and challenges) of inverted and active learning in history are indeed true. Despite the discomfort of occasionally not knowing how a hands-on activity might work, or having to be flexible when an approach fails, we have found that these semester-long experiments have given students a much greater grasp of historical methods than our classroom-based iterations. Additionally, students gain a profound sense of accomplishment and an expanded awareness of the many possible paths for a student with the skills of historical, archival-based research. We argue that the benefits of this model are significant, are worth risking the uncertainty of such a new model, and are applicable across a range of research method course applications.

II. Background and Model for an Inverted Methods Course

The Historic New Orleans Collection (THNOC), the site of both of these inverted models, is a non-profit museum, research center, and publisher dedicated to the study and preservation of the history and culture of New Orleans and the Gulf South. The institution, located in the French Quarter, was founded in 1966 by General L. Kemper Williams and his wife Leila Hardie Moore Williams—two private collectors of Louisiana materials who wished to keep their collection intact and available to the public for research and exhibition. Researchers—whether dedicated scholars or casual history buffs—can access THNOC’s materials through the Williams

Research Center. THNOC's holdings comprise more than a million items that document everyday life as well as momentous historical events spanning more than three centuries. The Collection includes more than 30,000 library items, more than two miles' worth of shelves of documents and manuscripts, as well as some 500,000 photographs, prints, drawings, paintings, and other artifacts.

One of THNOC's institutional goals is to make its holdings as accessible as possible to a diverse public. The Education Department supports this mission by finding ways to give students hands-on experiences with primary historical sources from material holdings, like curators hosting archival show-and-tells and creating curriculum that encourages students to analyze historical objects, documents, and images. Although these tactics have been successful, the Education Department wanted to find a way to create a more substantial experience for students that would expose them to potential careers in museums and archives; introduce them to the programs, exhibitions, and other projects that THNOC staffers work on; and, most importantly, give them time to conduct research in the Williams Research Center (WRC). The collaborative course projects with Xavier University of Louisiana (XULA) and Bard Early College New Orleans (BECNO) have changed the way that THNOC approaches the effort to connect students with archival material. Without this class structure and direct engagement, it is unlikely that students at either institution would have the opportunity, time, or confidence to conduct this type of extended research.

Daphne Derven, the Curator of Education at THNOC, began the first collaboration with BECNO in the spring of 2014 and was joined by Education Coordinator Jenny Schwartzberg in planning the first semester of the XULA class in the fall of 2015. In the planning stages for both classes, one of the central goals was to allow the students as much time as possible to conduct research independently, while still providing guidance and support when necessary. A second goal was to create an environment in which the students, not normally accustomed to spaces like the WRC, felt comfortable and confident. Semester schedules included presentations from Jessica Dorman, Director of Publications; Mark Cave, Senior Curator and Oral Historian; and John Lawrence, Director of Museum Programs. On several occasions, students, faculty, and THNOC archival and education staff met as a group to discuss assigned readings

and do peer reviews on project proposals and bibliographies. THNOC staff has responded to these students and the program in a unanimously positive manner—each year, more staff volunteer to give presentations than can be accommodated, and many staff members attend the students' final presentations. As the semester progresses, most student researchers become more engrossed in and excited about their chosen topics and the materials they discover—and WRC staff share in the excitement about their discoveries.

Bard Early College New Orleans (BECNO) Collaboration

The first collaboration, originating in Spring 2014, connected a BECNO class with THNOC. Bard College at Simon's Rock opened the first Bard High School Early College in New York City in 2001 to provide high school students with an early college education and exposure to the liberal arts. Founded in 2008 to fulfill this same mission, Bard Early College New Orleans serves eleventh and twelfth graders from a handful of partner public high schools in Orleans Parish, who take half-day college courses (one seminar and one elective) for up to four semesters. Passing grades earn students college credit, conferred by Bard College and widely accepted for transfer by colleges and universities nationwide. BECNO professors are encouraged to pitch elective classes similar to those they teach at their home institutions, and many on-staff teachers carry dual appointments.

The collaboration between BECNO and THNOC began after Daphne Derven contacted the Bard administration about collaboration possibilities. Professor Rien Fertel created "Stacks on Stacks on Stacks: From Archival Research to Museum Exhibit," a course that combined historical research with museum studies. The goal was to appeal to students with a wide variety of interests, including local history, museum studies, and art history. Students were encouraged to choose a topic, narrow their research interests down to a single collection or self-selected collection of items, and conduct primary research using those items. The final project included a paper detailing the students' research findings and a public presentation to their peers, BECNO professors, and THNOC staff. With enrollment capped at only eight students (due to transportation issues and space limitations in the WRC reading room), the class

proved to be extremely popular, and, as of this writing, has been taught four times over four subsequent spring semesters.

Xavier University of Louisiana (XULA) Collaboration

The collaboration between XULA and THNOC began in Fall 2015. Years earlier in 2011, several progressive attempts were made at XULA to provide students with more hands-on archival experience in “Introduction to Historical Research and Writing” (HIST 2415). These efforts included visits to different archives over the course of the semester, a collaboration with a local cultural institution in which students helped organize archival materials, and targeted project topics (chosen by the instructor) that forced students to engage with specific archival collections. One particularly useful intervention was to eliminate the final paper and focus on the steps of historical research rather than the final product. However, while the interventions were successful for the more intrepid students, it was still challenging to get the majority of the students into the archives and digging into primary research materials with any degree of consistency. Part of the challenge lay in the fact that students were in the early stages of their college careers: “Introduction to Historical Research and Writing” is a required course for history majors at Xavier University, usually taken during a student’s second year and followed with a research capstone class (HIST 4415) in their senior year. The bigger challenge was ultimately that students had never been exposed to archives, did not know how they worked (and, hence, were intimidated), and knew nothing of the transition from their research practices of synthesizing secondary materials to the work of primary research.

Fortuitously, a conversation between XULA Associate Professor of History Elizabeth Manley and THNOC Reference Associate Robert Ticknor sparked the idea to construct the course as a full-time endeavor at the archive. After some work in the summer with the WRC staff and Education Department plotting the syllabus and picking collections that students might find engaging, the class began in the fall of 2015. The basic premise was that students would first pick a topic, then a collection, and then conduct research over the course of the semester, ultimately making a presentation on their research process and results at the conclusion of the course to their peers, XULA history instructors, and THNOC staff. Every class

session except the first would be held at THNOC, and students would be responsible for reading and absorbing historical methods theory in their time outside of class. While each semester of the collaboration has presented challenges, it has been highly successful in engaging students in the practices of historical research, advancing their ability to interrogate primary sources, and increasing their confidence in themselves as researchers.

The Historic New Orleans Collection (THNOC) Outreach

It is crucial to note here that THNOC, while maintaining immensely diverse archival materials, is actively working to increase the diversity of its consuming public. Located in the French Quarter, it is generally visited by enlightened tourists and visiting scholars who know already the riches of the Collection (museum and archival) and have the resources to take advantage of them. Students at XULA and BECNO are almost universally unaware of its existence and are unlikely to venture in on their own. Further, students in both these collaborative classes are generally African American and come from middle- and lower-income families, and do not necessarily “see themselves” in what could be perceived as an elitist, white institution like THNOC. Through these course collaborations, we aim to demonstrate that not only does THNOC contain vast and diverse materials, but also that all students very much belong in such institutions of learning and culture.

From the perspective of faculty and THNOC staff, it has been incredible to see the difference in the students between day one of the class and the day of the final presentations. On the first day, most of the students generally seem nervous and even uncomfortable being in the WRC reading room and working with archival material. By the end of the semester, each student stands up in front of an audience in a formal presentation setting, speaks with authority on his or her chosen topic, and exudes a level of confidence that most had not demonstrated at the beginning of the class. From THNOC’s perspective, the goal of enabling wider access to archival holdings has been wildly successful, as these classes connect the institution with diverse populations of students and pave the way for generations of future student research. However, the classes have also yielded great dividends in terms of student learning, which we will further discuss below.

III. The Praxis of an Inverted Methods Course

Both of the collaborative courses discussed in this article have grown and developed over the several years they have been offered. In the section below, we describe the details of how these classes have run on a weekly basis, the changes they have undergone, and the challenges and successes faced by all participants. In addition to providing readers with a blueprint with which to create a similar course (see **Appendix** for sample syllabi), we also seek to demonstrate some of the key learning moments that would likely not have happened outside of this structure, including choosing feasible research topics, adapting and applying appropriate research methods in real settings, and developing a set of lifelong research and critical thinking skills.

BECNO's "Stacks on Stacks on Stacks"

BECNO's "Stacks on Stacks on Stacks" is held twice a week during the normal school hours of 1:00-3:00 p.m., with one day on the school's campus and one day on the visiting campus (THNOC). During the first scheduled class of the spring semester, students and their professor head to THNOC for a day of introduction. They learn about the history of the Collection; meet their research assistant, Robert Ticknor; begin to formulate what an archive is and does; and review standard dos and don'ts (no food and drink, library voices, pencils only!). Over the course of the next three to four weekly visits, classes take the form of "guest lectures" led by THNOC staff. As opposed to traditional lectures, these usually include a tour of THNOC's permanent collection galleries, a tour of a special exhibit, a talk on how a museum exhibition is curated, and a discussion on how to turn historical research into a working project. The class shifts focus over the semester's remaining ten or so weeks—usually timed to follow the Mardi Gras break in mid to late February. The entirety of class is then held in the reading room (in the Williams Research Center), where students follow a weekly routine of checking in, placing orders for items (hopefully provided to their professor the night before for sake of expediting), reading their primary documents, and thorough note-taking.

Back on the BECNO campus, the "Stacks" students meet once a week for a seminar-style class. Weekly readings are discussed, the previous

guest lecture is reexamined, creative/free writing is performed, and students provide updates and peer reviews of their research projects. Readings take several paths throughout the semester. Over the first couple of weeks, readings focus on the function of an archive—how it is created, maintained, and preserved—using a handful of essays, but most significantly Arlette Farge’s short and readable book, *The Allure of the Archives* (2015).¹⁴ Later readings engage the students on the uses of history, its study, and the subjectivity/objectivity question.¹⁵ Each year, the class wraps up with a reading of Lawrence Weschler’s *Mr. Wilson’s Cabinet of Wonder: Pronged Ants, Horned Humans, Mice on Toast, and Other Marvels of Jurassic Technology* (1996), always a popular read with the students, in order to discuss the historical function of museums in society.¹⁶ Essay assignments, short and long, are scattered throughout the semester and act as response pieces to these readings. Students are also required to provide weekly updates, written and read aloud in class, on their research projects. Peers are encouraged to share their insights—unexplored pathways, questions to consider, other possible archival items to study—in order to push the students to rely on their own expertise, instincts, and feelings about a project, and, most of all, to build a community of self-reliant scholars. A rough draft of the final project paper is due two weeks before semester’s end, in addition to a slideshow presentation—prepared with the help of their professor—of six to ten images selected by the students from their research. A public presentation (paper and accompanying slideshow) follows in the final week of the semester.

Over the past four years, the “Stacks” class has enjoyed phenomenal success among students. Because of the limited class size, prospective students must write an essay expressing why they would make a good candidate for enrollment and showcasing to the BECNO staff that they can be trusted with what amounts to a weekly off-campus “field trip.” There are always more applications than available spaces. Nonetheless, the class has presented challenges for faculty, staff, and students. It usually takes two to three weeks for students to feel comfortable in the new setting of the archive, to wisely utilize their limited time in the reading room (usually a solid hour after transport and check-in), and to remember to order items from the reference staff ahead of time (or find their research hour greatly diminished while waiting for documents to arrive from the stacks). The greatest challenge for students is selecting a research

topic that is interesting and engaging, yet narrow enough in scope to tackle in less than ten hours of research time. But by semester's end, every student has managed to produce a cogent research project. Although few, if any, are of publishable quality, simply because we do not focus on secondary research—time constraints being the biggest factor—several students have returned to the archive or added secondary research to rewrite and recycle their papers into more fully rounded research projects for other classes.

XULA's "Introduction to Historical Research and Writing"

The collaboration between XULA and THNOC takes place over the course of a single semester (approximately fourteen weeks, and generally from 2:00-5:00 p.m. on Wednesdays). During the first week, "Introduction to Historical Research and Writing" is held in the traditional classroom, with visits from THNOC staff to introduce the idea of the archives and the actual collaboration. For the remaining weeks, students take a bus to THNOC for each weekly class visit.¹⁷ In the final week of class, students make presentations on their research to THNOC staff, XULA faculty, and (if they desire) their friends and peers. During the first several weeks in the archives, students spend their time learning about the institution, picking a topic and collection to begin their research, and becoming familiar with the skills of primary document reading and note-taking. Once they have settled into their topics and research, they are required to create a list of secondary sources to provide context for their research topic, and to construct a research proposal. Time is taken out of the research period to conduct peer reviews of the research proposals, and the developing projects are also critiqued by XULA faculty and THNOC staff. Around mid-semester, students hear a presentation by the specialist in oral history, Mark Cave, to help them expand their understanding of usable primary materials. Nearing the end of the semester, they meet with Publication Director Jessica Dorman, who helps them prepare for their final presentations. They also engage in peer review one more time, once they have drafted their historiography of secondary source material related to their topic. In early December, during the last week of classes, they make formal presentations that include both their research findings as well as their reflections on the research process.

Outside of class time, students are expected to read required materials that include one monograph on historical theory (Michel-Rolph Trouillot's *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*) and two very different historical treatments of New Orleans at the turn of the century.¹⁸ In response to one of the latter, students are expected to write a book review to familiarize themselves with the practice and to understand the value of academic reviews for their own research process. Students are also provided with reading guides for each book, are expected to take notes on the material, and are required to post a weekly "muddiest point question" (MPQ) to the learning management system discussion board. Both the notes and the MPQ aid the instructor in evaluating any challenges (or failures) in digesting the outside class content, and in making sure students are on track with their understanding of the value of secondary source materials. On the final day of classes, students submit completed portfolios that include their original and revised research proposals, source lists (primary and secondary), notes on all of their sources, a book review, a historiography, and an outline and argument for a yet-to-be-written paper. They are encouraged to use a reference organizing program (preferably Zotero) and reminded that their portfolio will form the basis of their continued research for their senior capstone.

IV. Student Successes and Struggles

Over the three years of this collaboration, we have witnessed a number of encouraging successes, as well as faced some unexpected challenges with individual students and the group as a whole. On the positive side, regardless of academic ability at the beginning of the class, all students who have completed "Introduction to Historical Research and Writing" since 2015 have demonstrated measurable improvement in their awareness of historical methods and ability to engage in original historical research. At the high end of this scale, we have seen several students begin and continue research on thoroughly original topics that, at the end of their senior year, stand ready to be submitted to quality undergraduate history journals. We have also witnessed a number of students who, despite floundering considerably at the beginning of the semester, eventually found comfort in conducting archival research and were able to present

confidently on their topic at the conclusion of the semester. However, we have also seen some students struggle to select appropriate topics and fail to engage the outside-class content. To address the topic selection challenge, we have chosen to limit possible research areas to those served predominantly by typewritten materials (as paleography proved a nearly insurmountable obstacle for several students). We have also aggressively encouraged the selection of a single archival collection to improve project focus. To address the challenge of secondary readings outside of class time, we began making students accountable for note-taking on external readings, provided reading guides for each selection, required the posting of “muddiest point questions” each week, and conducted one-on-one meetings with students (five to ten minutes each) during archive time to make sure they were absorbing the outside reading content.

The most considerable challenge in the “Introduction to Historical Research and Writing” course lies in the transition from secondary-based to primary-based research. Students enter the class assuming they must immediately formulate a fixed research question and proceed to answer that question directly as many of them did in secondary-based research projects in previous classes. Pushing them to engage first with the archival materials, and then let the sources guide their questions, proves generally very uncomfortable for many of them. While no formal “solution” has been arrived at for this problem, letting students know it is perfectly normal to be unclear about the direction of their research, encouraging them that the materials they are looking at are compelling and relevant (or redirecting them to more compelling or relevant materials), and providing support for constantly shifting research questions helps them feel more comfortable engaging the primary documents and allowing the research to be guided by the materials.

From the archival/reference side, the challenges faced are a bit different, but the measure of success is the same: ensuring that the students become familiar and comfortable with being in an archive and with the process of doing historical research. One of the first challenges faced in the archive is ensuring there are adequate staff on hand to continue to assist other patrons, while also serving the students themselves. To that end, as mentioned, we encouraged students to make their requests the night prior to the class so that WRC staff can prepare all of the necessary material ahead of time.

When students comply, they are able to maximize their research time rather than wait for material to be pulled from archival repositories. Staff typically dedicate a good part of the day before the classes arrive for preparation. Also, because all accessioned materials must stay in the reading room, we have to conduct our classes in and around other patrons and keep the noise and disruption to a minimum, while still making sure the students get a chance to talk individually with instructors and staff. The process established by the WRC staff, in concert with the instructors' and students' needs as they experience research in the reading room, has generally worked successfully, but is also big part of the reason we must limit the class size to eight or less.

V. Student Interest, Inspiration, and Ambition

One of the most significant objectives, once the logistics of a course of this nature have been handled, is ensuring that every student finds a topic that is of interest to them, but is, at the same time, feasible over the span of a semester *and* supported by THNOC holdings. Students often initially choose a topic that is much too broad—such as “the history of jazz” rather than a focus on a single jazz musician or “World War I” rather than local responses to the war effort. Similar to these examples of students wanting to conduct histories of jazz or World War I in ten weeks, many of the participants propose huge areas of study, such as massive social movements, global war, mental health, or national politics. It is only through the expertise of the WRC staff, along with gentle coaxing from instructors and educators, that students move toward a more specific—and feasible—research focus.

On the one hand, you do not want to force a topic on a student; on the other, it is painful (and not terribly effective) to watch a student muddle through an overwhelming area of study. Examples from these classes include encouraging a student to transition from a broad interest in military history toward the focused study of a particular battle or participant. In one case, a student interested in “World War I,” after some floundering, took up the suggestion to focus his work on the letters of one soldier who wrote to loved ones in New Orleans from the battlefield. In another case, a student with an interest in “music” was nudged toward the collection of a pioneering female music booker and promoter of the 1950s who donated her business and personal files to the Collection. One

student broadly interested in “science” was able to focus on the life and career of a pioneering pediatric surgeon. Another, who initially wanted to tell the “history of film,” eventually relented and studied representations of New Orleans in movie posters. In all of these cases, the several weeks lost at the beginning certainly handicapped the student somewhat, but in the end, they managed to see that the more narrow focus (1) was perfectly acceptable for a project; (2) proved much less overwhelming (and thus reduced anxiety); and (3) resulted in a stronger, more unique end result.

The onsite experience and results for both collaborative courses have been excellent and demonstrate the benefits of teaching historical methods through direct involvement in hands-on research practices. First, there is a definitive practical benefit to getting the students out of a classroom, off campus, and into a historical institution that they would never have entered of their own accord. Coming to THNOC is definitely a different experience, even compared to going to their own university’s special collections. Having dedicated class time devoted to working with archival materials (not to mention having a professor and a reference staff member looking over their shoulders), rather than making it something students do outside of their regular class period, guarantees that students are engaging with the manuscript material in a more than perfunctory fashion. They generally find it odd at first, and in the first few weeks are not sure what to do with their time. As instructors and staff, we make regular rounds to check in with each student, answering and posing questions, explaining how to take notes on the document, and helping them to understand the organizational system. However, towards the end of the class, students have established their patterns and tend to get straight to work. In one week, the instructor was traveling for a conference and decided to experiment with letting the students head to the archives alone. Not only did they follow through with what they needed to do, they also expressed a collective sense of pride that they had done so independently.

There is also somewhat ineffable—but nonetheless very real—quality to working with actual primary materials rather than documents that have been reproduced in readers or sourcebooks, on the Internet, or in other reference volumes. Put bluntly, primary documents removed from their archival context—whether reproduced digitally or in print—lack the inspirational power of being in the

presence of original documents. There is something about holding a fragile paper, smelling its age, and understanding it was not printed off from a computer screen yesterday that helps transport students to that time and place. Holding letters written by Tennessee Williams (as one of our students did) is a much different experience from opening up a published book containing the playwright's selected letters. For the student that worked with these letters, she expressed a sense of connection with the writer and recipient, and ended up diving deeper into the lived experience of the latter. This sort of experience is at the heart of our enterprise. It allows students to understand history, research, archives, and museums in a way that the classroom and their own library just do not allow.

Creating lifelong skills for critical thinking is also at the core of our collaborative endeavor. Students that have completed the course and gone on to graduate and professional school programs have indicated that they are far ahead of their peers in their ability to conduct independent research. Such skills acquisition range from the above-mentioned topic selection, to defining a research focus, finding additional research materials once an original source had been exhausted, identifying appropriate secondary materials, and presenting research findings in a professional manner to a broader audience. In one case, a student who had reluctantly agreed to work on the files of the New Orleans YMCA (a topic defined without much trouble) began to struggle when reading through the notes of less-than-thrilling board meetings (with difficulty defining focus). After a brief discussion with the instructor about precisely *when* these meetings were occurring (in the middle of the Civil Rights Era) and about what was *not* being discussed (race and integration), the student not only realized the importance of asking questions about context and silences, but also found a topic that thrilled her and provided more than sufficient basis for her continued work into her senior thesis. Similarly, in final presentation preparation, careful questioning from instructors and staff have helped students select display materials and concepts more carefully, as well as overcome nervousness and find confidence by achieving a level of expertise on a specific topic over the course of the semester.

As crucial as we believe these hands-on research skills to be for the students' advancement broadly speaking, we believe that the skills learned in the archival classroom extend beyond even research. The

level of confidence in mastery has yielded much larger dividends in some of the more reticent and reluctant students. With more advanced students, the projects have pushed their critical analysis and research passion to even higher levels. Working independently, a crucial skill of any kind of research, is also a fundamental life skill that is acquired by most students through flipping a methods course in this manner. One of our biggest goals with both of these classes is to make the students feel comfortable and confident the next time they enter an archive or any space they might have once understood as an “elite” center of knowledge, whether it is at the Williams Research Center, a graduate or professional school, or somewhere else entirely. Given the final presentations, feedback from students after the end of the semester and in years following, and general observation over the course of four years, we can confidently assert that we have been successful on that front.

VI. Impact and Conclusions

Reflecting on the successes of this class brings several diverse examples of students’ cognitive and personal growth. As we stated at the beginning of this article, we argue that the “archives-as-laboratory” model provides three central benefits to students by (1) imparting the value of primary documents to the construction of historical knowledge; (2) imparting proper research methods and practices and empowering students as knowledge-producers; and (3) exposing students to the careers and praxis of the history graduate. We will talk briefly about each of these areas and provide some concluding thoughts.

Teaching the centrality of primary documents lies at the heart of this class and any archive-centric activity. The hands-on element of dealing with primary documents in their original format gives the students a heightened sense of value of the material, along with greater connection to its authors. In one extreme example, a student found a photograph and realized that one of the individuals in the image was her own grandmother. In many other cases, students demonstrate excitement and awe in finding and engaging, for example, an arrest record for the person they have been researching, a holiday greeting to a famous musician from their subject, or handwritten notes from unknown individuals to the young girls who

integrated the all-white public schools in New Orleans in the 1960s. Other projects have helped students understand how seemingly disparate primary documents can be strung together to tell a unique and engaging story of the past; through the process, students have learned to read individual documents for multiple meanings and purposes. Finally, they often come to understand that these materials have value for others when they provide images of the materials in their final presentations to members of THNOC staff or discuss their projects with peers, faculty, and community members.

Creating best practices in research is also a central goal of both the BECNO and XULA collaborative classes, and is always a work in progress. In “Introduction to Historical Research and Writing,” students are strongly encouraged to use the open-source Zotero program to keep track of the primary documents they discover in the archives, as well as the secondary materials they will use to provide context for their topic. In addition to the learning curve inherent in a new technology, students often struggle initially to understand that they must input significant data in order to construct a complete entry on an individual archival item. Often, realizations occur at the time they are required to turn in the first draft of their primary source list as they discover that an entry they created called “Dear John” failed to include that the item is a letter or omitted who wrote and received the item. Similarly, when they realize they must return to look at an item a second time, they often discover they have not noted what collection or folder they found it in, forcing them to dig through the finding aid once again. Learning to utilize finding aids (and to keep them handy for continued reference), as well as keeping careful notes on all sources reviewed, is generally mastered in the first few weeks and proves a highly useful skill as students continue their research in this class and beyond.

Detailed note-taking on content is one of the most difficult skills to impart to students. Like most of us, they seem to believe they will of course remember the basic construct of an item they look at on any given day, taking only the most cursory notes on the documents they review at the beginning of the semester. Inevitably, as their final presentations approach, they often find they have forgotten, for example, pertinent details relating to a meeting denoted only as “talks about 1964 legislation.” Unable to describe who was “talking” or why they were at said meeting, the student must then

return to the item for reexamination. Working independently, along with presenting their research at the end of the semester, are generally the most anxiety-producing elements of the course-as-praxis. With significant emotional and intellectual support, most students eventually come to appreciate the autonomy they are granted during their time in the archives; this becomes even clearer to them when they follow up on their projects subsequent to the class. One student, who pursued an MBA following his undergraduate degree, wrote that the independent research skills he learned through the course put him head and shoulders above other members of his business school cohort. The end-of-the-semester presentations often prompt more than a few pep talks with nervous students. However, even in the most extreme cases, students have successfully stood up in front of their peers, instructors, and THNOC staff (including, one year, the president of Xavier University) and reflected thoughtfully on both their topics and the research process. Often, students surprise even themselves, and they consistently demonstrate many if not all the skills they learned in the research process through their presentations.

Exposing students to institutions like The Historic New Orleans Collection—both a museum and an archival research center—allows us to demonstrate that such places are not elite bastions, but rather are highly accessible sources for learning, research, and even potential careers. Throughout both XULA and BECNO courses, students are introduced to a large number of THNOC staff who work in a wide range of areas, including archival research and manuscripts, curation, education, publication, and administration. We hope that the students' conversations with these individuals will permit them to see these areas not as obscure or unattainable, but as career options they themselves could pursue with a history degree. While it is far too early to argue that this class has led any students to careers in library science, archival curation, or museum studies, a number of students have demonstrated intense curiosity about the careers they see modeled, and an internship relationship has been established for both XULA and BECNO students. Participants in these courses have consistently demonstrated their ability to transfer this understanding of accessibility by conducting research in other archival centers across the city. Anecdotally, a number of students talk affectionately about their class time at THNOC, reflecting on

it not only as an extremely useful interval in their studies, but also as a time they enjoyed and would like to revisit.

While continually seeking to improve these course collaborations as archivists, education specialists, and instructors, we believe the framework we have created here is both an ideal example of teaching historical methods through a flipped structure and a model that could be exported to other institutions. Through these courses, students have demonstrated the skills of historical research and reflected on these abilities as life-long advantages. They have also come to appreciate the value of primary documents and disseminated their new knowledge to others—sometimes even informing THNOC staff about materials with which the staff were unfamiliar. In the process, students have become experts and knowledge-producers in small yet important areas of New Orleans history. Finally, they have become denizens of archival collections, comfortable with their structure and function and willing to engage with such centers in their continued education and future careers. While the city of New Orleans and its rich history provide an ideal backdrop for such a collaboration, it is not unique. Partnering with local historical societies, special collections, and small or large archival centers would allow any methods instructor to recreate this model for their students. Obviously, some planning and a sympathetic relationship between instructor and archivist are crucial to the success of such a project. However, achieving the goals of greater dissemination of historical material and more engaged historical research among students can be attained at the same time through collaborations like these.

Notes

The authors wish to thank Jessica Dorman for her editorial assistance with this article, as well as the audience members at the 2017 Southeastern Museum Conference presentation for their feedback on the project. We wish to dedicate this piece to Daphne Derven, the original inspiration and driving force behind this entire endeavor.

1. For an overall description of The Historic New Orleans Collection, see <<https://www.hnoc.org/about>>, and visit the Collection's website at <<https://www.hnoc.org>> for additional information on the institutional mission and holdings.

2. Robert B. Bain, "Into the Breach: Using Research and Theory to Shape History Instruction," *Journal of Education* 189, no. 1-2 (2008-2009): 159-167.

3. See, for example, Natalie Zemon Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and Their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995); Richard J. Evans, *In Defense of History* (London, United Kingdom: Granta Books, 2000); William A. Green, *History, Historians, and the Dynamics of Change* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1993); Simon Schama, *Dead Certainties: (Unwarranted Speculations)* (London, United Kingdom: Granta Books, 2013); Paul R. Spickard, James V. Spickard, and Kevin M. Cragg, *World History by the World's Historians* (Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill, 1998). For a good anecdote that does not include archival research, see Caroline Hoefflerle, "Teaching Historiography to High School and Undergraduate Students," *OAH Magazine of History* 21, no. 2 (April 2007): 40-44.

4. For more on the ways direct examination and application of primary materials in the history classroom "transcends the rote learning of facts and figures," deconstructs the myth of a single, fixed history, and develops problem solving and critical thinking skills through analysis of "context, selection and bias, [and] the nature of collective memory," see Michael Eamon, "A 'Genuine Relationship with the Actual': New Perspectives on Primary Sources, History and the Internet in the Classroom," *The History Teacher* 39, no. 3 (May 2006): 297-314. See also Katharine T. Corbett, "From File Folder to the Classroom: Recent Primary Source Curriculum Projects," *The American Archivist* 54, no. 2 (Spring 1991): 296-300; Michael Coventry, Peter Felten, David Jaffee, Cecilia O'Leary, Tracey Weis, and Susannah McGowan, "Ways of Seeing: Evidence and Learning in the History Classroom," *The Journal of American History* 92, no. 4 (March 2006): 1371-1402; Frederick D. Drake and Sarah Drake Brown, "A Systematic Approach to Improve Students' Historical Thinking," *The History Teacher* 36, no. 4 (August 2003): 465-489; Joan W. Musbach, "Using Primary Sources in the Secondary Classroom," *OAH Magazine of History* 16, no. 1 (Fall 2001): 30-32; and Bill Tally and Lauren B. Goldenberg, "Fostering Historical Thinking with Digitized Primary Sources," *Journal of Research on Technology in Education* 38, no. 1 (Fall 2005): 1-21; who encourage a drastically increased engagement with the scholarship of teaching and learning among historians.

5. Anthony Brundage, *Going to the Sources: A Guide to Historical Research and Writing*, fifth ed. (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley & Sons, 2013); Richard Marius and

Melvin E. Page, *A Short Guide to Writing about History*, ninth ed. (Boston, MA: Pearson, 2015); Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, eighth ed. (Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2015); Michael J. Salevouris and Conal Furay, *The Methods and Skills of History: A Practical Guide*, fourth ed. (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017).

6. As Michael Drake argues, "To work on sources of one's own choosing, to test hypotheses, to revise established wisdom, to engage in scholarly debate, does wonders for self confidence, interest and motivation." Michael Drake, "The Democratisation of Historical Research: The Case for DA301," *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 17, no. 2 (October 1996): 201-207, quote on 201. For a fascinating project that engaged National Security Archives and encouraged activism, see Jesse Hingson, "Open Veins, Public Transcripts: The National Security Archive as a Tool for Critical Pedagogy in the College Classroom," *Radical History Review* 2008, no. 102 (Fall 2008): 90-98.

7. Jonathan Buehl, Tamar Chute, and Anne Fields, "Training in the Archives: Archival Research as Professional Development," *College Composition and Communication* 64, no. 2 (December 2012): 277.

8. Buehl, Chute, and Fields, "Training in the Archives." See also David Pace, "The Amateur in the Operating Room: History and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning," *The American Historical Review* 109, no. 4 (October 2004): 1171-1192, for a fascinating review of the scholarship of teaching and learning in history; and Peter N. Stearns, Peter C. Seixas, and Samuel S. Wineburg, eds., *Knowing, Teaching, and Learning History: National and International Perspectives* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), for more collaborative approaches to history teaching and learning scholarship.

9. "Definition of Flipped Learning," Flipped Learning Network, 12 March 2014, <<https://flippedlearning.org/definition-of-flipped-learning/>>.

10. Jeremy F. Strayer, "How Learning in an Inverted Classroom Influences Cooperation, Innovation and Task Orientation," *Learning Environments Research* 15, no. 2 (July 2012): 171-193. See also Micah Stickel and Qin Liu, "Engagement with the Inverted Classroom Approach: Student Characteristics and Impact on Learning Outcomes," *Proceedings of the Canadian Engineering Education Association (CEEA) Conference-McMaster University May 31-June 3, 2015* (2015).

11. Barbara Rockenbach, "Archives, Undergraduates, and Inquiry-Based Learning: Case Studies from Yale University Library," *The American Archivist* 74, no. 1 (Spring-Summer 2011): 297-311. For arguments that advocate for the importance of archivists and librarians in primary and secondary history education, see Peter Carini, "Archivists as Educators: Integrating Primary Sources into the Curriculum," *Journal of Archival Organization* 7, no. 1-2 (January 2009): 41-50; Doris Malkmus, "'Old Stuff' for New Teaching Methods: Outreach to History Faculty Teaching with Primary Sources," *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 10, no. 4 (October 2010): 413-435.

12. Buehl, Chute, and Fields, "Training in the Archives," 278.

13. Bain, "Into the Breach," 333.

14. Arlette Farge, *The Allure of the Archives* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015).

15. Readings include selections from Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1995); and John Edgar Wideman, *Writing to Save a Life: The Louis Till File* (New York: Scribner, 2017).

16. Lawrence Weschler, *Mr. Wilson's Cabinet of Wonder: Pronged Ants, Horned Humans, Mice on Toast, and Other Marvels of Jurassic Technology* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996).

17. THNOC provides funding for busing students in both the Xavier University and Bard Early College classes each semester. In both classes, the enrollments are at or below eight students.

18. These selections have changed, but currently include Michael A. Ross, *The Great New Orleans Kidnapping Case: Race, Law, and Justice in the Reconstruction Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015); and Gary Krist, *Empire of Sin: A Story of Sex, Jazz, Murder, and the Battle for Modern New Orleans* (New York: Crown, 2014).

Appendix A: BECNO Course Syllabus

Bard Early College New Orleans
Spring 2017

Professor Rien Fertel
rienfertel@gmail.com

Stacks on Stacks on Stacks: From Archival Research to Museum Exhibit

"To get around in New Orleans, you drive through history, navigating the dense web of references embedded in the street names." — Ned Sublette

*"History is a weapon in today's struggles and a tool for building the future."
— Josep Fontana*

"Chaos was the law of nature; order was the dream of man." — Henry Adams

Stacks on Stacks on Stacks: From Archival Research to Museum Exhibit will examine the possibilities and problems implicit in historical research and writing, archival assembly and preservation, and museum subjectivity and authority. Through hands-on historical research and museum exhibition tours, this class will also examine the history and culture of New Orleans in order to foster a greater understanding of this place and its people. Through readings, discussions, and assignments, *SoSoS* will illuminate the complex — and often paradoxical — historical, cultural, racial, ethnic, environmental, and geophysical stories present and representative of the area.

SoSoS will be a two-part structured class. Each Tuesday students will read a selection of interdisciplinary texts to survey and study of archival and museum studies. On Fridays, classes will be held at The Historical New Orleans Collection, a museum and research center dedicated to the study and preservation of the history and culture of New Orleans and the Gulf South region. At the Collection, the class will hear guest lectures from a selection of archivists, museum curators, and professional historians. Students will learn what an archive is, how and why a museum operates, and the importance of preserving and exhibiting historical documents and items. Over the course of the semester, students will choose an area of local interest, pick a single individual item (an object, document, photograph, painting, diary, etc.) from the Collection on which to focus, and prepare a series of essays on that archival holding. For their final project, students will have to compose a final paper on their chosen object and prepare a brief accompanying public presentation, for a BECNO-curated exhibition, or student-created history of New Orleans.

Over the course of the semester, students should develop a personal understanding of the city's history and culture, the academic discipline of History, and the uses and misuses of History in historical exhibits, archives, and collections.

STRUCTURE

This elective course acts as an introduction for Bard Early College students to similar specialized classes taught at liberal arts colleges. I expect all students to attend each and every class sessions. If you know you will be absent, please provide your professor and the Bard administrators with excuse forms. Failure to provide excused evidence for 3 or more classes will result in a talk with your advisor, and possible disciplinary action and a lowered course grade. I expect class participation, all written assignments completed, and the timely fulfillment of all readings.

ASSIGNMENTS

- Students are expected to attend class fully prepared, there they will complete daily free-writing assignments and participate in class discussion.
- Two short essays.
- A critical Final essay and presentation (8-10 minutes in length; plenty of information to come at a later date).

GRADING

- In-Class Participation and Archival/Museum Self-Management: 20%
- Short Essay #1 (due 02/07): 10%
- Short Essay #2 (due 03/14): 10%
- Final Project: 60%
 - = • Rough Draft: 10%
 - Presentation of Rough Draft: 5%
 - Dress Rehearsal: 5%
 - Final Paper: 15%
 - Final Presentation: 25%

READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

The assigned readings should be completed for discussion by Friday of each week. There are three core texts, one copy of each will be distributed for you in which to underline text, scribble notes, and keep and love forever. They are:

- Arlette Forge, *The Allure of the Archives* (Yale University Press, 2013).
- John Edgar Wideman, *Writing to Save a Life: The Louis Till File* (Scribner, 2016).
- Lawrence Weschler, *Mr. Wilson's Cabinet of Wonder: Pronged Ants, Horned Humans, Mice on Toast, and Other Marvels of Jurassic Technology* (Vintage, 1996).

- **Note:** ALL READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS SUBJECT TO CHANGE!!!

Unit 1: What Is an Archive?

Week 1:

- 01/10: On Campus
- in-class reading: Fleckner, "'Dear Mary Jane': Some Reflections on Being an Archivist"; Hensen, "Revisiting Mary Jane, or, Dear Cat: Being Archival in the 21st Century"
- 01/13: THNOC, 410 Chartres Street
- *Introduction to the Williams Research Center, Reading Room, Archives and Collections, tour and discussion*, Boyd Cruise Room
- Faculty: Daphne Derven, Curator of Education; Jenny Schwartzberg, Education Program Coordinator; Becky Smith, Head of Reader Services; and Bobby Ticknor, Reference Assistant

Week 2:

- 01/17: On Campus
- read: Farge, *The Allure of the Archives*, pp. 1-46
- 01/20: THNOC, 533 Royal Street, Counting House
- *Curating an Exhibition: Moving from Concept to Exhibition*
- Faculty: Jessica Dorman, Director of Publications, Marketing, and Student Education

Unit 2: Finding Your Project

Week 3:

- 01/24: On Campus
- read: Farge, *The Allure of the Archives*, pp. 47-78; Trouillot, "The Power in the Story"
- 01/27: THNOC, 533 Royal Street, Counting House
- *The Historic New Orleans Collection, Discussion and walk through of the Louisiana History Galleries: overview, thematic orientation and purpose of long term exhibitions*
- Faculty: John H. Lawrence, Director of Museum Programs

Week 4:

- 01/31: On Campus
- read: Farge, *The Allure of the Archives*, pp. 79-124; Trouillot, "Good Day, Columbus"
- 02/03: THNOC, 533 Royal Street, Counting House
- *History and Controversy: New Orleans and the Domestic Slave Trade: 1808-1865*
- Faculty: Erin Greenwald, Historian/Curator

Unit 3: Into the Archives

Week 5:

- 02/07: On Campus
*** **First Essay Due** ***
• read: Wideman, pp. 3-52
02/10: On Campus

Week 6:

- 02/14: On Campus
• read: Wideman, pp. 52-104
02/17: THNOC, Reading Room, 410 Chartres Street
• Research Day 1
Faculty: Bobby Ticknor, Reference Assistant and Jenny Schwartzberg, Education Program Coordinator

Week 7:

- 02/21: On Campus
• read: Wideman, pp. 104-150

*** **Mardi Gras Break 02/24 — 03/03** ***

Week 8:

- 03/07: On Campus
• read: Wideman, pp. 151-193
03/10: THNOC, Reading Room, 410 Chartres Street
• Research Day 2
Faculty: Ticknor & Schwartzberg

Week 9:

- 03/14: On Campus
*** **Second Essay Due** ***
03/17: THNOC, Reading Room, 410 Chartres Street
• Research Day 3
Faculty: Ticknor & Schwartzberg

Week 10:

- 03/21: *** **No Class — ACT Testing** ***
03/24: THNOC, Reading Room, 410 Chartres Street
• Research Day 4
Faculty: Ticknor & Schwartzberg

Unit 4: What Is a Museum?

Week 11:

- 03/28: On Campus
 • read: Weschler, pp. 1-68
- 03/31: THNOC, Reading Room, 410 Chartres Street
 • Research Day 5
 Faculty: Ticknor & Schwartzberg

Week 12:

- 04/04: On Campus
 • read: Weschler, pp. 69-110
- 04/07: THNOC, Boyd Cruise Gallery, 410 Chartres
 • *Jazz and Storyville* exhibit walkthrough
 Faculty: Eric Seiferth, Assistant Curator & Historian

***** Spring Break 04/10 — 04/17 *****

Unit 5: Bard Curates THNOC

Week 13:

- 04/18: On Campus
 *** **ROUGH DRAFT OF FINAL PROJECT DUE** ***
- 04/21: THNOC, Reading Room, 410 Chartres Street
 • Research Day 6
 Faculty: Ticknor & Schwartzberg

Week 14:

- 04/25: On Campus
 • **PRESENTATION OF ROUGH DRAFT TO CLASS** (w/ peer-review, comment and critique)
- 04/28: THNOC, Reading Room, 410 Chartres Street
 • Research Day 7
 Faculty: Ticknor & Schwartzberg

Week 15:

- 05/02: THNOC, Counting House, 533 Royal Street
 • **RUN-THROUGH DRESS REHEARSAL OF FINAL PROJECT**
- 05/05: THNOC, Counting House, 533 Royal Street
 • *** **PRESENTATION OF FINAL PROJECT** ***
 • *** **FINAL PAPER DUE (No Extensions, No Exceptions)** ***

Appendix B: XULA Course Syllabus

INTRODUCTION TO HISTORICAL RESEARCH AND WRITING

Finding History in the Archives: New Orleans in the 19th & 20th Centuries

HIST – 2415-01 / Fall 2017 / W 2:00 – 5:00

Credit Hours: 3.0 / Administration 214 & *The Historic New Orleans Collection*

Instructor: Dr. Elizabeth Manley

Office: Administration Building, Suite 212, #6

Office Hours: M/W 9-12

Email: emanley1@xula.edu ; emanley1@gmail.com

Office Phone: 520-7409

Course Description

This course seeks to provide a foundation for students in the basic skills of the work of the historian. It will introduce students to the principles, practices, and concepts used by real-life historians, as well as individuals in many other fields, to investigate the past. Most basically, students will learn to ask relevant historical questions, conduct successful historical research and write effectively about the past. Historians seek to understand and *interpret* the past, not simply recreate “what happened.” That means that the most successful – and the most interesting – historical research is more than a simple compilation of facts and figures, events, dates, people and places. In this course, you will become an historian-in-training, learning to think, research, talk, and write as a historian. You will learn to identify historical problems, construct a feasible research question and agenda, and perform historical research. In addition, you will be expected to compile that information into a final, polished portfolio. As this is a required course for History Majors, the assignments for this course are rigorous and are designed to introduce you to the historian’s craft and give you the opportunity to practice them yourselves!

Although the primary focus of the course is on the practices and theories of history, we will center on a particular historical era in order to illustrate, with specific examples, the processes of change in local, national, and international contexts. By focusing on the late 19th and early 20th centuries in New Orleans, LA, we can narrow our historical and research focus. Within this theme, we will look at several different kinds of historical analysis: historiography and methodological research, as well as popular history, legal history, and more traditional archival-based studies. In addition, students will spend the majority of the class at the Historic New Orleans Collection in an effort to understand the structure and organization of primary document collections. Each week we will travel to the HNOC research center and study the materials they have there. Students will be expected to choose a topic of research and a collection or collections to examine, construct a research question, conduct research, and complete a final research portfolio. The class will conclude with presentations on individual research projects at the HNOC. As such, this class is “inverted,” meaning the work you would normally do outside of the classroom you will now do during class time. You will be expected to spend your time out of the classroom mastering content through reading and review exercises, short videos, and online discussion activities.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, students will be able:

- To differentiate between social, cultural, and popular forms of historical analysis **through close readings of secondary sources.**
- To construct a feasible and engaging research question and agenda.
- To **differentiate between the different kinds of historical data (primary and secondary sources), and compile** sufficient materials to create a thorough research paper bibliography.

- To critique their peers' work in a peer review process, and learn to integrate peer-review into their own work.
- To understand **how to deconstruct primary documents through critical readings** and document analysis assignments.
- To master the art of **reviewing a historical manuscript** for content and analysis.
- To explain the *process* and master the *steps* of historical research including archival mining, data synthesis, secondary analysis, peer review, and revision to create a unique final project.
- To synthesize the material they have learned through research and present it to their peers.

Required Texts

The following books are available at the Xavier University bookstore and are required:

- Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1997). [More recent 2015 edition acceptable]
- Marius, Richard and Melvin E. Page. *A Short Guide to Writing about History*, 9th ed. (New York: Longman, 2007). [Earlier editions acceptable]
- Gary Krist, *Empire of Sin: A Story of Sex, Jazz, Murder, and the Battle for Modern New Orleans* (New York: Crown, 2014)
- Michael A. Ross, *The Great New Orleans Kidnapping Case: Race, Law, and Justice in the Reconstruction Era* (New York: Oxford, 2014)

The following guide should be read IN ITS ENTIRETY (including the embedded videos) before the second class and the ZOTERO program (and word processing plug-ins) should be downloaded to your laptop according to your system specifications: <https://www.zotero.org/support/>.

The following books are available at the Xavier University bookstore and are recommended:

- Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, Eighth Edition: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers, Edition: 8*
- Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*

Additional articles included in weekly assignments may be posted on blackboard, on reserve at the library, or handed out in class. At the beginning of the semester you should make sure you familiar with **Blackboard** and are listed in this class.

Students will be expected to be consummately punctual for weekly trips to the Historic New Orleans Collection.

Assignments and Grading

Participation / Peer Review:	20%
Book Review:	10%
Research Proposals (2 Drafts):	10%
Source (Primary and Secondary) Lists:	10%
Source (Primary and Secondary) Notes:	10%
Historiography:	10%
Original Argument:	5%
Paper Outline and Intro Paragraph:	10%
Final Presentation	10%
Final Portfolio (revisions to above items):	5%

Participation: Class participation is crucial to this class and constitutes a significant portion of your grade. For full participation grades (20 points per class), students are expected to **1)** arrive to class (and for the van) on time and prepared, be respectful of their fellow students and instructor, and contribute thoughtfully to any course discussion. This includes paying close attention to the syllabus, completing the readings, engaging in class activities, thinking about the readings assigned each week (before class), and planning ahead (being organized) for your own research agenda (5 points). Students are also expected to **2)** take notes on the readings and bring those notes to class for review by the instructor (10 points). Please consult the reading guides (Trouillot, Krist, and Ross) for additional assistance as you read and take notes. Once students have completed the reading they will **3)** post a “muddiest point question” to the Blackboard discussion thread for that week by 9am Wednesday (5 points). Finally, students are expected to be courteous and respectful to one another and follow the rules of the HNOC while we are their guests.

Peer Reviews: Peer review is a process in which we both give and take constructive criticism on scholarly projects. Students will be expected not only to be prepared with their own work, but also to engage critically with the work of their peers. Peer reviews will be conducted in class on the days the proposals, source lists, and historiographies are due (an additional 10 points per exercise), therefore attendance on these days is more than critical. Your participation grade will include your peer review efforts.

Book Review: One of the most prominent – and practical – skills of the historian is the ability to read a manuscript and write a review of the historical analysis. That is, providing an overview of both the information presented in the book, but also its perspective on the topic and period, in a concise manner. Students will complete a book review for one of the manuscripts to be read for the class. More instructions will be provided in class.

Components of the Research Project

In this course, you will be able to select from a variety of research topics related to the time period / concepts covered in this class, and over the course of the semester you will work on the major components of a research project with the EXCEPTION of a final paper. This includes a research proposal, primary and secondary source lists (bibliographies) and primary and secondary source notes, as well as a short historiography, an original argument, and a paper outline. Once archival source collections have been chosen (week two) and topics refined (week three) more detailed instructions will be given on each component of the research process.

In addition to our visits to the HNOC students will be expected to familiarize themselves with the archives in New Orleans in order to collect any additional research materials necessary for their projects. A list of [Archival Research Repositories in New Orleans](http://nutrias.org/gnoa/norepos.htm) can be found at <http://nutrias.org/gnoa/norepos.htm>. It is likely you will need to visit these repositories at least once on your own to gather additional research materials. With appropriate notice, I may be able to assist with transportation.

Research Proposal: This is the center of any good research project. It sets up the research question, and establishes a plan through which the historian will complete the research. More details will be provided in class. The proposal will be submitted twice - as a draft and as a final version and grades will be averaged. The draft proposal will be subject to peer review in class.

Source Lists: This includes a list of both primary sources (at least four) and secondary sources (at least ten). Both primary and secondary sources should be consulted for appropriateness to your topic and research question before being added to your list. For this exercise, as well as for the notes to be taken (see below) on these sources, we will be utilizing the online bibliography program called Zotero. Please familiarize yourself with the program during the first few weeks of classes - see <http://www.zotero.org/>. The draft source list will be subject to peer review in class.

Source Notes: Students will hand in the notes they have taken on both primary and secondary sources (on two separate dates) through the Zotero program. In addition to demonstrating the depth of research undertaken, it is also a way to understand how we process materials as an historian. These notes will be submitted through a Zotero generated report and posted to blackboard by weekly, as well as printed and handed in as a final version.

Historiography: A historiography is essential to any research project. In essence, it is a summary of all the work that has come before you on your particular topic. What you are trying to establish with a historiography is what the work before has said, how it provides a foundation for your own work, and also how your work will be (even in some small way) different from what has been said before. The historiography will be subject to peer review in class.

Original Argument: Students will submit an original argument around which they would frame a research paper (even though they will not be writing one). It should be original (see above), but should also convey to the reader that their argument could be answered in an 8 – 10 page paper.

Final Outline and Opening Paragraph: This would be the final step in the research paper process before beginning writing. In this outline, you will set out your introduction and main argument, your supporting details, and the contents of your conclusion. Proper outline format should be used.

Presentation: On the final day of class, students will present their research to their fellow students, faculty, and the staff of the HNOG. More information on style and format will be given out in class.

A NOTE ON ALL WRITTEN WORK

- All written work must be typed, Times, 12 pt, font, 1" margins, and double-spaced.
- Use *Chicago* style formatting and footnotes (see Hacker, *D. A Pocket Style Manual*, 183-208 or Turabian).
- **Hard copies** must be submitted at the beginning of the class period.
- **Electronic copies** of selected papers must be uploaded to the "TurnItIn" link on Blackboard by 5pm on the date on which they are due.
- Late papers will lose five points if submitted after class has begun (in hard copy) and/or after 5pm in electronic version, and an additional five points for each day late thereafter, including weekends. Papers more than *one week* late will not be accepted and will receive a zero for that assignment.
- Keep copies of your work and electronic submissions; the instructor is not responsible for "lost" papers.
- Careful save all graded work as it will be collected both at the end of this class and later as part of your senior comp portfolio.

General Policies

Attendance: Class attendance is both important and **mandatory**. As a core seminar, your weekly contributions to class discussion and activities are a crucial element of not only your own grade, but also the success of your fellow students. Just as you can contribute to the learning of your peers, so too can they contribute to your own intellectual advancement. Please be attentive and respectful of the comments and contributions of others. Remember that attendance includes both your physical and mental presence. Reading assignments for each week are essential to your success in the course and I expect that you will give your best effort to comprehend the assigned materials *before* coming to class. Involvement in discussions on the reading material will also contribute (or detract from) your overall class participation grade, as described in the course assignments and grading section above.

Lateness: Do not arrive late to class. It is disrespectful not only to me, but to your fellow students who are attempting to concentrate on the material. I will not hold you over the end of class; in return, I expect you to arrive on time (not five minutes late), be in your seat (or seat in the van), and be ready to begin. Arriving more than five minutes late will result in an absence for that day's class as the van will leave without you.

In-class comportment: I expect you to arrive to class on time and be ready to listen, discuss, and take notes when class begins. That means that **all cell phones** should be put away and switched to silent. If you choose to utilize your cell phone during class – either in the form of a conversation or a text message – you will be asked to leave the classroom as such behavior indicates that your conversation is more important than the class. Such dismissals will result in an absence for that day. In addition, I expect that you will take care of all issues before coming to class, allowing you to sit attentively for the duration of the lecture or discussion.

Late assignments / makeups: Extensions for class assignments and final projects **will be granted only with valid justification and prior discussion with the instructor**. You should be aware of the assignments well in advance and must ensure that nothing will stop you from getting them to me on time. A breakdown in technology and/or a flat tire are not acceptable excuses for tardiness. Please contact me *before* the assignment is due if you feel you cannot complete the work. Feel free to contact me with any questions regarding assignments, expectations, and/or grading for this class. Late assignments will be docked five points for each day they are late, and **will not** be accepted after one week late.

Availability: In addition to my office hours, I am available for appointments with students. If you are experiencing problems or feel it would be helpful to speak to me, please do not hesitate to contact me via email or phone and I would be happy to set up an appointment with you at our mutual convenience.

Honor code and plagiarism: Academic honesty is expected of all students at Xavier. Your responsibilities as a Xavier student include being familiar with the honor system and the plagiarism policy of the University. If you are unfamiliar with what constitutes plagiarism I recommend you take this quiz: <http://www.indiana.edu/~tedfrick/plagiarism/index2.html>. The Honor Code of Xavier University states that “**students are personally responsible for their work, their actions, and their word.**” This policy incorporates all forms of academic dishonesty. Plagiarism is a particularly egregious offense in a history course. It is defined as “unacknowledged or falsely acknowledged presentation of another person's ideas, expressions, or original research as one's own work. Such an act often gives the reader the impression that the student has written or thought something that he or she has in fact borrowed from another. Any paraphrasing or quotation must be appropriately

acknowledged.” Cases of cheating or plagiarism will be reported to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences according to the procedures established in the Academic Integrity Policy (found at: <http://www.xula.edu/cas/index.php>) and may result in a failing grade, academic probation and/or sanction, or expulsion.

Students with disabilities: Xavier University seeks to provide accommodations for students with disabilities. Students should contact the Office of Disability Services (Building 15, 520 – 7315) for assistance. Appropriate paperwork can then be filed with the Dean and forwarded to the necessary professors.

Hurricane Preparedness Policy: As we live in the Gulf Coast in the wake of Katrina, it is important to have a hurricane emergency policy. Students should be familiar with Xavier University’s Hurricane Emergency Plan. Continuation of this course in the event of such an emergency will follow the dictates of university administrators and students should maintain contact via both email and blackboard.

Class Schedule

Week One: Introduction to a Historical Research Methods Class

Wednesday August 23: Syllabus and the Basics of Primary Documents, Archives and “Historical Truth”

Questions to think about: What is history? What is a primary document? Where do we find them? Is there historical truth? If not, what is plagiarism? How do we read critically?

Week Two: What is an Archive and How Do We Use It? **Begin meeting @ HNOC

Wednesday August 30: Diversity of Archives and Finding Aids and the Dangers of the Single Story

Questions to think about: What is an archive? How are archives different? Do they have different rules (from regular libraries) and why? What do historians do and how do they do it? What is the focus of the materials at the Historic New Orleans Collection? Why do we need to think beyond the “single story”?

Assignments for 8/30: (HNOC Orientation and Discussion of Primary Sources)

1. Watch Adichie Video (Ted Talk):
https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en
2. Review syllabus thoroughly
3. Download Zotero and Read Manual ([Bookmarklet](#))
4. Read Trouillot, Preface - 30; Marius, pp. 1 – 28; Benjamin, pp. 25 – 50 (pdf)
5. Take notes and post MPQ

Week Three: Beginning Research and Thinking about Context

Wednesday September 6: Experiencing an Archive

Questions: What does an archive look like and how do we use one? Why do we need historiography in research? What are parallel examples in other disciplines? What is productive reading? What makes for a good source? Why is it important to be meticulous in our record keeping?

Assignments for 9/6: (Begin Research Project @ HNOC)

1. Read Trouillot 30 - 69
2. Take notes and post MPQ
3. Print and review the finding guide for your collection; email me the folder(s) you would like to look at first by Wednesday at 9 am.
4. Create a Zotero library for your research project

Week Four: Constructing a Research Question

Wednesday September 13: Constructing Quality Research Questions

Questions: Why do we need a research question? What does it do for us as researchers? What type of paper are we working towards – and how does that affect the research question? How do you write a proposal from a research question? Why do we need to mention secondary sources as we discuss our research question?

Assignments:

1. Read Trouillot, pp. 70 – 107; Marius, pp. 56 – 94
2. Take notes and post MPQ
3. Add at least four (potential) *secondary* sources for your project to your new Zotero library
4. Write out a tentative research question and email me the folder(s) you would like to look at in your collection by Wednesday at 9 am.

Week Five: Working in the Archives

Wednesday September 20: The Challenges of Archival Research

Questions: How is history used to tell multiple pasts? What does the example of Columbus tell us? What are our moral and ethical obligations as historians? What are the challenges of working with primary documents? How do we create historical context with secondary sources?

Assignments:

1. Read Marius, pp. 94 – 118; Trouillot, pp. 108 – 156;
2. Take notes and post MPQ
3. Create a draft list of secondary sources in your Zotero library; print and bring to class
4. Email me the folder(s) you would like to look at in your collection by Wednesday at 9 am.

Weeks Six to Eight: The Great New Orleans Kidnapping Case

Wednesday(s) September 27, October 4, 11: Reformulating the Research Question and Proposal Writing, Assessing a Variety of Sources

Questions: Why are research proposals so important? What should they include? What should they not include? What do you need to do to finish your proposal? What are the different kinds of histories? What is the difference between an idea or an ideology and an “accepted truth”? What are discourse and rhetoric? How do we assess the successes and failures of a monograph? How do microhistories tell us a larger story about a particular time period? How do we “do” historiography?

Assignments for 9/27:

1. Read Ross, pp. 3 – 85
2. Take notes and post MPQ
3. Print and bring your primary source notes to class
4. Email me the folder(s) you would like to look at in your collection by Wednesday at 9 am.

Assignments for 10/4:

1. Read Ross, pp. 86 – 174
2. Take notes and post MPQ
3. Create and print a draft list of *all* primary sources to be used for your project in Zotero
4. Email me the folder(s) you would like to look at in your collection by Wednesday at 9 am.

Assignments for 10/11: (Peer Review of Research Proposals)

1. Read Ross, pp. 175 – 243
2. Take notes and post MPQ
3. Finish draft of Research Proposal (with sources); print and bring to class
4. Email me the folder(s) you would like to look at in your collection by Wednesday at 9 am.

Weeks Nine to Twelve: Empire(s) of Sin

Wednesday(s) October 18*, 25, November 1, 8: Assessing Popular History, Completing Research Proposals

Questions: How does history (telling a story about the past) differ from fiction? Are there agendas in history writing? What was Krist's research agenda? Is fiction relevant to historical understanding? Is it useful to combine the two? What are we learning about taking research notes? How do we use these notes to make our proposals stronger?

Assignments for 10/18*: (Students will conduct research @ HNOC on own)

1. Read Krist, pp. 1 – 86
2. Take notes and post MPQ
3. Continue working on research notes
4. Email me the folder(s) you would like to look at in your collection by Wednesday at 9 am.

Assignments for 10/25*: (Presentation by Oral Historian Mark Cave)

1. Read Krist 87 – 156
2. Take notes and post MPQ
3. Continue working on research notes
4. Email me the folder(s) you would like to look at in your collection by Wednesday at 9 am.

Assignments for 11/1:

1. Read Krist 157 – 240
2. Take notes and post MPQ
3. Complete Ross book review
4. Email me the folder(s) you would like to look at in your collection by Wednesday at 9 am.

Assignments for 11/8: (Presentation by Head of Publishing Jessica Dorman)

1. Read Krist 241 – 332
2. Take notes and post MPQ
3. Complete proposal revision; print and bring to class

Week Thirteen: Mechanics of History Papers

Wednesday November 15: Charting Our Sources: Voice, Style and Argument

Questions: How does a research question change as new materials are uncovered? Does that make the original questions flawed? How do you adjust? How do you translate research into presentation? What is your voice and style? Does your research shed light on questions your peers are having? How do you discuss research in progress? Are you asking the right questions of your sources? What visual images can you use to aid your presentation?

Assignments for 11/15:

1. Read Marius, pp. 119 – 170
2. Take notes and post MPQ
3. Complete historiography; print and bring to class

Week Fourteen: Getting to the Finish Line and Wrapping Up

Wednesday November 29: Final Presentations

Questions: What does our peers' work tell us about our own research methods?

Exercises: Listening to Our Peers!

Assignments for 11/29:

1. Prep final presentation!!!!
2. Gather all materials in portfolio

Research Project Deadlines

Wednesday August 30th – Complete Installation of Zotero, Tentative Selection of Topic

Wednesday September 6th – Begin Research at HNOC

Wednesday September 13th – Finalization of Topic and Tentative Research Question

Wednesday September 20th – Draft List of Secondary Sources (Zotero)

Wednesday October 11th -- Draft List of Primary Sources (Zotero)

Wednesday October 18th -- Draft Research Proposal with Revised Source Lists

Wednesday November 1st -- Ross Book Review

Wednesday November 8th -- Revised Proposal

Wednesday November 15th -- Historiography

Wednesday November 29th - Final Presentations @ HNOC

Wednesday November 29th -- Full Portfolios – including new materials - Outline, Introductory Paragraph, and Original Argument, plus all previously submitted materials and any revisions



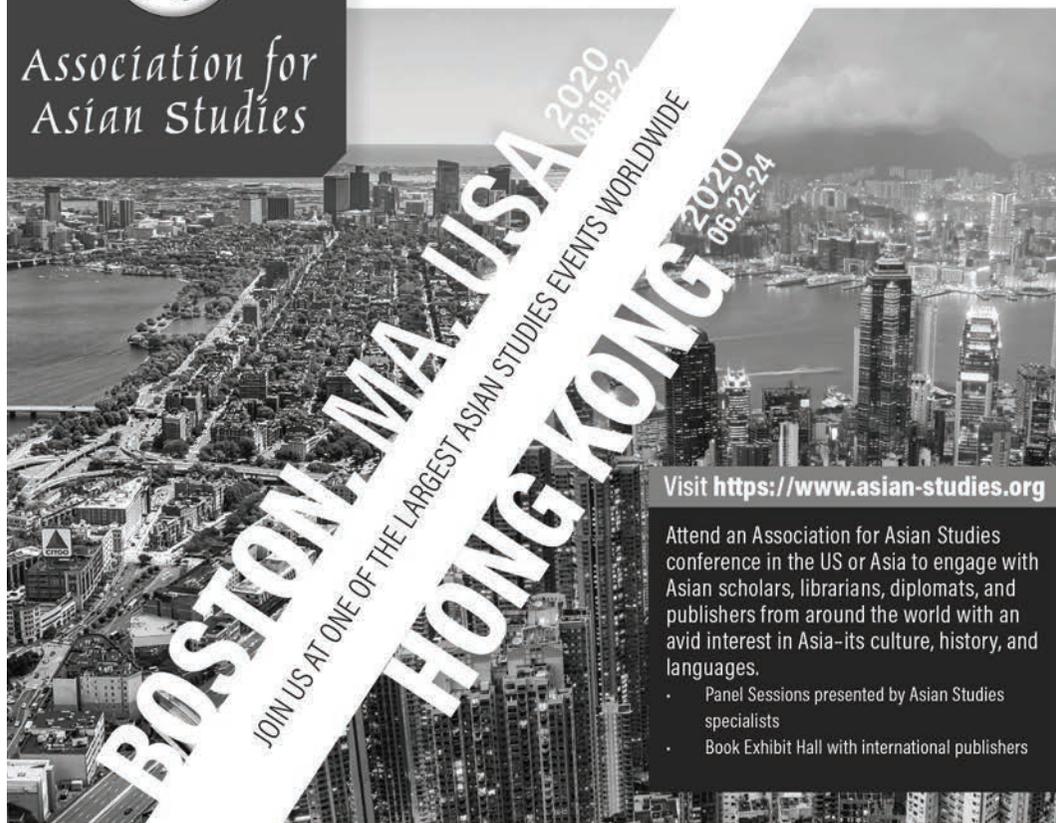
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