Instructors: Heritage Resources strives to ensure that every student who graduates from Western is able to find, understand, and interpret a wide variety of unique and primary source materials in various contexts throughout their lives. This is a life-long learning skill and a crucial component of both information and academic literacy. The rare, original, and archival sources collected by our programs are valuable teaching and learning tools that can enhance, enrich, and enliven research in nearly every subject. The following curriculum allows students to discover and use our unique resources while providing engaging methods for accessing, researching, and interpreting those materials. Instructional activities include onsite visits to the Center for Pacific Northwest Studies and University Archives (Goltz-Murray Archives Building), and Special Collections (Wilson Library 6th floor), during which students engage in hands-on exercises designed to emphasize active learning, group discussion, and reflection.

Through these activities students will be able to complete the following objectives:

• Articulate what archives and special collections are, and why they are valuable for research;
• Understand the three Heritage Resources units and the scope of their collections;
• Know basic rules for using unique and primary source materials, and be comfortable communicating with staff to facilitate research requests;
• Critically approach sources by considering factors such as why they were created, whether or not they contain bias or a particular point-of-view, how relevant/reliable they are, etc.

Instructions

Activities and Lesson Plans

We recommend allowing at least 80-100 minutes of class time for each onsite visit, during which time we will typically engage in the following:

• A brief introduction to the operations and types of materials housed by each unit, instruction on how to access and use those resources, and a "behind the scenes" tour of facilities;
• An activity in which students work in groups with a selection of materials (such as items relating to a particular topic or format) and answer a set of questions/prompts designed to encourage observation, reflection, and questioning;
• A group discussion that covers an analysis of the resources, any challenges encountered, and/or questions or other issues the students wish to address.

We invite instructors to work with us in customizing selected materials and questions/worksheets to align with the theme of their course.
Preparation

To give students a basic understanding of the three Heritage Resources units and the scope of their collections, we recommend that instructors assign the “Accessing Primary Sources on Campus” video before their onsite visits to Heritage Resources.

Special Collections Session

Lesson Overview

Students will become familiar with the processes and protocols for accessing Special Collections materials, and refine their information literacy and critical analysis skills through a hands-on exploration of texts and objects.

Activities

1. Special Collections staff provide an introduction and vault tours.
2. Students collaborate in groups to complete worksheets at various stations containing a selection of resources (depending on the length of the class session and the number of workstations, students will typically spend between 5-10 minutes per station);
3. Each group reports back to the class, and students engage in discussion facilitated by instructor and staff (we suggest at least 15-20 minutes for this activity).

Archives Building Session

Lesson Overview

Students will become familiar with the three units located in the Archives Building (the Center for Pacific Northwest Studies, University Archives & Records Management, and the Northwest Branch of the Washington State Archives), understand processes and protocols for accessing collection materials, and learn how to critically analyze primary sources through a hands-on activity.

Activities

1. Staff provide an introduction to the Archives Building, overview of the three units, and behind-the-scenes tour.
2. Students collaborate in groups to complete worksheets at various stations containing a selection of resources;
3. Each group reports back to the class and students engage in discussion facilitated by instructors and staff (we suggest at least 15-20 minutes for this activity).
Special Collections — Sample Worksheet

Group Member Names:

Instructions: Use the questions on this sheet to help you analyze the resources provided.

1. What is the title of the resource and when was it created? (If no date is given, consider approximating a date range i.e. “circa 1900-1910”, otherwise mark as “undated.”)

2. Who authored this resource? Who was the intended audience? Consider what might have been going on at the time of its creation and what cultural (political, social, aesthetic) significance the work might have had.

3. Does the item have any distinguishing physical features or markings? Are there any notes in the item, or is it signed by the author? What else do you notice about its condition/physicality?

4. What information does the resource provide? Is it factual, personal opinion/observation, fiction, poetry or something else?

5. Why is this in Special Collections rather than the Libraries’ circulating collection?

6. How might you continue research related to this item? What would your next steps be?
Archival Resources — Sample Worksheet

Group Member Names:

**Instructions:** Use the questions on this sheet to help you analyze the resources provided.

1. What is your general topic? What kinds of resources are at your workstation?
2. When were these resources created? What was going on during that time (historical context)? Why were these records created at that particular time? What issues, ideas, values or struggles do they reveal?
3. Who created the resources and why might they have created them? Who was the intended audience? Note any particular bias the author(s) and/or intended audience(s) may have lent to the resource.
4. What are the strengths and weakness of these resources? Is there information missing, or that you’d expect or want to find but cannot locate? Where might you go to find or supplement that information?
5. How/why do you think this resource came to be in the Archives? Do you have any additional thoughts about the kinds of records that get kept versus those that are lost (or never created in the first place)?
6. If you were an archivist, what kinds of records would you hope to collect?