

Collecting 2020

In this digital project for English 290: Human Values in Literature (Fall 2020), students will build digital collections of artifacts that speak to the historical phenomena of our current moment. Recognizing that we all live within, and actively create, history, we are gathering artifacts of the now. We collect and curate the objects -- material and digital -- that capture the overlapping experiences of living through a global pandemic, living through the movement for Black Lives, and living through 2020. We will be using Omeka, an open-source application for online digital collections, to gather and organize our artifacts collectively over the first half of the semester. In the latter half of the semester, we will work in small groups on Omeka that pull select artifacts into themed exhibits, with accompanying written analysis. The project as a whole is scored out of 200 points, with 4 main steps described below in order of deadline. The total score you earn on the project will account for 20% of your course grade.

Sequence of Steps

Week 4:

Background reading and discussion. We will read essays on the COVID-19 pandemic and Black Lives Matter movement, watch videos exploring the meaning of key terms like archive and artifact, and read articles about the kind of rapid-response collecting that we will be engaging in ourselves. Students will vote on additional topics for the collections.

Week 5:

Tuesday's class session will take up the entire scheduled time, with the whole class present from 1:15-2:30pm (Sept 22). Class will be visited by specialist librarian Niamh McGuigan and Digital Humanities graduate fellow Andrew French, who will help us think through some of the conceptual pieces of an archiving project, such as what makes an artifact primary or secondary, how to define a digital object, and how to use metadata to narrate and organize our artifacts. Video tutorials will be available as an introduction to the Omeka tool. We will continue reading about the ethics of archiving, especially archiving digital material, and of using archives to capture contemporary experiences. By Thursday, we will move on to other readings on the topic of "remains."

Week 6:

Tuesday's class session will take up the entire scheduled time, with the whole class present from 1:15-2:30pm (Sept 29). Andrew will visit class to introduce us to the Omeka tool and demonstrate how to add objects to the site and how to make decisions about categorizing the object. He has also recorded a video tutorial, available in Panopto.

Week 6-8 (Sept 29 to Oct 17):

The entire class will add objects to our Omeka collections, uploading them and completing the metadata fields. Andrew will be available during this time to field individual questions and offer drop-in support hours.

(Continue to next page for deadlines)

➔ **Step 1 (30 points): By Sat 10/17 at 11:59pm, each student is responsible for uploading 3-4 artifacts to our Omeka site, adding each object to the appropriate collection and completing all the specified metadata fields for each object.**

(Step 1 will be graded in the following manner: 15 points are available for adding the requisite number of items, all of which meet the stated criteria as outlined in this document and the Guidelines and Norms document, and doing so by the deadline. 15 points are available for thoroughly completing the metadata fields to the best of your ability (and seeking input if you have questions). 10 points extra credit are available for showing thoughtfulness, resourcefulness, originality and/or creativity in your selection of items.)

Week 9:

Students will form small groups and sign up to work with a specific collection.

Week 10:

Small groups will create proposals and outlines for the exhibits. Some class time will be given for this purpose.

➔ **Step 2 (40 points): By Wed 10/28, each group is responsible for submitting an exhibit proposal, which would include some introductory text and an outline for the artifacts that will be included in the exhibit. Detailed instructions to follow. This piece is graded entirely as a group.**

Weeks 10-13:

Small groups will work on exhibits in and outside of class.

➔ **Step 3 (30 points): By Wed 11/12, each student is responsible for submitting a completed object analysis worksheet for the object they're writing about in their group's exhibit. This piece is graded individually.**

➔ **Step 4 (100 points): By Thurs 11/19, final exhibits will be due. The exhibit will consist of some group-written content and some individually-written content (artifact analysis), and will be graded 50% individually and 50% as a group.**

Week 14:

We will review and discuss one another's exhibits in and out of class.