

# Queer Culture Collection

English and Women's Studies 245: Introduction to Lesbian and Gay Studies

## Archive Project

The Archive Project is our most significant endeavor this semester. With only fifteen short weeks, there is only so much that we can cover, yet the possibilities are so many. Our units cover some of the biggest and broadest concepts in queer studies, and we'll encounter prominent thinkers and creators who have contributed to the fields of queer thought and culture. They and their work are only a sample. To complement this sample, the archive project aims to demonstrate the great breadth of materials available for consideration and analysis.

In his 1994 book *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, Jaques Derrida argues that there is “no political power without control of the archive, if not of memory. Effective democratization can always be measured by this essential criterion: the participation in and the access to the archive, its constitution, and its interpretation” (4). In addition to recovery of queer figures whose sexuality was silenced or obscured in the historical record, recent theoretical work on queer archives challenges the limitations of normative archives and the narratives they support. Jose Esteban Muñoz, for example, argues for ephemera and performance as evidence, in contrast to material archives. In her work on trauma, Ann Cvetkovitch, like Muñoz, advocates for the immaterial, but in the form of an archive of feelings, one that registers affective responses. And J. Jack Halberstam argues for a more expansive archive for cultural studies, one that emphasizes popular culture as the appropriate archive for political criticism and queer experience.

The archive project attempts a digital approach to queer archives, one that takes Derrida's emphasis on “participation” and “access,” “constitution,” and “interpretation” seriously by handing these tasks over to you as students. You will participate in our digital archive as curators, and you will all have access to the digital platform as authors. You will be in charge of deciding what constitutes the archive—what content, or artifacts, should be included—and then offering an interpretation, or analysis that relates your artifact to our course units.

By the end of the semester, we will collectively have over a hundred artifacts accompanied with your evaluations and critical analysis posted to the digital archive—a substantial resource for LGBTQA representation, for diverse queer expression, and for further critical analysis.

For more specific information on the different components of the archive assignment, check out the following links.

[Choosing Content](#)

[Writing a Post](#)

[Publishing A Post](#)

[Rubric](#)

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## Content

**Concept:** The broadest category that we need to consider is **queer culture**. Like queer, a word that can mean so many different things, I want to consider culture in a similarly capacious way. I am therefore open to whatever kind of cultural content that you want to include—it can either represent queer culture, or queer normative culture.

**Categories:** I currently have the website divided into eight cultural categories: **literature** (novels, plays, poetry, non-fiction, criticism), **music** (classical, hip-hop, jazz, pop, etc.), **performance** (dance, theatre, opera), **film, art** (sculpture, painting, architecture), **television, events** (concerts, festivals, parades, pageants), and **institutions** (stores, clubs, bars, restaurants, neighborhoods, centers). These are only my initial ideas, so if yours take us in different directions, we can change the categories accordingly. Every artifact that you submit to the digital archive must have a category.

**Artifacts:** You will submit **four** artifacts to the archive over the course of the semester, one for each of our different units. Each of the four artifacts must come from a different cultural category. I want you to engage with a variety of cultural forms. Additionally, these artifacts must be a **substantial contribution**. For example, rather than a single poem or song, submit the book of poetry or album from which they are excerpted. Over the course, you should also aim to tackle at least one difficult artifact that will require more extensive time to research and analyze.

I really want you to explore as much as possible. Some of you come into the class with lots of previous exposure to and participation in queer culture and communities. For those of you, I want you to show the rest of us what is cool and what you're into. Some of you might have little to no familiarity with queer culture, so I'm glad that you're in this course. For you, you might start with your interests and search for queer perspectives. I really just want everyone to explore.

**Proposal:** Before you compose the written portion of your submission to the archive, you will send me a **brief** proposal in an email that includes what your artifact is and why you think it belongs in our archive. Only one person in the class can submit an artifact, so make sure to check previous submissions before sending me your proposal.

The following step is [writing the post](#).

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## Post

After you have chosen your artifact, you will write a post that describes and analyzes it.

If you want a general idea of what I am looking for, take a look at [this post](#) that I wrote about a ballet company.

Each post should be around **500 words**, and should include the following components:

**Visual:** You should include an **image** or a **video** that depicts your artifact. For example, if you are writing about a book, you could include an image of the book's cover or an image of the author. You could also include a video clip of the author reading, or a screen adaptation of the work.

**Introduction:** You should provide enough **historical context** for your reader to understand **where** your artifact came from, **when** it was created, and **who** created it. What is essential for your reader to know about your artifact in order to understand the analysis that will follow? After context, you should include a **summary** or **description** of your artifact. Summaries are more appropriate for things like novels or films that have a plot, while descriptions are more appropriate for events, institutions, or dance, for example. You should aim to highlight in words the most important parts of your artifact.

**Queer Culture Analysis:** After your introduction, you should provide your reasons for why you chose to include your artifact in our digital archive. How does it represent queer culture, or how does it queer normative culture? Make sure that you include ample evidence and analysis to support your reasons.

**Unit Concept Analysis:** After you articulate why your artifact belongs in our archive, you should offer an analysis of how your artifact relates to the concepts of each of our units—gender, sex, history, and the contemporary. In your analysis, you must paraphrase or quote one of the readings that we encountered in the unit, or one of the discussions that we had during class. This portion of your post should prove to me that you understand and are able to use the key concepts of this course.

**Category** and **Tag:** By choosing a category and a tag, you help to classify the artifacts. Categories are limited to the ones listed on the [content page](#), but you must choose—or contact me about including one

that will better suit your artifact—before you can publish your post. A tag is more specific in terms of category (for example, “ballet” is a tag for the general category of “performance”), or it could adopt a different system of evaluation (for example, choosing “fierce,” a descriptor, over a more traditional genre).

All posts should be well organized and thoroughly proofread—I want to see hard and polished thinking. If you have a question concerning writing, please let me know. I am more than happy to meet with you about how to make your writing stronger.

Posts will be due on **February 26** (Unit: Gender), **March 26** (Sex), **April 16** (History), and **April 30** (The Contemporary).

These posts are an important means of evaluation, and are therefore worth **30%** of your final grade. [A rubric for the archive project is available here.](#)

The next step is [publishing your post](#).

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## Publishing a Post

After you have chosen your content and written your post, you will need to post your content to our digital platform, Sites @ PSU. The following is a step-by-step guide to publishing a post.

1. Because you are already on this website, you are already looking at a page created with Sites @ PSU. In the upper left, click on the "Log In" and enter your Penn State user name and password.
2. In the upper left, hover over the "My Sites" and then hover over "Queer Culture Collection," the name of our course site. Click on "Dashboard," which will appear on the right.
3. On the dashboard page, on the vertical menu on the left, click on the "Posts" button toward the top of the menu. Then click on "Add New," located next to the title on the "Posts" screen.
4. On the "New Post" screen, enter a title for your post that names your artifact.
5. Below the title, click on the "Add Media" button to upload your visual component. When the "Add Media" screen comes up, you can either click on "Upload Files" > "Select a File" to upload a file from your hard drive, or you can "Insert a URL" of an image or video clip. You can insert the media anywhere in your post.
6. In the main box, enter the text of your post. Use as many of the formatting tools that you need to make the post look quality.
7. On the right, there are two boxes for "Category" and "Tag." Choose at least one category (or contact me about creating a new category) and include as many tags as you would like. I suggest around five tags per post.
8. Find the blue "Publish" button on the right menu, and make sure that your "Visibility" is set to "Public" or "Password Protected," and your "Publish" is set to "Immediately."
9. To ensure that your post was published, navigate to the website and check under "New Entries." It should be posted there. If you don't see it there, I won't be able to see it either, so make sure to retrace

your steps. Once successfully posted, I will move them to their permanent locations based on your choice of category.

If you have other additional questions, you might try finding the answer on the [Support](#) page for Sites @ PSU.

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## Rubric

The following is an overview of how I will evaluate your archive project posts. These are not strict categories with point values, but rather a general idea of what I think is important in critical writing and for this specific project.

### Context and Summary

**A:** Author provides thorough historical context, including where, when, and by whom the artifact was created. The contextual analysis also demonstrates appropriate research. Summaries are concise, emphasizing only the most important details. Content is engaging, and readers leave prepared to encounter subsequent analysis.

**B:** Author provides sufficient historical context, including where, when, and by whom the artifact was created. The contextual analysis demonstrates some research. Summaries are concise, emphasizing only the most important details. Content is engaging, and readers leave prepared to encounter subsequent analysis, although some questions may linger.

**C:** Author provides historical context, including where, when, and by whom the artifact was created. The contextual analysis demonstrates some research. Summaries are mostly concise, but could use further editing so as to emphasize only the most important details. Content is engaging, and readers leave prepared to encounter subsequent analysis, although many questions may linger.

**D:** Author provides insufficient historical context; information regarding where, when, and by whom the artifact was created is absent. The contextual analysis demonstrates little to no research. Summaries are short or too verbose, and could use further editing so as to emphasize only the most important details. Content is boring, and readers are confused before encountering subsequent analysis.

**F:** Author provides little to no historical context, and the contextual analysis demonstrates little to no research. Summaries are too short or too verbose, and lack clear purpose. Content is boring, and readers are confused before encountering subsequent analysis.

### Analysis of Course Concept

**A:** Author provides several good reasons for why the chosen artifact belongs in the course's digital archive. Reasons are well articulated, incorporating both evidence from the artifact and appropriate analysis. Analysis is also effectively organized.

**B:** Author provides several good reasons for why the chosen artifact belongs in the course's digital archive. Reasons are mostly well articulated, although there may be certain problems in the logic. Author incorporates both evidence from the artifact and appropriate analysis. Analysis is also effectively organized.

**C:** Author provides some reasons for why the chosen artifact belongs in the course's digital archive. Reasons are clear, although there may be certain problems in the logic. Author incorporates evidence and analysis, but their purpose is unclear. Analysis is well organized for the most part.

**D:** Author provides few reasons for why the chosen artifact belongs in the course's digital archive. Reasons are unclear and demonstrate many problems in logic. Author incorporates little evidence and analysis, and what is there merits a better organization.

**F:** Author provides few to no reasons for why the chosen artifact belongs in the course's digital archive. Reasons are unclear and demonstrate many problems in logic. Author incorporates little to no evidence and analysis. Analysis shows little effort toward effective organization.

### **Analysis of Unit Concept**

**A:** Author provides several good reasons for how the chosen artifact relates to the unit concept. Reasons are well articulated, incorporating both evidence from the artifact and appropriate analysis. Author effectively incorporates course readings or discussions. Analysis is also effectively organized.

**B:** Author provides several good reasons for how the chosen artifact relates to the unit concept. Reasons are mostly well articulated, although there may be problems in logic. Author incorporates both evidence from the artifact and appropriate analysis. Analysis is also effectively organized. Author effectively incorporates course readings or discussions.

**C:** Author provides some reasons for how the chosen artifact relates to the unit concept. Reasons are clear, although there may be problems in logic. Author incorporates evidence and analysis, but their purpose is unclear. Author incorporates course readings or discussions. Analysis is well organized for the most part.

**D:** Author provides few reasons for how the chosen artifact relates to the unit concept. Reasons are unclear and demonstrate many problems in logic. Author fails to incorporate course readings or discussions. Author incorporates little evidence and analysis, and what is there merits a better organization.

**F:** Author provides few to no reasons for how the chosen artifact relates to the unit concept. Reasons are unclear and demonstrate many problems in logic. Author fails to incorporate course readings or discussions. Author incorporates little to no evidence and analysis. Analysis shows little effort toward effective organization.

### **Substantial Contribution**

**A:** The artifact is an interesting addition to the archive. It requires substantial engagement to analyze it effectively.

**B:** The artifact is an interesting addition to the archive. It requires substantial engagement to analyze it effectively, although less than an A contribution.

**C:** The artifact is an interesting—but maybe obvious—addition to the archive. It requires substantial engagement to analyze it effectively, although less than an A or B contribution.

**D:** The artifact is not an interesting—or maybe too obvious—addition to the archive. It requires little engagement to analyze it effectively.

**F:** The artifact is not an interesting addition to the archive. It requires little to no engagement to analyze it effectively.

### **Style and Organization**

**A:** Post is clearly written and effectively organized. It is free of grammatical and mechanical errors, and the style is polished.

**B:** Post is clearly written and effectively organized. It is free of grammatical and mechanical errors, and the style is polished, although some minor flaws persist.

**C:** Post is clearly written and effectively organized. It is mostly free of grammatical and mechanical errors. Overall style is effective, but could merit more attention.

**D:** Post is vaguely written and ineffectively organized. It has many grammatical and mechanical errors. Overall style merits improvement.

**F:** Post is vaguely written and ineffectively organized. It shows no signs of proofreading.

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