

## Writing Across the Archives: Transcript

Hello, and welcome to this on-demand digital workshop for Writing Across Emory. In this talk, entitled Writing Across the Archives, we'll consider how and why you should use Emory's archives to bring writing into your classroom. [SLIDE] My name is Sarah Harsh; I'm a postdoctoral fellow in the Writing Program. I also got my PhD in English here at Emory, and I worked for many years as a research assistant at the Rose Library. One of the highlights of my time at Emory has been combining my passion for teaching with my love of the archives, so I'm excited to share that with you today.

[SLIDE] We'll start this presentation with an overview of the Rose Library for those who may be newer to Emory or who need a refresher on our wonderful archives. Then, we'll explore the rationale for teaching with the archives and take a quick look at some of the pedagogical theories that support archival learning. Next, I'll direct you to some of the many helpful resources the Rose Library has in place to support archival instruction. We'll explore some ideas for archival class sessions and writing assignments before closing with two examples of successful archival classwork across Emory's curriculum.

[SLIDE] Hopefully you have already had a chance to visit the Rose Library, located on the tenth floor of the Woodruff Library. It was fully renovated in 2014, so if you haven't been in a while you should definitely pay it a visit. I'm always amazed with how light and bright the space is—definitely not the musty, dusty place your students may be imagining! There is also a beautiful view from the balcony— you can really see why Atlanta is called “the city in the forest!”

[SLIDE] To offer an overview of Rose Library and the many services they offer, I'll turn it over to former instructional archivist and current head of research services Gabrielle Dudley. This introductory video is available on the Rose Library's website and might be an effective way to familiarize your students with Emory's archive. (I'll link to this video on the handout accompanying this presentation).

Gabrielle Dudley:

*Welcome to the Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archive, and Rare Book Library at Emory University. My name is Gabrielle Dudley, and I am the instruction archivist. Rose Library is a special collections library and archives. We collect the papers of individuals and families, and the records of businesses and organizations. We have five main collecting areas: African American History and Culture; Emory University Archives; Literature and Poetry; Political, Social and Cultural Movements; and Rare Books. Each of these areas has a subject area expert or curator responsible for maintaining strong and lasting relationships with current and future donors, and for actively seeking new materials to complement the existing collection. The staff of the Rose Library is comprised primarily of archivists and librarians who have specialized training and subject-area expertise. You may recognize many of the public services provided by our staff, including the answering of reference requests, managing public programming and exhibitions, instructing new scholars on using the archives to research, and*

*providing physical access to the materials through the reading room. You may not be as familiar with the work we do to provide both in-person and remote access to collections, such as accessioning newly acquired materials, cataloging rare books, arranging and describing paper-based collections, and managing born-digital collections. Each of these roles is vital, and contributes to the mission and core values of Rose Library, and ensures broad access to the collection materials within our care. Each year the Rose Library hosts over 2,000 visitors—each with a different focus and approach to our collections and services. Scholars may come to Rose Library from across the world to see subtle changes to manuscripts or annotations in the margins of a book, while undergraduate students might be interested in the way student life and demographics have changed over time. Outside of traditional research conducted by historians and literary scholars, many visit Rose Library to research their families, and local artists might request access to photographs, maps, or sheet music as inspiration for a theater production, concert, or public art piece. The Rose Library is open to anyone to conduct research and tour exhibitions and public spaces. We are located on the 10th floor of the Robert W. Woodruff Library on the campus of Emory University. Upon entering the Rose library, you will be greeted at our reception desk and invited to explore the interactive screens, exhibitions, and public spaces. If you plan to conduct research, staff at the reference desk and in the reading room will orient you on the guidelines for use of materials. The Rose Library's materials do not circulate, so you can schedule as much time as you need in our reading room to enjoy the items you requested. If you do not have a project or specific interest in mind, visit us for our online and in-person exhibitions, public programming, and beautiful views of the Emory campus and city of Atlanta. Here at Rose Library, we welcome all visitors for research, creativity, and pleasure. Thank you, and we hope to see you in Rose Library soon.*

As you can see, the Rose Library does a lot of impactful work for Emory students and scholars and cultivates an international community of learners.

[SLIDE] I want to focus for a moment on the five collection strengths that Gabrielle mentioned: African American History and Culture; Emory University Archives; Literature and Poetry; Political, Social and Cultural Movements; and Rare Books. While our holdings are especially rich in these areas, this is not an exhaustive list. Even if your course doesn't match or speak to these broad collection areas, there is a very good chance the Rose Library has something that will. For example, Rose Library has collections containing medical manuscripts, textbooks, and instruments. So if you are interested in teaching with the Rose Library but aren't sure if they will have materials to suit your class, definitely check out the finding aid and consult an archivist.

[SLIDE] Now let's take a look at some of the reasons why you should consider using the archives in your class. [SLIDE] First of all, it's really fun. It offers students opportunities for hands-on, experiential learning. Archivists will instruct your students on how to handle the materials carefully and responsibly. I think we're all really valuing these physical experiences as we return to in-person learning. Another good reason to teach with the archives, particularly if you're working with manuscript material, is that it allows students to see the writing process. They are able to look at published authors' drafts, complete with edits, rewrites, and revisions. This opportunity helps reinforce to students that writing is a recursive process, and that they should be undertaking their own drafting and revision in their writing projects. A class visit to the

archives also gives students the opportunity to work with primary sources and to practice their research skills. A trip to Rose Library might even prompt a large discussion of how to locate credible sources and original documents. The artifacts in the Rose Library also offer opportunities for visual analysis, which I find students are always excited to do. They love being able to analyze a photograph, book cover, poster, or pamphlet for its visual and aesthetic qualities. The same goes for the physical objects in the collection. There are some cool, sometimes creepy things in Rose Library like human hair, clothing, and other ephemera. Students always enjoy seeing and discussing these relics of the past. In addition, a trip to Rose Library can be a great way to shift the energy in your classroom. I've found that it will refocus my students; it gives them a break from our usual class format while energizing them about our subject. Finally, bringing your class to the archives offers opportunities for students to interact with primary sources in a variety of different ways to generate research-based writing. We'll take a look at some of these ways on the next slide.

[SLIDE] The BEAM framework was developed by Joseph Bizup as a rhetorical vocabulary for teaching research-based writing. I've found this framework helpful when planning my archival sessions as it allows me to think through the different opportunities students have to "write back" to the archive. BEAM is an acronym which describes the various ways students may incorporate and respond to sources in their own writing. Students might use a source to provide general background or context on a person, time, place, or idea. Hopefully we are all accustomed to having our students use a source as evidence to support their own original argument. I know that's something we really try to stress in the writing program. Students might respond to the argument within a source by either agreeing or disagreeing with the author. And while Bizup uses the M to represent "method," I like to think of it as "model." Either way, students might encounter something they'd like to replicate in their own writing, like a way of structuring a text or even an artistic approach. BEAM allows us to think about the many wonderful sources at the Rose Library and the various potential they hold for our students. I find it a helpful reminder that we don't always need to be writing traditional research papers in order to interact with sources in a meaningful way.

[SLIDE] That brings us to the resources you should consult if you are interested in teaching with the Rose Library. First and foremost are the wonderful team of archivists. For teaching purposes, Instruction Archivist Jacqueline Reed would be your point person. I've included her contact info here, as well as on the handout accompanying this presentation. Before reaching out to Jacqueline, you'll probably want to fill out an instruction request form so that she and her team can get a sense of your needs. Instruction sessions tend to fill up fast, so the earlier you complete this form, the better. I often find it helpful to think one semester ahead when planning archival visits— to the extent that that is possible, of course! As you brainstorm possibilities, you'll also want to check out the Assignment Portal on the Rose Library's website. Here, you'll learn more about the kinds of assignments and class configurations that are possible during your instructional session. We'll take a closer look at those next. [SLIDE]

[SLIDE] The Rose Library offers a variety of configurations to suit different class sizes and different pedagogical goals. You can find these examples and more on their website, linked on

the handout. One of the most popular configurations is called “Speed Dating.” In this class session, you and your instruction archivist select one artifact per student, and students rotate around the artifacts at set intervals. The speed dating configuration works well for large classes and is a good way to maximize the quantity of materials your students see. If you have a smaller group of students, or want the students to spend more time with individual materials, you might consider small group work. For this configuration, each small group is given a set of materials and tasked with presenting their findings to the class. Another fun configuration that offers opportunities for participation is the treasure hunt. Working independently or in groups, students sift through a set of materials to explore, address, or analyze research questions. And finally, you may opt to have students undertake individual research. This configuration is best for advanced students who have some familiarity with the archive. Individual research most closely resembles the work scholars do in the reading room, and is a great way for students to participate in the Rose Library’s scholarly community. This is not a comprehensive list of configurations, and your instruction archivist will consult with you to determine the best fit for your needs and goals.

[SLIDE] Your choice of configuration may be in part determined by the kind of writing assignment you’d like to incorporate into your visit. While you certainly don’t have to have a writing assignment in order to visit the archive, an assignment drawn from students’ work at the Rose Library can help reinforce effective research practices, good writing skills, and your course content. These writing assignments can take many forms; you have options for both short- and long-term projects. You may opt for something simple and low-stakes, like an in-class worksheet. Or, to carry the project a bit beyond your class session, you might ask students to write a reflective Canvas or blog post about the materials they encountered and their experience with the archive. If you’d like to use your archival visit to jumpstart a longer assignment, textual and visual analysis papers work really well. Students might analyze the changes on a draft of a Seamus Heaney poem, explore the aesthetic qualities of an image in the Langmuir African American Photography Collection, or discuss the object history of a crystal ball belonging to Mamie Wade, a Savannah fortune teller. Finally, if you’d like to build on your work in the archives throughout a longer stretch of the semester, students can curate a mock, digital, or physical exhibit. For this project, students are tasked with selecting artifacts, writing introductory panels and label copy for each artifact. They may also produce a gallery guide, catalog, or tour. Exhibition-based archival writing offers students opportunities to write in a new, public-facing genre and allows them to take ownership of a certain aspect of your course content. Make sure to consult with an archivist well in advance if you’d like to do a physical student exhibition, as exhibition spaces are limited. We’ll see an example of an exhibition project up next. [SLIDE]

[SLIDE] Let’s take a look at some successful archival work done by students across Emory’s curriculum. Starting with one of my own classes, a first-year writing course on Writing about Travel. While I was initially wary that freshmen wouldn’t be up to archival research, they rose to the challenge, as Emory students so often do. I consulted with an instruction archivist to go over my course goals and objectives. We selected artifacts and determined the class configuration. For our archival session, we followed the “speed dating” format as students rotated around artifacts relating to travel. Students looked at maps, photographs, passports, postcards from

famous authors, and more. After our class visit, students were tasked with curating a mock exhibition on a topic relating to travel. Inspired by the Rose Library's Green Book, one of my students curated an exhibition about the history of Black travelers. Using the artifacts she encountered at the Rose, this student wrote compellingly about the challenges and opportunities facing black bodies moving through space. I was impressed with this student's work and with many of her classmates'.

To offer another example from a different discipline, I reached out to Instruction Archivist Jacqueline Reed. She shared the example of a class session that recently went well. Drawing from the newly acquired David R. Scott collection, Sociology 489 explored artifacts relating to the Apollo era. Using primary sources from Apollo 15 astronaut Scott, students worked in groups at a number of themed stations. They answered questions like "How do these items expand our understanding of the role of women in the Apollo Era? How might we see these women being depicted in the media and other mediums during this period? Which narratives and perspectives may be missing from the present material?" Jacqueline reported that students found the material fascinating and that it was a very productive session. I can't wait to hear more about this latest collection.

[SLIDE] I'll close with this glowing testimonial from Emory Dance instructor Anna Leo. For many years, Professor Leo has had her students visit archival collections and exhibitions to draw inspiration for their own choreography. In 2016, I had the pleasure to see her students perform routines responding to an exhibition I curated on the Beat generation. It was powerful to see so many young women respond physically to that male-dominated literary tradition, and just goes to show the wonderful, productive projects that happen when different disciplines are in conversation with the archives. As Professor Leo says, she "watched students light up when permitted to look at objects and documents which the archivists have selected for their viewing...The Rose Library and the instructional sessions inspire me and my students equally!" I hope this presentation has inspired you to consider your own ways to write across the archive.

[SLIDE] Thank you very much for listening, and I hope to see you in the archive! END.