Moving Team-Based Special Collections Instruction Online

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Special Collections & Archives
Florida State University Libraries
FSU & University Libraries

• Florida State University
  ○ 41,000 students at Tallahassee campus

• University Libraries
  ○ 73 library faculty and many more staff employed across multiple campuses, facilities, across Florida and the world
FSU Special Collections & Archives

- Special Collections & Archives Division (SCA)
  - 8 faculty, 6 full-time staff, plus hourly staff
  - no position devoted to public services
  - Digital Library Center
SCA Users

- FSU students, undergrad and graduate
- FSU faculty
- FSU administrators
- visiting scholars
- community groups
Areas of Collection Strength

- Florida State University History
- Florida History
- Civil & Human Rights
- French History
- History of the Book
- Poetry
- Children’s Literature
SCA Instruction Group - Origins

- Fall 2017
  - faculty departure in SCA (without imminent replacement)
  - left an instruction team of one
  - New gaps in institutional and collections knowledge
  - Make up lost hours
Requests for class visits remained fairly consistent - 50/year
Emphasis on close collaboration with course instructors
New team recruited from existing reference and research services staff
variety of experience in instruction, public services, and special collections
Team approach and communication helped share labor and expertise
SCA Instruction Group - Since 2017

- Team approach has remained in effect
  - field, discuss, and delegate requests as a group
  - flexibility in scheduling class visits
  - refine workflows and documentation
- Session design emphasizes
  - adapting to course objectives
  - in-person active learning
  - SAA-RBMS Guidelines for Primary Source Literacy
SCA Instruction Group - Since 2017

- Partnerships renewed and sustained in core disciplines and other Libraries units
- Capacity to execute sessions was able to expand dramatically when vacated faculty position was filled
- Everything was perfect and nothing needed changing
Spring 2020 - Behind the Asterisk

- The original plan: 38 Class Visits in SCA Spaces
  - English
  - Art
  - Art History
  - Humanities
- Planned visits included involvement of 7 members of SCA Faculty and Staff
- A few visit series, culminating in final projects revolving around SCA materials
- MARCH 16 -

- Monday of FSU’s Spring Break (students did not return)
- Beginning of most of us moving to remote work
- March 17 - governor announces stay-at-home order

- March 17 Instruction Group Meeting:

  “Online Instruction Period - March 23rd to April 5th (at least)”
Spring 2020 - Behind the Asterisk

Response:
- Contact with Instructors
  - Survey attempt
    - 2 responses (immediate)
  - Most faculty were overwhelmed
- March 24 Meeting Agenda: “Who has heard from instructors? What’s the plan?”
- Creation of communication log for status and plan for moving forward
Punching up Online Presence

Overall Search Tips for Special Collections Catalogs & Databases

- Try the same keyword searches in all three search tools, different tools may yield different information, even about the same collections
- Avoid using very specific terms or combined keyword searches at first - start with a lot of results and narrow from there
- Placing quotations around a specific phrase will help you narrow results in order to find information containing that exact wording (but may also lead to no results if the phrase is too specific)

FSU Libraries Catalog Advanced Search

- Best source of information on rare books collections (and lots of other resources at FSU Libraries)
- Also includes description of some archival collections, with links out to finer description in the finding aid database (see below)
- General guidelines discussed here: [https://youtu.be/rmFaAMBuIAR](https://youtu.be/rmFaAMBuIAR)
- Advanced Search offers greater specificity in search terms
Spring 2020 Stats

- Of 17 in-person sessions scheduled for March 16-April 23:
  - 5 became Zoom sessions
  - 9 re-imagined as asynchronous projects with some content provided by SCA
  - Only 3 canceled outright
  - About 250 out of 300 students remained supported by SCA instruction team
Covid-19 Instruction:
By the Numbers

COVID-19 Instruction Response
FSU Special Collections & Archives

Synchronous Instruction
Asynchronous Instruction

March 16, 2020 - November 1, 2020
Covid-19 Instruction: By the Numbers

COVID-19 Instruction Response
FSU Special Collections & Archives

TOTAL: 48 Classes Supported

March 16, 2020 – November 1, 2020

Asynchronous 33.3%

Synchronous 66.7%
Covid-19 Instruction: By the Numbers

- Since May we've created:
  - 12 unique Canvas modules, each assembled from
  - 93 unique pages
  - 28 unique assignments
  - 5 unique quizzes
  - hundreds of documents, images, and media files
  - At least six SCA Instruction Team members have contributed Canvas content
Canvas Commons
Existing Assets for Shift to Online Instruction

• Team Approach
  ○ Division of labor
  ○ Responsiveness to course objectives and calendar
  ○ Regular communication with course instructors
Existing Assets for Shift to Online Instruction

- Online resources
  - Digital Library
  - SCA finding aids
  - Libraries catalog
- Digitization staff on instruction team
Challenges of Online Delivery

- Students no longer engage with “the stuff”
- Favorite items not available?
- Lack of affective response
- How to demonstrate artifactual attributes?
- Tactile and other sensory experience
Advantages of Online Delivery

- Encouraging discovery of materials outside of FSU Special Collections and Archives
- Contextualizing our materials and connecting our collections to those at other institutions
Using Filming to Our Advantage

- Artists’ Books and Scrapbooks were a particular challenge to bring online for instruction
- Filming a video of the object was a way to help us demonstrate artifactual attributes
Advantages of Online Delivery

- Digital surrogates
  - easier to present to more than a few learners
  - asynchronous access
  - prompt for discussion of iterations of primary sources - advantages and disadvantages of copies in new formats

The above hand-colored woodcut from the Nuremberg Chronicle (fig 1) depicts the city of Nuremberg as it likely looked in 1493. Located on the Pegnitz river, Nuremberg was a political and economic center with rich communities of guilds including paper makers. This illustration of the city includes the earliest depiction of a paper mill (the reddish-roofed structures outside of the city walls in the bottom corner of the image). Watch the following recreation of the practices of a medieval paper mill, and consider why they might need to be set along the river.
Advantages of Online Learners

- Working with online description and Digital Library repository
  - Search strategies
  - finding aids
  - hierarchies and relationships within and among collections
Challenges of Online Delivery

- Learning Curve: Getting materials into LMS - Canvas
- Decisions about presentation
  - Link out to Digital Library (if possible)?
  - Import into Canvas?
  - How much data to include:
    - Citations
    - Bibliography
    - Link to resource
Using Restrictions to Our Advantage

- Materials sans context useful for instigating open and exploratory conversations
- Flexibility in presentation of materials directly within assignments, pages, and quizzes for interaction
- Students can share screens and gesture with great specificity to small details of items.
Effective Instructor Collaboration

- Considerations:
  - Setting expectations in an environment new to everyone
    - copyright and access
    - technological possibilities
    - Timelines
  - Consult early (and often)
  - End-of-semester instructor surveys
Reading the Zoom Room

- Can’t walk around and monitor student engagement (read “the vibe”)
- Learn existing etiquette/culture of course
- Empower students to ask questions
- Host can broadcast messages to breakout rooms
- Student leaders
- Designate a Chat Monitor
- The more places you put student instructions the better
Documenting Online Instruction Services

- Group revision of research guides and web pages to better describe remote services
  - Research Guides & Web Pages
  - Wiki content
- Learning Canvas Modules and other tools
- Development of digitization and copyright guidelines
- Communities and resources popping up all over
  - Teaching with Primary Sources
  - Library of Congress webinars
Redesign: Archival Reflection Essay

- Original Plan
  - Engage students face-to-face with collections items
  - Class visit forms basis of reflective essay composed after the visit
- Spring 2020 - Instructor moved to asynchronous model
- Redesign
  - Suitable digital surrogates selected from Digital Library
  - Students given links, visited DL on own time
  - Reflective Essay on Digital Library experience
Redesign: History of the Old Testament

- Typical orientation to Bibles collection: extra credit
  - Pull list developed with course instructor
  - Instructor leads show-and-tell session in SCA classroom
  - Class discussion
  - Students gain better knowledge of SCA collections and course topics
Redesign: History of the Old Testament

• Redesigned as asynchronous work for remote learners
  ○ Pre-selected items not all available in FSU Digital Library
  ○ Images located and collated by SCA faculty from other Web resources
  ○ SCA faculty created slide deck for Canvas and short quiz to assess/confirm student review of images
  ○ Students gain better knowledge of SCA collections and course topics
Redesign: History of the Old Testament

Codex Amiatinus
(c. 700 AD)

Extant Manuscript Includes at the end of OT:
- Sapientia
- Ecclesiasticus
- Tobis
- Hester
- Judith
- Esdrae 1 & 2
- Machabeurum 1 & 2

EXCLUDES Letter of Jeremiah and Book of Baruch

Diagram of Contents

Digital Surrogate:
http://mslo.mss.hcmoines.it/s.aspx?id=AiQ0S3h2-l14r7GxMcJaR&c=Biblia%20Sacra##book
Redesign: HoTT Asynchronous Modules

- Initial Request: In-person visits, sharing materials connected to ink, parchment, and paper, for History of Text Technologies classes at the undergraduate and graduate levels
- Reworked into asynchronous Canvas Modules with built-in activities
Redesign: HoTT Asynchronous Modules

- FSU SCA Materials alongside other representative materials
- Embedded videos of text technologies in practice
- Module adapted for graduate-level work with writing assignment
- Request for division Canva account to design graphics
Redesign: Rhetoric of Sustainability

• Original Plan
  ○ Orientation to Special Collections research
  ○ Essay assignment around selected materials from across SCA collections on Florida ecology and environment

• Course went fully online in Fall 2020
Redesign: Rhetoric of Sustainability

- Revised Plan
  - Some items from original selection digitized to support primary source essay assignment
    - several weeks lead time
  - Online class visits
    - orientation to Digital Library content and searching
    - Check in on essay assignment
Redesign: Rhetoric of Sustainability

- Online Exercise - Orientation to Digital Library
  - review of existing demonstration video
  - students tasked with “reference requests”
  - found objects formed basis of discussion
    - primary source literacy topics
    - Digital Library metadata
    - rights and restrictions on access and re-use
    - utility of digital surrogates
    - selection for digitization
Redesign: HoTT Narrative Stitching

- Based on an active-learning technique from Dartmouth’s Librarians Active Learning Institute, and deployed successfully in person
- Designed around materials “sets” related to a central topic.
  Three phases:
  - Student becomes “10-minute expert” on their item
  - Students introduce their items to their group (4) and the group answers some guiding questions to develop a narrative connecting the materials
  - Groups present out to the entire class
Redesign: HoTT Narrative Stitching

• First attempted move online: Summer 2020, class of 19
• Zoom breakout rooms used to develop groups around materials sets
• Took this first iteration to the SFA run-through group for feedback and ideas
• Learning experience
  ○ Low instructor buy-in
  ○ Too many materials
  ○ No stakes or ownership
  ○ No sense of skill transfer
Redesign: Multi-Visit
Religion in the South

- Nearing “embeddedness” with multiple visits across the semester and class content built around collections
- Collaboration with guest speakers and partners from Technology and Digital Scholarship
- Student “pods” and the bonus of familiarity with breakout rooms and exercise formats
- Office Hours and final project support
Original Design: Multi-Visit Religion in the South

- Visit One: University Archivist Sandra Varry guest speaker on Land Acknowledgement and the history of University connections to Enslavement

16 YEARS A FOUNDER


With A Postscript - June, 2020
Original Design: Multi-Visit Religion in the South

- Visit Two: Module with readings and interactions with SCA materials on myth-making about indigenous populations, especially abduction narratives and cataloging of spiritual practices
Original Design: Multi-Visit
Religion in the South

- Visit Three: Remembering Emmett Till - guest speakers, intro to Digital Humanities and data input based on materials from the Davis Houck Papers
Re-Design: Multi-Visit Religion in the South

● Visit Four: Black Organizing in Tallahassee, Integration, Bus Boycotts
  ○ Featuring redesigned Narrative Stitching based on feedback from SFA group
  ○ Two sets of materials from opposing perspectives
  ○ Exercise framed as the experience of a researcher with limited time in the archives and synthesis of new information via other experts in the field
Re-Design: Multi-Visit
Religion in the South

- Ran for both graduate class and undergraduate class
- Developed another narrative stitching module on “The Economy that Slavery Built” around Sharecropping in the SE United States
Further Opportunities in Shift to Online Delivery

- Revisiting conversations about communications technology
  - Document cameras
- Adapting already-available digital content to online sessions
  - Digital Library
  - Exhibit resources
- New digital content for instruction can be re-used
  - Ready reuse of Canvas and video content in instruction
  - Digital Library and exhibits
Spring 2021 and Beyond

- Adapting digital session content for wider audiences and uses
- Statistics - documenting “new” services
- More Canvas Commons content - a la carte modules for instructors to plug and play
- Content for hybrid courses
- Spring: in-person AND streaming? The ever-evolving instruction efforts continue.
- Novice researchers no longer oriented to SCA spaces
Thank you! Questions?

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