

Title: Zoom-Adapted Intro to Archives Class (Synchronous)

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Contact me with any questions/comments!

Intro to me/my position

I am the Interdisciplinary Science & Technology Librarian and Poly Archivist at Bern Dibner Library, New York University. Dibner Library is located on the Brooklyn Campus of NYU and primarily serves the Tandon School of Engineering. While the bulk of my teaching with primary sources work has found a natural home in the first year undergraduate Expository Writing Program (which offers two required courses for Tandon students), I have always focused my TPS work around STEM outreach. I want our science and engineering students to recognize themselves as potential creators of archives and be empowered to find and analyze archival material in their personal and professional lives.

Intro to this Teaching Tool:

This synchronous Zoom and Google Drive lesson is based on an in-person session I have taught to lower level and upper level undergraduates at the NYU Tandon School of Engineering. The lesson is geared towards any course asking students to do archival research for the first time. In the physical classroom, pairs of students are given an item from the archives and then asked to provide details about this item using the finding aid. Although this activity asks them to search in the opposite direction of a typical search, I've found that using the physical item in hand as an entry point compels them to truly explore the finding aid rather than glossing through it. The ultimate goal is for the students to gain familiarity with finding aids so that the term itself and the structure of information is not completely foreign when they begin archival searches on their own.

I had booked three of these sessions for March 26, 2020 and had prepared a cart of examples featuring various archival formats to use for this class. Of course, this cart was of no use to me at home. I had one week to flip this lesson into a remote format. I decided I wanted to keep the class as close to the in-person format as possible, which resulted in the development of a synchronous Zoom instruction session. I used breakout rooms and directed each breakout group to a Google Drive folder with a digitized item from the archives and the same worksheet I use in my in-person session.

Course Profile: I taught this Zoom lesson in Advanced College Essay, a required course for all first year undergraduates. But, I have taught this lesson in upper level undergrad courses in the Sustainable Urban Environments program. This lesson would be an appropriate part of any course which is requiring students to engage in archival research for the first time

Collections Profile: The Poly Archives collects the records and associated manuscript collections of the former Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute (now the NYU Tandon School of

Engineering). Only 1.5 collections from our archives have been formally digitized. In order to replicate the variety of formats I used in the original lesson, I searched through items in my own Google Drive that I'd scanned for reference or internal requests. These were not all high-res scans, but they were completely usable for the objective of this lesson. I always find that imperfections lead to great teaching moments-- looking at scans of varying quality helped us to think about how physical materials are represented in digital collections. And, we were able to dive into discussions about what the students imagined would be different if they were holding these items in their hands. Since it was now a given that all archival searches these students engaged in for class would be in digital repositories, it was helpful to pair the online finding aid search with conversations about how physical materials are represented digitally. I'd like to stress that while you do need to have a few digitized items on hand for this lesson, it's fine if these are random cell phone pics rather than high-res images from a digital repository.

Materials

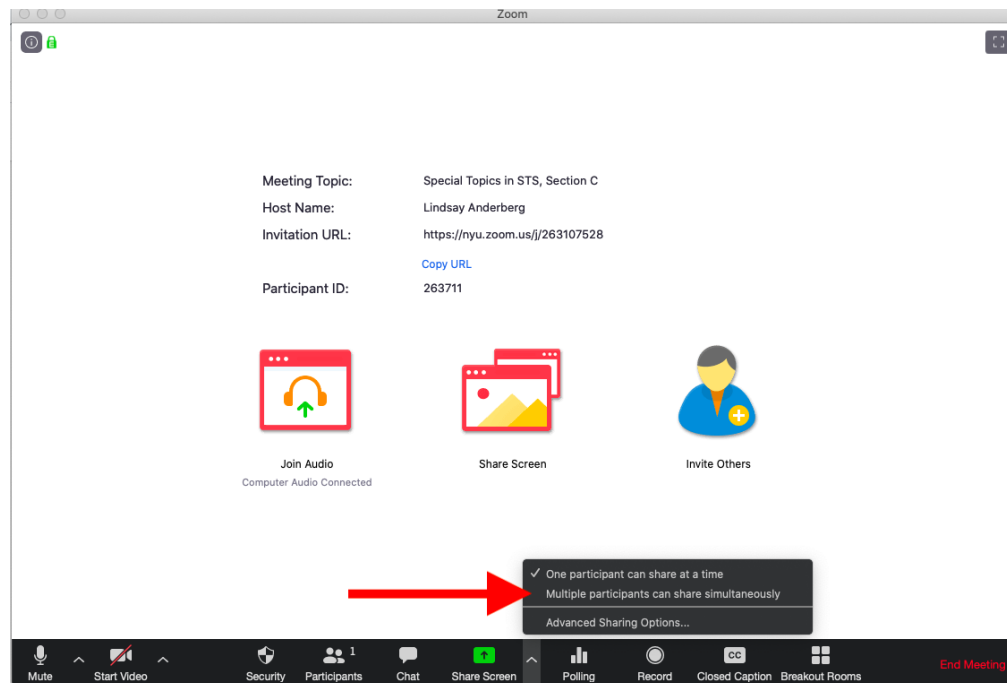
- 1.) Laptop with Internet access and Zoom account
- 2.) [Google Drive folder of digitized Poly Archives materials](#)
- 3.) [Google Drive worksheet](#)
- 4.) [Google slides with icebreaker prompt and example search](#)

Preparation:

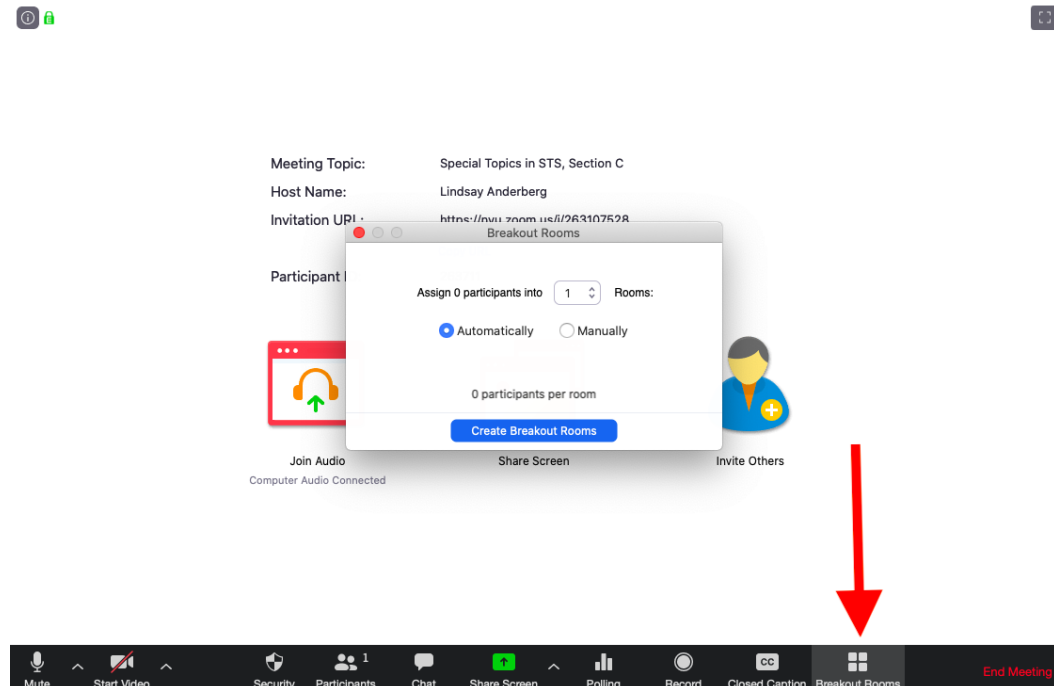
Setting up Google Drive: To prepare for this class, I first needed to identify enough digitized materials for students to be able to work in groups of 2-3. Since this class had 15 students, I dug around in my Drive until I found 7 previously digitized items. Once I identified these items, I made a copy of each one. I created a main Google Drive folder for the class and then made folders labeled Group 1 - Group 7 in that folder. I placed a different digitized item in each folder. I made 7 copies of the worksheet and placed one in each folder. If you are doing multiple sections of the course, which I was, you need to make additional copies of all of these folders for each section. The added benefit of working in Drive is that students can annotate directly on the digitized items, if they'd like. But, this does mean you do want to give each group in each class their own copy of the item. Be sure to set the Drive folder permission settings to either "Public on the web" or "Anyone with the link" and "organize, add, and edit" so that students can actually access and work in these files!

Slides: The slides contain an initial prompt to get students thinking about archives. Invite students to reply in the chat and then begin to talk through their responses. Invite them to unmute their mics and say more, if they'd like.

Zoom breakout rooms logistics: I was a guest in a faculty member's class, so I needed her to grant me permission to share my screen to show my slides. Tell the faculty member to click the caret next to "Share Screen" and then select "Multiple participants can share simultaneously"



I also had the faculty member set the breakout rooms, since she was the meeting host. If you are doing this yourself and are the host of the meeting, all you need to do is click the Breakout Rooms button in Zoom and then select the number of rooms you need.



I told the students I would not randomly pop into their rooms, but that I would be hanging out in their Google Doc worksheets, so if they had any questions they could ask me via the Google Doc chat feature or we could discuss an interesting or confusing observation

through comments. When delivering this lesson in person, I will circulate around the room to check in on how the groups are doing, but jumping into a breakout room feels like the equivalent of barging through a closed door into a private conversation. I've found that hanging out in the Google Docs allows me to be present without being oppressive and allows me to gauge when we should call the groups back to the main room to discuss their findings. While this is my approach, you do have the ability to go into a breakout room if you want to. I think the most important thing is to set the students' expectations: if you want to jump into the breakout rooms, be sure to let them know that you will be doing that in advance.

Learning Goals:

- In this class we will use digitized primary sources from the Poly Archives as a way to
 - become comfortable with searching archival collections
 - learning the basic organization of a finding aid
 - writing citations for archival materials, and
 - although students will not be in a reading room, we will talk about the general expectations of handling materials and archival reading rooms.

Activity Outline:

- 1.) **Warm up:** Show a slide that says "Archives." Ask the students to write down what they think of when they hear the word "archives"-- it could be a definition, an example, an image, etc. After 3 minutes, invite the students to begin writing down some of their thoughts in chat (**15 minutes writing & discuss**)
- 2.) **Introduce today's lesson:** We will work with materials from the Poly Archives in order to become comfortable with searching for and citing archival sources. You will be working in Zoom breakout rooms (up to 7 rooms) in small groups to investigate one object. A worksheet will guide you through this activity. The archivist will model this activity with a sample archives object and search, [as shown in the Google Slides](#). (**15 minutes**)
- 3.) **Activity:** Small groups of students will be assigned to Zoom breakout rooms. They will also be directed to [this Drive folder](#). Each folder contains one digitized object from the Poly Archives and one worksheet for the group. Students will be asked to explore their object and to complete the following worksheet in their folder. One student from the group will be elected to unmute their microphone and share their findings over Zoom when they come out of the breakout rooms. (**15 minutes**)
- 4.) **Conclusion:** Ask each group to share what they found challenging or what was something new they encountered with the archives search. The archivist can

screenshare the object the group is discussing as they comment. The archivist will lead a discussion about how archival collections and finding aids are organized as well as how to cite them. We'll also go over tips about accessing archives in person and students will be pointed to online resources such as <https://dp.la/> and any other subject specific repositories which might relate to their class (**10 minutes**)

Looking Forward:

Obviously, if I had planned an online class in advance, I would have taken the time to properly scan hi-res images and include recto/verso or multiple angles for three-dimensional objects. But, as an on-the-fly flip to remote teaching, I think this class was successful and points to the benefits of keeping our TPS classes on the schedule even if they won't be perfect. There is also something to be said for enticing students to view our physical materials (which are way better than my hodgepodge digital surrogates!) when we physically reopen.

Appendix

- 1.) [Worksheet](#)
- 2.) [Slides](#)

Worksheet and [Link to Worksheet](#) in Google Docs

Introduction to Working with Archives

- 1.) Working with your partners, inspect the digitized item you have been assigned from the Poly Archives. Items are assigned by group number in this Google Drive folder:
<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1o6eR--MxDjrSvSNrdYDiyADUCOwjYVc>

Use information from that item (a title, a label, etc.) to try a search in the NYU Special Collections portal <https://specialcollections.library.nyu.edu/search/>

Record the full information you found about your item below:

- 2.) The document giving you this information is called a **finding aid**. Finding aids describe archival collections to researchers and provide a full container list of the items in the collection. Spend some time looking around the finding aid to which your item belongs. Then, answer the following questions:

(a) To what series does your item belong?

(b) What other series are in this collection? What do you notice about how the collection is arranged?

(c) What is the name of this collection?

(d) In what section of the finding aid can you find background information about this collection?

- 3.) Referring to the finding aid's preferred citation note, formulate a full citation for your item:

Helpful resources

NYU Special Collections search portal

<https://specialcollections.library.nyu.edu/search/>

Search for collections across (or within) Poly Archives, NYU University Archives, Fales, Tamiment, NYU Abu Dhabi Archives, Brooklyn Historical Society, and New-York Historical Society

Brooklyn Visual Heritage

<http://www.brooklynvisualheritage.org/>

Images from Brooklyn Historical Society, Brooklyn Public Library, and the Brooklyn Museum

Digital Public Library of America

<https://dp.la/>

Collections of images, documents, video, and audio files from across across the United States. Search curated sets by topic or search the entire collection by keywords. Since dpla is an aggregator site, you need to click the link in the item record to find the archives where the item is held.

Questions?

Contact Dibner librarian/Poly Archivist Lindsay Anderberg for help

la715@nyu.edu

Slides and [Link to Slides](#) in Google Docs

Archives

- 1.) Did you work with archives last semester? If so, write down (to yourself) what you remember about archives-- specific objects, concepts, the experience, etc.
- 2.) If you didn't work with archives last semester, take a few minutes to write down (to yourself) what you think of when they hear the word "archives"-- it could be a definition, an example, an image, etc.

After you've gathered your thoughts, begin to jot down some of these ideas in Zoom Chat.

Slide 1: Icebreaker and getting students into the mindset of working with archival materials. (You might be surprised how many students mention "old" and "dusty." This leads to great conversations about contemporary and digital collecting! Also, how we really don't want dust, mold, and pests in our physical collections!)

Poly Archives & Special Collections: Collection Overview

Guide to the collections in the Poly Archives at Bern Dibner Library, New York University

Collection Overview

Using Poly Archives

Collection Development Policy

Finding Aids

Citing Archival Sources

Archival Terminology and Definitions

Using the Materials



Appointments are necessary for all researchers who wish to consult archival and manuscript materials. To schedule an appointment, please email Poly Archivist Lindsay Anderberg at landerberg@nyu.edu. Please allow 24 hours advance notice when making appointments.

For more information about [Planning Your Visit](#) see our website.

To locate material across this or other collections at NYU Libraries, you can [Search our Finding Aids](#).

Poly Archives & Special Collections

The mission of the Poly Archives is to collect, preserve, and provide access to the records of the former Polytechnic Institute (1854-2014). The archives document the history of the former iterations of the school including: the Brooklyn Collegiate and Polytechnic Institute, Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn, Polytechnic Institute of New York, Polytechnic University, and Polytechnic Institute of New York University.

The Poly Archives' rare books and special collections provide context to the archival material by providing documentation of the history of



Location, Hours, Contact, & Services Information

[Dibner Library Website](#)

Search Finding Aids

Search Finding Aids

Search

Plan Your Visit

guides.nyu.edu/polyarchives

Slide 2: Screenshot and link to the Poly Archives homepage.

Biochemistry Lab, 1979



Slide 3: Beginning my example of the activity. Here is my digital object in hand as well as the file name.

<https://specialcollections.library.nyu.edu/search>



NYU Libraries > BobCat > Archival Collections

BROWSE ALL

Library

Tamiment Library & Wagner Labor Archives	396,024
The Fales Library & Special Collections	237,912
New-York Historical Society	157,321
New York University Archives	90,975
Brooklyn Historical Society	30,548
Akkasah Center for Photography at NYU Abu Dhabi	16,931
Poly Archives	13,157
Research Institute for the Study of Man	10,699
NYU Abu Dhabi Archives and Special Collections	2,628

Digital Content

Archival Collections

biochemistry lab

[Advanced Search](#)

RENOVATION NOTICE
NYU Special Collections - Fales Library, Tamiment Library & Robert F. Wagner Archives, and University Archives - is undergoing a major renovation over the next two years. There may be an impact on services and collections. All repositories will be closed to researchers from May 21, 2020 - September 7, 2020. Please contact scra@nyu.edu with any questions, and visit the [Special Collections Renovation Project website](#) for more information.

Use this site to explore descriptions, finding aids, inventories and digitized content from archives held by New York University's special collections. You can also use this site to search archival material held by the New-York Historical Society and Brooklyn Historical Society.

WHAT ARE SPECIAL COLLECTIONS?

Slide 4: Next, I'll open the NYU special collections search portal and try a search with any information I have on hand. This could be the file title (for the purposes of this class, I made the file titles what was written on the back of the photo since I did not have the verso of photos on hand). Some items (yearbooks, student newspapers, etc.) have written info in the item (in the image) itself.

The Search

LIMIT MY RESULTS

▼ Library

- The Fales Library & Special Collections 223
- New-York Historical Society 103
- Poly Archives 102
- New York University Archives 94
- Tamiment Library & Wagner Labor Archives 83
- Akkasah Center for Photography at NYU Abu Dhabi 38
- Brooklyn Historical Society 13

► Digital Content

► Creator

► Date Range

► Subject

► Name

► Place

► Language

Archival Collections

biochemistry lab [Search](#)

Advanced Search

Search terms: biochemistry lab [×](#) [New Search](#)

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 **Biochemistry Lab**

Format: Archival Object

Contained in: Guide to the Poly Archives Historic Photograph Collection, 1957-2011 >> Series II: Academics >> Subseries A: Departments and Laboratories >> **Biochemistry Lab**

Date range: Inclusive, 1979

To request this item, please note the following information

Library: Poly Archives

Collection call no: RG.026

Location: Box: 4, Folder: 5

Slide 5: Here's what comes up when I search. Read the metadata that comes up and see if that seems to fit your item in hand. Also note the filters on the side if you need to refine your search.

The Finding Aid

See all finding aids in this repository

Table of Contents

- Descriptive Summary
- Biographical / Historical
- Scope and Contents and Arrangement
- Access Points
- Administrative Information
- Container List
 - Series I: Buildings and Campus Views
 - Series II: Academics
 - Series III: Administration
 - Series IV: Publications and Productions
 - Series V: Student Life
 - Series VI: Alumni
 - Series VII: Events
 - Series VIII: Miscellaneous, negatives, and contact sheets

Box: 4	Folder : 5	Biochemistry Lab Click to view	1979
Box: 4	Folder : 6	Bioengineering Lab Click to view	undated
Box: 4	Folder : 7	Biomedical Engineering Department Click to view	2000
Box: 4	Folder : 8	Chemical Engineering Department Click to view	1954-2005
Box: 4	Folder : 9	Chemical Engineering Lab Click to view	1930s - 1990s
Box: 4	Folder : 10	Chemistry Department Click to view	1955
Box: 4	Folder : 11	Chemistry Faculty Click to view	undated

Slide 6: Click into the item, which jumps you into the middle of the finding aid.

Click to view the image gallery for confirmation



Image-Service

Slide 7: This is a collection with digitized images, so we can definitely verify whether we have found the right folder in the right collection by using the “Click to view” link.

Explore the Finding Aid: Scroll up to find the series

Table of Contents

Descriptive Summary
Biographical / Historical
Scope and Contents and Arrangement
Access Points
Administrative Information
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► Series I: Buildings and Campus Views
► Series II: Academics
► Series III: Administration
► Series IV: Publications and Productions
► Series V: Student Life
► Series VI: Alumni
► Series VII: Events
► Series VIII: Miscellaneous, negatives,
and contact sheets

Container List

Series II: Academics

Subseries A: Departments and Laboratories

Container 1	Container 2	Title	Date
Box: 4	Folder : 1	Aerospace Department- Long Island Campus, Farmingdale Click to view	undated
Box: 4	Folder : 2	Aerospace Lab- Farmingdale, Long Island Click to view	undated
Box: 4	Folder : 3	Aerospace Lab- Farmingdale, Long Island Click to view	undated
Box: 4	Folder : 4	Aerospace Lab- Freeport, Long Island Click to view	undated
Box: 4	Folder : 5	Biochemistry Lab Click to view	1979
Box: 4	Folder : 6	Bioengineering Lab Click to view	undated
Box: 4	Folder : 7	Biomedical Engineering Department Click to view	2000

Slide 8: Here's where we explore the finding aid together. It follows the questions that are asked on the worksheet. The first one is to scroll up and figure out what series this is.

Explore the Finding Aid: Collection title and details

[Print / View Finding Aid as Single Page](#)

POLY ARCHIVES

& Special Collections

Bern Dibner Library of Science and Technology

Poly Archives Historic Photograph Collection RG.026

Poly Archives
Bern Dibner Library of Science and Technology
5 MetroTech Center
Brooklyn 11201
646-997-3943
dibner.library@nyu.edu

Poly Archives at Bern Dibner Library of Science and Technology
Collection processed by Lindsay Anderberg and Absar Alam
This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on September 27, 2018 using Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Container List

Series II: Academics
Subseries A: Departments and Laboratories

Container 1	Container 2	Title	Date
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Slide 9: Looking at where our finding aids display (1) the collection title (2) Bio/Hist note and (3) Admin Info-- because this is where our Preferred Citation Note is nested.

Explore an archival object on your own!

- 1.) Navigate to this shared Google Drive folder:
<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1o6eR--MxDjrSvSNrdYDiyADUCOwjcYVc>
(I'll put this link in the Zoom chat too)
- 2.) You'll see Group 1 - 7 listed in the folder
- 3.) Inside each group folder is a digitized item from the Poly Archives and a worksheet
- 4.) You will be randomly assigned to small groups in 7 Zoom breakout rooms. Your Zoom room number is the same as your group number. Open up your folder to view your item and edit the worksheet as a group
- 5.) After about 10 minutes we'll call you back to the main Zoom. Assign one person from your group to report back.
- 6.) If you have any questions, feel free to pop out of the breakout room and ask!

Slide 10: Directions for students to do this activity on their own.

Questions?

Ask now or email me!

Lindsay Anderberg (la715@nyu.edu)

Or

polyarchives@nyu.edu (this email goes to me and Poly Archives Graduate Assistant, Zoe Blecher-Cohen. Either of us can help with archives questions)

Slide 11: Final slide is contact info