Archival Curation Assignments

Background

Our course pursues two inquiries: What methodologies and methods do scholars use to examine women’s and feminist rhetorics? And how may we engage with this scholarship to construct and analyze those archives of women’s and feminist rhetorics that interest us? One way we will take up these questions is through a collaborative curation project. Specifically, we will curate online collections of archives and materials related to women’s and feminist rhetorics from across historical periods and cultural contexts.

As you know from our recent reading, collaboration has long been a central practice within feminist rhetorical studies (Lunsford and Ede). And as feminist scholars of rhetoric take up “invitations” to embark on “meaningful engagements” with digital humanities, the fruitfulness and even necessity of collaboration takes on new valence (Enoch and Bessette; Enoch, Bessette, and VanHaitsma). Archives 2.0 are participatory, digital texts are not only examined but produced by scholars, and digital productions often involve practices of textual curation (Ramsey-Tobiene; Graban, Ramsey-Tobienne, and Myers). These curatorial practices include filtering, gathering, linking, captioning—all means of managing and re-composing existing information to facilitate navigation by new audiences (Geraths and Kennerly; Johnson; Kennedy).

Our curatorial goal will be to collect archives, digital archives, and other born-digital and digitized materials of use to not only us, but also audiences consisting of scholars with shared interests in women’s and feminist rhetorics.

Assignment

Your assignment is to use the social networking platform Pinterest to curate a collection of links to archives, digital archives, and other materials that will serve our collective course inquiries, your final research projects, and our external audiences.

Deadlines

Please feel free to work on developing our archival curation project as much and as often as you want to, based on your interests, networks, and research process. These deadlines refer only to the minimum requirements for contributors. The tasks listed are meant to give you an idea of what to expect, but these will ideally develop through our “dialogic” collaboration (Lunsford and Ede). Any revisions to the assignment and deadlines will be noted here and announced during class.

1. **By week 6, 10/03**: (1) Create a Pinterest account for use in this course. As you select a username, consider the level of anonymity you would like to maintain. Upload a photo and create an “About you” statement that is fitting for your account. (2) Start pinning potentially relevant archives, digital archives, and other materials (please create a minimum of 10 pins). At this stage, your collection of pins and boards may be minimally filtered and ordered. (3) Follow our course account, “Curating Women’s & Feminist
Rhetorics,” at https://www.pinterest.com/WomFemRhet/. I will then follow you, and you can find and follow everyone in the class. (4) Come to class prepared to discuss this initial process of curation in light of our prior readings and discussions on feminist methodology and methods.

2. **By week 8, 10/17:** (1) Continue pinning, reaching a minimum of 20 total pins. (2) Notify me of collaborative boards you would like created for our course account. Then accept my Pinterest invitation to collaborate on those boards. (3) Begin developing captions or “descriptions” that introduce, contextualize, and explain the pins you may want to share with readers via our class account. (4) When you’re ready, begin adding pins to our collaborative boards for the class. Pins are “ready” when you have developed captions and other metadata that are revised and edited with your readers in mind. (5) Come to class prepared to informally present on your archival curation.

3. **By week 12, 11/14:** (1) Work with your classmates and me in order to make decisions about our collaborative boards for the class. (2) Refine at least 5 of the pins you contributed to the collaborative boards. (3) Contribute to editing our course collection (revising captions, adding metadata, checking links, etc.) (4) Decide how you will share our archival curation with audiences outside the course. (5) Come to class prepared to present briefly on your curatorial practices and shifting roles within our dialogic collaboration.

**Additional Considerations**

- We will work together to get started with curating these collections, and help will be available through in-class discussions, demos, and work sessions.

- Feel free to pin a variety of materials. For instance, you may curate links to relatively traditional brick-and-mortar archival collections or to digital archives of historical materials. But you may also use boards to compose your own archives, compiling born-digital and digitized artifacts while theorizing how they function as an archive.

- On the page for our class account, “Curating Women’s & Feminist Rhetorics” (https://www.pinterest.com/WomFemRhet/), you will find a board with sample pins that might help with ideas for getting started. I’ve included a board related to my research project and other boards on methods. Additional boards will appear as I hear from you.

- On my professional Pinterest page (https://www.pinterest.com/curatingrhet/), you are welcome to peruse a wider variety of resources: examples of digital archives, digitized materials, and other sources; readings about using Pinterest for archival purposes; pieces of interest about digital archives; and resources on citation and copyright considerations.

- If you would like to check my Twitter feed (@pvanhaitisma), I regularly tweet and retweet about archives, digital archives, curation, and women’s and feminist rhetorics. Tweets directed specifically to our class will appear under the hashtag #WomFemRhet.
(You are welcome to follow me on Twitter, an account I use for scholarly purposes, and I would in turn follow you. This is completely optional.)

**Course Readings Cited**


