

Primary Sources Teaching Fellowship Program: Building Primary Source Literacy by Training the Next Generation of Instruction Librarians and Archivists, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Libraries

Wilson Special Collections Library with the University of North Carolina (UNC) at Chapel Hill Libraries, as lead applicant, in partnership with the Teaching with Primary Sources (TPS) Collective, requests a three-year Project Grant of \$283,280 to support the development and implementation of an online summer fellowship program in primary source pedagogy designed to 1) build primary source literacy in diverse communities across the state of North Carolina; 2) fill gaps in current MLIS curricula by training new librarians and archivists in primary source pedagogy and critical librarianship; and 3) build capacity within special collections libraries and archives across the country to meet the rising demand for in-person and digital education with primary source collections including archives, manuscripts, rare books, ephemera, born digital materials, and digitized collections.

Statement of Broad Need: Primary source literacy allows individuals and communities to draw meaningful connections between the past and the present; to interpret textual, visual, and material evidence; and to think critically across complicated information landscapes. When librarians and archivists are trained in primary source pedagogy, they can help students be more inquisitive, critical learners and enable communities to understand, interpret, and harness the power of their own histories. Primary sources are especially complex because their formats may be unfamiliar to today’s users, and they require critical analysis of both their historical context and the intentions of the people who created them.¹

Because primary sources provide connections to otherwise unrecoverable historical narratives, special collections and archival materials are increasingly being used by classrooms across the disciplines in K-12, college, university, and community learning settings. For example, at Wilson Library, we have seen a 20% increase in the demand for instruction over the past five years, and our librarians increasingly collaborate with faculty and teachers on designing curricula and research projects. However, a 2018 study of graduate library and information sciences (LIS) curricula found that there are “few opportunities for future archivists to gain any pedagogical training, especially skills in teaching with primary sources.”² Libraries and archives have met this demand through professional development for existing staff, by hiring LIS graduates with teaching backgrounds in other fields, and through on-the-job pedagogical training. At Wilson Library, we have also hired master’s students from UNC’s LIS program and trained them in primary source instruction, critical pedagogy, and critical librarianship. However, UNC’s residential graduate LIS program lacks the diversity of other programs in the state, which include a program at an Historically Black University as well as programs with online and hybrid curricula.

Project Design: We propose a summer online program that will fill the curricular gap in primary source pedagogy in current MLIS education while building a network of support for new professionals across the state of North Carolina interested in the field of teaching with archives and special collections. The program will be offered in Summer 2022, Summer 2023, and Summer 2024 in collaboration with the TPS Collective, an independent group that supports teachers of primary sources at all levels and institutions, especially young professionals and professionals who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color in the library and archival field. TPS is a partnership between members of the Instruction and Outreach Committee of the Association of College and Research Libraries’ Rare Books and Manuscripts Section and the Reference, Access and Outreach Committee of the Society of American Archivists.

¹ “Guidelines for Primary Source Literacy,” developed by the ACRL RBMS-SAA Joint Task Force on the Development of Guidelines for Primary Source Literacy, approved 2018. <https://www2.archivists.org/sites/all/files/GuidelinesForPrimarySourceLiteracy-June2018.pdf>

² Anderberg, Lindsay, Robin M. Katz, Shaun Hayes, Alison Stankrauff, Morgen MacIntosh Hodgetts, Josué Hurtado, Abigail Nye, and Ashley Todd-Diaz. 2018. “Teaching the Teacher: Primary Source Instruction in American and Canadian Archives Graduate Programs.” *The American Archivist* 81 (1): 188–215. <https://doi.org/10.17723/0360-9081-81.1.188>.

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The online program will be based on a training program piloted during the 2019-2020 academic year at Wilson Library to train graduate student staff in primary source pedagogy. The pilot project, led by research and instruction librarian Emily Kader, had a cohort of six LIS students who met weekly for guided discussions of readings, to hear guest speakers, and to take part in hands-on workshops. Topics included primary source literacy, learner-centered teaching, creating inclusive learning environments, critical pedagogy, lesson planning, faculty engagement, job market preparation, object-based learning, backwards design, assessment, and teaching online.

The program we propose will modify the pilot to make it more accessible and inclusive for LIS students enrolled in programs across the state of North Carolina. Serving a cohort of ten students a year for three years, the program will bring together fellows from North Carolina's five public LIS masters programs, housed at Appalachian State University, East Carolina University, North Carolina Central University, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. By drawing from the LIS programs at these schools, we will build a diverse cohort of fellows, with a special focus on students from underrepresented groups in the library profession. The program will provide training on teaching with primary sources, critical pedagogy, and critical librarianship while also building community connections for these students within the special collections profession.

We will bring together new professionals interested in teaching with primary sources broadly conceived, including manuscripts, archives, rare books, other print materials, digitized materials, and born digital collections. Using a learning management system, the select cohort of fellows will meet online twice a week for seven weeks to discuss shared readings about current topics in the field, attend presentations by practitioners, participate in workshops, and take part in community building events. The online format will enhance the accessibility of the program and will enable sustained participation from fellows from across the state. The program will conclude with an in-person three-day workshop at UNC Chapel Hill where fellows will participate in hands-on learning and teaching activities, in-person discussions, and speaker events. The fellowship's goal will be to build future capacity for teaching primary source literacy within inclusive classroom settings, both in-person and on digital platforms.

Diversity plan: Using our network of connections at MLIS programs, libraries, and other cultural institutions across the state to promote the program, our goal will be to recruit fellows from underrepresented groups in the library profession and also from groups underrepresented in UNC Chapel Hill's LIS master's program. An advisory committee of LIS faculty from each of the five North Carolina schools and the TPS Collective will help us identify candidates. We will seek recommendations from the American Library Association Spectrum and Association of Research Libraries/Society of American Archivists Mosaic scholarship programs. The syllabus of guest speakers and readings will include numerous authors and professionals in the field who are people of color and people from different types of institutions and geographic locations. Providing our cohort of fellows with a network of professional contacts that reflects a range of cultural and professional perspectives will be core to the mission of our program.

Broad impact: Our training program aims to have a broad effect on special collections' libraries and archives and their ability to hire and retain diverse staff, to serve many different communities, and to educate their publics through K-12, college, university, and community educational programming. Our focus on North Carolina helps us scale up after the success of our pilot program. Ultimately our goal is to develop a program that can be implemented regionally or nationally. Toward this effort, we will share our curriculum at national conferences, on platforms like the TPS Collective website, and in other professional venues.

Budget summary: The estimated total budget for the project over three years is \$283,280, which includes \$195,000 in Student Support in the form of fellowship stipends of \$5,000 for 10 fellows a year for three years and \$15,000 for student travel for a yearly in-person workshop. The budget also includes \$9,000 in travel for workshop guest instructors; \$15,000 in meals for fellows and other participants; \$9,000 in consultant fees for virtual and in-person guest speakers and instructors; \$18,000 for software and supplies; \$2,000 for printing and design of instructional and promotional materials; and \$35,280 in indirect costs.