**English 4590.08H: Archival Research Methods and American Literature, 1860-1910**
**Professor Elizabeth Renker**
**Spring 2013**
**M 2:15-5pm DE 250**

**Office:** DE 511; 688-3835 (my office); 292-6065 (receptionist)
**Office hours:** T 2:15-3:15; Th 10-11 and 2:15-3:15; and by appointment.

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**Description**

4590.08H is a methods class that will train you to conduct original primary source research and to integrate those findings with secondary source research into a substantial, original long research paper. We will focus on processes—on the how of conducting research-- more than on conclusions. Prepare to roll up your sleeves and dive into the messy world of archival detective work! The class will train you in methods and materials from two primary disciplines, literary studies and history, serving three essential purposes for honors students:

**First, this methods class will introduce you to conducting archival research.** When scholars talk about archival work, they typically mean research in original primary materials. “Archival research” typically means working with unpublished sources that can only be found in unique collections at particular libraries. In other words, these unique items cannot be borrowed through libraries, or found on Google. So, this is a very specialized and distinctive kind of research in unique materials that most researchers never see! Archival work is for the research detective.

**Second, it will develop your expertise in American literature from 1860-1910, conventionally characterized as the era of “American realism.”** In addition to working with archival materials relevant to this era, we will develop a broader expertise in this period by reading selected secondary works that provide a fuller context.

**Third, it will train you in the practical dimensions of writing original research papers.** This class is an ideal option for students who want to prepare writing samples for graduate school, for award competitions, or simply as training for writing a thesis. Here is the link for the OSU Libraries Undergraduate Research Prize, which students from this class WON last year and the year before! [http://library.osu.edu/news/grants-awards/undergraduate-research-prize/](http://library.osu.edu/news/grants-awards/undergraduate-research-prize/)

Here is the link for the Denman Undergraduate Research Forum, another research distinction for which you should consider applying: [http://denman.osu.edu/abstracts.aspx](http://denman.osu.edu/abstracts.aspx)

Competitions and opportunities like these enhance any future application and resume. The OSU Undergraduate Research Office also provides support and information for research enterprises: [http://www.undergraduateresearch.osu.edu/](http://www.undergraduateresearch.osu.edu/)

Take advantage of these opportunities!

**Class Objectives**

* To learn to conduct meaningful, advanced, original research.
* To sharpen analytical writing skills.
* To learn advanced scholarly skills for conducting archival, primary-source research.
* To learn how to integrate archival research and scholarship into original research papers.
* To build expertise in American literary history, 1860-1910.
Required texts

Selected materials posted on Carmen or available on line (tba as term progresses and I see where our discussion is going).

Optional texts

Requirements and % of Grade
1. Check your osu email daily for class announcements about assignments, etc.
2. Daily attendance, preparation, and participation (15%).
3. Periodic required homework at RBMS during Primary Materials Weeks, indicated on syllabus (15% for each week’s bibliography/attendance at RBMS; 30% total). Under semesters, faculty are asked to assign out-of-class work at a rate of 2:1 for every hour of class time. So, during these weeks, you will be required to work independently at RBMS for at least five-and-a-half hours beyond our regular class time of two hours and 45 min. In other words, you need to put a minimum of 8.25 hours total into your work for this class every week. You will sign in and out of RBMS on the sign-in sheet for our class, located at the front desk. During homework hours you spend at RBMS, you will explore and read primary materials, building the skills we are learning in class. At the conclusion of Primary Materials Weeks I and II, you will submit an 8-page single-spaced descriptive bibliography of selected materials that you have assessed during your homework hours. Sample bibliography entries and instructions appear at the end of this syllabus, so you have a model for what the bibliographies should look like.

RBMS is open at limited hours (listed below), so you will need to fit your homework into their schedule during these weeks. If you cannot fit this requirement into your schedule this term, you should drop this class. It is an absolute requirement and no excuses will be accepted. Your descriptive bibliographies are due on Mon. 2.11 by 9am (Piatt Collection) and Fri. 3.8 by 11:59pm (Tarver Collection). (You may integrate one or more of the other collections listed, or others that you identify in consultation with Anne Fields or another librarian, into either or both of these assignments; if you identify a collection to work with other than those listed on this syllabus, you must clear it with me via email).

3. A 10-page draft toward your final paper (20%). Due in the Carmen dropbox no later than 11:59pm on Fri., 3.22. Responding to this many papers of this length will take me about two weeks.

4. A 15-20 page final research paper integrating primary research with secondary sources about this period in literary history (35%). I will provide further instructions about the final paper after midterm. You should be working toward this paper the entire term, not writing it the last week; in fact, you will need to identify a general topic very early in the term, which you will then refine and shape as we continue to research and read. I will hold the papers to a level of quality that reflects dedicated work for an entire term; do not hand in hasty or rushed final papers. When you read the finding aids for week 2, you should be thinking about developing possible topics. Your descriptive bibliographies will contribute to the ongoing research task, as will all your reading during the term. Take careful notes about all your reading.
assignments and during all our class discussions. All this preparation can go very concretely into the final paper. Due on Fri., April 26 by 5:45 pm in the Carmen dropbox.

Promptness, Attendance, Participation
It is your responsibility to come to class on time. If you arrive after I have taken attendance, you will already have been marked absent, so it is your responsibility to ask me at the end of class to mark you present. I will not repeat announcements for latecomers or answer emails about what you might have missed, so choose a classmate on whom you can rely for information and exchange contact information. Since we meet only once per week, more than one absence from class will adversely affect your participation grade. Active participation is essential to this class in particular, since its foundation is active thinking about research problems. If you attend every class, but don't participate in the discussion classes, your class participation grade will be a C. Regular, informed participation will bring your grade up; additional absences will bring it down.

Academic Misconduct
I will pass all cases of suspected plagiarism to the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM), as required by the Faculty Rules (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). It is the responsibility of COAM to investigate all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes, but is not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct. If COAM determines that you have violated the University’s Code of Student Conduct, the sanctions for the violation could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the University. If you have any questions about citation and the use of sources, I will be more than happy to help you, so please ask. You must include in your bibliographies for research papers ALL sources whose information you have incorporated into your data, including any general online sources such as Wikipedia.

The Office for Disability Services
Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the professor and GTA about their needs as soon as possible. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; OSU Office for disability Services Web Site. If you suspect you might have a learning issue with which you need help, you may also visit this office for assessment.

The Writing Center
All members of the OSU community are invited to discuss their writing in a one-on-one tutorial with a trained consultant at the Writing Center. See www.cstw.org for information.

1. Mon. 1.7 Introduction: “American Realism”: definitions, contexts, problems
We will spend roughly half the class on reviewing the syllabus and expectations, and half the class discussing the following assignment:
Following the “Daily Reading Assignment” instructions above, prepare: Herbert Edwards, “Howells and the Controversy over Realism in American Fiction,” American Literature 3.3
Our class today is organized in parts:
2:15-2:25 Fill out RBMS Research Applications. You will need to fill out a Research Application on your first visit, so bring a photo ID or you will not gain access to the room.
2:25-3:30 The World of Archives Introduction to the world of archives, including such topics as proper handling of materials; the idea of an “archive”; terminology you might encounter working in collections, such as “finding aid,” “catalogue,” “database”; how to cite archival materials; and other research concepts and practicalities.
3:30-4pm Discussion with Prof. Anne Fields, OSU Libraries. Prof. Fields will discuss the librarians’ role in our research enterprise this term, the library research prize, and other important issues for our work going forward.
4pm-5pm: discussion of reading assignment for today: finding aid to the Piatt collection (url on p. 2 of this syllabus); finding aid to the ephemera in the Tarver collection (url on p. 2 of this syllabus); Dr. Tarver’s Excel spreadsheet of his collection (url on p. 2 of this syllabus). Come with at least four concrete questions about the practicalities of working with these lists. You will only be able to develop these questions after you have looked at the finding aids. Any researcher faces this task; that is, you read exhaustive lists of these kinds and have to figure out which particular materials to look at. How does one proceed? Think about the research detective’s predicament and practical courses of action, and come to class ready to discuss how to get started. You are looking at the Tarver and Piatt finding aids in depth, but I also want you to skim the url’s for all the other collections I listed under “Other Subsidiary Collections” on pp. 3-4 of this syllabus. We will discuss the practicalities, challenges, opportunities in these tools.

3. M, 1.21. OSU CLOSED.

4. M, 1.28 Poetry, “the genteel” and postbellum poetic culture
You can find all assigned Piatt poems in the Bennett edition, although I have listed them on the syllabus with their original publication dates and venues.
Piatt poems: “The Palace-Burner” (The Independent 1872); “The Funeral of a Doll” (The Capital 1872); “No Help” (That New World 1877); “The Old Slave-Music” (The Capital 1873); “Mock Diamonds” (The Capital, 1872); “An Irish Fairy Story” (The Manhattan, 1874). I will assign different students to focus on different individual poems, although all of us will read all the poems assigned.

5. M, 2.4 Reading Piatt in historical context; writing bibliographies; thinking about research questions
I will announce additional poems based on how our discussion on 1/28 progresses. We will also discuss the sample descriptive bibliography entries at the end of syllabus, as models for your upcoming bibliography assignments.

Also read: Elizabeth Renker, “Poets in the Iron-Mills,” American Literary History 20.3 (2008): 521-529 (JSTOR) and Coleman Hutchison and Elizabeth Renker, “Popular Poetry in Circulation,” The Oxford History of Popular Print Culture (Oxford, 2012) 395-413 (Carmen). Both are short, concrete practical examples of research essays in our area of scholarly endeavor, and since I wrote the first and half of the second, I can talk to you about the very practical elements of research and writing them.

6. M, 2.11 Primary Materials Week I/The Piatt Collection
We will spend this class at RBMS (NOT in our usual classroom), working with primary materials in the Piatt Collection. I will be present to guide your individual and group pursuits. There is no assigned secondary reading this week, so you are also required to spend at least five-and-a-half hours beyond our regular class time working in the Piatt Collection. Make sure to sign the RBMS attendance sheet for our class, kept at the front desk. Your first descriptive bibliography is due by Mon. 2.18 at 9am in the Carmen dropbox. You should be taking notes toward your final paper the entire term, week by week. Your bibliographies are one research element toward the final.

7. M, 2.18 Postbellum rhetorical culture
Reading: Nan Johnson, “‘Dear Millie’: Letter Writing and Gender in Postbellum America,” in Gender and Rhetorical Space in American Life; (77-108; Carmen) Angela Sorby, “Schoolroom Poets: Childhood, Performance, and the Place of American Poetry, 1865-1917, 1-14 (Carmen). I will assign additional reading, including poems, based on how the class research is developing.

8. M, 2.25 Postbellum rhetorical culture
Nancy Glazener, “The Practice and Promotion of American Literary Realism” (Carmen); L. Moody Simms, Jr., “An Episode in the Realism War,” American Literary Realism, 1870-1910 13.1 (1980): 41-60 (JSTOR). Simms uses research in periodicals from 1894-1895 to build an argument, just as you are using primary sources to build an argument. Everyone should read his summary on 41-42, the first part of this article. He then reprints three of the essays he found in the periodicals, by Thayer, Boyeson, and Mabie. If your last name begins with A-F, read the Thayer; with K-M, read the Boyeson; with N-Z, read the Mabie. We will compare notes about these individual essays in class as examples of discourse from the mid-1890s, discussing the kinds of cultural evidence they constitute.

9. M, 3.4: Primary Materials Week II/The Tarver Collection
Class meets at RBMS (105 Thompson). There is no assigned secondary reading this week, so you are also required to spend at least five-and-a-half hours beyond our regular class time working in the Tarver Collection. Make sure to sign the RBMS attendance sheet for our class, kept at the front desk. Your second descriptive bibliography is due by Fri., 3.8, at 11:59pm, in the Carmen dropbox. You should be taking notes toward your final paper the entire term, week by week. Your bibliographies are one research element toward the final.

SPRING BREAK, 11-15 MARCH
10. **M, 3.18 Primary Materials Week III/all collections**  
Order your materials in advance from any RBMS collection. Since this is the first day after break, remember to have given RBMS two advance business days with your order. I will be present in class to consult with you about your materials. Class meets at RBMS (105 Thompson)  
There is no assigned secondary reading this week, so you are also required to spend **at least five-and-a-half hours beyond our regular class time** working at RBMS this week. **Ten-page draft toward final paper due no later than Fri., 3.22 by 11:59pm in the Carmen dropbox** (20%).  
It will likely take me about two weeks to get through this many papers of this length. You should continue with your research and writing while I am critiquing your draft.

11. **M, 3.25 Meet at RBMS.** Independent research. I will be available for conferences in a quiet spot in the Reading Room.

12. **M, 4.1 Class discussion about status of projects.** Meet in our regular classroom, **DE 250.** Everyone presents an oral abstract to the class (nothing to be handed in) about the current state of final projects, presenting current findings, soliciting feedback on questions that remain, and describing challenges with composing the final paper. Abstracts should summarize the kinds of primary and secondary sources you are using and the argument toward which you are putting them.

13. **M, 4.8 Additional group reading and/or independent research time, depending on how things have been going for everybody (tba once I see where things stand by this point).**

14. **M, 4.15 Meet in RBMS Reading Room.** I will be present there for consultation.

15. **M, 4.22 Individual conferences in my office.** Schedule appointments in advance.

**Final papers are due on Fri., April 26 by 5:45pm in the Carmen dropbox.**