Presentation

TITLE SLIDE

INTRO SLIDE
Who we are
- Quick personal introductions
  - Laura is head of instruction and outreach for special collections and university archives. In addition to overseeing the general primary source instruction classes, I oversee exhibiting in the library, website maintenance and development, guide maintenance and development, and event coordination. Over the past 5 years, I worked with graduate students from the UMD library school who have significantly contributed to our instruction program.
  - Cecelia was the GA for Instruction and Outreach for the last two years, teaching information literacy and working with Laura to develop new lesson plans

OVERVIEW SLIDE
Presentation Outline Slide
- Conversations about racism and bias
- Past lesson plans, successes, challenges
- Group work
- Potential for Service Learning

INSTRUCTION SLIDE
What we do
- In general, we provide one-shot instruction sessions. Usually we are asked to introduce students to the archival research or show them cool stuff. Our teaching philosophy is generally to teach them broad techniques or theory so that they can apply their skills at any special collections. In addition to all the online resources that are available to researchers, UMD is located within relatively easy access of Library of Congress, National Archives, and many historical societies. This means students have access to historical primary sources from numerous places. We also value building students critical thinking skills and attempt to engage them in discussions that break down the surrounding context of a particular object in order to better understand it.

NEW SECTION SLIDE
Why talk about bias?
- Why were we so eager to jump into these conversations in the classroom?
- These types of conversations are often difficult for participants, especially in situations where people are coming from various backgrounds and have a variety of political or social leanings.
When we started thinking about this, we America was in the midst of the Black Lives Matter movement (and countermovements). Americans seemed more and more willing to engage in these conversations and seemed to be building better social awareness and improving our ability to have these conversations.

- We saw new classes being offered on campus that were focused on exploring issues of diversity, difference, identity.
- One class in particular sparked a fire in us. This class was a communications class focusing on the Rhetoric of Black America

COMM 360 Class
- Describe course (edited from syllabus)
  - This course is a survey of Black and African American rhetoric from the colonial era to the present...focus on primary texts written by black and African Americans...we will also engage music, art, and film as rhetorical strategies...to facilitate informed, empathetic, and challenging discussions about this material.
- Many semesters ago, when we taught the first class for the first time, we had provided a very traditional session, focusing on developing students archival research methods and document analysis skills. The course instructor was an active participant and when it was clear students were ready, she started getting them to discuss issues of racism and bias as they related to the types of collections they would be interested in studying. She asked them where these collections came from, who created them, how they come to be in an archive, and how racism and bias affect each part of that process. She was a great instructor and this was a particularly fantastic group of students, and the discussion she led in this setting was really exciting to witness.
  - This really inspired us to expand our thinking about what we were doing with this course and if it might be more appropriate for us to steer the conversation toward discussions of racism and bias, especially as that was a central theme for this particular class.

CHANGE SLIDE
How did things change?
- We realized that many other classes we interacted with also identified course goals as engaging in critical thinking about racism and bias, and maybe inclusion of these conversations should not be limited to this particular rhetoric class.
- We began experimenting with how and when to include these discussions into our lesson plans

POLL EVERYWHERE SLIDES (3)
- Mirroring what the Communications instructor lead her students through, we developed a series of discussion questions around the following questions
  - How objects that archives might collect are created and how racism and bias affect the types of objects that are created, especially by minority or underserved populations
- How the resulting objects are valued and after creation, how they are cared for
- Why are or aren't they cared for
- Who gets to decide
- What happens when those objects disappear
- How are archivists and librarians and therefore resulting collections shaped by bias
- Which objects are valued in this setting as worthy of collection and appropriate representations of history

COMMUNICATION SLIDE
- Two types of classes
  - Those concerned with examining objects and analyzing the social constructs especially as they related to racism and bias
  - Those where students learned archival research methods and analysis and interpretation, but weren’t especially focused on themes of racism or bias
- Ended up with two different models
  - COMM - whose stories are left out, why?
  - HIST - staged your questions a bit better, leading them to these same answers, but with more questions

- Class Structure (general)
  - Overview of archives
  - Document analysis
  - Discussion about what we learned about community from the documents
  - Discussions of race and bias

CHALLENGE SLIDE
Successes and Challenges
- Challenges
  - Limited by one-shot session (only 50 min with students)
    - At times, we might have been trying to do too much with the students given our time
      - Trying to introduce archival research methods, and conversations of bias and document analysis
  - Most students had no prior experience with archives, special collections or historical primary sources
  - Some students were not eager to have conversations about racism and bias
    - It was clear certain groups were uncomfortable or didn’t have the background - we were jumping into too deep too quickly
    - We learned to have much more broad conversations that weren’t so heated, complicated and touchy
    - Involving the course instructor in these conversations makes it easier, they have built rapport with the students and can use the specific language they have been using in class to address these issues,
conversations about bias might look different in rhetoric vs. american studies vs. history classes
- Sometimes, students weren’t required to use primary sources for research, so teaching them our traditional research methods class was not especially useful
- Unknown if the course will continue to be taught or course instructors changes frequently and relationships with instructors cannot continue to build
  - We are often working with PhD students as opposed to tenured faculty

SUCCESS SLIDE
- Successes
  - Have developed our lesson plan over time
    - Each semester we assess how things went and make changes
    - Understand that each class needs to be adapted to the specific learning outcomes of the course; and whether the students have an archival research project
    - Understand that we need help from the course instructors to guide the conversation, especially in disciplines we aren’t well versed in (such as rhetorical analysis)
  - Students were able to spend time examining and interpreting primary sources
  - Students were able to describe who, when, why, how objects were created
  - Instructor really enjoyed bringing students to archives and felt their exposure to what we have and what we do is really important

TOUR SLIDES (2)
- Since Cecelia graduated, I was able to continue this development, and a colleague and I have created a framework for a class that successfully introduces archives through conversations about representation by examining a large organization’s archival collection and contrasting that with a small community archive
  - Touring our AFL-CIO exhibit
  - Using the Filipino archival collection
    - The Rita M. Cacas Filipino American Community Archives documents Filipino American communities in the Washington, D.C., metro area (including Maryland and Northern Virginia) and in the state of Maryland more broadly. The collection also documents significant historic events related to the transition of United States’ occupation of the Philippines (1898-1946) to the country’s independence, including Filipino military and government service under the United States in the two World Wars. The collection includes evidence and documentation of historic special events such as dances, celebrations and receptions, and social/professional clubs of D.C. area Filipinos.
SECTION SLIDE
American Studies and Service Learning
- AMST offered an opportunity to really expand upon the work we were doing, incorporate these conversations about racism and bias AND focus on archival research methods
- A great relationship
  - The first instructor we were working with taught a number of AMST courses over the course of a few years

AMST COURSE OBJECTIVES SLIDE
- Her courses focused on how we use material culture to understand differences, especially in terms of “American”ness through race, gender, culture, identity, etc.
- All were concerned with understanding how difference is shaped in America
- All incorporated analyzing objects/material culture
  - AMST 212 Diversity in American Culture - This course will focus on the ways that diversity in the United States of America has been socially constructed.
  - 205 Material Aspects of American Life - This course introduces students to material culture, to theories, questions, and methods of studying objects and things that surround us in everyday life.
  - AMST 101 - this course will introduce students to the Department of American Studies’ three pillars of scholarship: the construction of identity and difference; the cultures of everyday life; and the transnational.

PRIMARY SOURCE INSTRUCTION SESSIONS SLIDE
- We felt that we were able to take some of the course learning outcomes and goals and fit them logically into our existing library session goals

PROJECT DESCRIPTION SLIDE
- Project description - all shared the same final project
  - As the final project students will design and give a presentation of the Langley Park community, using a mix of the four methods we discussed this semester, Archival/ Historical, Material Culture, Media Analysis, and Ethnography. Their use of these methods will also include an intersectional approach. There will be five groups of five students. Students are allowed to use any form of media or technology to present their projects. This can include but is not limited to video, Facebook, Twitter, PowerPoint, Prezi, video or a combination of technologies. Each group be given a topics to examine and the group will be responsible for using the methods above to investigate their individual topics.

MATERIALS SLIDE
Materials from our collection
- Describe Langley Park briefly
- Describe our holdings: maps, urban planning, reports, zoning information, most
government created, most from the 1960s - 1980s
- The Langley Park material was very, very dry and boring
  - The material also reflects the official/bureaucratic systems surrounding the
    community and do not provide a personal reflection of the people who lived in the
    community
  - Very clearly our “collection” is missing that side of the story and those voices
  - We need to do a better job of matching related material, rather than expecting
    students to pour over the material and make connections, especially given the
    time - we can provide prompts to help students zero in on relevant info and make
    those connections between docs
    - For example how does the transit plan from the 70s relate to the report
      produced in the 90s - did the community see the impact that was
      predicted?
    - How does the description of the community appear in

ACTIVITY SLIDES
Activity
- Using what you know about this particular course project what types of service learning
  opportunities can you imagine for a group of undergraduates working in small groups?
- What other potential exists for archives to be involved in service learning opportunities?

SERVICE LEARNING SLIDE
Immediate plan
- The professor I worked with previously is moving on the next phase of her PhD program
  and is no longer teaching this course
- I have reached out to the new professor and hope to continue to build on the progress
  we made in developing our library session
- Hope to include an opportunity for students to be involved in creating community archive

Long term plan
- Build trust with the community
- Develop a routine program where students organize community archiving events by
  working with stakeholders in the community
  - Collect oral histories
  - Plan scanning events (staffed by students and librarians)
  - Invite community members to visit the archives and learn about their community
    history
  - Create pop up museums to share the community history in their community

Identifying stakeholders
- As these classes are mainly taught by graduate students or adjunct faculty, it would be
  good to develop a relationship with permanent, tenured faculty in the department
- Expand to other disciplines
- Librarians in the community
- Leaders in the community

Building a community archive
- Can a University Library successfully build a community archive?
- Can that archive only be created by the community itself?
- What is our role as librarians?
- Can we build something small, even if it isn’t a true community archive?

SERVICE LEARNING AND OUR GOALS SLIDE