About the Archives

Awardees will develop independent research projects that draw upon resources found in the University Library System’s archives. The ULS is proud to have special collections and archives housed in the Archives Service Center (ASC), Center for American Music (CAM), Fine Arts Library (FA), The Theodore M. Finney Music Library and Hillman Library’s Special Collections Department (SC). These units work collaboratively to make their collections available and easily accessible to undergraduates. Below are examples of potential areas of research; however, this is not a comprehensive list and students are encouraged to inquire about other collections that might align with their interests.

1. **Special Collections Department**: The Special Collections Department is the designation for rare books, literary manuscripts, and special collections which belong to the University of Pittsburgh and has strong collections in American colonialism and westward expansion, American schoolbooks, children’s literature, history of books and printing, philosophy of science, and theatre and the performing arts.

   Students interested in research about childhood studies or the history of children and their books could utilize materials from the Elizabeth Nesbitt Collection to study various aspects of how literature and media were produced for children reflecting important social, cultural, religious, political, educational, and technological developments from the 18th century to the present.

   Undergraduates interested in Gender, Sexuality, and Women’s studies could study the magazines, publications, periodicals, and ephemera that document the legacy of civil rights advocacy, women’s and LGBT history, culture, politics, community relations, and public health. Students would assist in the creation of specific library Web pages based on materials in the Special Collections and inspired by classes that have visited the Department.

   Students interested in research on history, Pittsburgh history, theatre, or the performing arts could utilize materials from the Ford E. and Harriet R. Curtis Theatre Collection to study history and development of theatre in Pittsburgh, western Pennsylvania, and across the United States from the 19th century to the present, as well as the social, economic, technological, and cultural events that have shaped and influenced theatre.

2. **Archives Service Center**: The Archives Service Center (ASC) is the repository for manuscript and record collections that documents the history of Pittsburgh and the Western Pennsylvania region, including the University of Pittsburgh. Students interested in research on childhood during the late 19th and early 20th century could utilize several collections related to the settlement house movement to study various aspects of how children were taught and their potential impact on views related to subjects such as Americanization, gender roles, and home-life.

   Undergraduates interested in 20th century political environments in the United States could utilize collections related to political figures, political movements, the labor movement and government records to study various aspects of political connections and influences. Many of the political collections held by the ASC contain a wealth
of documentation that is valuable to researchers from around the world who are interested in studying the transformation of the Pittsburgh region from its industrial base to an “Eds and Meds” economy, the emergence of environmental activism in response to industrial pollution, women’s role in the political sphere, and the early formation of public – private partnerships that were forged in the Pittsburgh region.

3. **Center for American Music**: The Center for American Music's Foster Hall Collection reflects a broad cross-section of American popular culture, especially from the 1840s to the 1930s. In addition to containing one of the most significant collections of 19th-century American music, the Center for American Music is also the principal repository for materials concerning the life and music of Stephen Collins Foster, a Pittsburgh native who was America’s first professional songwriter.

   Students interested in 19th century American theater and minstrelsy could study original photographs of 19th century performers, posters advertising their shows, souvenir songsters sold of troupe repertoire, sheet music covers depicting the troupes, and texts describing the performance contents.

   Students interested in 19th and early 20th century periodicals could research the extensive collection of clippings of Foster related news items in the collection and help to determine which articles are available in digital databases.

   Students interested in the history of recorded sound could work with the collections extensive collection of 78 rpm discs to determine the significance of the collection and research which of them have been commercially released in digital format.

   Students interested in Foster's role in popular culture could analyze the collections growing subset of Fosteriana, a variety of materials depicting Foster and his songs, and help create metadata to facilitate the cataloguing of this collection. They could also help research and identify other Foster related product that are not held by the collection.

   Students interested in the music industry in the 19th century could analyze the business records kept by Foster’s brother after his death, including his royalty statements and posthumous license agreements, as well as examining 19th century publications for the ways in which music was being marketed to the general public.

4. **Frick Fine Arts Library**: The art and architectural history collection was begun in 1927 along with the founding of what is now known as the Department of the History of Art and Architecture. The collection once focused on the history of medieval and renaissance art and architecture since that was the focus of the Department’s curriculum and research. As the faculty and course offerings shifted to a focus on global modern and contemporary art and architecture, the collection has grown in these areas. It is a rich collection covering many time periods in several languages.

   Students interested in concepts such as visual knowledge, agency, identity, mobility/exchange, environment, and contemporaneity, as represented in the Department of the History of Art and Architecture curriculum, will find numerous exhibition catalogs of interest in the Frick Fine Arts Library. Working across collections to put these exhibitions into larger context could provide students with an opportunity to consider individual research as well as to describe connections among disparate collections.

   Students interested in the role that Artist Books have played in contemporary art would benefit from studying the artist book collection at the Frick Fine Arts Library. Students will work with the librarian to enhance the metadata
for the artist books. Enhanced metadata would allow students and faculty to search for particular themes, imagery, methods of construction, and materials, enabling them to develop different types of research questions.

Students interested in the relationship between text and image could study Pitt’s collection of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean hand scroll facsimiles. Students would work with Librarians as well as the curator of the University Art Gallery to collect metadata, to more fully describe the scrolls so as to enable more effective discovery of these materials.

Students interested in visual materials may want to consider working with several different collections, since visually-rich materials exist in many ULS collections.

5. **The Theodore M. Finney Music Library**: The Music Library contains a music research collection as well as several collections of important musical materials. Collections include: Early American hymnals and tune-books, volumes of sheet music with regional significance, and seventeenth and eighteenth century prints of English sacred and secular works. The library holds a number of important archival collections that focus on silent film music (the Mirskey Collection), jazz (The Johnny Masters Collection, and ethnic singing societies (Polish Singers Alliance of America Collection. Recorded sound and visual materials enhance the study of music at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Students interested in research on silent film music could utilize materials from the Mirskey Collection to study various aspects of how music was used to create soundtracks for early films. Students would assist with searching databases to see if the title has already been cataloged and adjust the cataloging records to reflect the local practice for metadata.

Students interested in research on regional jazz performance could utilize materials from the Johnny Masters Collection to study various aspects of how this jazz group utilized the sheet music in the collection. Students would enhance the finding aid for the collection and assist with searching databases to see if the title has been cataloged and adjust the cataloging records to reflect local practice for metadata.

Students interested in recorded sound on vinyl long-playing records could assist in the processing of gift recordings that focus mainly on classical Western art music by 19th and 20th-century Russian, French, and German composers, as well as earlier music from the medieval and baroque eras. Processing would involve searching databases to see if the title has already been cataloged and adjust the cataloging records to reflect local practice for metadata.

### Information Sessions

Undergraduates interested in developing a research project that draws on one of these collections should attend any one of the information sessions listed below. During the information sessions, undergraduates can discuss ideas with Dietrich School faculty, representatives from the Office of Undergraduate Research, and librarians. All sessions take place from 4:00—6:00 p.m. in the Digital Scholarship Commons space located in G-49 Hillman Library. Interested undergraduates can also schedule one-on-one consultations with librarians, faculty, or OUR representatives by writing [our@as.pitt.edu](mailto:our@as.pitt.edu).

**Dates:** October 4, October 5