First Scenario

• Large classes of underclassmen
• Many have no previous exposure to Special Collections
• Students herded into research room and talked at for 50 minutes; some fall asleep
• Shown a pile of photocopied manuscripts, which they scan or capture on their phones
Let's Try Something Else...

Second Scenario
Taking the Plunge: Students in the Stacks

Third Scenario
The Ups and Downs of Archival Interns
The Embedded Archivist, An Instruction Model

The “embedded archivist” teaching model is a strategy for direct and repeated course intervention.

Intended to support research assignment objectives as well as larger class learning goals, this model allows students deeper engagement with archival materials and concepts over a longer span of time.

“Embedded archivists have the potential to greatly enhance the learning and success of undergraduate students. In the archives, context is critical. As educators, archivists should teach archival research within the context of the overall research process.”

Taking (Baby) Steps Towards an Embedded Archivist Model

Milestones to Consider:

- Syllabus integration -- “Almost Embedded” Archivist
- Assignment (re)Design -- “Somewhat Embedded” Archivist
- Classroom Co-teaching -- “Fully Embedded” Archivist

Rachel’s Tips and Tricks:

1. Build strong relationships with instructors
2. Look for value-added learning opportunities by allowing for deeper and ongoing engagement with archival materials (e.g.: scaffolded assignments)
3. Share in the curricula goals and actively contribute to their achievement. In other words, become an integral and indispensable member of the class.
Almost Embedded

Simple Syllabus Integration

The time in the archives and the interaction with the archivist is clearly articulated in the course schedule and syllabus as critical to the course

Class learning goals and hands-on activities are incorporated into the archives experience

Preparation required from students before class so they come ready to engage

Get involved with post-visit assignments so that you can ensure ongoing interactions and learning
Somewhat Embedded

Assignment (re)Design

The archives experience is part of a larger, meaningful, and well-articulated assignment that you (the archivist) have a hand in designing.

The best assignments allow for discipline-specific analysis, connection with materials, and the development of research skills.

Give students the ability to not just be information consumers but also information creators/authors; make it public!
Fully Embedded

Co-Teaching

This is a full and ongoing partnership with the course and the professor of record.

Co-teaching has many facets including shared syllabus design, lesson planning, split or “tag-team” instruction time, and shared evaluation/grading of student products.

As a co-instructor you are fully integrated over the course of the semester; you get to know each student as an individual and observe their growth as researchers and scholars.
Embedded Archivist - Lessons in Partnership

Opportunities

- More involvement in student learning outcomes
- More time to expose students to the nuances in practice and archival theory
- More time for students to explore collections and concepts
- Students teach us about what they see and what our collections contain
- Faculty understand our collections can be used for more than just “show and tell” or personal research.
- Realizing the “Primary Source Lab” idea
Embedded Archivist - Lessons in Partnership

Challenges

● Communication
● Communication
● Communication
● Timing
● Managing hands on group work with an “external” partner
● Providing appropriate input & feedback
● Knowing when to step back
A Course of One’s Own

Being the “instructor of record” provides opportunities to design all aspects of a course - the goals, the timeline, the activities - and then put them into play.

In-person courses allow for “hands-on” engagement and learning opportunities. Online modules could also be designed and used to supplement and enhance understanding.
A Course of One’s Own

Challenges

● Making time
● Designing a progressive path that leads through to specific learning objectives
● Filling time in a meaningful way (my class was 3 hours on Thursday night!)
● Grading
● Balancing and addressing student needs throughout the semester
● Managing (large and small) group hands-on activities
# A Course of One’s Own

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>For Students</th>
<th>For Special Collections and Archives</th>
<th>For me (archivist-instructor)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>For Students</strong></td>
<td>Exposure to professional, working archivists</td>
<td>New audience and potential researchers</td>
<td>Opportunity to exercise my teaching skills and return to a teaching framework</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interaction with archival and historical materials</td>
<td>Professional development opportunities for everyone - possibility for presentations and discussion panels</td>
<td>Revisiting archival literature and theory with “fresh” eyes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exposure to new resources and research skills</td>
<td>Lesser known and/or used collections surfaced</td>
<td>Space and time to think about current issues and design problem solving activities that can be tested and trialed</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New problem solving frameworks, critical thinking</td>
<td>New eyes on “old” problems - arrangement &amp; description, preservation, access issues</td>
<td>Learning from students and impressive colleagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Promotes access generally</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
This class also showed me the wealth of knowledge a box of files could hold and I was able to carry this newfound perspective of archives to my other research based classes.

Going into this class I thought, "yeah, archives are cool, it's a room full of paper," but it is so much more than that. Having the hands-on experience with the materials helped solidify the amount of effort that is put into the archive and thinking like an archivist made me appreciate all the time and effort that goes into the archive. Archivists are the heroes of the archive...

I think that this class has given me new insight into the diverse ways that archival practices interact with other aspects of life. ... I think that archives are important, not just as a matter of historical curiosity but as an issue of societal accountability.

This class has given me a whole new understanding of archival work and I have even more respect for archivists now. Archival work is about much more than just storage or record keeping.

**In their own words**......
Teaching Take-aways

- Take **baby steps** to try out some “embedded” teaching strategies
- Be clear on your **role**, the instructor’s, and the course/assignment objectives
- Consider and ready yourself for the additional **time and commitment**
- Think **pedagogically** about your approaches, their timing, and their rigor; for example, consider multi-step, scaffolded assignments that allow meaningful interactions with materials on multiple occasions
- When co-teaching, be **flexible and open**; communicate clearly and often
- Be **student-focused** always; remember, it’s about the students’ experiences and their success (not yours!)
- In terms of **preparation**, sometimes less is more; be willing to meet students where they are in their learning and research, and deviate as needed from the schedule