

**Title of Project:** Searching for and Finding Women and Religion (PAR 225)

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**Please Describe Your Project:**

This Information Literacy (IL) Project was written for PAR 225: Women and Religion. The project will be implemented in an online version of the class in Fall 2019 and modified for on-campus sections of the class in Spring 2020.

PAR 225 is a religious studies course that examines women's religious practices and the construction of gender, power, and agency in American history from the 1600s to 2000s.

PAR 225 satisfies the following requirements:

- Satisfies University Studies II: Approaches and Perspectives/Living in Our Diverse Nation;
- Partially satisfies University Studies II: Approaches and Perspectives/Historical and Philosophical Approaches;
- Partially satisfies University Studies IV: Building Competencies/Information Literacy;
- Satisfies a Core Course in the Women and Gender Studies Minor;
- Satisfies an Elective Course for PAR majors and minors with an emphasis in Religion.

This IL Project introduces students to primary research, the importance of primary research in the field of women and religion, and how to find, analyze and evaluate primary sources about women and religion. This project is concentrated on reframing the common misconceptions (among historians and students) that women have not been significant actors in American religious history and that women are rarely, if ever, found in primary sources pertaining to American religious history. To these ends, the IL Project contains five components (interspersed with other course readings and assignments) that build over the course of the semester and focus on primary research and primary source evaluation.

**Component 1: Searching for Women in American Religious History**

In Module 2, students will read Catherine Brekus's essay "Searching for Women in Narratives of American Religious History" in *The Religious History of American Women* (UNC Press, 2007). The essay examines major works in religious studies for what they

present about women as actors in history and how women are included in the historical narrative through primary sources. Brekus asks students to consider how historical narratives (secondary sources) are formed from the primary sources used and not used. She argues that one reason women do not appear important to American religion and American history is because historians have left women out of the narrative. By including women as primary sources in historical narratives, we can understand how women have been central to American religion and American history. The sources historians use (or do not use) influence the historical narratives they write. After reading this essay, students will watch a lecture and answer a discussion question about the reading.

- Discussion Question: According to Catherine Brekus's essay "Searching for Women in Narratives of American Religious History," women have been left out of American religious history. Explain one way that women have been left out of American religious history and how you think scholars might reincorporate women into this history.

### Component 2: How to Define, Find, and Cite Women and Religion Sources

Module 3 builds on the previous module by suggesting that scholars can reincorporate women into American religious history by finding and analyzing primary sources about women and religion.

This module provides videos from Randall Library's website that guide students in defining, finding, and citing primary sources.

Students will complete the following exercises in this module:

- Watch: "How to Incorporate Women into American Religious History Through Primary Research"
- Watch: "What is a Primary Source?" - <https://www.screencast.com/t/38FFLTsinHE>
- Watch: "Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Sources" - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L5DdedR\\_iF8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L5DdedR_iF8)
- Complete Quiz: Defining Primary and Secondary Sources
  
- Watch: "Finding Historical Primary Sources on the Open Web" - <https://www.screencast.com/t/EpVIFI1jFJuf>
- Watch: "Finding Historical Primary Sources in the Library Catalog & Databases" - <https://www.screencast.com/t/o4h2YNKj>
- Read: List of UNCW Primary Source Databases for PAR 225 (module page and course page for students to review; also on the syllabus; see below)
- Complete Assignment: Finding Primary Sources about Women and Religion:

This assignment asks students to apply what they learned from the videos and from the reading in Module 2 by finding one primary source about women and religion

from the web and one primary source about women and religion from the Library Catalog and Databases. The sources can be from any era in American history as long as it relates to some topic about women and religion from the Catherine Brekus reading. Students will post their sources as attachments, PDFs, or images on the Canvas assignment page.

The assignments also require students to read and answer questions about the primary sources, including:

1. Who is the author of the source?
  2. What is the title of the source?
  3. What kind of source is it? A book, newspaper, something else?
  4. Where did the source originally appear in terms of location?
  5. What is the source about?
  6. What does the source argue?
  7. Who is the audience of the source?
  8. What is the purpose of the source?
- Watch: “Citation: A (Very) Brief Introduction”
  - Watch: “Why and How to Cite Material in This Course”
  - Complete: Citation Quiz
  - Complete Assignment: Cite the Primary Sources you Found in Chicago as notes.

This assignment asks students to apply what they learned about citations by citing the two sources they found about women and religion. The sources must be cited in Chicago as notes. Students will be given this resource on the assignment page and it will be explained in the video “Why and How to Cite Material in This Course”:

- a. Chicago Citation Guide:  
[https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html](https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html)

Note: The syllabus includes the following information on primary sources and Randall Library’s primary source databases. This information will be explained in the module components about how to find primary sources above.

### **What is a primary source?**

Primary sources are historical documents that were made or produced in the era you are studying. For example, a primary source from the 1820s would be a magazine article written in the 1820s. Primary sources are often written documents, like letters, newspaper articles, or magazine articles. Primary sources can also be images, drawings, needlework, films, videos, objects, or any other kinds of media that were produced in the era you are studying.

## **Where can I find primary sources?**

Finding a primary resource will take more than one minute. Sometimes, you will need to read through a couple of primary resources to make sure you pick one that is about women and religion. Do not get frustrated. Research takes time. Researching means re-searching or searching over and over again using different key terms and filters.

The best places to search for primary sources are UNCW's primary resource databases listed below. Click on the blue links to go to the database. You can also search the web using specific search terms. Go nuts. Find something cool!

### **[American Antiquarian Society \(AAS\) Historical Periodicals Collection](#)**

The American Antiquarian Society (AAS) is the source for the premier library documenting the life of America's people from the Colonial Era through the Civil War and Reconstruction, giving digital access to the most comprehensive collection of American periodicals published between 1684 and 1912. The historical periodicals collection contains digitized images of the pages of American magazines and journals and provides rich content detailing American history and culture, including advertising, health, women's issues, science, the history of slavery, industry and professions, religious issues, culture and the arts, and more.

### **[American Civil Liberties \(ACLU\) Papers](#)**

Drawing from the records of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), it focuses on civil rights, race, gender, and issues relating to the U.S. Supreme Court. The American Civil Liberties Union has throughout its history consistently stood at the center of controversies involving the rights of Americans. Its records offer researchers a unique view of the inner workings of the organization and the hundreds of groups with which the ACLU interacted.

### **[American Periodicals](#)**

Contains periodicals published between 1740 and 1940, including special interest and general magazines, literary and professional journals, children's and women's magazines and many other historically-significant periodicals. It includes American Periodicals Series and American Periodicals from the Center for Research Libraries.

### **[Archives of Sexuality and Gender](#)**

Includes gay and lesbian newspapers from more than 35 countries, reports, policy statements, and other documents related to gay rights and health, including the worldwide impact of AIDS, materials tracing LGBTQ activism in Britain from 1950 through 1980, and more. Historical records of political and social organizations founded by LGBTQ individuals are featured, as well as publications by and for lesbians and gays,

and extensive coverage of governmental responses to the AIDS crisis. The archive also contains personal correspondence and interviews with numerous LGBTQ individuals, among others.

### [GenderWatch](#)

GenderWatch is a repository of important historical perspectives on the evolution of the women's movement, men's studies, the transgender community and the changes in gender roles over the years. Publications include scholarly journals, magazines, newspapers, newsletters, regional publications, books and NGO, government and special reports.

### [History Vault](#)

Researchers can access digitized letters, papers, photographs, scrapbooks, financial records, diaries, and many more primary source materials taken from the University Publications of America (UPA) Collections. Our collections include Civil Rights and the Black Freedom Struggle, Southern Life and Slavery, American Politics and Society, Workers and Labor Unions, American Indians and the American West, and Women's Studies.

### [Nineteenth Century Collections Online \(NCCO\)](#)

Primary source collections of the "long" nineteenth century. Content includes monographs, newspapers, pamphlets, manuscripts, ephemera, maps, statistics, and more. Topics include Asia and the West, British Politics and Society, British Theatre, Music and Literature, Children's Literature, Europe and Africa, Mapping the World, Photography, Science, Technology and Medicine and Women.

### [North American Women's Letters and Diaries](#)

Full text of letters and diaries. The collection includes bibliographies of women's diaries and letters yet published. It lists over 7,000 published and unpublished items from a variety of sources.

### [Women and Social Movements in the United States - Scholar's Edition](#)

Brings together primary documents, books, images, scholarly essays, book reviews, web site reviews, and teaching tools. Documents the multiplicity of women's activism in public life.

### [Women's Magazine Archive](#)

An archival research resource comprising the full backfiles of leading women's interest consumer magazines. Titles are scanned from cover to cover in high-resolution color and feature detailed article-level indexing. Coverage ranges from the late-19th century

through to 2005 and these key primary sources permit the examination of the events, trends, and attitudes of this period. Among the research fields served by this material are gender studies, social history, economics/marketing, media, fashion, politics, and popular culture.

### [Women's Studies](#)

Features collections from the Schlesinger Library, Margaret Sanger Papers, and records of National Woman's Party, Women's Action Alliance. Part of the [History Vault database](#).

### Component 3: How Authority is Constructed, Contextual, and Gendered in Primary Sources

In Module 4, students will be introduced to a recurring topic in the course variously called “the woman’s sphere,” “the woman question,” and “the separate spheres.” This topic informed the women’s rights movement from the 1820s to today.

At one end of the spectrum, proponents of the woman’s sphere used the Bible to argue that women should work at home and men should work outside the home. There were, however, many different interpretations of the woman’s sphere and what it meant. These interpretations varied from person to person based on one’s gender, social location, perceived professional authority, and how one interpreted the Bible.

Students will read:

- Sarah Josepha Hale, “The Ladies Mentor,” *Godey’s Lady’s Book* (1830s).
- George Washington Burnap, excerpt from *Lectures on the Spheres and Duties of Woman* (1840s.)

After reading the two primary sources about the woman’s sphere, students will listen to a lecture about the sources and fill-out a comparison chart provided on Canvas. The chart will ask students the following questions about the sources from the reading and lecture:

1. Who wrote the source and when?
2. What kind of source is the primary source?
3. What can you gather about the social location of the author in terms of gender, race, profession, and socio-economic status?
4. What is the primary source about?
5. What is the argument of the primary source?
6. Is the primary source in conversation with another source, author, or topic?
7. What evidence does the author use to make or support the argument?
8. Why does the author think the evidence used is credible evidence?
9. Why does the author think she / he is an authority on the subject?

After answering these guided questions on their own, students will submit a discussion answer that evaluates the authority of the source. Students will respond to their peers' answers in discussion responses. This assignment is intended to teach students how authority is constructed, contextual, and gendered in primary sources and why acknowledging these constructions matter for our course.

- Discussion Question: According to the primary source readings, who has the authority to define “the woman’s sphere” and why? Why do you think acknowledging different authorities (voice, opinions, power) in primary sources matters for our course?

#### Component 4: Finding Women and Religion Archival Reports

Modules 2, 3 and 4 prepare students to find and evaluate sources about women and religion in short archival reports. Over the course of the semester, students will find three primary sources on their own and write about them in the reports. The following is the archival report assignment description from the course syllabus.

Students will submit three archival reports. The archival reports are meant to teach you how to read and analyze primary sources. For each archival report, you will find and identify a historical primary source that supplements our course material, readings, and themes from that week. The first archival report corresponds to the time and themes of module 5 to 8. The second archival report corresponds to the time and themes of modules 9 to 12. The third archival report corresponds to the time and themes of modules 13 to 16.

The primary source might be an image, a piece of writing, a performance, a sound recording, a film, an object, or something else from the periods we have studied.

The only rules are: 1) the primary source must relate to gender AND religion in some way; and 2) you are NOT permitted to use primary sources from the course syllabus or primary sources we have talked about in the course. Find something on your own to write about.

Think of this assignment as a short history report. Your goal is to find something that provides us with more information about a topic in our course. This is not meant to be an exhaustive research project. It is meant to get you to find a primary source on your own, contextualize it, analyze it, and evaluate it by relating it to larger course themes.

#### **How Should I Write the Archival Reports?**

Each archival report should be between 400 to 450 words long. That is about 1.5 pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point font in Word. Submit archival reports as Word documents.

Your archival report should follow this format in this order:

- **Contextualize the primary source.** Providing context includes identifying the who, what, when, and where associated with the primary source. In other words, describe the author (if possible) and the primary source. This may also include where the source appears, year published, the author, or what the primary source is made of and how big it is, if it is an image, object, or film.
- **Analyze the primary source.** Providing analysis includes describing what the primary source is about / describing what the excerpt argues / explaining the content of the primary source and identifying the movement, era, or people associated with this source.
- **Evaluate the primary source.** Providing evaluation includes making an argument about why the primary source is important to the course, how the theme of this piece relates to other themes we have studied in this course, how the source expands on or argues against something we have studied and why, explaining why this source fits or does not fit with what we have been studying and why. The evaluation must make a connection to the course in some way. Make a connection by directly engaging with and citing other course readings, lectures, and/or discussions.
- **Cite the Primary Source.** Using Chicago to cite the primary source in a note.

Archival Reports will be graded based on 1) Overall Presentation and Citation (spelling, grammar, length, and citation style); 2) Context; 3) Analysis; 4) Evaluation(s); and 5) Relevance of the Source.

Archival reports should be submitted to Canvas under the appropriate assignment title (i.e. Archival Report 1, Archival Report 2, Archival Report 3).

Provide a copy of the primary source in your report. For example, include the primary source you are writing about as an image, PDF, or other document. **DO NOT** provide URLs. Library database URLs are not permalinks. Download the source and attach it in some way to the assignment.

### Component 5: Evaluating Women and Religion in Primary Sources Final Paper

In the final paper, students will answer a prompt that evaluates what they have learned about women and religion in this course by using primary sources to make an argument. The following is the assignment description from the course syllabus:

**Possible Prompt:** Some historians have argued that the women's rights movement in the United States had nothing to do with religion. Others have argued that the women's



rights movement in the United States was hostile to and opposed religion. Using primary sources from class readings, lectures, and/or archival reports as your evidence, make an argument that analyzes and evaluates how the women's rights movement in the United States was related to religion. Pick a specific era in American history to make your argument or make an argument about how this relationship changed over time. Be creative as you develop your argument and your thesis.

**Length:** The paper should be 1,200 to 1,500 words (about 4 to 6 pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point font). The paper must adhere to the minimum and maximum word limits. For every 100 words below or above the limits, 3 points will be deducted from the final paper grade. Use this assignment to work on concision and precision in your writing. Omit unnecessary words. Make your thoughts clear and direct.

**Paper Genre:** The final paper is a historical essay that answers a prompt. The paper must refer to primary source examples, and when necessary secondary readings, lectures, and themes to make an argument with the primary sources and answer the prompt. Opinions, feelings, and beliefs do not count as evidence for your argument.

**References to Course Material:** The final paper MUST specifically refer to course material (primary readings, secondary readings, lectures, and/or themes) to make and support your argument. This is a requirement, not a suggestion. The final paper will be graded on the quality of your engagement with course material to make and support an argument. The final paper must demonstrate a mastery of course material and concepts. This means the final paper is open note and open book.

**Outside Sources:** Students are not allowed to use outside resources to write this paper other than the primary sources from their archival reports. The final paper is not a research paper. The only sources students should use to write this paper are the course readings, lectures, and/or primary sources from the archival reports.

**Citations:** The final paper MUST include footnotes or endnotes. A footnote or endnote must be included in the paper each time you mention the words of someone else in a quotation or the ideas of someone else in your writing. This includes references to course readings (primary and secondary sources), lectures, and other students' discussion responses. Citations must be included as footnotes or endnotes, not as in-text citations. Use [Chicago-Style](#) citations.

**Structure:** The paper should clearly and creatively answer one of the prompts by engaging with major issues, questions, or problems that you identified in course readings, lectures, and/or discussion. The final paper should have an introduction with a thesis, a body with three or more paragraphs, and a conclusion that reiterates the thesis and explains the significance of your argument.

**Works Cited Page / Bibliography:** A works cited page and bibliography are not required for the final paper, but the paper must have footnotes or endnotes in Chicago.

**Cover Sheet:** A cover sheet is not required for the final paper.

**Grading Rubric:** The final paper will be graded based on: 1) Overall Presentation; 2) Quality of Engagement with Course Material; and 3) Development of a Thesis and Argument. See the Evaluating Women and Religion Final Paper Rubric on Canvas for more details.

### **Project Audience, Category, and Frames:**

This course and IL Project are developed for first-year students, upper-division undergraduates, and distance learners.

This IL Project incorporates various components of the course, including assignments, changes to previous syllabi, teaching plan, and course design.

This IL project incorporates the following frames:

- Authority is Constructed and Contextual
- Information Creation as a Process
- Information Has Value
- Research as Inquiry
- Searching as Strategic Exploration