Davidson Archives and Special Collections
Best Practices for Course Projects

The purpose of this guide is to help faculty design research projects for classes or individual students that will be presented through the Davidson College Archives and Special Collections website or the college’s Institutional Repository.

Types of projects:

- *Davidson Neighborhoods*: The Davidson Neighborhoods project seeks to capture data and writings about neighborhoods, religious institutions, civic organizations, businesses, educational institutions in the Davidson, NC and the Lake Norman area. These can include anthropological, sociological, historical, scientific, environmental aspects, and creative works.
- *Special Collections*: Projects related to items or collections in the Smith Rare Book Room.
- *Digital Studies*: Class or individual work resulting in digital scholarship outside of archives or special collections based work.

Project Design:

Meeting with a member of the Archives and Special Collections staff is recommended in the initial planning stages of a project. While pedagogical purpose and design is the prerogative of faculty, the project design must take into account the following requirements:

1. Student Contracts
2. Documentation & Permissions:
   - IRB
   - Permissions – Oral History – sound and transcripts, document reproduction
   - Data dictionaries
   - Citations: works must include works cited
3. Collaborations: Civic Engagement & Community Partners
4. Submission procedures:
   - Davidson Encyclopedia
   - Wordpress/Omeka/Neatline projects
   - Sound Recordings - transcripts
   - Data files
   - Institutional Repository
1. **Student Contract**: Language to be included in syllabus or assignment description:

The work produced in this assignment is intended to be publicly available through the college’s website and credited to each student by name. Participation in the project implies granting Davidson College non-exclusive perpetual right to distribute your work over the internet and/or make it part of the college’s digital archive for scholarship. All work must meet specific requirements to be accepted for the website: Work must receive a grade of B or higher.

Research works must have appropriate documentation with footnotes or works cited.

Projects using original oral histories must have permission forms signed by interviewer and interviewee. Copies of the sound files and/or transcripts must accompany final projects.

Projects that involve scanned documents or images must have signed permission forms accompanying the scanned materials. Digital copies of permissioned documents must accompany final projects.

Students must sign [Student Work Permission Agreement Form](#).

2. **Documentation & Permissions**:

*IRB* – If projects require [Institutional Review Board oversight](#), the IRB notice of approval must be included.

*Permissions* – If the project involves gathering oral histories or acquiring copies documents or images from interview subjects, the appropriate permission and donation forms (oral history, deed of gift) must be used and accompany the digital files. Archives and Special Collections cannot accept donations of sound or document files without clear property and copyright permissions.

*Data dictionaries* – If the project involved the gathering of statistical data or field research reports, a data dictionary defining all the fields used and a description of the data within the fields must accompany the data.

*Citations* – All works must include footnotes or works cited information. The formatting may vary by project but students are expected to properly document their use of sources. [Examples of citation practices](#) can be found on the Archives and Special Collections website.

3. **Collaborations**

The Center for Civic Engagement has [resources for projects connecting with the local community](#). These include community-based learning courses, assistance with course development, summer institutes, and well-developed relationships with community partners.
4. Submission procedures:

**Davidson Encyclopedia** – Projects intended to be included in the Davidson Encyclopedia require the approval of a member of the Archives and Special Collections staff. Students will be trained in the use of WordPress and granted temporary access as authors to the appropriate WordPress site. Archives and Special Collections staff will review student work before granting permission to publish. All content (embedded images, videos, etc) must reside in a site managed by the archives. They may not be in a student’s private flicker, Instagram, etc account.

**Digital Media: Wordpress/Omeka/Neatline, etc.** – Projects that are intended to be part of the Archives and Special Collections website require approval by a member of the staff. They will be housed within the server space of the college library. NOTE: All content (embedded images, videos, etc.) must reside in a site managed by the archives. They may not be in a student’s private flicker, Instagram, YouTube, etc. account. Archives and Special Collections reserves the right to edit and update projects as appropriate.

**Sound Recordings & Transcripts** – Projects that generate recorded oral histories and transcripts are expected to include those files along with any additional final product. Sound files and word documents or pdfs are to be sent to the archives with accompanying metadata spreadsheet. The metadata will include name of interviewer, name of interviewee, date of interview, class name/ID. Files names should follow this protocol: Class number_Student last name_interviewee last name_semester. Ex: EDU360_Blodgett_Byrd_F14). Archives and Special Collections staff can help with resources for oral histories including tips and life history forms

**Data files** - Collections of data in spreadsheets or csv files must be accompanied by a data dictionary or documentation manual identifying the fields and process of data collection.

**Institutional Repository** - Projects where the final product is a text document rather than digital media can be included in the college's IR as pdfs a similar manner to honors theses and writing award winners. Students will be required to provide an abstract and keywords.