

Transfeminisms in the Archives Project

Important Dates:

- **Monday, 3/4:** QAP Library Workshop during class (Skillman 209)
- **Sunday, 3/31:** Archive Exploration Notes due
- **Sunday, 4/7:** Project Proposal due
- **Friday, 4/26:** First draft of project due
- **Tuesday, 4/30:** Peer-Review Letter and Draft Comments due
- **Wednesday, 5/1:** In-class peer feedback on first drafts
- **Friday, 5/13:** Final draft of project due by 11:59pm via Moodle

Each item should be submitted by 11:59pm via Moodle on the specified date.

Objectives:

- Apply transfeminist concepts, theories, and methods to the analysis of primary sources.
- Explore, navigate, and utilize digital archives effectively.
- Critically engage with oral histories and documents from the Lafayette Queer Archives Project.
- Incorporate feedback from peers and instructor to refine project plan and final product.

Project Description:

Through this project, you will explore the presence of trans and feminist identities and ideas within the Lafayette Queer Archives Project (QAP). Utilizing the tools provided by the [QAP Scalar site](#), you will engage in the practice of “poking and prying with a purpose” invoked in the welcome to the site, surveying a wide variety of materials collected in the QAP and considering their relation to transfeminist questions and concepts. I encourage you to let your own desires and curiosities drive your exploration of the QAP. Your final project should engage substantively and imaginatively with both archival materials and our course texts, but the exact shape of that project is yours to imagine. You might compose an investigative essay that advances an original argument about the presence (or absence) of transfeminist ideas within Lafayette’s history, using course texts as a lens through which to interpret QAP materials. Alternatively, you might opt for a hybrid project that blends analytical and creative modes, such as using concrete details cited from the archive to compose a historical narrative that superimposes questions or insights from course readings onto a richly imagined scene from Lafayette’s past. Whatever final product you choose to create, you will use transfeminist topics and concepts from course readings as orienting points while blazing your own trail through—and perhaps occasionally getting lost in—the rich collection of archival materials present in the QAP.

Assignment Stages:

1. QAP Library Workshop

- On **Monday, March 4**, we will attend a guided session led by Elaine Stomber and Mary Armstrong at the Special Collections & College Archives reading room (Skillman 209) where you will learn to navigate the digital archives of the QAP. You will also have a chance to examine some physical objects included in the collection.
- During this session, you will gain familiarity with the breadth and depth of the archive’s collection and begin considering what kinds of materials you may want to engage with.

2. Archive Exploration and Notes

- After the library workshop, you will begin to explore independently the QAP to locate interviews, documents, and/or artifacts that may be productively read through a transfeminist lens and/or align with themes and concepts discussed in class readings.
- As you explore, please take notes on materials you encounter in the QAP, documenting details that may be relevant for your project and describing potential ways you might engage with those materials in your project.
- **Format:** Archive Exploration Notes may be typed or handwritten. They may be in outline or bullet-point form and need not be organized into paragraphs or formal writing.
- **Length:** No minimum or maximum length for Archive Exploration Notes; I would suggest around 1.5 single-spaced pages in outline format. More importantly, notes should engage substantively with at least three (3) items from the QAP by describing or quoting relevant details and discussing how you might engage with those details in your project.
- **Due Date:** Submit Archive Exploration Notes for a completion grade by **Sunday, 3/31**.

3. Project Proposal

- Using your Archive Exploration Notes, draft a project proposal describing your idea for the project, your chosen archival item(s), the transfeminist themes or concepts you intend to explore, and the course texts you plan to engage.
- As you draft your proposal, keep in mind the variety of options described above under “Project Description.” Consider whether you want to write an academic analysis, an essay that incorporates creative elements, an imagined dialogue, or something else entirely.
- **Format and Length:** One page, single-spaced, 300–500 words.
- **Due Date:** Submit your Project Proposal for a completion grade by **Sunday, 4/7**.

4. First Draft

- After submitting your Project Proposal, you will receive instructor feedback and approval to move forward on drafting your project. At instructor’s discretion, individual consultations may be requested to refine proposals before moving on.
- Once approved, begin drafting your project. You need not adhere rigidly to the ideas discussed in the proposal; it is natural for a project to evolve as you begin writing. If the project begins to deviate radically from the proposal, I would suggest scheduling an instructor meeting to discuss the new direction.
- You will submit for peer review a first draft of your project, which should include an introduction, engagement with archival materials and relevant class readings, and a conclusion. Your draft need not be complete, but it should be coherent and organized.
- **Format and Length:** MLA style, double-spaced. At least 1500 words (~5pp) but up to 3000 (~10pp).
- **Due Date:** Submit your First Draft for a completion grade by **Friday, 4/26**. Instructor will share first drafts with your peer-review partner, who will provide feedback.

5. Peer Review: Draft Comments and Peer-Review Letters

- You will be assigned a peer review partner with whom you will exchange feedback on the first drafts of your projects.
- After receiving your peer review partner's first draft, please read the draft thoroughly and use the "comment" function in Word, Google Docs, Adobe, etc., to provide brief notes, reactions, and questions to the author as you read. Remember to provide both constructive criticism *and* encouragement.
- Once you've read and commented, compose a feedback letter to the author providing your overall assessment of the draft. Try to condense or summarize your draft comments, emphasizing what you think is most important. Include both the strengths of the draft and suggests for further improvements, providing specific examples wherever possible.
- **Format and Length:** Peer-Review Letters should be addressed to the author and about one single-spaced page in length (at 12-point font). Draft comments may be informal notes and should be provided using the comment function in Word or a similar program.
- **Due Date:** Submit Draft Comments and Peer-Review Letters for a completion grade by **Tuesday, 4/30**. Instructor will share these with your peer-review partner and bring printouts to class on Wednesday, 5/1 to discuss.

6. Final Draft

- Revise and finalize your project, incorporating the peer-review feedback you received.
- **Requirements:** See Assessment Criteria below. Note that your final draft should cite and substantively engage with at least five (5) course texts. There is no minimum number of QAP materials you need to cite, but ensure that you engage thoroughly with at least one.
- **Audience:** students, faculty, and staff at Lafayette.
- **Format:** Word document or PDF in [MLA Style](#) (see also "MLA Style Guide" linked from Moodle): header; title; font: Times New Roman, 12-point font; double-spaced; 1-inch margins; Works Cited page; parenthetical citations. [See here](#) for instructions on citing archival materials in MLA style.
- **Length:** 2400–3000 words (~8–10 pages). *See syllabus for paper length policy.*
- **Due Date:** Submit final draft by **Friday, 5/13**.

Assessment Criteria:

The following elements will contribute to the final project grade; items other than the final project will be graded for timely completion and for their adherence to the expectations described above:

- **QAP Exploration Notes:** 10% of total project grade
- **Project Proposal:** 10% of total project grade
- **First Draft:** 20% of total project grade
- **Peer Feedback Letter:** 10% of total project grade
- **Final Project:** 50% of total project grade

The final project will be assessed on a 100-point scale based on the following criteria (see Grading Rubric on next page for details):

- **Application of transfeminist theories:** How effectively does the project apply transfeminist perspectives to analyze archival materials? Does the project cite at least five (5) course texts and engage substantively with the ideas therein? *(25 points)*
- **Interpreting archival materials:** Does the project demonstrate deep engagement with the chosen archival item(s) through a transfeminist lens? *(25 points)*
- **Organization and coherence:** Is the project well-structured and logical? *(15 points)*
- **Purposefulness:** Does the project clearly articulate what it sets out to demonstrate? Are the stakes (“so what?”) of the project clear? How effectively does it achieve its stated purpose? *(15 points)*
- **Clarity of expression:** How effectively does the writing communicate the project’s main ideas to the intended audience (members of the Lafayette community)? *(10 points)*
- **Conventions:** Does the project adhere to the formatting guidelines of MLA style, including citations and works cited page? *(10 points)*

Transfeminisms in the Archives Project Grading Rubric:

	A	B	C	D	Failing
Application of transfeminist theories	Engages with at least five course texts, demonstrating thoughtful and substantive consideration in ways that illuminate new insights in archival materials. (23–25 points)	Engages with at least five course texts, though a few may be discussed only in passing. It may be occasionally unclear what insights course texts provide for archival materials. (20–22 points)	Engages with at least five course texts in passing, or fewer than five texts substantively. Connections between course texts and QAP materials may be surface level or somewhat unclear. (18–19 points)	Engages only perfunctorily with fewer than five course texts. Connections to QAP materials are unclear. (15–17 points)	Does not engage with course texts. (0–14 points)
Interpreting archival materials	Deeply and creatively considers selected item(s) from QAP through a transfeminist lens. Project presents original insights on selected QAP material. (23–25 points)	Meaningfully engages QAP material, though insights may be somewhat obvious. (20–22 points)	Engagement with QAP material is present but mostly surface-level or descriptive with few original insights presented. (18–19 points)	Incorporation of QAP materials is minimal and lacks original interpretation. (0–17 points)	Does not incorporate QAP material. (0–14 points)
Organization and coherence	Ideas seamlessly flow into one another. Introduction lays out a clear roadmap for the paper, transitions between paragraphs guide readers through ideas, and a satisfying conclusion is present. (14–15 points)	Logical organization is apparent. Introduction is present but may lack clear articulation of the paper’s trajectory. Transitions between ideas may be a bit choppy. Conclusion may be perfunctory. (12–13 points)	Ideas are presented with some sense of order, though occasional redundancies may be present and organizing logic is not always clear. Introduction and conclusion may both be perfunctory. (11 points)	Ideas are presented in a disorganized manner without logical connections. Paragraphs feel disjointed. Introduction and conclusion may be minimal or absent. (9–10 points)	No apparent attempt is made to present ideas in a logical order. (0–9 points)
Purposefulness	Author clearly articulates early in the paper why the ideas presented are important and why the reader should care. Content of the paper delivers on this promise. (14–15 points)	An articulation of purpose is present but may oversell the significance of the project or may appear too late in the paper to be impactful. (12–13 points)	A meaningful purpose is present but may be implicit rather than explicitly stated. Alternately, author may claim a purpose that is not fulfilled by the project. (11 points)	Overall purpose of the paper is unclear, but some minor implicit stakes can be identified by the reader. (9–10 points)	No explicit or implicit purpose is present. (0–9 points)
Clarity of expression	Writing is thoughtfully tailored to the intended audience, stylistically elegant, and carefully crafted. (9–10 points)	Writing is accessible to intended audience but may include too little or too much information. Style is effective and ideas are clearly communicated overall. (8 points)	Stylistic choices are sometimes inappropriate to intended audience. Articulation of ideas is occasionally hampered by lack of clarity. (7 points)	Style may occasionally alienate audience. Writing is hard to follow and may contain many proofreading oversights. (6 points)	No consideration for audience or clarity of expression is present. (0–5 points)
Conventions	Conventions of MLA style are followed with few to no deviations, including parenthetical citations and Works Cited page. (9–10 points)	MLA style is mostly followed with a few inconsistencies present. Citations and Works Cited page contain some deviations. (8 points)	Consistent deviations from MLA style are present. Citations are present but Works Cited page may be missing or consistently lacking important or accurate information. (7 points)	Little attention to MLA conventions is present. Citations and Works Cited page may both be haphazard and one or the other is missing. (6 points)	No attention is paid to MLA style. No citations or Works Cited page present. (0–5 points)