Instructor:

Class: English 10600

Due Date:

Purdue Profile Assignment (This assignment can simply be a profile assignment, too.)

For this assignment, you will choose a topic related to Purdue University to profile and research primary source materials from the Purdue Archives and Special Collections (ASC) on your specified topic. Examples of topics: professors, Purdue presidents, departments, buildings, clubs, student life, sports, fraternities, famous or influential alumni, residence halls, Purdue choirs, Purdue bands, train wreck, tank scrap, etc. If you want to choose a professor, alumna or alumnus, or a Purdue president, please choose someone before 1970. Looking at the timelines and information on the ASC website is a wonderful way for you to find a topic, as well. If you are going to focus on a broader topic, I strongly suggest that you narrow it down to a specific time period in order to avoid becoming overwhelmed. Once you choose a topic, you must first search the Archives collections database and e-Archives to make sure there is enough information on your topic to conduct reasonable research in the ASC. Do not forget to search the Oral Histories! There should be at least three archival sources on your topic, and you may certainly use secondary sources as well. If you have difficulty locating materials in the ASC on your topic, please come see me, and we will search together. You may also contact a staff member in the ASC at archives@purdue.edu; however, I prefer you contact them AFTER you have chosen your topic. You may ask the staff if they have more information on your topic once you have completed your initial research. Do not go to the ASC empty-handed and expect the archivists to do your work for you.

Things to consider while researching:

What is particularly interesting about this topic? Is there anything surprising that you were not expecting to find? Is there anything specific that makes your topic an influential or integral part of Purdue history or history? Is there a purpose to viewing these original documents as opposed to seeing them online? Did you experience any challenges? What were your experiences in researching your topic and looking at the original documents?

Once you have gathered all of the information on your topic, I want you to compile your findings into a coherent 2-3 page paper; you should not simply list your findings. The point is not to write a biography or a history of your topic. This is more of an investigative assignment, so you do have some freedom with what you choose to write. Remember to use the questions above to help guide you. Your papers should be in MLA format with 12 point Times New Roman font. You should also have a works cited page; if you are not certain how to cite primary sources from the ASC, go to the OWL website or come see me. This assignment will require you to visit the reading room in the Archives and Special Collections; you will need to register at the front desk.

Compiled by Kristin Leaman

Remember that food, drinks, gum, and pens are not permitted and to wash your hands before handling the materials. Their hours are Monday-Friday, 10am-4:30pm; therefore, you will want to give yourself plenty of time before the assignment is due to conduct your research. Please note that because you are dealing with rare and delicate materials, you may **NOT** start researching your topic in the reading room 48 hours before your assignment is due, as I do not want any of you rushing carelessly through these materials. Remember to treat these materials as you would like to be treated if you were that old. ☺

Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have regarding this assignment.

Remember: When requesting an instruction session, it is most important to notify the archivist that you are having your students do an archives assignment and to send a copy of the assignment to the archivist. This will allow us to gear the instruction session towards your assignment and better prepare the staff for when your students visit for their research. You can email archives@purdue.edu to request an instruction session.