Memory and power converge in academic archives. Those who work and teach in archives know that the process of navigating academic archives is not intuitive. They are collections of analog and digital files warehoused under secure measures. They contain pitfalls of bias and power requiring guidance from librarian-archivists who are the gatekeepers of the information landscape in an academic library. Unlike the access of the open stacks, students, faculty, and researchers must negotiate interacting with librarian-archivists or finding aids to access what is most often culturally hegemonic rare works and primary source materials. Foremost, academic archives are collections of dominant cultural memory, which means they have long privileged whiteness and predominantly preserve the histories of the historically powerful. While many researchers and students learn to navigate these spaces on their own through trial and error, a sense of belonging within dominant cultural spaces is a major contribution to a researcher’s relative confidence. In this chapter, we offer a case study of a course we designed at the University of Colorado Boulder, a predominantly white institution (PWI), for an arts and sciences program that enrolls first-generation students and students of color. We posit that undergraduate students from historically underrepresented and minoritized communities within the academy can be empowered to confront, reveal, and amend the hegemony of academic archives through affect-centered instruction in assessing cultural biases of materials and institutional cultures of gatekeeping.
The terms *underrepresented* and *minoritized* are themselves haunted by institutional histories of exclusion: exclusion of people, of ideas, and of methods. Commenting on Canadian archival appraisal theory and staffing in 2011, Terry Cook remarked that “you see a white, middle-class, well-educated, and not very diverse group—the only significant change in that time is the male-gender demographic domination has been replaced by a female one” (175). While conducting original archival research, our students came to understand and bear witness to the unsettling ways in which institutional exclusions over time cause underrepresentation. The sections that follow describe how assignment design, collection use, and attention to emotional intelligence (EI) unsettled the culture of exclusion and in turn “settled” our undergraduate students in university archives, special collections, and rare books rooms. We draw upon a range of disciplines to contextualize course design and discuss some of the stakes of student engagement, including emerging theories of EI, undergraduate education, and archival science.

**The Miramontes Arts and Science Program**

In fall 2019, the authors designed an active-learning archival research seminar for students in the Miramontes Arts and Sciences Program (MASP) at University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder). MASP is a scholarship and mentoring program that serves high-achieving students from institutionally underrepresented communities, including first-generation college students. The program was founded in 1993 to retain underrepresented students at CU Boulder, especially within the natural sciences (“About Us”). Each semester, MASP students enroll in one credit arts and sciences seminars with their MASP peers. These seminars, taught by faculty from a range of disciplines, introduce MASP students to advanced topics and skills and are intended to develop students’ identities as researchers and scholars. The seminars are an important counterbalance for many MASP students who report being the only person of color in their other university classes. In spring 2020, the archival research MASP seminar was offered again due to high demand. (The fall section was about 75 percent overenrolled.) While MASP seminars are open to MASP students from all four undergraduate cohorts, most of the students enrolled in the archival research seminars were first-year students in STEM majors.

In an effort to “acknowledge our own positionality” (Caswell et al. 79), the authors of this chapter identify as a first-generation student and a person
of color, respectively. We related to MASP students from our unique perspectives as a first-generation white literary studies scholar, who held adjunct status during both MASP seminars, and an Afro-Asian tenured academic librarian-archivist. Both authors are pedagogically motivated by empathy — having personally experienced a range of issues that might make first-generation students and students of color apprehensive about archival research. We aimed to help our students overcome apprehension and find confidence by speaking openly about our own experiences and our processes toward finding confidence in our identities as scholars.

For students from underrepresented communities at PWIs, like students in the MASP seminars, apprehension may arise from expectations about staff and materials. As Sara Ahmed explains, “when we describe institutions as ‘being’ white (institutional whiteness), we are pointing to how institutional spaces are shaped by the proximity of some bodies and not others: white bodies gather, and cohere to form the edges of such spaces” (157). Academic librarian Ian Beilin considers “the connections between physical space and the whiteness of the library experience and librarianship,” and observes that “the physical space of the library may inscribe, overdetermine, and perpetuate the library as a white space” (81). Archival research may lead to interactions with staff who lack awareness of institutional barriers faced by students from historically underrepresented communities. It may also lead to interactions with staff who uphold personal biases, and/or who enact microaggressions, which unfortunately was the experience of some of our students, explained in more detail below.

**Academic Archives in the United States**

Archival science has long acknowledged both the lack of diversity in the field and the Eurocentric collecting policies in university libraries and archives. Examples include the early collection-building practices of Western European medieval manuscript collections in U.S. research collections or the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C. Manuscript and archival collections from underrepresented communities have been largely overlooked in U.S. academic library collecting policies. Nondominant cultural collections have been collected, if at all, by local or state heritage societies. In the words of former CU Boulder professor Vine Deloria, Jr. (Standing Rock
“we see throughout early colonial history the desire to re-create the English way of life in North America” (12). Writing about undergraduate identity development specifically among Black students, Tomarra A. Adams observes that if “students are not able to see themselves in the curriculum […] this critical absence can cause them to internalize their marginal status” (286). The settler colonial process of invasion and replacement created the present reality in which students of color do not necessarily see their life experiences reflected in dominant culture primary sources at PWIs.

Current library and archival science pedagogy emphasizes teaching students to work with primary sources early in their academic careers as a means of engaging emerging scholars. But even the landmark 1998 Boyer Commission report on undergraduate research failed to adequately address cultural differences and increasingly diverse undergraduate demographics. As a case in point, for academic year 2019–2020 the University of Colorado System Office reported that 33 percent of enrolled undergraduates on all CU campuses identified as people of color, up 96 percent from academic year 2010–2011 (University). According to the same report, slightly more than 15 percent of undergrads identified as Hispanic/Latino in 2019–2020, up 117 percent from 2010–2011. While pedagogical strategies for introducing undergraduates to primary research methods have now received wide acceptance, the fact remains that archives can be problematic spaces with collections that often omit large segments of contemporary U.S. society as well as precolonial cultures. How, then, do instructors implement new teaching methods within environments that warehouse biased histories?

One answer, informed by Michelle Caswell et al.’s theory of “representational belonging” (74), is to collaborate with campus librarians and archivists and local community archives to locate primary sources for student use that present, if even obliquely, underrepresented histories. This strategy is discussed in more detail below. Another strategy informed by theories of EI is teaching emerging scholars to communicate with librarian-archivists and be emotionally prepared when doing so. Active collaboration, especially for new scholars, is in line with Cheryl Glenn and Jessica Enoch’s recommendation to acknowledge “archivists themselves as vital agents in the archival scene” (329). Even at institutions where collecting protocols historically—or currently—lack diverse representation, teaching faculty, academic librarians, and archivists who facilitate underrepresented students’ access to
dominant culture collections are well poised to significantly amend students’ sense of belonging on campus and develop students’ expertise and feelings of self-efficacy.

**Emotional Intelligence Theory and Undergraduates from Underrepresented Communities**

Emotional intelligence, which is the interrelationship “between emotion and cognition” and includes “emotional and social abilities, skills, competencies and facilitators” (Itzkovich et al. 37–38), offers one way to demystify institutional cultures of gatekeeping and examine tensions between theory and method in archival sites. This is not to suggest that first-generation students and students of color are intellectually deficient. Rather, we point to the stakes of asking students to work in settings and with materials that almost assuredly will present microaggressions or worse. Insofar as instructors already equip students intellectually for course tasks, we also advocate equipping students emotionally.

A campus library and archive can be extensions of the classroom, which was the case for the MASP seminars. However, library and information science literature tends to examine these spaces as ancillary rather than fundamental to the educational mission. Signaling that they mean a range of instructional zones beyond the traditional classroom, Monique Boekaerts and Reinhard Pekrun remark that “the classroom is an emotional place,” and that “students frequently experience emotions such as enjoyment of learning, hope for success, pride in accomplishments, anger about task demands, fear of failing an exam, or boredom in academic settings” (76). Together, librarians, archivists, and teaching faculty can develop curriculum that teaches students emotionally attuned navigational tactics and encourages undergraduates to interrogate dominant culture collections, including teaching students how to interact with personnel who act as the gatekeepers of Eurocentric collections. Staff biases aside, we take as an assumption that an archive is a setting where “incivility is embedded in power relations” and teaching faculty must acknowledge potentially negative interactions that their students may experience (Itzkovich et al. 28).

Proposing a more complete analysis of the significance of culture in theories of EI, Huynh et al. argue that the “role of culture for EI has been widely neglected” and EI in general “has been a highly controversial topic” (114, 124).
Huynh and his colleagues’ discussion of EI in workplaces and educational institutions resonates with our own observations of reading room staff. Specifically, the degree to which staff, as a function of their training, may or may not be culturally sensitive toward students’ fears. Huynh et al. determined that an individual’s socioeconomic background, including the level of schooling they had achieved, were statistically significant cultural differences relating to EI or, more precisely, what Huynh et al. call “emotional perception.” People from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and people with fewer than four years of higher education presented higher degrees of interdependence (Huynh et al. 117–18). Put another way, they demonstrated higher degrees of emotional perception.

In addition to a thorough orientation of the physical space and a meaningful introduction to archive staff, culturally aware communication is key to the interaction between students and staff. Many MASP seminar students reported experiencing having to regulate an emotional response when visiting the reading room, both individually and in group visits. When not with the instructor or the librarian-archivists with whom they had built a relationship, our seminar students faced staff who were unfamiliar with the materials being used for class or the students’ assignments. Body language, eye-contact, and whether a student was able to articulate the assignment or correctly identify the primary sources led to several stressful student/staff interactions. Some students will perceive such interactions as “uncivil,” to use Itzkovich et al.’s term, or condescending, and leave thinking that they do not belong in the reading room, or that it is not worth the effort to navigate the space.

In some instances, such interactions may arise from staff members’ (inherent) bias toward racial and gender identity. This is the type of interaction that calls for discussing the inappropriate behavior with staff and teaching emerging scholars that they are not misreading or imagining microaggressions, nor are they at fault for the uncomfortable interaction. Several of our students who reported concerning interactions helped initiate a learning process for staff. In one case, internal miscommunication combined with staff’s lack of believing a student’s request to be accurate. Two MASP students in fall 2019, including a first-year student who identifies as biracial and African American, were firmly assured by archive personnel that the primary source they were requesting outside of class time was not available. The librarian-archivists working with the MASP students had placed the materials near the research desk, but since the bound newspaper title was not
reflected in the integrated library management system, other reading room colleagues did not consider checking elsewhere for the students’ request. A series of errors in internal communication could have impacted a public patron in a similar situation. However, in a classroom setting, and due to the instructor-librarian partnership, both students and staff learned the importance of speaking up in order to resolve the situation in a timely manner. For her part, the student mentioned in this example has always been quick to emphasize her positive experiences in the seminar. The authors posit that this derives from the confidence the student found in the emotionally and intellectually fulfilling research she pursued during the class, which involved cataloging and analyzing references to African American community leaders in 1950s—era issues of the Boulder Daily Camera.

EI theory illuminates a cyclical process we noticed in our students during independent research. As they worked materially and discursively to recover and appraise counterhistories within PWI primary source materials, they became self-consciously more aware of underrepresentation in the institution’s materials. Our students would start to speak in terms of an overwhelming empathy, responsibility, kinship, and obligation toward the communities represented in the materials, as they simultaneously noticed a growing self-confidence in their own unique insights. They learned to “contravene, push back, and defy accepted precepts in the pursuit of justice for those living and dead, ghosted by and in archives” (Lowry 6). We aimed to validate and even anticipate students’ affective responses in these moments.15

Relatedly, teaching faculty and archivists may benefit from bystander-intervention training. Should students report troubling interactions, teaching faculty ought to embrace their responsibility at a minimum to investigate and carry student concerns forward to library leadership. Teaching faculty feedback may prove useful in archive personnel evaluation and support accountability measures such as corrective professional development. Otherwise, easy dismissal of microaggressions by teaching faculty exacerbates rather than supports changing archive reading room culture and librarian-archivist-patron interaction. Unfortunately, this is not a new concern within the profession.

Even as the passage of civil rights legislation in the 1960s yielded significant changes in student demographics, staff training opportunities to support an increasingly diverse student body lagged far behind. As historic scholarship demonstrates, some efforts were made “by an increasing number
of ‘socially responsible’ librarians [...] to heighten awareness and raise public consciousness regarding the kinds of services libraries are capable of offering, beyond their traditional confines” (Murphy and Nilon 288–89). In a 1974 chapter about librarian-patron communication, Marcy Murphy and CU Boulder’s own Nancy Mildred Nilon16 posited that graduate library science programs should better prepare aspiring librarians specifically in communication and interview skills, arriving at the conclusion that “if the librarians tend to talk as much as the patron or more, they are likely blocking the patron’s communication” (290). After conducting a national survey of training offered in graduate programs and professional development offered at public, academic, and state libraries, Murphy and Nilon underscored that “there is nothing new in the idea that the library has served a middle-class elite” (288).17 But they also made prescient observations about the “crucial exchange which takes place between the librarian and the user before the retrieval of the information” (287). As we continue discussing below, emotionally intelligent training for students also factors significantly into the outcome of these “crucial” exchanges.

MASP Archival Research Seminar: A Case Study

When designing the MASP seminar, the authors prioritized instruction in advanced research methods as well as instruction in confidently occupying space within the reading room. This included meeting in the reading room when possible, introducing students to the archive staff, and low-stakes assignments that directed students to make solo visits to expand their confidence and competence. Through a blend of both independent research and group work, the course assignments allowed for peer mentoring between students from various cohorts enrolled in the same seminar. During class discussions, and especially while working with the newspaper collections, upper-class students shared knowledge of research methods they had acquired in other classes including anthropology, queer studies, and ethnic studies. But strategies relating to the emotional impact of research proved to be new territory for all seminar participants. After reflecting on student experiences during the fall 2019 semester, the authors were even more intentional in spring 2020 about addressing the emotional toll of navigating institutional spaces that have been and continue to uphold dominant cultural values and histories.
One significant addition to the spring 2020 seminar was a graded required visit to the reading room outside of class time. The visit was structured around a writing prompt that invited students to plan this visit in tandem with a peer from class, providing the added potential benefit of peer learning. Whether going solo or in pairs, the visit was meant to reinforce students’ growing sense of confidence in their right to occupy institutional space. During and after the visit, students answered their choice of any four out of nine possible questions, including an opportunity to describe the emotional connection they might have started forming toward one of the newspaper collections. The prompt also welcomed students to connect personal lived experiences and bodies of knowledge with the collection they worked with. Whether or not a student responded for class credit to questions explicitly foregrounding affect, they still had the opportunity to reflect privately on what their answers might have been. They saw a class document soliciting affectively attuned responses in equal measure with analytical approaches to the research process.

The instructor also overhauled the short weekly reading responses on archival theory, community archiving, and underrepresented history in order to foreground affect. Similar to the prompt for the reading room visit, weekly reading responses always allowed students to reply to their choice of three out of five or six questions. In their responses to an essay that discusses researchers’ affective reactions to the South Asian American Digital Archive (Caswell et al.), one question invited students first to make plans for allowing their heart, intuition, or emotions to lead their minds at any point in their own work with CU Boulder’s collections, and second to consider whether they would set limits on potentially emotionally taxing work. Students in both sections frequently mentioned the added sense of responsibility they felt upon fully comprehending that they were researching vastly underrepresented histories within a PWI’s collections.

The course design was a collaborative effort between the instructor and CU librarian-archivists. The instructor initially sought archivists’ input to maximize experiential learning for MASP students without overburdening staff availability. A conversation that began around designing archivist-approved assignments grew into more philosophical questions of whether to limit the type and number of holdings students would be asked to work with. The instructor had determined the primary outcome to be students’ confidence and self-identification as researchers, and the secondary outcome
to be highlighting underrepresented local histories within the institution’s holdings. The choice was made to center students’ archival research around newspaper collections, specifically six countercultural and subculture holdings dated between the 1940s to 1980s. All newspapers were recent enough that students had an awareness of the historical contexts. At the same time, the holdings were dated enough that none represented students’ precise lived experiences.

These six local papers included the *Granada Pioneer*, published between 1942 and 1945 by Japanese Americans in the Amache, CO, internment camp, and *El Diario de la Gente*, the Boulder Chicano student newspaper that promoted education and activism. *El Diario* was most active during the 1960s and 1970s, including coverage of Los Seis de Boulder (The Boulder Six), who were six Chicano activists killed in two car bombings in Boulder in spring 1974.19 During fall 2019 when the MASP seminar was first offered, graduate student Jasmine Baetz created a public art piece (see fig. 14.1) honoring Los Seis that was installed next to the campus building Chicano students had occupied in spring 1974 in protest primarily of CU Boulder’s financial aid policies.20

After forty-five years, Los Seis being the prominent subject of campus-wide discussions again also impacted the strategic pivots made in spring 2020. Especially in *El Diario* and *Granada Pioneer*, but also in the other publications, students “suddenly discovered themselves existing” within the university’s archive (Caswell et al. 70, 71). The other four serials students worked with included 1950s–era issues from the *Boulder Daily Camera*, 1960s and 1970s-era countercultural publications, *Snake Ranch News* and *Boulder Express*, and 1980s-era issues from the former CU Boulder student paper, *Colorado Daily*.

In their essay on the impact of community archives, Caswell et al. borrow the theoretical concept of symbolic annihilation, seeking to “uncover how members of one particular ethnic community respond to both absences and misrepresentations in mainstream repositories and attempt to counter such absences and misrepresentations through an independent community archives” (57). We selected primary sources to facilitate a similar experience. The additional readings for the course were academic essays and selections from a monograph focused almost entirely on community archived primary sources relating to the Grenada Revolution. Fall 2019 students spent one class meeting early in the term at the Blair-Caldwell African
American Research Library (BCAARL) in Denver, where they encountered a community-created archive. While housed within an institutional space (a Denver Public Libraries branch), the BCAARL is located in Five Points, a historically Black neighborhood northeast of downtown Denver. BCAARL collections are curated by members of the community they represent. To the extent that time and resources allow it, we encourage educators to look beyond their institution, whether it is a PWI or otherwise, to consider sites where students may experience representational belonging in archival research (Caswell et al. 75).

In spring 2020, on-campus instruction shifted to distance learning due to COVID-19 the week that the MASP seminar had been scheduled to tour the BCAARL. While it was a disappointment to the students, the instructor, and
Settling Emerging Scholars  | 271

BCAARL staff alike to miss that visit, and to miss further time spent in the CU Boulder Special Collections reading room, it was extremely beneficial that Granada Pioneer and El Diario were both available digitally online. In a moving show of support, BCAARL librarian-archivists Terry Nelson and Annie Nelson (who are unrelated) attended the spring seminar research presentations on Zoom at the end of the term. Unprompted by us, Nelson and Nelson praised students for the important recovery work they had accomplished and the new knowledge they had created. A spring semester second-year student, who identifies as white and Latina, garnered particular approbation for uncovering in the Snake Ranch News previously overlooked accounts of Black community members’ activism, which earned her multiple enthusiastic follow-up questions from BCAARL staff.

Students who completed all (or nearly all) of the coursework ended the term with at least an A-. The instructor designed major assignments with an emphasis on practicing research processes and awarded full credit for demonstration of effort rather than imposing a hierarchy of mastery through traditional letter grades. Major assignments included individual consultations with the instructor, a research journal, and a presentation to peers. The weekly low-stakes reading responses were awarded completion points on a sort of modified contract grading scheme based on answering a minimum number of the instructor’s questions while also achieving a minimum level of polish, organization, and word count. Students chose what questions they felt individually compelled to answer and posted their replies on a class discussion board visible to all participants, which again encouraged peer learning. Replying to a peer was always a valid response option that could take the place of replying directly to one of the instructor’s questions.

**MA SP Student Experiences**

While reading essays on community archives near the beginning of the term, students in both semesters intuited the affective toll they would face once work began in earnest in the reading room. This was more pronounced during spring term due to the instructor’s more direct wording of the reading response questions after observing the degree to which fall 2019 students wanted to discuss their emotional responses to research at a PWI, particularly as people from underrepresented communities. During a fall 2019 class trip to the reading room, the instructor noticed that one student appeared to
be frozen in place staring at a page from *El Diario*. When the instructor asked if she was okay, the student expressed anxiety about whether she would be able to do justice to the lives contained within the archival materials she had been asked to consult. During the next class meeting, the instructor queried whether other students had felt similar pressures. They said they had. The authors believe that by drawing out the issue of affect for spring 2020 students in their assigned readings, it normalized and legitimized students’ own feelings of being “unsettled,” whether they chose to discuss these moments openly or not.

In fall 2019, during a reading room conversation with one MASP student about the Japanese American internment camp paper, the *Grenada Pioneer*, one of the authors learned that this student had recently studied abroad in Regensburg, Germany, and had acquired substantial German language skills in addition to his prior language proficiency in Japanese. University of Colorado Boulder Special Collections had acquired a complete run of the German-language prisoner of war newsletter, *Die PW Woche*, published in Camp Carson, Colorado, which the author mentioned to the student.22 Immediately curious about the differences between these camp publications, the student spent the next several weeks producing a sophisticated comparative reading of the two. As both of us noted to him at the time, it was likely that no other scholar had yet compared these two collections representing a relatively under-researched aspect of Colorado’s WWII history.23 The student’s language skills uniquely qualified him for this work. And equally important, his research questions were validated by archivist-librarians with whom he’d developed relationships. Like all students in the MASP seminars, the student had been encouraged to develop his own research instincts after initial guidance from the instructor. He hit research pay dirt when he compared tone and voice in both camp publications. He observed that although incarcerated as foreign enemy combatants, German POWs published their newsletter in a voice loyal and proud of der Führer and the Fatherland, even though they knew their publication was being surveilled. In contrast, but also under surveillance, Japanese Americans at Amache appeared wanting to maintain a sense of normalcy and assimilation with dominant cultural values, such as with baseball scores and planned Christmas events.

Another student who was drawn to the *Grenada Pioneer* in the spring 2020 term had little prior personal connection to Japanese language or culture.
Yet this student, a first-year undergraduate at the time, declared her interest in the *Granada Pioneer* and Camp Amache in general from the moment she first saw the three thick bound volumes containing CU Boulder’s holdings of the newspaper. This was on the first day that the spring 2020 class met in the reading room for an introduction to CU Boulder’s Special Collections and Archives. In mid-March, immediately before campus closed due to COVID-19 precautions, one of the authors shared several websites with the student for further exploration, one of which was the oral histories at Densho Digital Repository. On her last in-person visit to the reading room, the student listened to interviews while paging through one of the bound volumes of the camp newspaper. She wondered out loud to the librarian-archivist whether she was listening to someone who had been at the camp. Her final presentation at the end of the term demonstrated sophisticated navigation between different primary source formats—and competent awareness of the strengths and limits of each sort or record-keeping.

Several MASP students chose to carry research they had begun in class beyond the end of the term, including students who ultimately pursued thesis projects they hadn’t previously considered before enrolling in the course. Some of the more advanced students directed their research questions, and subsequent discoveries, toward in-progress research for an ongoing thesis or a project with another professor. An upper-class student in fall 2019 who identifies as Latinx brought their pervasive understanding of queer theory to their group’s analysis of *El Diario de la Gente* when the group decided to investigate gender representation within the local Chicano movement as it was recorded in the newspaper. As this student further analyzed *El Diario*, a key name stood out to them from prior research. The student was then able to connect this new evidence from *El Diario* to their research from outside of class. A first-year student in fall 2019 who identifies as white and Cherokee worked on two separate research projects after the class that were related to the methods she developed in response to the 1980s-era issues from the *Colorado Daily*, the former CU Boulder student newspaper. As an undergraduate research assistant to CU Boulder professor Amanda Carrico, this student collated data from historical conservation ads in digitized *Time* and *National Geographic* magazines, which was a clear outgrowth of her approach to analyzing evidence of the local conservation movement in the *Colorado Daily*. The next step in her project was coding the ad data regarding things like the apparent goal and emotional tone of an ad.
Most of the students in both sections, of which the majority were first-year undergraduates, eventually experienced a moment in which they self-identified as researchers and recognized their capacity to produce new knowledge. Some returned to their communities with renewed appreciation for preserving records of activism and resilience—in some cases even spanning generational divides with the new knowledge they gained. While we cosign Ian Beilin’s suggestion that “a critical library pedagogy that acknowledges students as producers of knowledge may be the best challenge to inherited oppressive structures that literally surround students when they walk into the library” (92), we also maintain that the skills acquired in the MASP seminars moved with our students beyond the reading room walls. One student who identifies as Mexicana, and who was a first-year student at the time of the class, spoke publicly in favor of preserving Baetz’s Los Seis de Boulder sculpture on CU Boulder’s campus, including granting an interview with at least one local reporter in spring 2020. The research methods that another student had practiced in class perhaps carried over into his internship with Colorado State Representative Adrienne Benavidez (and perhaps vice versa), with whom he drafted Colorado House Bill 20-1031 establishing Frances Xavier Cabrini Day and abolishing Columbus Day as a state holiday. This student and the student who was interviewed about Los Seis both worked on El Diario in class.

In some cases, students’ self-discovery looked like versions of symbolically affirming encounters that Caswell et al. describe. In other cases, students discovered their identities as culturally sensitive researchers who could approach underrepresented communities that were different from their own lived experiences with empathy and tact, such as a fall 2019 student who developed a newfound interest in reactions to climate change and environmental topics reported in 1980s–era issues of the Colorado Daily. Similarly, a first-year male student who identifies as Asian American became interested in representations of gender in 1950s issues of the Boulder Daily Camera. After browsing the collection, he decided to focus on visual rhetoric in advertisements depicting women. The student not only tracked gendered stereotypes such as the demure housewife, he also formed observations regarding the echoes of these images in our current moment. In one incredible discovery, he noticed how the male gaze in one Boulder Daily Camera ad was identical to the leering scowl in the prolific “distracted boyfriend” meme. In the meme, a “boyfriend” in the center of the image walks away from the
viewer hand in hand with a woman in a blue shirt while looking lustfully over his left shoulder at another woman in a red shirt walking in the opposite direction toward the viewer. In his final presentation, the student received audible gasps when he displayed this meme next to an advertisement published some sixty years previously in the Boulder Daily Camera. He expanded his personal empathy and educated the audience that day by showing how certain female stereotypes had remained unchanged in visual media.

Conclusion

As Caswell, Cook, and others have documented, management and staffing, physical setting, and collecting practices combine with an institution’s history of preserving a particular cultural memory. We maintain that these same spaces are ripe for original research by emerging scholars. The well is not yet tapped dry. In fact, at least two students’ original research is cited in one of the author’s in-progress manuscripts. Having learned to navigate these spaces of cultural memory at one institution, course participants also reported gaining new confidence to manage the affective burdens of (re) presenting the/their excluded past in other spaces. The assigned readings and the homework prompts in both semesters also gave students theory and language through which to critique an institution’s history and navigate its archival erasures.

In the United States, the twentieth century ushered in a changing student demographic in higher education. Still, in the twenty-first century, U.S. academic archives remain largely dedicated to preserving settler papers and collections that reflect the dominant culture. Yet, settler collections already held in U.S. academic archives may contain sources that provide evidence of underrepresented or underreported communities. The authors invite teaching faculty across disciplines to consider Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s concept of the “palimpsest of imperialism.”25 Palimpsest here describes a research process that’s relevant in these archives; scrape away a layer, or shine a black light on parchment, and perhaps an earlier story or draft may be uncovered. Settler collections may lead to the discovery of overlooked individuals or community history hidden in plain sight—by a generation of undergraduates trained to develop into emotionally intelligent emerging scholars.

MAHP students discovered themselves portrayed positively, as well as negatively, in a predominantly (and historically) white institutional archive.
The MASP seminars accordingly harnessed students’ enthusiasm and accounted for their anxiety, while settling the students within archival spaces and among archival staff. On an emotional level, this process was uniquely individual. Delivering affect-centered instruction to undergraduate students from historically underrepresented communities involves the important step of developing student confidence, affirming their right to exist in archive spaces, and recognizing their ability to confront, reveal, and amend the hegemony of academic archives. As Terry Cook argues, “the archive, and archiving, is fundamentally political, and, not surprisingly, invites—and reflects—controversy, contestation, and challenge” (175). Throughout students’ academic tenure as emerging scholars, their exploration of primary source materials creates new knowledge and new methods of interrogating dominant culture collections. The instructor’s and librarian-archivist’s roles are to develop this self-efficacy.

Notes

Acknowledgement: The authors thank the following CU Boulder emerging scholars for permitting us to document and share their experiences: Max Armendariz, Mariah Clute, Taylor Dutton, Sierra Esparza, Mar Galvez Seminario, Mahdieya Hossaini, Aiden Jorgenson, James Kim, Isaac Spinoso, and Jaqueline Rangel. We are inspired and humbled by the curiosity, empathy, and innovation that each brought to their research.

1. See Shetty’s and Bellamy’s analysis of Spivak, namely that archival work “is indeed a task of ‘measuring silences’” (25–26).

2. See Pugh (7) and Malkmus (48). Díaz et al. discuss “learning bottlenecks” in addition to remarking that “most college professors learned how to be historians more or less by osmosis, without explicit instruction on how to perform many of the operations necessary to produce historical knowledge” (1211).

3. Brown and Dancy define PWIs as: “institutions of higher learning in which Whites account for 50% or greater of the student enrollment. However, the majority of these institutions may also be understood as historically White institutions in recognition of the binarism and exclusion supported by the United States prior to 1964” (524).

4. Challenged by reading room security, which is formalized gatekeeping to monitor who belongs in this academic space, perseverance remains imperative for public or campus constituents to access archival and special collections.
5. On April 16, 2021, Nia K. LiteraryLady shared a post on the “Culture Keepers: Black Archivists and Librarians” Facebook page, quoting Janel Cubbage, director of suicide prevention for the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene who wrote: “We are not minorities, we have been minoritized. We are not underrepresented, we have been historically excluded. Language matters.”

6. Salovey et al. define EI as “the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional meanings, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote better emotion and thought” (qtd. in Hatch and Kornhaber 36).

7. The CU Boulder Office of Data Analytics reported for academic year 2019–2020 that individuals identifying as BIPOC filled 20.4 percent of 1,277 tenure-track and tenured positions, up 54 percent from fall 2008 (CU Boulder Tenured).

8. A 2004 survey of archivists revealed that “only 7.0% of all A*CENSUS respondents (5,620 respondents out of a survey population of 11,935) reported belonging to one or more ethnic or racial groups other than Caucasian, up from 2.8% [. . .] two decades ago” (Irons Walch et al. 42). On July 24, 2020, the Society of American Archivists announced IMLS funding for A*CENSUS II to be launched in October 2021. An updated view of archivist demographics will be available when survey results are published. See also Poole.

9. Speaking in 1979 about modern literary manuscript collecting, British poet and librarian Philip Larkin observed that “during the last forty or fifty years, and more particularly during the last twenty years, the papers of the major British writers of this century have been intensively collected not by British but by American Libraries” (100). Larkin recounts that “C. P. Snow told me in 1960 that there were thirty-one theses about him in America and none in England, and I doubt if his was an isolated case” (102).

10. See Billeaudaux and Scott as well as Zastrow.

11. The full report may be found online at https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED424840.

12. For example, in Honorée Fanonne Jeffers’s recent work The Age of Phillis, she challenges the accepted narrative of Phillis Wheatley Peter’s origin story through extensive archival research. Jeffers brings to light details that challenge the long-accepted biased historical accounting of Wheatley’s life written by Margaretta Matilda Odell, a white woman who claimed family ties to Wheatley’s owner, Susanna Wheatley. MASP students investigated and challenged dominant culture history with a similar eye toward bias.

13. See Medina, especially chapter 3.

14. For an example of the Eurocentric nature of archives and public perception of these spaces in popular fiction and British and American artistic works, see Schmuland and Craig and O’Toole.
15. See McCracken and Ortiz for research that examines “high-risk” students’ affective sense of themselves as writers.

16. In 1960, Nilon was the first African American librarian hired at CU Boulder Libraries.

17. Unfortunately, the response to Murphy’s and Nilon’s survey was unremarkable. At the time, few library science programs included communication or interpersonal skills training in graduate curriculum. This type of training was seen in postgraduate professional development training, if at all.

18. The authors thank CU librarian-archivist Sean Babbs for his invaluable input on course design and for his suggestion to focus on the six newspaper collections mentioned in the following paragraph.

19. Activism by students of color at CU Boulder in the 1960s and 1970s focused on hiring more diverse faculty, adding ethnic studies curriculum, actively recruiting students of color for enrollment, and holding the institution accountable for the financial aid it promised. A 1989 campus report on twenty years of “minority” student enrollment claims that the university kept no official records prior to 1968 when its Educational Opportunity Program was established (McArthur 4). For example, the report’s author could produce no record of Native American student presence before 1968 (6). In general, institutionally recorded racial demographics at CU prior to the 1990s are imprecise. The authors thank CU Boulder archivists David Hays and Ashlyn Velte for their research assistance with twentieth-century student demographics. We also thank student assistant Brooke Thieben.

20. During the spring 2020 term, the sculpture’s permanent status on campus seemed uncertain. The course instructor and students from both sections attended a demonstration on March 12, 2020. One course participant was quoted in local media expressing the significance of seeing visual representations of Chicano and Latinx history on campus, particularly an aspect of that history previously and conspicuously absent from university-sponsored narratives about the institution. The finding aid of primary sources, including federal law enforcement task force records related to Los Seis de Boulder bombings and university administrative documents, is accessible as of October 2021 at https://archives.colorado.edu/repositories/2/resources/2525.


22. Fort Carson is on the I-25 corridor near Colorado Springs and only about 175 miles northwest of Camp Amache, CO, where more than seven thousand Japanese and Japanese Americans were interned during World War II. Die PW
Woche: Stimmen aus Lager u. Heimat [The Prisoner of War (PW) Weekly: Voices from the Camp and Homeland] was published from 1943 to 1945 by imprisoned German enemy combatants. Camp Carson had been managed by the Enemy Prisoner of War Information Bureau under the United States Army Provost Marshal General and was closed in 1946. In 1954 it became known as Fort Carson Military Reservation (Connor et al.). The newsletter is accessible in the CU Digital Library as of July 2021, https://cudl.colorado.edu/luna/servlet/s/a90weu.

23. In April 2021, Colorado representatives Joe Neguse (D) and Ken Buck (R) introduced a bipartisan bill that would designate Amache as a national historic site. The bill passed in March 2022. The former internment camp site had been cared for by volunteers.


25. Spivak’s “palimpsestic narrative of imperialism” applies to dominant culture archives in which emerging scholars uncover layers of history to bring forth new interpretations (qtd. in Shetty and Bellamy 27). The authors thank Terry Fahy for suggesting Spivak’s relevance.

Works Cited


Boyer Commission on Educating Undergraduates in the Research University. Reinventing Undergraduate Education: A Blueprint for America’s Research


