

Poly Archives Teaching Sets Spring 2025

Four teaching sets from the Poly Archives are available for Spring 2025. If you'd like to schedule a visit and teaching session for your class, please email Lindsay la715@nyu.edu and/or the Poly Archives polyarchives@nyu.edu.

Click on a link below to get the full description, materials list, and suggested lesson plans:

- 1.) [MetroTech Center: Campus development, urban renewal, and displacement](#)
- 2.) [Who Is An Engineer? Gender, race, and economic status over time](#)
- 3.) [Engineering, Politics, and Ethics: The Vietnam War at Poly](#)
- 4.) [STEM Students & Creative Writing: Golana \(sci-fi\), Counterweight \(poems, short story\), and Fusion \(science journalism\) at Poly](#)

1. MetroTech Center: Campus development, urban renewal, and displacement

Description: In this class we will use primary sources from the [Poly Archives](#) as a way to present narratives and ask questions about the formation of our home campus-- MetroTech Center. Through a variety of archival formats (maps, correspondence, photographs, architectural plans, campus planning documents, and newspapers) the complex story of MetroTech Center and the development of Polytechnic's (now NYU's) Brooklyn campus will emerge. We will use these primary sources as entry points to consider current both past and conceptions of gentrification, urban renewal, eminent domain, university-industry partnerships, and campus/student life. These primary sources will also allow students to practice forming research questions, based on which components spark their interest, and to consider how they would pursue these research questions by investigating secondary sources.

Objectives:

- 1.) To gain a preliminary understanding of the types of items archives collect and how they can be used for research.
- 2.) To identify different formats types and consider the means of their creation. When, how, for what purpose/for whom, where were these documents created.
- 3.) To think critically about connections between documents and to think about these connections in context.
- 4.) To discuss how the connections/conversations between documents relate to a larger narrative. How does this narrative fit within social, historical, scientific, cultural, or political contexts?

Materials:

- 1.) MetroTech model designed for Forest City Ratner, circa 1990
- 2.) Photo album of MetroTech construction, circa 1990
- 3.) Construction photos on board with descriptions, circa 1990
- 4.) Brooklyn Campus Development Plan for Polytechnic Institute of New York submitted by Gruzen & Partners, 1979 AND 1982
- 5.) Polytechnic Reporter articles about MetroTech, Vol. 10 no. 3 (1990) and Vol. 10 no. 7 (1990)
- 6.) Map for firehouse re-design, undated but circa 1977.
- 7.) MetroTech news and fact sheet
- 8.) MetroTech Ready Ref publications-- Daily News, Research Park Forum, and Engineering New Record

9.) Volume II, Section IV B: Sociological Impacts, [Pages IV-151 to IV-193](#) (also printed out and on cart).* Socioeconomic Impacts Section of MetroTech EIS:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B_xsMZay49SrSExNdWxJVEpKS2M?usp=sharing

10.) Appendix F, Written comments on the DEIS (letters from the community), [Volume 3, starting on page 68 of the PDF](#)**

11.) Daniela's walking tour book

* This section outlines demographics of residents in the area and how many residents will be displaced (200), businesses in the area and how many businesses will be displaced, as well as the formation of MetroTech Commons as public recreation space.

** Be sure to tell the student that they should skim and get a sense of what these EIS sections are about-- obviously there's no way to read ALL of this in the allotted time. Who is being displaced? How are sociological impacts discussed as part of a development project? Etc.

Class outline:

1.) Warm up question: "What are archives?" Each student gets a half sheet of paper to jot down ideas. Tell the students they should write whatever comes to mind-- a definition, an image, an experience, other related words, etc. Ask the students to share responses and discuss. Use the students' responses to clarify and describe archives. **(10 minutes)**.

1a.) Alternative warm up question: "What do you know about MetroTech Center/Brooklyn Commons/Tandon's campus? And, how long has MetroTech/our campus been here?" Each student gets a half sheet of paper to jot down ideas. Tell the students they should write whatever comes to mind-- things they know, things they feel, guesses they have based on experience or reading. Ask the students to share responses and discuss. Use the students' responses to engage in a conversation around when MetroTech was created (early 1990s) and the ideas of permanence/impermanence/growth/displacement/renewal of urban environments. **(10 minutes)**.

2.) Small groups (2-3) students will be given one object, or set of objects, from the MetroTech Collection. Working with a guided question sheets, students will examine the object(s) and record findings and questions **(15-20 minutes)**.

3.) Each group will present their findings to the class. As each group presents their objects, the archivist and the professor will engage the students in conversations about the object-- what they noticed, how did they determine certain facts, what information is still missing? **(10 minutes/group)**.

4.) As each group presents, it will become apparent that all of these objects relate to each other. As a full class, we will discuss how these objects tie together and how our understanding of the objects shifts as we learn about associated objects. This leads to broader discussions: What do these objects say about the production of knowledge? Would seeing an object out of context change or confirm your ideas about the construction of our campus or the development of Downtown Brooklyn in general? How would you go about interpreting or contextualizing a primary source document that doesn't have supporting information in the archives? The professor will tie these ideas back to course themes. **(10 minutes)**

Sample Question Sets: [☰ Copy of MetroTech Deep Reading](#) and [📄 MetroTech questions.docx](#)

If guided question worksheets or slides are to be used, they are best developed through a conversation between the course instructor and archives instructor to ensure students are guided in themes and ways of thinking that will connect to class themes and objectives. The question sets linked above are examples of question sets used for this lesson in the past.

2. Who Is An Engineer? Gender, race, and economic status over time

Description: In this class we will use primary sources from the Poly Archives as a way to present narratives and ask questions around the topics of gender, race, diversity, and economic status of engineering students over time. We will look at how the make-up of the student body at Poly (now Tandon) changed over the years, read and listen to accounts by former women students, and consider how an engineering education at Poly was marketed to potential students through brochures (text and images).

We will use these primary sources as entry points to consider current conceptions of what an engineer looks like today and how we know that (what images do we see, how are we marketed to, what do we read?). These primary sources will also allow students to practice forming research questions, based on which components spark their interest, and to consider how they would pursue these research questions by investigating secondary sources

Material list:

- 1.) Audio recordings, 1964 (Pick one)
 - a.) Dr. Ernst Weber, Professor and President of PIB, 1st President of IEEE:
https://drive.google.com/open?id=1V8xgTQa0JB_jNo92mAkzLSpKPO8dT4we
 - b.) Dr. Charles Overberger, Professor of Polymer Science and Chemistry
https://drive.google.com/open?id=1I_zChH-t7KN0cRZrKop2cG5f75831knt
 - c.) Poly Dean Henry Middendorf, Convocation 1963
<https://drive.google.com/open?id=17Rcd6We1pt4fk3J5ZFYIWP8huXs7uX2O>
- 2.) Polytechnic brochures
 - (a) [MEN: The cornerstone of strength](#), circa 1964
 - (b) [A Woman's World](#), circa 1975
- 3.) Video Oral Histories (maybe or pick one)
 - (a) Link to three videos (Stella Lawrence Daniels, Eleanor Baum, Ursula Burns)
https://prezi.com/v-fwbplphqo4/poly-women-videos/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy
- 4.) Curated archival exhibits on identity by Tandon students
 - (a) Joel Ureña (Tandon '20) Black and Latinx students:
<https://jurena.github.io/Tandon-Poly-Archives-Project/>

- (b) Kyle Mudie (Tandon '22) Evolution of co-education at Poly:
<https://polyarchives.hosting.nyu.edu/exhibits/show/a-study-on-the-evolution-of-t>
[h](#)
- (c) Mahdi Chowdhury (Tandon '24) Muslim students:
<https://polyarchives.hosting.nyu.edu/exhibits/show/the-muslim-experience-poly>
- (d) Amisha Gopee (Tandon '24) South Asian students:
<https://polyarchives.hosting.nyu.edu/exhibits/show/southasians---poly-nyu>
- (e) Amy Li (Tandon '25) Female athletes at Poly:
<https://polyarchives.hosting.nyu.edu/exhibits/show/female-athletes-at-poly>

5.) Polywogs (yearbooks), various years

6.) Polytechnic Reporters (student newspaper), various years

Potential lesson plan

Note that it might be useful to focus this class on gender or ethnicity/race. There's a lot going on for one class session

- 1.) **Warm up:** Listen to an audio recording from Brooklyn Polytechnic, 1964. Discuss how these recordings relate to our current expectations or experiences of Tandon and the field of engineering today. Also, pay attention to which statements stand out to us as not fitting within our current conceptions or engineering, college, or general social norms.
 - a.) Dr. Ernst Weber, Professor and President of PIB, 1st President of IEEE:
https://drive.google.com/open?id=1V8xqTQa0JB_jNo92mAkzLSpKPO8dT4we
 - b.) Dr. Charles Overberger, Professor of Polymer Science and Chemistry
https://drive.google.com/open?id=1I_zChH-t7KN0cRZrKop2cG5f75831knt
 - c.) Dean Henry Middendorf:
<https://drive.google.com/open?id=17Rcd6We1pt4fk3J5ZFYIWP8huXs7uX2O>
(5 minutes to listen, 5 minutes to enter comments in chat; 10 minutes to discuss)
- 2.) **Introduce today's lesson:** We are thinking about the question "Who is an engineer?" through the frame of materials from the Poly Archives. You will be working in small groups to examine your objects. While you will have a worksheet to guide you through these materials, always have these questions in the back of your mind:

Who made this? Why did they make it? Who was the audience? What genre is this? And, how do I encounter information similar to this object today? (5 minutes)

3.) **Activity:** Divide into 3 or 4 groups to look at archival materials. Students may work with a guided question sheet. (20 minutes)

4.) **Student Sharing:** Each group will have 5 minutes to share what they viewed and any comments/questions they had. (20 minutes)

5.) **Discussion**

- Something surely sparked your interest here. Follow that hunch. What would your next step be? How does a primary source or experience in the world lead into a secondary source?
- This may include a written prompt by the instructor to kick things off or tie the lesson directly to their unit/assignment (10 minutes)

Sample Question Set: [Who is an engineer_2023.docx](#)

If guided question worksheets or slides are to be used, they are best developed through a conversation between the course instructor and archives instructor to ensure students are guided in themes and ways of thinking that will connect to class themes and objectives. The question set linked above is an example of a question set used for this lesson in the past.

3. Engineering, Politics, and Ethics: The Vietnam War at Poly

Description: In this class we will use primary sources from the Poly Archives as a way to present narratives and ask questions around the topics of activism and protest movements and how/whether engineering, ethics, and politics are intertwined.

Documents cover a wide variety of issues related to the Vietnam War in general, but particularly on an engineering college campus. This lesson particularly can be shaped in a variety of ways. Topics include:

- [Student Protesting](#)
 - Strike in reaction to Kent State, ROTC firebombing, Students To Oppose Politicization (S.T.O.P.)
- [Draft and Student Deferments](#)
 - Draft counseling by faculty, opposition to reporting class rankings, discussion of 2-S classification
- [March 4th Movement - Research Stoppage and Teach-Ins](#)
 - Nation-wide movement concerned with scientific research and the war, Poly activities surrounding social impact of science, faculty organized teach-in to educate students on the war
- ["The Moral Dilemma of the American Scientist" essay and On-Campus Recruiting](#)
 - Essay by Poly professor on ethics in science - especially in war, faculty concerns over CIA and Dow Chemical recruiting on campus, ads in student newspaper from military

Materials List

- 1.) War at Poly
- 2.) Draft and Student Deferment
- 3.) Faculty Group on Public Affairs
- 4.) Faculty
- 5.) Student Protesting
- 6.) March 4th Movement
- 7.) Moral Dilemma of the American Science by Frank Collins
- 8.) PIB to Parents
- 9.) Polytechnic Reporter scans
- 10.) Polytechnic Reporter with marked pages (flip through to see articles and military advertisements)
- 11.) Polywogs (yearbooks): 1967, 1968, 1969

12.) Context sheet, created by Zoe Blecher-Cohen (could be printed out)

[☰ Context Sheet - Vietnam on Campus](#)

Potential lesson plan

1.) **Warm up:** Share a copy of Frank Collins's essay "[The Moral Dilemma of the American Scientist](#)" via Drive and ask all students to co-annotate the document for 10 minutes. They can do this by using the comments function to write thoughts and ask questions. Students can reply to each other via comments. The prof and the archivist will participate as well.

(10 minutes to co-annotate; 5 minutes to discuss)

2.) **Introduce today's lesson:** We are thinking about the questions surrounding protest movements and the ideas of engineering, ethics, and politics through the frame of materials from the Poly Archives. You will be working in small groups to examine your objects. While you will have a worksheet to guide you through these materials, always have these questions in the back of your mind: Who made this? Why did they make it? Who was the audience? What genre is this? And, how do I encounter information similar to this object today? (5 minutes)

3.) **Activity:** Divide into 4 groups. Talk to each other about what you are viewing, but write down individual responses on your worksheets. (20 minutes)

4.) **Student Sharing:** Each group will have 5 minutes to share what they viewed and any comments/questions they had. They may share their screens to show the rest of the class an image or a clip. (20 minutes)

5.) Discussion

- Something surely sparked your interest here. Follow that hunch. What would your next step be? How does a primary source or experience in the world lead into a secondary source?
- This may include a written prompt by the instructor to kick things off or tie the lesson directly to their unit/assignment (10 minutes)

Sample Question Set: [☰ Vietnam/Activism Worksheet](#)

If guided question worksheets or slides are to be used, they are best developed through a conversation between the course instructor and archives instructor to ensure students are guided in themes and ways of thinking that will connect to class themes and objectives. The question set linked above is an example of a question set used for this lesson in the past.

4. STEM Students & Creative Writing: Golana, Counterweight, and Fusion at Poly

Description: In this class we will examine creative student writing produced by former Poly (now Tandon) engineering students. These works, including Golana (sci-fi magazine), Counterweight (literary magazine), and Fusion (science journalism/technical writing magazine) are part of the Poly Archives collections.

We will use these primary sources as entry points to consider current conceptions of how engineering students engage in creative writing endeavors today and the role of arts/humanities in STEM education. These primary sources will also allow students to practice forming research questions, based on which components spark their interest, and to consider how they would pursue these research questions by investigating secondary sources

Materials list:

- 1.) Golana: Dec 1963 (first issue), 1965-66, 1969, 1970, 1971 (last issue)
- 2.) Counterweight: 1957 (first issue), 1962, 1966, 1969, Winter 1998, Spring 2002 (last issue)
- 3.) Fusion: Summer 2004, Fall 2004
- 4.) Ethan Vasquez's online exhibit on Golana:
<https://polyarchives.hosting.nyu.edu/exhibits/show/creative-chronicles>

Potential lesson plan

- 2.) **Warm up:** Each student will receive a printed out poem from Counterweight. The students will have 5 minutes to read the poem and to annotate it or to jot down any notes or questions. In the discussion, the instructors will encourage students to talk about similarities or differences they notice between the author's ideas or experiences and their experiences as engineering students today.
 - a.) Poem 1: [Taking the A Train by Tim Long, Counterweight Quarterly, Winter 1998](#)
 - b.) Poem 2: [There is More to Living than Collecting Things by Edith Mae Tagliavia, Counterweight Quarterly, Spring 1966](#)
(5 minutes to read and annotate; 10 minutes to discuss)

- 2.) **Introduce today's lesson:** We are looking at creative writing generated by former engineering students at our institution. We have pulled a former student sci-fi magazine (Golana), literary magazine (Counterweight), and nonfiction magazine (Fusion) from the Poly Archives. You will be working in small groups to examine these materials, find points of interest, and identify questions. While you will have a worksheet to guide you through these materials, always have these questions in the back of your mind: Who made this? Why did they make it? Who was the audience? What genre is this? And, how do I encounter information similar to this object today? **(5 minutes)**

- 3.) **Activity:** Divide into 4 groups. Talk to each other about what you are viewing, but write down individual responses on your worksheets. **(20 minutes)**

- 4.) **Student Sharing:** Each group will have 5 minutes to share what they viewed and any comments/questions they had. They may share their screens to show the rest of the class an image or a clip. **(20 minutes)**

- 5.) **Discussion**
 - Something surely sparked your interest here. Follow that hunch. What would your next step be? How does a primary source or experience in the world lead into a secondary source?
 - This may include a written prompt by the instructor to kick things off or tie the lesson directly to their unit/assignment **(10 minutes)**