Overview

The UA Little Rock Center for Arkansas History and Culture (CAHC) provides graduate assistants with an enjoyable work experience that will supplement their coursework at UALR and prepare them for the professional world. During their tenure at CAHC, GAs will gain hands-on experience with archival processing, digitization and digital preservation, metadata, patron assistance, and outreach and community engagement. They will also participate in a variety of professional development opportunities. At the end of the appointment, CAHC graduate assistants will have created a portfolio of materials, including reports, publications, and exhibits, that they can use to further their careers.

Graduate assistants will participate in the day-to-day operations of CAHC by performing regular duties and responsibilities, including working the Roberts Library research room desk, completing patron requests, and writing metadata. They will also participate in reading discussions with other GAs and network with different cultural heritage institutions. Each semester, graduate assistants will complete projects related to collection management, access and outreach, research and writing, digital preservation, and professional development.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of the graduate assistant appointment, students should be able to:

- *Locate and evaluate primary and secondary sources for utilization in original research*
- *Critically engage with relevant literature in the field*
- *Demonstrate knowledge of archival principles, practices, and values*
- *Follow CAHC practices and workflows*
- *Demonstrate basic digital literacy*
- *Apply fundamental principles and practices of digital preservation*
- *Assist patrons with archival research*
- *Collaborate with team members/colleagues*
- *Create engaging and thoughtful public-facing content*
- *Present themselves in a professional manner*

General Expectations

Graduate assistants at CAHC will work 20 hours each week for a total of 300 hours each semester. Spring 2025 assignments begin August 20, 2025*,* and end by December 11, 2025. Students should perform all work related to the CAHC graduate assistantship, including readings, at CAHC during their weekly hours. A lunch break is provided, but that time does **not** count toward the hours worked. GAs may work outside their scheduled hours at the discretion of their supervisor. GAs are not expected to work during university breaks, but may choose to do so if they need to make up their hours. **GAs will keep track of their hours using a timesheet in Google Drive (linked to their Monday.com board). The timesheet should be updated at the end of every week.**

All graduate assistants will work under the primary supervision of CAHC Student Coordinator Amanda McQueen, but certain responsibilities or projects will be supervised by other CAHC staff members, as indicated in the syllabus. GAs are expected to arrive on time and leave when

scheduled. Parking accommodations will be provided. If unforeseen circumstances or events affect their schedule, GAs must inform the CAHC Student Coordinator as soon as possible, either via email (amcqueen@ualr.edu or ARCHIVES@lists.ualr.edu) or Slack.

Students follow UALR's inclement weather policy. If UALR is closed, then GAs do not come to CAHC, and the hours they would have worked that day are counted toward their semester total. CAHC follows the Central Arkansas Library System's (CALS) inclement weather policy, so CAHC will close if CALS closes due to weather. If CALS/CAHC is closed, GAs should not come to Roberts Library, but they may work remotely with the permission of their supervisor. GAs may also work from home if it is dangerous to travel to CAHC.

Graduate assistants must meet basic professional standards while at CAHC. The regular dress code is business casual, although occasional duties may require more or less formal attire (e.g., event assistance or moving boxes). GAs should strive to communicate professionally, both in person and via email, with other CAHC staff members, patrons, and guests. Remember that more casual behavior might be appropriate for communicating with someone in person or with a close colleague, and more formal rules may apply to email communication or communication with someone you have not met. Students should ask if they need clarification about how to communicate in particular cases. Finally, GAs must respect coworkers, patrons, and guests. They should also be reliable and collegial. Remember that a team's success depends on each team member's efforts.

Graduate assistants follow CAHC workflows and office protocols, including appropriate use of project management and communication tools used by CAHC, such as Slack for in-office communications and Google Drive for file storage and sharing. **GAs are expected to use Monday.com to track their tasks and projects and to keep the Student Coordinator updated on their progress.** At the end of every semester, GAs will perform digital housekeeping, relocating necessary files and deleting unnecessary files.

Graduate assistants will be evaluated twice each semester. Midway through each semester, the Student Coordinator, in consultation with other CAHC staff, will use this form to evaluate the student's progress toward meeting the learning objectives. They will meet with the student to discuss their progress and make any necessary adjustments to semester duties or projects. At the end of each semester, students will reflect on their own progress toward meeting the learning objectives by filling out this form. The Student Coordinator will also evaluate the student's skill development, professional conduct, and overall performance throughout the semester using this form. The Student Coordinator and GA will then meet to share their completed forms, discuss the GA's strengths and areas for improvement, and outline expectations for the next semester.

At the end of their assistantship, GAs will complete an exit interview, during which they will evaluate the overall training and work experience they received at CAHC. The GA will complete this form on their own and then meet with the Student Coordinator to discuss it together.

If normal activities are disrupted for any reason, the syllabus schedule and projects may be adjusted. Additional optional activities may be added to the syllabus throughout the semester. If changes occur, graduate assistants will be notified as soon as possible.

Recurring Tasks

During their tenure at CAHC, graduate assistants will perform regular duties and responsibilities that will help them build on their archival education and learn about the day-to-day activities in an archive. These tasks are assigned to all GAs each semester.

Reading Discussion

Once a week, GAs will be assigned a reading related to archival theory and practice and will attend a discussion with their peers led by a CAHC archivist. GAs are expected to complete the reading before the discussion and come prepared to contribute to the conversation. These discussions will help students learn to engage critically with relevant literature in the field. All assigned readings can be found in the Digital Library on Monday.com.

Once a semester, each GA will choose the reading and lead the discussion. GAs should submit their chosen reading to the Student Coordinator and other students at least one week before the discussion. Students may select from the unassigned readings in the Digital Library or find a reading on their own. Students are also welcome to choose multimedia sources, such as podcasts or video essays. Fourth-semester GAs are encouraged to select a reading related to their thesis.

For the Fall 2025 semester, reading discussions will be held on Wednesdays, from 11:00am-12:00pm in Suite 202.

Research Room Desk Shift

GAs will work one two-hour desk shift each week in the Roberts Library research room, assisting patrons with using manuscript collections, books, microfilm, or other resources. First-semester GAs will be trained and will shadow others before working shifts independently. Working the research room desk will help students learn how to locate and evaluate primary and secondary sources, how to present themselves professionally, and how to work with the public.

Patron Requests

As needed, GAs will assist CAHC staff with patron requests. This may require locating collections in storage, digitizing requested items, writing metadata, using archival software, or corresponding with patrons via email. Completing patron requests will help students learn CAHC workflows, digitization technology and standards, how to present themselves professionally, and how to work with the public.

Social Media Posts

Under the supervision of Engagement Coordinator James Wethington, GAs will create approximately seven social media posts each semester (due every other week). In their first

semester, these posts will feature digitized photographs or other materials from CAHC collections found through ARStudies. In their second and third semesters, GAs will create content based on a series of prompts. In their final semester, they will create a cohesive social media campaign. Creating social media posts will help GAs learn about CAHC collections and workflows, archival software, and how to create engaging and thoughtful public-facing content.

Metadata Creation
Throughout each semester, GAs will help the Digital Services Lab with the digitization metadata backlog. Students will be assigned digital objects from the Digitization and Metadata Tracking Board. They will write metadata describing the object(s) and will then upload the digital files and metadata to CONTENTdm, making them available to the public. Students will generally complete one batch of metadata every two weeks. This task will help students learn CAHC workflows, archival software, and metadata standards.

Digital Services Lab Intensive
For one week during each semester, GAs will receive in-depth training and practice with the equipment and software in the Digital Services Lab. Supervised by Student Coordinator Amanda McQueen and Digital Records Specialist Caitlin Robertson, the DSL intensive will allow students to help preserve audiovisual materials, large format materials, and born-digital materials from CAHC collections. Most of the materials students will work with during the intensive will be selected from the DSL's priority digitization list; when applicable, students will work with materials from their collection processing project. This training week will give students practice with CAHC workflows and sustained experience with a range of digitization and born-digital technologies.

Semester Projects

Each semester, graduate assistants will be assigned several larger projects to support the learning objectives and generate items for their professional portfolios. Some of these projects will be assigned in specific semesters, as indicated in the descriptions below. Other projects will be assigned based on the student's schedule, the duration of their appointment, and/or their interests.

Collection Processing Project
Under the supervision of the Student Coordinator, GAs will process at least one CAHC manuscript collection. Processing will entail creating an inventory and a processing plan, researching the collection contents and context, organizing and rehousing physical materials, creating a finding aid, drafting promotional social media posts, and summarizing their work in a brief report. Students usually process one small collection in the first semester of their appointment and may process an additional collection in a later semester. This project will help students develop their knowledge of archival best practices and CAHC software and workflows.

Digital Services Lab Project
Under the supervision of Digital Records Specialist Caitlin Robertson, GAs will spend one semester working on a project for the Digital Services Lab. The project may involve large-scale digitization of materials, digital file management, metadata creation, and/or other tasks related to digital preservation. Students will summarize their work on the project in a brief report. Students usually complete this project in the second or third semester of their appointment. This project will help students strengthen their knowledge of CAHC workflows, archival software, and the principles and practices of digital preservation.

Special Project
In their final semester, GAs will be assigned a project focused on strengthening a specific skill set or knowledge area chosen by the student. This project may involve collection processing, digital preservation, outreach and engagement, or some other area of archival practice. CAHC staff will be responsible for defining the project, but will attempt to accommodate the student's interests. At the conclusion of the project, the GA will summarize their work in a brief report. This project will help students further develop their knowledge of archival best practices and CAHC software and workflows.

Small Physical Exhibit
Under the supervision of Engagement Coordinator James Wethington, GAs will create a small physical exhibit using CAHC collection materials to be displayed in one of the cases outside Suite 202 at CAHC. Students may choose the topic of their exhibit, and should think critically about the exhibit scale and how best to present physical materials in a display case. This project will help students learn about CAHC collections and how to create engaging and thoughtful public-facing content.

Notable Arkansans Web Exhibit
Under the supervision of Head Archivist Emily Summers, GAs will use CAHC materials to create a Notable Arkansans web exhibit, a small online exhibit about an influential or interesting person from Arkansas. Students will be assigned a person to write about and will create the exhibit using WordPress. This project will help students strengthen their research and writing skills and learn how to create engaging and thoughtful public-facing content.

Encyclopedia of Arkansas Article
Under the supervision of Engagement Coordinator James Wethington, GAs will research and write an entry for the *Encyclopedia of Arkansas*. Students are encouraged to choose a topic related to CAHC collections or to their other research projects or interests. This project is usually assigned in the student's third semester, when they will select their topic and begin researching and writing. In the following semester, students will finish writing and submit their article to CALS for peer review. This project will help students learn to locate and evaluate primary and secondary sources for use in original research and strengthen their writing skills.

Interview with Archival Professional
In their first semester, GAs will identify a practicing archivist or librarian and conduct a short interview with them about their career. GAs will reflect on what they learned in a brief report, and briefly describe their experience in their final presentation at the end of the semester. This project will help GAs network with others in the field and learn how to present themselves professionally.

Resume, Cover Letter, and Mock Interview
In their final semester, GAs will write a professional CV and/or resume suitable for archivist or librarian jobs and will write a practice cover letter for a job posting they find interesting. They will share their CV and cover letter with the Student Coordinator, who will provide feedback. In addition, GAs will participate in a virtual mock interview with CAHC staff, who will provide feedback and tips to help the student improve their interview skills. GAs will also have the opportunity to discuss the job market and application process with professionals in the field. This set of projects will help students refine their writing skills, learn to present themselves professionally, and prepare themselves for the job market.

Final Presentation
At the end of each semester, each GA will deliver a short (approximately 10-minute) presentation to CAHC staff about their work and what they have learned. This presentation should include a slide deck. This project will allow GAs to share their progress with their peers and CAHC staff, and learn how to present themselves professionally.

Your Semester Projects, Fall 2025:

- Collection Processing Project – name of collection
- Interview with Archival Professional
- Final Presentation

Semester Schedule:

Deadlines are approximate and subject to change based on project progress and staff availability.

Week 1 (Aug 20)

Orientation & Trainings

- Graduate Assistant Onboarding
- Decorate desk space 😀
- Introduction to Confluence – read Graduate Assistants page
- Meet with Student Coordinator for overview of semester projects & goals

Research Room

- Complete Library of Congress Classification tutorials

    - Wilmington University Library Tutorials – complete “Tutorial: One” through “Tutorial: Testing”
    - Kent State University Tutorials – complete Tutorial and Tests 1-3
- Read Brown, “The Reference Interview: Theories and Practice,” Library Philosophy and Practice (2008)

Processing Project

- Read Processing Project Guidelines
- Begin reading Processing Collections Manual

Week 2 (Aug 25)

Orientation & Trainings

- Introduction to ArchivesSpace – skim ArchivesSpace Manual in Confluence
- Introduction to CONTENTdm – skim CONTENTdm Manual in Confluence
- Introduction to Preservica – read Preservica page in Confluence

Reading Discussion (Wed, Aug 27, 11:00am) – Topic: Archival Theory and Practice, led by Amanda

- Santamaria, “Ch.2: Beyond MPLP: Principles of Extensible Processing” in *Extensible Processing for Archives and Special Collections: Reducing Processing Backlogs* (2015): pp.15-27

Research Room

- Continue LoC tutorials & “Reference Interview”
- Begin shadowing CAHC staff
- Practice shelving books

Social Media

- Read Social Media Guidelines
- Training with Engagement Coordinator James Wethington
- Post #1 Due

Processing Project

- Read Processing Collections Manual
- Overview of processing workflow & introduction to processing project with Student Coordinator

Week 3 (Sept 1)

Reading Discussion (Wed, Sept 3, 11:00am) – Topic: Ethics & Archives, led by Amanda

- Caswell & Cifor, “From Human Rights to Feminist Ethics: Radical Empathy in the Archives,” *Archivaria* 81 (Spring 2016): 23-43.

Research Room

- Continue shadowing CAHC staff
- Practice shelving books as needed

Metadata Backlog

- Read Metadata Backlog Guidelines

- Training with Student Coordinator
- First digital object(s) assigned – Due Week of Sept 15

Processing Project
- Work on inventory and processing plan

Week 4 (Sept 8)

Reading Discussion (Wed, Sept 10, 11:00am) – Topic: Copyright, led by Amanda
- Urban, "How Fair Use Can Help Solve the Orphan Works Problem," *Berkeley Technology Law Journal* 27.1379 (2012): 1379-1429.

Research Room
- Continue shadowing CAHC staff
- Practice shelving books as needed

Social Media
- Post #2 Due

Processing Project
- Submit Processing Plan to Student Coordinator

Week 5 (Sept 15)

Orientation & Trainings
- Patron request training with Head Archivist Emily Summers
    - *Patron requests will be assigned as needed*

Reading Discussion (Wed, Sept 17, 11:00am) – Topic: Metadata, led by James
- Digital Public Library of America, "Special Projects in Reparative and Inclusive Description," YouTube, (2024).

Research Room
- Begin independent desk shifts

Metadata Backlog
- Upload assigned digital objects & metadata to CONTENTdm
- New digital object(s) assigned – Due Week of Sept 29

Processing Project
- Begin processing

Interview an Archival Professional
- Read interview project guidelines
- Overview of project with Student Coordinator
- Select interview subject and make contact

Week 6 (Sept 22)

Reading Discussion (Wed, Sept 24, 11:00am) – Topic: Grants & Funding, led by Amanda

- Stuart, "Ch. 14: The roles of libraries, archives, and museums in the cultural economy: Perception, documentation, and vision for the future," in *Economic Considerations for Libraries, Archives and Museums* (2022): pp.197-211

Research Room Shift

Social Media

- Post #3 Due

Week 7 (Sept 29)

Reading Discussion (Wed, Oct 1, 11:00am) – Topic: Access and Outreach, led by James

- Oklahoma Archivists Association, "Archiving 101: Fundamentals of Collection Management, Part 5 - Access and Outreach," YouTube (2025).

Research Room Shift

Metadata Backlog

- Upload assigned digital objects & metadata to CONTENTdm
- New digital object(s) assigned – Due Week of Oct 13

Interview an Archival Professional

- Schedule date for interview – must take place before Week of Nov 10

Week 8 (Oct 6)

Orientation & Trainings

- Skim Digitization Manual in Confluence in advance of DSL Intensive next week

Reading Discussion (Wed, Oct 8, 11:00am) – Topic: Archiving Audiovisual Materials, led by Amanda

- Wharton, "Bespoke ethics and moral casuistry in the conservation of contemporary art," *Journal of the Institute of Conservation* 41.1 (2018): 58-70

Research Room Shift

Social Media

- Post #4 Due

Midterm Evaluation Meeting

Week 9 (Oct 13)

Orientation & Trainings

- Digital Services Lab Intensive

Reading Discussion (Wed, Oct 15, 11:00am) – Topic: Digital Preservation, led by Caitlin

- Rausing and Baldwin, "Introduction," in From Dust to Digital: Ten Years of the Endangered Archives Program, ed. Maja Kominko (2015): pp.xxxvii-xxxvii.
- Lewisohn, "Conservation of the Iranian Golha radio programmes and the heritage of Persian classical poetry and music" in *From Dust to Digital: Ten Years of the Endangered Archives Program*, ed. Maja Kominko (2015): pp.587-616.
- Review Endangered Archives Program website

Research Room Shift

Metadata Backlog

- Upload assigned digital objects & metadata to CONTENTdm
- New digital object(s) assigned – Due Week of Oct 27

Processing Project

- Meet with Student Coordinator to discuss progress

Week 10 (Oct 20)

Reading Discussion (Wed, Oct 22, 11:00am) – Topic: AI in the Archives, led by Amanda

- Courtney, "Beyond the Screen: Machine Learning and Metadata Creation at GBH Archives," *American Archive of Public Broadcasting*, Dec 9, 2024.
- Keen, "Be Not Afr(AI)d: A GBH Intern's Perspective on the Future of AI in Archives," *American Archive of Public Broadcasting*, Apr 14, 2025.

Research Room Shift

Social Media

- Post #5 Due

Week 11 (Oct 27)

Reading Discussion (Wed, Oct 29, 11:00am) – Topic: Noah's Choice

Research Room Shift

Metadata Backlog

- Upload assigned digital objects & metadata to CONTENTdm
- New digital object(s) assigned – Due Week of Nov 10

Week 12 (Nov 3)

Reading Discussion (Wed, Nov 5, 11:00am) – Topic: Kacey's Choice

Research Room Shift

Social Media

- Post #6 Due

Week 13 (Nov 10)

Reading Discussion (Wed, Nov 12, 11:00am) – Topic: Liam's Choice

Research Room Shift

Metadata Backlog

- Upload assigned digital objects & metadata to CONTENTdm
- New digital object(s) assigned – Due Week of Dec 1

Interview with Archival Professional

- Submit report on interview to Student Coordinator

Week 14 (Nov 17)

Reading Discussion (Wed, Nov 19, 11:00am) – Topic: James' Choice

Research Room Shift

Social Media

- Post #6 Due

Interview with Archival Professional

- Share experience with peers at reading discussion

Final Presentation

- Read Final Presentation Guidelines

Week 15 (Nov 24) – Fall Break

Thanksgiving, Thursday, Nov 27, and Friday, Nov 28 – CAHC Closed

GAs can work this week to make up missed hours. Contact the Student Coordinator if you plan to work during Fall Break.

Week 16 (Dec 1) – Last Day of Class: Dec 3

Research Room Shift

Metadata Backlog

- Upload assigned digital objects & metadata to CONTENTdm

Processing Project

- Finalize processing project (or get project to a good stopping point)
- Submit final report to Student Coordinator

Final Presentation (Wed, Dec 3, 11:00am)

- Present to GAs & CAHC staff
- Upload copy of presentation to GA Projects & Presentations Folder

Final Evaluation Meeting