Our CDLTI brought together faculty and staff from across Whitman College: from Archives, Art History, Geology and Environmental Studies, History, Maxey Museum, Religion, the Sheehan Gallery, and Spanish. Together, we set out to explore the history of collecting – both on- and off-campus – as well as the unique challenges and opportunities of teaching with the College’s Collections.

The genesis of the CDLTI came with the realization that a number of faculty members already use paintings, photographs, realia, and manuscripts to great effect in their teaching, but that their work is not necessarily well-known to others on campus. Even more significant remains the fact that many members of our campus community remain unaware of the depth and breadth of our holdings. We therefore embarked upon a focused investigation of the Whitman Collections, with an eye to amplifying their use in the curriculum across campus and making a first step in developing institutional awareness of the ethics and legacies of housing such collections.

Our work was hands-on. We toured Whitman’s Collections, shared assignments both used in the past and still in the planning stages for future courses, and we looked for opportunities to incorporate material-culture objects in other courses. We also discussed the practices of collecting and archiving, in antiquity, early modernity, and in the contemporary world. The group gathered for seven sessions of two hours and three special sessions: a tour of the Walla Walla Foundry, a meetup with Elyse Semerdjian’s CDLTI, Orientalism, Photography, and Human Zoos, and a tour of the campus tree-mapping program. Our readings included selections from Anderson, Reinventing the Museum: The Evolving Conversation on the Paradigm Shift; James, Museums in a Troubled World; Turkle, Evocative Objects: Things We Think With; Weil, Making Museums Matter; and Moist and Banash, eds., Contemporary Collecting: Objects, Practices, and the Fates of Things.

- Melissa Salrin & Sarah Davies, co-coordinators
Syllabus

Session 1: February 6\textsuperscript{th} -- Collections campus tour
Tour of Campus Collections, Introductions and Origins

Readings:
\begin{itemize}
\end{itemize}

Presentation: Sarah Davies
Focus of Discussion: An introductory discussion regarding the \textit{habitus} of collecting, its ancient origins, and the scope and place (literally and metaphorically) of Whitman’s collections and their contemporary challenges. Sarah spoke about her experience teaching with Maxey Museum and Archives, for Hist227: \textit{Rome} and Hist215: \textit{Who Owns Antiquity}?

Session 2: February 20\textsuperscript{th} -- Archives
Genealogy of Collections

Readings:
\begin{itemize}
\end{itemize}

Presentation: Rogers Miles, Melissa Salrin
Focus of Discussion: A closer look at the development of the "public museum" in the 19th and 20th centuries. This session used material from Archives to investigate Whitman history and to ponder ways of integrating this history (and its archival material) into a wider range of activities on campus. Rogers shared the details of his course, Rel348: \textit{The Secularization of Whitman College}. Melissa spoke about her work with Lisa Uddin's “Imagining Walla Walla” assignment and her work with Gens245: \textit{Critical Voices}.

Special Session: February 26-7 -- Walla Walla Foundry tour

Session 3: March 6\textsuperscript{th} -- Sheehan Galleries
Collecting as Cultural Practice

Readings:
\begin{itemize}
\end{itemize}

Presentation: Kynde Kiefel
Focus of Discussion: New directions in the future of collecting and for Whitman’s place(s) within and in response to these trends. This session explored the nature of Whitman’s latest acquisitions and issues regarding their storage and display in the Sheehan Gallery spaces and scattered in public spaces across campus. Kynde presented her work in researching, acquiring, and promoting Ruth Fluno’s artwork and papers.

Session 4: April 3rd -- Hall of Sciences
States of Nature

Readings:
• Sherry Turkle, 2011. Evocative Objects: Things We Think With.

Presentation: Bob Carson
Focus of Discussion: Whitman Collections in the Hall of Science. This session introduced the extensive holdings and resources of the departments of Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Astronomy, and Geology. Bob Carson coordinated faculty from each department in leading portions of the tour, which visited the Herbarium, Planetarium, greenhouses, and other major facilities.

Session 5: April 10th – Maxey Museum and Archives
Histories and Identities, Inclusion and Exclusion

Readings:

Presentation: Laura Ferguson, Nico Parmley
Focus of Discussion: Teaching with objects: logistics, issues, solutions, and new directions. Nico discussed his work teaching with Whitman’s facsimile manuscript of the 13th century Cantigas de Santa Maria. Laura spoke about Hist 259: American West and her use of Maxey Museum and Archives materials. She shared examples of object lesson assignments inspired by common-place.org.
**Session 6: April 24th -- Maxey Museum**
Ethics and Intentionality

**Readings:**

Presentation: James Warren

**Focus of Discussion:** Topics discussed during this session included Maxey Museum and the Power and Privilege Symposium at Whitman, as well as Whitman’s relationships (both existing and potential) with the wider communities of Walla Walla and the Northwest Consortium. Jamie provided examples of the use of Maxey Museum materials in Pol100: *Race, Gender, Body*, Eng252: *Intermediate Nonfiction*, and in the recent Maxey Museum collaborative exhibition, *Particles on the Wall*.

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**Session 7: May 1st -- Sheehan Galleries and Collections campus tour**
Beyond Collections: Relationships, Responsibilities.

**Readings:**

Presentation: Krista Gulbransen

**Focus of Discussion:** In this session, Krista led a discussion of the history of modern museums, their unique and ongoing interrelationships with the Academy, and her own work in developing a new course for fall 2015 – Arth210: *Museums and the Politics of Display*.

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**Special Session: May 3rd -- Continuing the Conversation**
Joint Meeting with Elyse Semerdjian’s CDLTI: *Orientalism, Photography, and Human Zoos*

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**Special Session: May 8th -- Campus Tree-Mapping Program**
Tour of campus with Bob Carson, who introduced the program and its initiative to establish a database of all trees on campus and incorporate this data into GIS.
Participant Reflections

Bob Carson
(Geology and Environmental Studies)

[report to be submitted, June 25th]

Sarah Davies
(History)

The workshop was extremely successful. I found the readings both relevant and thought provoking, and I looked forward to every one of our sessions, which generated inspiring conversations and unexpected new ideas. My eyes were opened to the unique depth and breadth of the College’s holdings, across a range of disciplines, and I was surprised by the many stories that this campus has to tell, and which need to be shared. I also found myself wanting to take a slew of my colleagues’ courses and eager to work towards developing a “Collections” cross-disciplinary “emphasis” in the College curriculum.

I am planning to add more “object lessons” from the College's Collections into a greater number of ancient history courses. I have already used Late Roman glass and coins from the Maxey Museum in an Intro to Rome course, and have integrated a small archival research project into a special topics course entitled, *Who Owns Antiquity?*. I would like to build upon these foundations, first by expanding both assignments. The coin assignment, for example, can be incorporated into two courses next year (Intro to Rome and the Roman Revolution). I will be asking students to spend more time with the coins and to develop written and oral work to “read” and analyze these objects as primary source “texts,” before sharing their discoveries with their peers. Whitman’s cuneiform tablets and cones (and their accession documents), which reside in the Archives, can also be incorporated into Hist-180, *Ancient Cities and Empires*. Having learned about Whitman’s facsimile of the 13th century Cantigas de Santa Maria, I am interested in having students consider this object in the context of discussions of copying and of the ancient manuscript tradition. And I am inspired to pursue the College’s acquisition of more such teaching facsimiles – such as a facsimile of the Vergilius Vaticanus, a late 4th cent. CE illuminated copy of Vergil’s *Aeneid*.

This CDLTI has also made me vastly aware of the need for more outreach in the general category of “teaching with collections” – between faculty, staff, and students, and in increased collaboration with the community. Whitman’s diverse Collections are sprinkled all across campus, and in some cases, tucked away into corners. This phenomenon is both a blessing and a curse, and it could benefit from greater awareness on the part of the campus community. The activity of collecting is not at all a passive process and it should not be perceived as such. Instead, it requires a
wider conversation, about what Whitman College represents, historically and in the contemporary world, and where it wants to go. And this conversation should then expand to engage with local museums, schools, and groups (e.g., Fort Walla Walla, Kirkman House, the Foundry, Walla Walla AIA). AIA’s National Archaeology Day in October could provide one among many points of contact. And further afield, there are numerous potential opportunities in the forum of the Northwest Consortium (in my discipline, for example, Willamette’s Hallie Ford Museum has a teaching collection of antiquities and a series of ancient art/archaeology visiting exhibitions).

Laura Ferguson
(History)

I would absolutely say that our workshop was a success. It was a pleasurable and collaborative experience. I learned so much about the college’s collections and about how my colleagues use, manage, and/or support the use of these collections in the classroom. The workshop included a nice blend of learning about various collections and sharing ideas, assignments, and projects that each of us might adapt to our own particular classes. We had many productive conversations about the important role these collections play in the college’s curriculum and about how we might manage, support, and promote them.

My participation in the Beyond A Cabinet of Curiosities CDTLI has already shaped my courses at Whitman. For a class on 19th Century U.S. history (offered this spring), I had planned to have my students create an exhibit in collaboration with the Maxey Museum as their final project. Since this was the first time I was doing a museum exhibit as a part of a course the discussions I had with the other members of the CDTLI about theories and approaches to exhibits, the logistics of creating exhibits, and the history of the Maxey collection were tremendously helpful. Jamie Warren and I drew on the conversations we had as a part of the CDTLI to help the students create their exhibit. Additionally, the students in my History of the American West class visited the archive this spring. I have had the chance to work with Melissa Salrin as a part of several of my courses, but I think our collaboration this semester was especially successful. Drawing on discussions we had as a part of the CDTLI about the relationship between Whitman and the surrounding community and our desire to encourage students to think deeply about the history of the college and region, Melissa selected documents and objects from the college’s archival holdings that highlighted changing interpretations of the story of Marcus and Narcissa Whitman. Many of the students later commented on the significance of reflecting on the college’s history and namesake. The students’ visit to the archive and the discussions they had with Melissa during their visit prepared them for our trip to the Whitman Mission. Pairing the visit to the archive with the trip to the mission was a very successful component of the course as a whole. Though my time as a visiting professor has come to an end, I know that the collaborations with Jamie and Melissa greatly enriched my courses this semester, and I would imagine that they will do similar projects with other professors in the future.
Krista Gulbransen
(Art History)

This CDTLI group, my first at Whitman, was truly an invigorating experience, simultaneously introducing me to the superb collections across campus (at Sheehan, Maxey, Penrose Archives, Science building, etc.) and providing me with an invaluable opportunity to engage with faculty and staff from across the disciplines. Our discussions and readings were incredibly thought-provoking, and I was inspired to hear about how faculty have utilized objects and archival documents in their teaching. Given my teaching and research specialty in South Asia (and the college’s lack of collections from that part of the world), I struggled to conceptualize how to incorporate the collections into my teaching when I arrived at Whitman at the beginning of the 2014-2015 academic year. After discussions with my colleagues in this CDTLI group, however, the number of ways I can integrate Whitman’s collections into my own classes now seems endless. This will certainly affect my pedagogy moving forward at Whitman. For example, I discovered that the geology department has samples of minerals that were once used to make the pigments used in Indian painting. I plan to borrow these samples to share with my students in future classes on South Asia. Melissa Salrin and I have also discussed the possibility of purchasing facsimiles of Indian illustrated manuscripts for use in my courses. In my experience, these opportunities to interact with objects can be very beneficial to learning.

I believe the CDTLI group also laid the groundwork for future cross-disciplinary collaborations in teaching, particularly my Fall 2015 course “Museums and the Politics of Display.” I designed this course in order to incorporate existing collections into my teaching, despite the aforementioned lack of South Asian materials. One of the projects in this class will require students to study the collections on campus to better understand their origins and the manner in which they have been displayed, both historically and today. As a result of this CDTLI group, I now have the support of people working in Penrose Archives, the Maxey Museum, and the Sheehan Gallery to facilitate my students’ research.

Over the course of the semester, I became aware of the impressive size and breadth of the collections on campus and the incredible amount of work the staff put into caring for, documenting, cataloguing, and facilitating faculty and student use of the collections. It occurs to me that the college could increase its investment into these efforts, in order to more fully integrate the collection into students’ educational experience at Whitman. Our group also discussed the possibility of sharing our ideas about ways of incorporating collections into our teaching with the broader faculty, perhaps in the form of a group CTL or Faculty Forum presentation. We also anticipate that tours of campus collections for new faculty and students would be hugely beneficial for the entire Whitman community.
**Kynde Kiefel**  
(Sheehan Gallery)

The Spring 2015 CDLTI group ‘Beyond A Cabinet of Curiosities’ was incredibly generative; each meeting a cornucopia of ideas; every session, professionally inspiring. Represented here was a strong variety of voices, all of whom brought necessary and innovative perspectives to this pedagogical investigation of Whitman’s varied Collections. One of the most successful aspects, in my opinion, stemmed from our variety: an excellent set of staff, junior faculty, and long-time tenured faculty. This academic cocktail offered up a combination of new, optimistic options for collections on campus, folded into seasoned experiences of what has and has not worked in the past, specifically in relation to pedagogy. Each member’s role(s) at the college and their subsequent presentations to the group offered detailed and illuminating knowledge from their areas of interest, their research focus, and the myriad ways in which collection objects and documents have been and can be utilized. There now blooms a list of very real and inventive ways that faculty can make use of Whitman Collections in the classroom, ways we can involve both current and past students, and concepts on how best to involve the larger surrounding community.

Based on the conversations and planning within the Collections CDLTI, there are a number of immediate and long-term ways to tie all three collecting bodies on campus to curriculum. Group members seem to agree that increased visibility and access to collections is key. A consistent sentiment among faculty and students I collaborate with year-to-year is the oft-stated admission: “I didn’t even know this was here!” One option to shift this common experience would be to include collections tours and presentations right out of the gate, making these objects and documents known to faculty, staff, and students upon initial orientation to our institution. Strong efforts will also be made to connect Encounters material with collections. For example, there is a possibility that I will present on Jim Dine’s ‘Carnival’ this Fall 2015, as Encounters faculty will be making this campus sculpture and artist in the upcoming semester. Another suggestion to increase exposure entails a CTL presentation on Collections and/or a Faculty Forum during the 2015/16 Academic Year, emphasizing themes as they relate to syllabi, whether those motifs lie in specific objects or the overall concepts found in museums and collections. A much-anticipated and long-awaited reality relating to collections on campus will culminate in Krista Gulbransen's Museum Studies course, which I am certain will propagate already-vibrant student interest in these practices. In addition to Whitman students learning about the history, design, and installation of museum shows is the plan to involve our professors in the same. We will make more focused efforts to invite Whitman faculty to curate or co-curate exhibitions within the Sheehan Gallery, Maxey Museum, Penrose Library displays, Stevens Gallery shows, based on their interests and areas of expertise.

Rogers Miles suggested the creation of a publication (or series of publications), highlighting Whitman’s hidden collections. This would complement the very visible
sculpture and two-dimensional collections throughout campus and possibly serve as a spark to ignite interest in the lesser-known aspects of our area’s history. Group members participated in a number of tours for our CDLTI, each one offering a unique set of possibilities. In addition to those “rooms within rooms” to which we were allowed access and explanation, we toured the Walla Walla Foundry, an already-rich Whitman Collections connection many agreed should be cultivated even further.

This “Beyond the Cabinet of Curiosities” Collections CDLTI was beautifully designed and felt deeply successful in what it set out to do. Each of us now sits on a more solid structure of knowledge previously hidden or only peripherally understood in relation to college collections. Connections were made that will culminate in future collaborations and actual programming. Melissa Salrin and Sarah Davies guided our CDLTI with an effective mixture of dynamic vision and real world application. From this solid base, members seemed to find great value and excitement in furthering an educational community around collections, lighting the dark corners and hidden rooms on campus, and bridging departments, resources, and campus goals to build the best educational experiences available. There is so much to gain from the physical pieces and adjoining stories of Whitman College’s various collections and this CDLTI brought about exciting ways to conjure from them new life.

**Rogers Miles**

(Religion)

Like the blind men and the elephant, all the participants in this CDLTI seminar had some acquaintance with a portion of Whitman’s collections but little or no knowledge of the beast as a whole. Though I had come to know the Archives through collaborating with Melissa Salrin in teaching students to do historical research in religion, I had no idea, for example, of the extent of the collections in the Hall of Science. I marveled at the herbarium and the snakes and reptiles—both living and embalmed—and the rock and fossil collections as well as the taxidermy. Curators of Whitman’s diverse collections like Melissa Salrin, Kynde Kiefel, James Warren, Heidi Dobson, and Bob Carson not only informed us about the collections but impressed upon us the importance of maintaining them. Other members of the seminar like Sarah Davies, Nico Parmley, and Krista Gulbransen gave stimulating demonstrations of the way they use objects and texts from Whitman’s collections in their classroom teaching. The reading in the seminar placed the collections at Whitman College in a wider context. I learned, for example, how collecting began as an aristocratic activity, how it morphed in the nineteenth century with the birth of museums as paternalistic institutions and celebrations of imperial power, and the challenges facing those same museums in the present and in the future.

I come away from the seminar enthused. I am looking forward next fall to introducing my first-year students in Encounters to Jim Dine’s *Carnival*, one sculpture from Whitman’s collection of many outdoor sculptures and a new addition
to the Encounters syllabus for the fall semester. And now that I have more than a speaking relationship with Kynde Kiefel—thanks to the seminar—I may ask her to address my students about the work. Perhaps I can even take them to the Walla Walla Foundry where Carnival was cast and which I visited as a member of the seminar. I am looking forward to teaching again this fall my archives based course on the secularization of Whitman College. Having seen Sarah Davies demonstrate how to read ancient Greek and Roman coins, I will be looking for objects as well as texts attesting to the presence of religion on the Whitman College campus in the past and in the present.

Nico Parmley
(Spanish)

The very nature of this CDLTI, “Beyond a Cabinet of Curiosities: A Pedagogical Investigation of College Collections,” not only encouraged me to push the limits of my own curiosity, but also to challenge my current approaches to familiar material and channel it into creative and productive pedagogical methodologies. And this necessarily opens up countless opportunities for cross-disciplinary teaching and learning. I am seeing this immediately as I prepare to work this July in the archives of the National Library on Barcelona, Spain. I have done archival research before, but I feel am approaching my study this time with a much broader perspective. In particular, while in the past, I would have simply mined documents for information immediately relevant to my topic, this summer, I look forward to considering the whole system and process of not only what, but also how, my documents are archived and presented. I can't predict my results, but I have already begun to reconsider the way I have approached a 13th-century manuscript I studied two years ago at El Escorial, and on which I have recently published an article.

Perhaps most importantly, I am excited to find ways to bring this method of research to my students. That is, I would like to find a way to virtually bring them along with me during the process of discovery. A few of my colleagues in the CDLTI were able to provide concrete examples of how this can and has been done in the classroom. Moreover, I am already thinking about completely different kinds of courses I can offer in regards to medieval archival research. How can I make these documents/manuscripts/artifacts/collections not only relevant, but come alive to my students. In many ways, my presentation of the material demands the same theory and methodology of an installation or exhibit. What do I choose to present? How do I choose to present it? Giving students an opportunity to peek for a moment behind that curtain could produce fascinating results, and equip them with much more than information about something I found in a library one day in Spain.
Melissa Salrin  
(Whitman College and Northwest Archives)

Our CDLTI was a rich and invigorating experience. I wish we could have bottled the enthusiasm and energy each of our participants brought to our meetings; it was intellectually stimulating and also great fun to work through document and object sets with colleagues, learning how others have put campus collections to good use in their classrooms. The time we spent touring facilities and learning about collections across campus was also useful, given it helped us broaden our awareness not only about the genealogy of campus collecting practices but also of the sorts of hidden collections found across campus. I think this particular seminar was especially successful, given that we had scholars from all three divisions represented—we were able to recognize the ways creative approaches to pedagogy and outreach could provide more avenues for dialogue across disciplinary divides. In many ways, our conversations turned toward the notion of collections as laboratories—as sites for hands-on engagement with larger themes of inclusion/exclusion, ethics of display and ownership, and material culture. As Whitman College continues to seek ways to distinguish itself from other selective liberal arts colleges, one key approach could be capitalizing more on the rich and varied collections it possesses. Indeed, a more thoughtful, sustained approach to college collections would enhance not only scholarship and learning but also our sense of community and place.

Whenever students visit special collections, I encourage them to be mindful of the power structures that undergird the institution of the archives and to think about the gaps that exist in its holdings. By foregrounding this point, I want to create an opportunity for them to think deeply about the constructed nature of knowledge. We always already need to interrogate the institution of the archives itself and not merely the documents it preserves; as this seminar has revealed to me, we as an institution need to create more opportunities to investigate the collections and collecting practices of Whitman College. By inviting students to think about how institutions like Whitman imbue authority in their collections, we help students develop critical thinking skills and help them recognize their connections to larger communities, both scholarly and public.

This seminar has deepened my appreciation for the outstanding resources available in our campus collections; I am especially in debt to Laura Ferguson’s exceptional use of both archival resources and campus and local sites as method of encouraging student engagement with objects. I am eager to build from our conversations and collaborate closely with fellow participants on new classes, especially Krista Gulbransen’s offering on museums and the politics of display. I also intend to make thoughtful purchases in our rare book holdings that can more readily support faculty interests and investigations of material culture and lesser-known campus collections. I was especially impressed with Jamie Warren’s collaboration with Jason Pribilsky and their work to bring the Particles on the Wall exhibition to the Maxey Museum; I think this kind of innovating programming and outreach has multiple benefits. I would like this CDLTI to lead to more such collaborations on installations.
across campus. It would be outstanding if some of us from this group could do a CTL presentation to demonstrate how we are able to incorporate campus collections into classroom assignments. I actually think additional CDLTIs in the future on this theme would be very valuable since it would enable us to invite even more faculty into these important conversations and would create the opportunity for continued interdisciplinary work. Finally, I would like our efforts to bring more visibility to campus collections.

James Warren  
(Maxey Museum)

The possibilities for teaching using Whitman’s campus collections are both (almost) limitless and severely hampered by a lack of institutional resources, visibility, and awareness. The “Cabinet of Curiosities” CDLTI focused on familiarizing the group with the scope and depth of the college’s collections (archival, historical/anthropological, artistic, scientific, and departmental), as well as on how those in the group are currently using those collections in the classroom.

In terms of the collections, the histories of them are haphazard, accidental, and marked by both a lack of self-awareness and any concerted and sustained institutional support. This is certainly true of the Maxey Museum, which still suffers from a lack of basic documentation and knowledge about the histories of items in its collections—not just where they came from, but who donated them and how those objects were acquired. This is also notable for many of the rich scientific collections, which were in many cases undocumented and any knowledge about them residing in certain personal memories rather than in any form of institutional knowledge.

Both getting word about the diverse collections and working as a group to document and provide access to all the diverse resources seems like it would pay big and unexpected dividends in terms of teaching across disciplines. Faculty members ARE teaching, with great effect, using the collections, and promoting those efforts to the administration as well as to other faculty members will only increase the pedagogical value of the collections. Along these lines, several ideas came out of these conversations, including: incorporating more information about campus collections in orientations for faculty, staff, and students; creating a brochure or newsletter for campus collections; forging more cross-campus ties to the Walla Walla Foundry; inviting more faculty members to curate and install exhibitions; using this CDLTI as the basis for a Faculty Forum; and talking to alumni about collections.

Each session allowed one group member to share how they’ve been using collections in their classrooms up to now, and to solicit some ideas about how those lessons may evolve for different classroom settings, or be developed to incorporate different collection materials. It was also an opportunity to see how members of different disciplines were using various collections, and what collections they were using.
As the Interim Exhibitions and Collections Manager for the Maxey Museum, the workshop has really demonstrated to me that the collections are already being used and that more instructors would use the collections if they were a) better aware of them and b) helped to think through how those collections could be both incorporated into what they are already doing and offer them something completely different pedagogically. This summer I will be identifying and reaching out to select instructors to discuss the use of collections in their classes.