



DIVISION OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS

## Narrative Section of a Successful Application

The attached document contains the grant narrative and selected portions of a previously funded grant application. It is not intended to serve as a model, but to give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations. Prospective applicants should consult the Summer Seminars and Institutes application guidelines at

<http://www.neh.gov/grants/education/summer-seminars-and-institutes>

for instructions. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Division of Education Programs staff well before a grant deadline.

Note: The attachment only contains the grant narrative and selected portions, not the entire funded application. In addition, certain portions may have been redacted to protect the privacy interests of an individual and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information and/or to protect copyrighted materials. The page limit for the narrative description is now **fifteen** double-spaced pages.

Project Title: Elizabeth Bishop and the Literary Archive

Institution: Westminster College

Project Director: Bethany Hicok

Grant Program: Summer Seminars and Institutes

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## **Narrative Description**

### **a) Intellectual Rationale**

The three-week NEH Summer Seminar for College and University Professors that Westminster College is proposing, *Elizabeth Bishop and the Literary Archive* (EB Seminar), will be held at Vassar College from June 12 to June 30, 2017. The seminar will bring together a broad range of college and university professors interested in or influenced by the poetry of Elizabeth Bishop (1911-1979) and her circle, including Bishop scholars in the field of the literature, history, and culture of the Americas, and, more broadly, scholars focused on interdisciplinary inquiry, gender and LGBTQ studies, and literature and archival research. The EB Seminar will be convened and guided by Westminster Professor of English **Dr. Bethany Hicok**, who is a published and internationally recognized expert in the field of Bishop scholarship and archival research, and was an NEH Summer Seminar participant in 2010. The goals of the EB Seminar are to extend and deepen our knowledge and understanding about Bishop, her circle, and literary history; introduce and develop new methods of interdisciplinary teaching and research in the humanities; strengthen the academic discourse surrounding the ethics of archival research; and develop a deeper understanding of how social issues affect artistic expression. With its emphasis on ethics, its exploration of the relationship between the public sphere and the creative process, and its focus on the effect of information technology on how we understand and define knowledge, this seminar also addresses the **NEH's Common Good Initiative**.

Bishop provides an excellent case study for this interdisciplinary, collaborative seminar for five key reasons: 1) Bishop has emerged as one of the most important and discussed American poets of the twentieth century and is widely taught in college courses on post-war American poetry, American literature surveys, travel writing and poetry, and postmodern poetry, and her

Brazilian poetry and prose translations continue to appear in a number of anthologies used in Latin American studies; 2) she has been the subject of two international conferences (Brazil in 2011 and Sheffield, UK in 2015) in the last four years and a major motion picture (Bruno Baretto's *Reaching for the Moon*, which focuses on her love affair with the Brazilian aristocrat, Lota de Macedo Soares, with whom Bishop lived in Brazil from 1951 to 1966); 3) a major reassessment of Bishop's career and reputation is currently underway as a result of the publication in the last decade of six new editions of Bishop's work, which add well over 1,000 pages of previously unpublished or long-out-of-print poetry, prose, drafts, and letters to her published oeuvre; 4) Bishop's archive continues to expand with Vassar's recent acquisition of significant new materials, such as the revelatory series of letters Bishop wrote to her psychoanalyst in 1947; and 5) current developments in literary studies and the digital humanities suggest a strong interest in literature and the archives. The theme for this year's annual conference of the Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association (PAMLA), for instance, is "Archives, Libraries, Properties," for which Dr. Hicok will be proposing a Special Session on Bishop and the Archives. In the digital humanities, Marianne Moore scholars are working collaboratively to develop a digital and searchable version of Moore's notebooks that might serve as an example of what could be done in Bishop studies. For these key reasons, the time could not be more auspicious to conduct such a seminar that would help launch the next phase of scholarship and teaching on Bishop and her circle, and to consider some of the key questions in the humanities today.

Bishop's archive at Vassar will serve during the seminar as an "informing matrix," as scholar Anita Helle has put it, that will "enlarge and enrich" the context of Bishop's writing and the ongoing reassessment of her work, life, and career (Helle, 2007). Helle was speaking of the

work of Bishop's contemporary Sylvia Plath when she made this statement in her introduction to the edited volume, *The Unraveling Archive: Essays on Sylvia Plath* (2007), but it rings equally true for any writer and her archive. Bishop's archive, like Plath's, is extensive, comprised of more than 120 boxes, 3,500 pages of drafts of poems and prose, notebooks, memorabilia, artwork, hundreds of letters to major poets and writers of the twentieth century, and Bishop's recently catalogued library, which contains more than 2,000 volumes. Moreover, the archive continues to grow with Vassar's recent acquisition of an explosive series of letters Bishop wrote to her psychoanalyst Ruth Foster in 1947, documenting her alcoholism, her sexual abuse as a child, her candid exploration of her sexual identity as a lesbian at a time of extreme homophobia and persecution, and childhood trauma—all of which she links to her own poetry. These documents, which will form the core of one of our key case studies for the seminar, constitute one of the most detailed psychosexual memoirs we have of any twentieth-century writer, and provide deep insight into the relationship between sexual identity, the creative process, and the significance of psychoanalytic discourse on the themes, ideas, and knowledge of Bishop's generation of American poets. Her archive demonstrates that Bishop was at the center of a celebrated circle of poets and writers--from Marianne Moore, Wallace Stevens, Robert Lowell and James Merrill in North America to Pablo Neruda, Carlos Drummond de Andrade and Manuel Bandeira in South America--whose collective work and correspondence with Bishop provide a rich and complex story of culture, politics, and artistic expression at mid-century that spans two continents.

The publication of new volumes of previously unpublished or long-out-of-print work has shifted the terrain of Bishop scholarship to a focus on questions of process, ethics, canon, reputation, and extra-textual concerns by making a large body of Bishop's previously

unpublished work much more accessible. Dr. Hicok helped launch the current reassessment of Bishop as the co-editor of a new collection of essays (*Elizabeth Bishop in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Reading the New Editions*, 2012) that considers the impact of new material on our understanding of Bishop. Joanne Feit Diehl called *Elizabeth Bishop in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* a “commanding collection” that “will stand at the forefront of the crucial...re-formation of Bishop’s work and her world.” *Elizabeth Bishop in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* focuses primarily on Alice Quinn’s controversial volume of Bishop’s uncollected poems, drafts, and fragments, *Edgar Allan Poe & the Juke-Box* (2006), as well as *Words in Air: The Complete Correspondence Between Elizabeth Bishop and Robert Lowell* (Travisano with Hamilton, 2008), which makes accessible almost 900 pages of letters between these two major American poets and provides one of the most thorough dialogues about literary history, culture, and the creative process at mid-century that we have to date. But the publication of so much of Bishop’s unfinished work, as well as the question of how scholars use archival materials, has been the source of some concern. This concern was voiced most spectacularly by the critic Helen Vendler when she dismissed the products of *Edgar Allan Poe & the Juke-Box* as “the maimed and stunted siblings” of Bishop’s mature and published work.<sup>1</sup> More recently, Vidyan Ravinthiran questioned whether all the focus on the archive would lead scholars to neglect the poetry and the stunning skill that makes us care about Bishop in the first place (2015). In the face of such criticism, we might consider a lesson from the world of the visual arts: as Lorrie Goldensohn points out, whole exhibits have been devoted to the sketches and “drafts” of an artist’s major works (2012). The EB Seminar is a kind of curatorial effort, then, that brings together texts in ways meant not to overshadow artistry, but rather to enhance our understanding of the beauty of the aesthetic process itself to lead us to more complex and nuanced readings of the major work of Bishop and her circle. Scholars can be attentive to both

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<sup>1</sup> From Vendler’s *New Republic* review “The Art of Losing,” April 3, 2006, 33-37.

the archival record and a poet's primary aesthetics. Thus, we can say that Bishop is important, first and foremost, because she is one of the great writers of the twentieth century, and we can write with attention to her stylistic brilliance. At the same time, we can understand that the identities of literary figures, as many archivists agree, "are constructed and reconstructed through the experience of archival documents" (Craven, 2008). Archives themselves are shifting sites of knowledge that are incomplete, fragmentary, and subject to additions and deletions (Smith and Stead, 2013). As a writer's reputation changes (as it has for Bishop), so does our reading of the archives, and, indeed, of the finished work, as we have seen so clearly in the dramatic shifts that our reading of Bishop has undergone over the last fifty years. Hence, archives can "help us to reclaim and reframe the work and reputations of literary figures" (Smith and Stead, 2013).

The EB Seminar will benefit participants in several ways. It will help them to deepen their knowledge of the theoretical and critical debates surrounding the archives and literary history; develop teaching and scholarship on Bishop and her circle with opportunities to publish in an edited volume of essays; debate key issues in the digital humanities; and learn new methodologies in textual scholarship, such as "genetic criticism," which will inform both their teaching and scholarship. One of the key critical literary movements in France to emerge in the last decade, genetic criticism attempts to reconstruct the poet's workshop by focusing on manuscript study as a form of literary criticism that considers the dynamic relationship between the "final" text and the "textual components" that came before it, thereby "encompass[ing] all the stages of literary creation" (Van Mierlo, 2013).

Dr. Hicok has a strong commitment to the teaching and research goals of the NEH Summer Seminars, having participated in a five-week NEH Summer Seminar on Brazilian literature, guided by Dr. David Foster and held in São Paulo, Brazil in 2010. Through her

participation in this seminar, Dr. Hicok developed knowledge of Brazilian literature and Portuguese language that provided a foundation for her forthcoming book *Elizabeth Bishop's Brazil* (University of Virginia Press, April 2016). In the interest of developing a truly collaborative experience for participants, outlining key areas of new teaching methodologies and scholarship on Bishop, and providing multiple opportunities for consultation and work with archival materials, the EB Seminar time frame (three weeks) will provide sufficient opportunity to develop the narratives of our case studies and promote meaningful discussions with our guest lecturers.

### **b) Program of Study**

Dr. Hicok has structured the EB Seminar to encourage collaboration among scholars, promote the integration of teaching and scholarship, foster interdisciplinary study in the humanities, and help to broaden scholarship on Bishop and her circle. The seminar will be organized around “case studies” (for instance, the Ruth Foster letters) that take advantage of the archive and its contents with a focus on a series of intertwined questions of concern to both archival and literary study: How does newly discovered material change our perceptions of writers and their world? What is the relationship between a poet’s drafts and her final texts? What is the best way to use these materials in the classroom? How do social and cultural forces affect what is in the archive and how we interpret its contents? The buying and selling of a poet’s papers can turn literary estates into big business with archives, publishers, and executors all bidding for a piece of the pie. What are the implications of publishing the working contents of a poet’s workshop? What are the ethical considerations of publishing deeply personal letters that the poet may not have intended to make public?

The case study approach is meant to provide a model of integrative teaching and

scholarship for seminar participants to apply to their own scholarship and teaching, introducing an effective method for helping students to work through questions of ethics and aesthetics and to better understand the complex dimensions of authorship. While case studies are most often used in law, medicine, and business, they can also be useful in thinking through ethical problems in the humanities. We can, first and foremost, consider the entire three-week seminar as a case study in the relationship between the poet and her archives, as Linda Morra has done in her study of the archives of Canadian writers (*Unarrested Archives: Case Studies in Twentieth-Century Canadian Women's Authorship*, 2014). One could say that Bishop herself was a theorist of the archives as repositories of memory, and that she acted as her own curator of memory. In her 1971 poem "Crusoe in England," for instance, at a time in her life when she contemplated where her own papers and effects would be placed, the poet's avatar, Crusoe, now safe in England after having been rescued from his island, notes that the local museum has asked him to "leave everything to them"—all the products of his island industry, e.g., a flute, his knife, "shriveled shoes," and "shedding goatskin trousers." These objects, made by Crusoe on his island and used for his very survival, will now be placed in a museum as things torn from their original use and value. "How can anyone want such things?" Crusoe asks. But Bishop knew full well why anyone would want these things. The objects in museums and archives can serve as important reminders of our past and its relationship to the present. They can answer important questions about who we are and what we know. Bishop's poetry is full of archival documents that act as indexical signs to the business of recapturing and re-finding long-buried memories of family, nation, and history. These signs point the way to understanding human suffering and constructing one's own identity from the shards unearthed from the past and placed in the larger context of family and nation. Moreover, as Linda Anderson has noted, Bishop's recursive writing process, which

involved “returning to drafts, [and] using ideas and images from notebooks written years before,” meant that Bishop actually gathered into her work “archival traces and memories which could also provide connections and echoes across time” (Anderson, 2013).

Within the broader case study of the poet and her archive, we will focus on the 1947 letters Bishop wrote to her psychoanalyst as a way of highlighting the broader ethical issues raised by the seminar. This “case” is particularly interesting because it will allow us to situate our discussion at the intersection of aesthetics and ethics. Our method will consist of bringing together a complex of texts for discussion—the letters themselves, theoretical and ethical discussions on the use of such material, selected writings in Freud and psychoanalysis, related work that focuses on the “queer archive,” and poetry and drafts that Bishop composed at the same time that have significant links to the letters. Participants will summarize readings and provide significant questions for discussion that will help us construct a complex and nuanced story about the value and importance of this material to our understanding of literary history and the creative process, determine responsible approaches on how to use this material (should it be published in its entirety, for instance?), and consider models and methodologies that would enhance our ability to tell the larger cultural story without losing sight of the aesthetics (that is, the sheer beauty and brilliance of this particular poet’s work).

#### ORGANIZATION OF SEMINAR ACTIVITIES WITH SCHEDULE, TOPICS, AND THEMES

Week One: Case Study: The Poet and Her Archive. During the first week, we will establish the parameters of the seminar’s overarching case study: the poet and her archives. Participants will be expected to have read and be familiar with primary Bishop materials already published. (See full list of core readings, Appendices 23-25.) To help establish our different experiences of reading and teaching her, we will begin the seminar with a discussion of Bishop

as a poet. What makes her important? What poems do we value the most? Why? How do we teach her? This early discussion will help us explore the different approaches that we might build on as we explore the relationship between the poet and her archives. **Dr. Ronald Patkus**, Associate Director of Libraries for Special Collections at Vassar College, will introduce participants to archival materials throughout the course of the three-week seminar and contribute to our discussions of how archivists approach the archive and consider materials and their uses. In order to allow participants to explore their own archive-based research interests during the seminar and to contribute fully to a collaborative discussion, they will be asked to forward their research interests in advance to Dean Rogers, Special Collections Assistant at Vassar. We will study the nature of archival evidence and begin to develop a theoretical framework for our work. Core readings that will help to establish this framework include Jacques Derrida's seminal essay, "Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression" (1995). More recent discussions of literary study and the archives will include *The Boundaries of the Literary Archive: Reclamation and Representation* (Ashgate, 2013), an anthology of current interdisciplinary scholarship on the literary archive, including new methodologies such as genetic criticism; and *Queering Archives: Historical Unravelings* (*Radical History Review*, Fall 2014), a group of essays focused on the process of questioning our inherited knowledge of sexuality and gender in our approach to archival materials. Participants will receive the reading list (and access to archival materials) several months in advance of the seminar.

An overview and discussion of Bishop scholarship and the uses of archival evidence will complete the first week of study as we work toward defining the landscape of Bishop scholarship and the literary archive. Core readings of archival scholarship on Bishop will include Dr. Hicok's *Elizabeth Bishop's Brazil*, selections from *Elizabeth Bishop in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Reading the New*

*Editions*, Camille Roman's *Elizabeth Bishop's World War II—Cold War View*, and Thomas Travisano's *Midcentury Quartet: Bishop, Lowell, Jarrell, Berryman, and the Making of a Postmodern Aesthetic*. This scholarship makes the claim that archival discoveries lead to surprising new ways to tell the story of literary history and the poet's work.

Participating scholars will give short précis of their progress during morning seminar sessions and will discuss connections with the readings. In the afternoon, scholars will work independently in the archives on their own projects with opportunities for consultation with each other, the archivists and Dr. Hicok. Because the archive can only accommodate eight scholars at a time, work in the archive will be staggered among participants based on projects and interests.

**Dr. Thomas Travisano**, Professor of English at Hartwick College and a foremost Bishop scholar and master teacher, will join us during the week for lectures and discussion, particularly centered around the archive and the new biography of Bishop he is writing for Penguin. Dr. Travisano, who received a Guggenheim Fellowship to write this new biography, will provide invaluable insight into how he is integrating newly discovered documentary evidence into his biography. A winner of Hartwick's teacher-scholar award, Dr. Travisano will also help us explore ways to integrate this material into our teaching.

Week Two: Case Study: The Ruth Foster Letters. The Ruth Foster Letters will be the focus of this week's case study. The discussion will be informed by readings in Freud, the letters themselves, and related poetry that Bishop was writing at the time of the letters, an approach that Dr. Hicok has already implemented in an advanced undergraduate seminar on Freud and Psychoanalysis at Westminster College. Bishop provides her own analysis of her magisterial 1947 poem "At the Fishhouses" from the perspective of the dreams and relationships uncovered during her psychoanalytic sessions. The letters are important documents of literary history,

demonstrating the importance of Freud's theories, for instance, to the writers of Bishop's generation and their understanding of memory and family history. In these letters, Bishop documents her own awakenings as a lesbian and the connection of these awakenings to the images that form the foundation of her own poetry. She also reveals, for the first time, childhood sexual abuses that she suffered. The EB Seminar will invite open inquiry into the responsibilities of scholars, archivists, and literary estates in the uses of these papers.

We will explore "The Queer Archive" as we discuss the changing landscape of Bishop's reputation from early reception to the present in the context of her "outsider-hood" and lesbian identity as it relates to changing cultural norms over time. Core readings that will help us to understand this changing landscape and that focus on gender, lesbian identity and outsider-hood include Adrienne Rich's "The Eye of the Outsider" (1986), Hicok's "Elizabeth Bishop's Queer Birds: Vassar, *Con Spirito*, and the Romance of Female Community," (1999, 2008), and the essay collection *The Geography of Gender* (1993). These essays will help us to trace the shift in approaches to Bishop under the influences of feminist and queer scholarship. At the end of the week, **Alice Quinn**, former poetry editor of the *New Yorker* and editor of the controversial volume *Edgar Allan Poe & the Juke-Box*, will join us for discussion on archival research, editing archival material, the Foster letters, the *Edgar Allan Poe* controversy, and her current editorial work on the important notebooks Bishop kept during her decade living in Key West in the late 1930s and 1940s. The notebooks reveal Bishop's own archival methods of gathering materials for her poetry; and they are filled with drafts, clippings, notes, and descriptions, including notes on her visits to E. Ross Allen's Florida Reptile Institute in Fort Meyers that inspired some of the imagery of Bishop's "Florida," and a fishing expedition with Ernest Hemingway's captain that influenced the writing of one of her most anthologized poems, "The Fish." These notebooks also

provide a rich literary and cultural history of Key West, Florida, as Bishop crossed paths with many of the writers and artists who wintered in Key West, including Robert Frost and Wallace Stevens. Quinn's expertise will help us examine the role of editors and publishers in shaping a writer's career both when she is alive as well as posthumously.

Week Three: Case Study: The Archive and the Digital Humanities. We will look at how the study of new archival material raises questions of ethics as well as the rights of researchers to use this material for scholarly purposes, including inquiry into privacy and literary estates as well as copyright law. These questions will lead us to consider another dimension of archives and literary scholarship: Can the Bishop archives participate in the current revolution in the Digital Humanities? What ethical issues and copyright issues surface? We will collaborate to define key areas of scholarship that will move us to the next level in the ongoing reassessment of Bishop's career, canonicity, and reputation. Finally, participants will present brief précis on their research projects and archival findings, and will discuss ways to integrate archival research into their teaching. (Refer to *Program Syllabus* for more details, Appendices 18-22.) Since the seminar seeks to build communities of inquiry, the website developed for the seminar will offer further opportunities for sharing knowledge with a larger community of teachers and scholars. Dr. Hicok will host an ongoing blog accessible through the website to stimulate conversation and generate excitement. Articles about Bishop, photographs, artwork, and replica images of some of her papers will be made available through the website. These and other materials posted on the website will make the intellectual content of the project available to a wide range of teachers and scholars.

### **c) Project Faculty and Staff**

**Dr. Bethany Hicok** will serve as director of the EB Seminar. She is Professor of English and Director of the Honors Program at Westminster College. Her most recent book, *Elizabeth Bishop's Brazil* (University of Virginia Press, 2016), makes extensive use of the Bishop archives to tell the most comprehensive story to date of Bishop's nearly two decades in Brazil and the impact of this experience on her life and work. Her first book, *Degrees of Freedom: American Women Poets and the Women's College, 1905-1955*, draws on several archives to tell the story of the poetic development of three American poets: Marianne Moore, Bishop, and Sylvia Plath, in the first half of the twentieth century. Dr. Hicok has also published on innovative approaches to teaching, including book chapters on teaching the legal, social, and ethical issues of the Human Genome Project in paired courses in literature and biology, and on collaboration, scholarship, and undergraduate research. Dr. Hicok's experience in interdisciplinary approaches to scholarship and teaching, archival research, and Bishop studies will benefit participants in both one-on-one consultations with Dr. Hicok and in the seminar format. (Refer to the director's résumé, Appendices 26-30.) Dr. Hicok will be joined by **Dr. Ronald Patkus**, Associate Director of Libraries for Special Collections at Vassar College and Adjunct Professor of History, who will serve as lecturer and on-site coordinator at Vassar. Patkus has organized two major exhibitions and a conference related to the Bishop collection (in 2011 and 2004). Guest lecturers for the seminar will include **Dr. Thomas Travisano**, Professor of English, Hartwick College, a foremost scholar on Elizabeth Bishop; he is the author of *Elizabeth Bishop: Her Artistic Development* (1986), *Midcentury Quartet: Bishop, Lowell, Jarrell, Berryman and the Making of a Postmodern Aesthetic* (1999), and principle editor of *Words in Air: The Complete Correspondence between Elizabeth Bishop and Robert Lowell* (2008). **Alice Quinn**, editor of *Edgar Allan Poe & the Juke-Box: Uncollected Poems, Drafts, and Fragments*, by Elizabeth

Bishop, is Executive Director of the Poetry Society of America and an adjunct professor at Columbia University's Graduate School of the Arts. The former poetry editor of *The New Yorker*, Quinn is currently editing the journals and notebooks of Elizabeth Bishop. (See *Biographies and Letters of Commitment*, Appendices 31-37.)

#### **d) Participant Selection**

Participants will be drawn from a national pool of applicants and selected by a committee of three convened by Dr. Hicok (the seminar project director). The two other members of the selection committee will be Thomas Travisano and Ron Patkus. Sixteen participants (who will include at least three non-tenure-track/adjunct professors) will be selected as per NEH guidelines. Dr. Hicok, who belongs to an international network of scholars, educators and translators in literature and modern poetry, will seek to attract seminar applicants through the website developed at Westminster College, through the NEH website, through social media (such as Facebook), and through e-mail lists of the various organizations and societies to which she is connected, including the MLA, PAMLA, the Modernist Studies Association, the American Literature Association, the National Women's Studies Association, the Elizabeth Bishop Society, the Robert Lowell Society, the list of attendees at the recent international conference on the subject of Bishop that was held in Sheffield, England, and a list of scholars who have conducted research in the Bishop archives at Vassar College. Dr. Hicok will also reach out to academic scholars she knows who have a strong interest in Bishop to enlist them to spread the word.

#### **e) Project Website**

Westminster College Information Technology staff will develop a visually stimulating website hosted through the college at least eight months in advance of the seminar so that it can be used as a tool to publicize the seminar in order to attract participants. The website will include a

detailed description of the seminar, as well as detailed information available in the navigation menu, such as seminar faculty and credentials, the seminar syllabus, core readings, and the schedule. The navigation menu will also include links (with photographs) to Vassar College housing, Vassar Special Collections, the NEH website and its application process, and other websites that feature serious discussion of Bishop's work, including the Elizabeth Bishop Society website. The seminar will also be publicized through the online *Elizabeth Bishop Bulletin*. Westminster College, Vassar College, Dr. Hicok and her colleagues, and seminar participants will take advantage of opportunities to disseminate project resources and products through links provided by the NEH on its website and through its EDSITEment web portal.

#### **f) Institutional Support**

While Dr. Hicok is on the faculty of Westminster College, the summer seminar will be located at Vassar College, primarily because the Bishop Archives are housed in Vassar's Special Collections. Vassar is also a valuable location because Bishop graduated from Vassar College in 1934, so the college played a significant role in Bishop's formative years.<sup>2</sup> Seminar discussions will take place in a seminar room in the library, close to Special Collections, and after seminar discussions, participants (on a rotation schedule) will spend their remaining time each day engaged in research in the archives. Vassar will provide affordable housing for seminar participants in dorms (\$50 per night) and meals (\$36 per day). Housing off campus is also available across the street in the Vassar Alumni House. Dr. Hicok will work closely with Dr. Patkus to organize the seminar and make materials available for participants in advance. Dr. Patkus has confirmed Vassar's support and interest in the seminar (Appendices 34). Both colleges have the technological capability to support their roles in the proposed project.

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<sup>2</sup> See Dr. Hicok's two chapters on this topic in her book *Degrees of Freedom*.

## **Appendices**

### **a) Day-by-Day Syllabus for *Elizabeth Bishop and the Literary Archive***

**Project Director: Dr. Bethany Hicok**

#### **Week One: Case Study: The Poet and the Archives**

##### **Days One, Two and Three:**

Participants will briefly introduce themselves and describe their own teaching and research interests as they relate to the seminar topics. Dr. Hicok will have consulted with participants before the seminar in order to incorporate participant interests into the final syllabus for the seminar. Participants will also contact Vassar Archival Assistant Dean Rogers so that he can gather relevant archival materials beforehand. After these introductions, we will begin with a discussion of Bishop as a poet. What makes her important? What poems do we value the most? Why? How do we teach her? This first day of the seminar is important to help establish the poet at the center of our study and to explore the different approaches that we might build on as we interrogate the relationship between the poet and her archives. Dr. Ronald Patkus, Head of Vassar Special Collections, will introduce participants to materials we will be working with over the course of the three-week seminar. We will then move into a discussion that focuses on Bishop as a theorist of memory and a poet whose own method of composition depends on the gathering of archival traces from personal as well as national histories, allowing us to see her poetry through an archival lens. Core readings that will inform our discussion about the poet and her archives include primary sources—Bishop’s poems, letters, and drafts—that demonstrate her archival process. In order to provide a theoretical framework for our discussions and consideration of the poet and her archives, we will also discuss Derrida’s seminal essay “Archive Fever,” Steadman’s *Dust*, and selected chapters from *The Boundaries of the Literary Archive*.

Participants will be expected to read this material before the seminar. Each day will involve two to three hours of seminar discussion in the morning and engagement with the archives in the afternoon. Ron Patkus will join us for some of our discussion to provide insight from the archivist's perspective.

The discussion of the poet and her archives on the first and second days will move into a consideration of the nature of archival "evidence" on the third day. What constitutes archival evidence? What constitutes "evidence" in literary scholarship? Bishop herself used "archival" evidence in her own writing to explore important details of character in her memoir of her mentor Marianne Moore, "Efforts of Affection." In that memoir, Bishop tells of Moore's and her mother's famous rewriting of Bishop's poem "Roosters." Bishop writes: "The revised poem had been typed out on very thin paper and folded into a small square, sealed with a gold star sticker and signed on the outside 'Lovingly, Rose Peebles'." Rose Peebles was a favorite teacher of Bishop's at Vassar. Why does Bishop include this detail? Does Bishop's own archive at Vassar actually possess this bit of "evidence?" If so, is the evidence consistent with Bishop's description? Essays from the "Forum on Evidence and the Archive" (*Journal of Nineteenth Century Americanists*, 2013) will inform our discussion and set the stage for the theoretical issues we will take up throughout the course of the seminar.

**Days Four and Five:** Here we move into a discussion, informed by readings from Anderson, Hicok, Quinn, Grey, Travisano, Green, and Samuels, of Bishop scholarship and the uses of archival evidence. We will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of various methodologies used in the process of archival research, particularly genetic criticism, in our consideration of the texts and contexts of a writer's workshop as we work toward defining the current landscape of Bishop scholarship and the literary archive. Dr. Thomas Travisano, Bishop's current biographer and a

renowned Bishop scholar, will join us on these two days for lecture and discussion on archival research, teaching Bishop and her circle, and the art of biography.

### **Week Two: Case Study: The Ruth Foster Letters**

**Days One and Two:** During this week, we focus in on our primary case study: the ethics and aesthetics of Bishop's 1947 letters to her psychoanalyst. Ron Patkus will discuss Vassar's acquisition of these papers. As mentioned in the narrative, we will bring together a set of documents in order to create a dialogue between the letters and Bishop's own poetic methods, psychoanalytic theory, current scholarship on the subject, and ethical considerations. Each participant will be asked to focus on a particular reading or set of readings, give a short précis of the arguments, and provide seminar participants with questions and concerns for our consideration. We can look, in part, to recent activity in Sylvia Plath scholarship as a model for our approach to this new material. As with Bishop, new primary materials made available to Plath scholars at the beginning of this century led to a reassessment of the poet and the subsequent publication of an important and widely cited volume of essays in 2007, edited by Anita Helle and titled *The Unraveling Archive: Essays on Sylvia Plath*. Here we take the approach used with Plath scholarship a step further by bringing scholars together early in the process, and allowing them to work together and explore some of the major themes and questions emerging from the archives.

### **Day Three: The Queer Archive**

Since Bishop's letters to Ruth Foster explore at the deepest level her own sexual orientation and its impact on her development as a writer, we move into a more theoretical discussion of what constitutes the "queer" archive with selections from the *Radical History Review* on *Queering Archives: Historical Unravelings*. In order to place this discussion in the

context of Bishop scholarship, we will also discuss the changing landscape of Bishop's reputation from early reception to the present. We will begin with Adrienne Rich's reassessment of Bishop in 1986 when she began to reread Bishop's well-known poetry in terms of outsiderhood and lesbian identity. By the early 1990s, under the influence of feminist, psychoanalytic, gender, and queer criticism, scholars began exploring in more depth the psychosexual tensions in Bishop's work and her lesbian identity, which culminated in a groundbreaking book of essays, *Elizabeth Bishop: The Geography of Gender*. That same year, in *Elizabeth Bishop: The Biography of a Poetry*, Lorrie Goldensohn published a hitherto unknown poem by Bishop, an openly lesbian love poem, which was among Bishop's papers in Brazil. We will review this reassessment of Bishop and then move on to the new materials in the archive on days three and four.

**Days Four and Five: Alice Quinn** will join us for lecture and discussion on archival research, editing archival material, the controversy over *Edgar Allan Poe & the Juke-Box*, and her current work on Bishop's notebooks. In these two days we will focus on the role of editors and publishers in shaping a writer's career both when she is alive as well as posthumously. During the week, participants will give brief reports on archival findings and continue to use time in the archives for independent research projects throughout the week. Dr. Hicok will consult with individuals as they work through their research.

### **Week Three: Case Study: The Archive and the Digital Humanities**

**Days One and Two:** The study of new archival material inevitably leads us to questions of ethics and the rights of researchers to use this material for scholarly purposes. To provide context, we will discuss essays by Sara Hodson, on privacy and literary estates, and by Robert Spoo, on "Copyright Law and Archival Research." These questions will lead us to consider

another dimension of archives and literary scholarship: Can the Bishop archives participate in the current revolution in the Digital Humanities? What ethical issues and copyright issues would that raise? Let us take the case of Quinn's editing of Bishop's unpublished poems, drafts and fragments published as the controversial *Edgar Allan Poe & the Juke-Box*, or her current editorial project of the notebooks Bishop kept during the decade she lived in Key West. Might Bishop's readers be better served by a digital and searchable version of this work? That is precisely what several Marianne Moore scholars are doing with Moore's notebooks through a digital humanities project unveiled at the Modernist Studies Association 2015 Annual Conference held in Boston. The results of what they have completed so far are impressive and provide a better format for viewing and understanding this material and its influence on Moore's poetic process than traditional book formats. It also makes this material more useful for the classroom and teaching. Moreover, this project is collaborative, drawing on the expertise of three Moore experts and a University of Rochester graduate student with expertise in the digitization of archives. We encounter copyright issues with the Bishop estate that scholars do not experience with the Moore estate, but worth considering as we move forward is how to make accessible Bishop's extraordinary archive to her readers and our students.

**Day Three:** Participants will work together to try to define key areas of scholarship that will move us to the next step in literary studies and the ongoing reassessment of Bishop's career, canonicity, and reputation.

**Days Four and Five:** Participants will present précis on their research projects and archival findings, and will discuss ways to integrate archival research into their teaching.

## **b) Core Readings for Elizabeth Bishop and the Literary Archive**

### **Core Readings I: Primary Texts by Bishop and her Circle/Biography**

Bishop, Elizabeth and Robert Lowell. *Words in Air: The Complete Correspondence between Elizabeth Bishop and Robert Lowell*. Edited by Thomas Travisano with Saskia Hamilton. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008.

Bishop, Elizabeth and *The New Yorker*. *Elizabeth Bishop and The New Yorker: The Complete Correspondence*. Edited by Joelle Biele. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011.

Bishop, Elizabeth. *Edgar Allan Poe & the Juke-Box: Uncollected Poems, Drafts, and Fragments*. Edited by Alice Quinn. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006.

----- *One Art: Elizabeth Bishop Letters*. Edited by Robert Giroux. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1994.

----- *Poems*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011.

----- *Prose*. Edited by Lloyd Schwartz. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011.

Fountain, Gary and Peter Brazeau. *Remembering Elizabeth Bishop: An Oral Biography*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994.

### **Core Readings II: Methodology, Archival Research, Theoretical Frameworks**

Derrida, Jacques. "Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression." *Diacritics* 25.2 (summer 1995): 9-63.

Freud, Sigmund. *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*. Trans. James Strachey. New York: Basic Books, 1962.

----- *The Uncanny*. Trans. David McLintock. New York and London: Penguin, 2003.

Goldensohn, Lorrie. "Approaching Elizabeth Bishop's Letters to Ruth Foster." *The Yale Review* 103, no. 1 (January 2015): 1-19.

- Helle, Anita, ed. *The Unraveling Archive: Essays on Sylvia Plath*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007. Selected chapters.
- Hyde, Carrie. *Forum: Evidence and the Archive*. Special Issue of *the Journal of Nineteenth-Century Americanists*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013.
- Jimerson, Randall C., ed. *American Archival Studies: Readings in Theory and Practice*. Society of American Archivists, 2000.
- Smith, Carrie, and Lisa Stead, eds. *The Boundaries of the Literary Archive: Reclamation and Representation*. Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2013. Selected chapters.
- Spoof, Robert E. "Copyright Law and Archival Research." *Journal of Modern Literature* 24, no. 2 (Winter 2000/2001): 205-12.
- Steedman, Carolyn. *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001.

### **Core Readings III: Literary Criticism, Reassessment and Archival Research**

- Anderson, Linda R. *Elizabeth Bishop: Lines of Connection*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015.
- Cleghorn, Angus, Bethany Hicok and Thomas Travisano, eds. *Elizabeth Bishop in the 21st Century: Reading the New Editions*. Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2012. Selected Chapters.
- Green, Fiona. "Elizabeth Bishop in Brazil and *The New Yorker*." *Journal of American Studies* 46, no. 4 (2012): 803-29.
- Hicok, Bethany. *Elizabeth Bishop's Brazil*. Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2016.

Hicok, Bethany. "Elizabeth Bishop's 'Queer Birds': Vassar, *Con Spirito*, and the Romance of Female Community." *Degrees of Freedom: American Women Poets and the Women's College, 1905-1955*. Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2008.

Samuels, Peggy. *Deep Skin: Elizabeth Bishop and Visual Art*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2010.