

# *Teaching and Learning with Special Collections and Archives*

*Introducing Religious and Theological Primary Sources  
into the Classroom*

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**A**t the Yale Divinity Library, staff have been actively introducing religious and theological primary sources into the classroom in a variety of ways. These forms of engagement with special and archival collections have been integrated into both the traditional face-to-face classroom context and the non-traditional online environment. By planning and implementing interactive classroom sessions, librarians and archivists are helping faculty and students locate, access, and experience primary sources in both physical and digitized formats. Library resources interwoven into the teaching curriculum, especially digitized archival materials, help demonstrate the value of library collections for stakeholders, such as the Yale Divinity School (YDS) and showcase the educational opportunities theological libraries provide for faculty and students. Special and archival collections intentionally integrated into the cur-

ricular design of the classroom shape and enhance the pedagogical practices of the faculty and help make course content more appealing for students and more fully applicable to their coursework, projects, and life experiences.

This chapter provides an introduction to the Yale Divinity Library special collections and archive. The aim of the essay is to spotlight the teaching and learning program of the library by demonstrating how staff introduce and integrate primary sources into the classroom experience for both faculty and students. The chapter will document successful methods of engaging and interacting with students through their experience with special collections materials, including archival documents. Three examples of our program within traditional and non-traditional classroom contexts will be showcased, including our online distance education component using video conferencing technology. Each example spotlights the value and uses of religious and theological special collections and archives in a classroom setting.

## *Teaching and Learning with Religious and Theological Primary Sources*

During the past fourteen years, I have had opportunities as a former college professor to blend my pedagogical experiences of classroom instruction with my more recent work as a special collections librarian. This chapter presents some of the practical opportunities librarians and archivists have while engaging with faculty and students in academic settings. The chapter benefits librarians and archivists working with teaching faculty in theological school and seminary contexts who are considering ways to actively engage students with original, primary source documents in print and digital formats.

Teaching and learning with religious-themed primary sources in a classroom context are essential curricular opportunities for all students. These primary sources are considered “special collections” or “distinctive collections” in academic libraries and, in smaller educational contexts, are often linked directly with the archives of the institution. The materiality and formats of these collections vary in scope and may include such items as rare books, personal papers, manuscripts, and photographs. Silva and McIntosh (2019, 96) note

that these items often receive special designation, protection, and care because of an item's condition, year of publication, monetary value, availability, or direct historical connection with the owning institution.

Including special and archival collections in pedagogical situations benefits both faculty and students, and staff of the library and archives should see these moments as opportunities and proactively engage with those who can make these experiences happen. Christoph Irmscher (2016, 134) notes that library or archival staff should attempt to “demystify special collections, to establish them as a place not unlike but in fact very much like the rest of campus, or for that matter, the world.” Opportunities to “demystify” primary sources beckon librarians and archivists to consider venues and to actively seek ways to connect these “special” or “distinctive” materials to the school's curriculum.

Library resources, specifically primary source materials, brought into the classroom demonstrate the value of the library by showcasing the educational services libraries and archives provide for faculty and students. Irmscher (2016, 149) notes that most students are prepared and willing to “embrace special collections materials, to handle them, to study them, to make them part of their lives.” By linking library resources with the school's curriculum, especially its digitized materials, librarians and archivists demonstrate the inherent value of these collections for the school's administration.

These opportunities also showcase for stakeholders the services libraries provide for faculty and students. Like hosting students in a reading room, these sessions bring together “a synthesis of student learning and experiential learning, while providing opportunities for students to gain hands-on practical skills they can use in their future careers” (Anderson and Brand 2017, 90). Peter Carini (2016, 196) confirms that these opportunities are ways to “create expert users of primary sources,” who are better prepared to “find, interpret, and create narratives using primary sources.” As a result, primary sources integrated into teaching and learning sessions enhance the classroom and the student's experience with materials in fascinating and enriching ways.

Librarians and archivists are tasked with planning and implementing creative and engaging solutions to help faculty and students find, access, and experience primary resources. Barbara Rockenbach (2011, 298) confirms that methods such as active learning techniques using primary sources in the classroom are some of the “best ways to

increase student engagement and teach higher-level critical thinking skills,” which help affirm the learning process and the value of the material. This pedagogical approach to active learning is affirmed by Gore and Koelling (2020, 454), who note that students who physically experience archival materials engage their “intellects, bodies, and emotions” in ways that foster critical thinking about the materials under review.

Ultimately, the use of primary sources in the classroom offers opportunities for faculty and students to engage in learning about the past, which then provide real, in-class moments to consider and wrestle with historical questions in the present. Integrating special collections and archives into the classroom and having those materials woven into the framework of the lecture or lesson plan helps students become more aware of past successes and failures from history, while at same time better positioning students to think critically of the present. As I’ve explored previously (Anderson and Shetler 2019, 158–9), this approach can also encourage classroom participants to critically examine and engage with the materials that present both fascinating and troubling historical narratives. These sessions can inspire and perplex students. They can help make students more aware of the many silences in historical narratives, while spotlighting ways of identifying and interpreting a variety of historical and contemporary complexities that include race, gender, and class in the present. Ultimately, they inform us, while they also help dismantle assumptions and perceptions.

### *A Brief History of the Yale Divinity Library and Day Missions Library and Collection*

The Yale Divinity Library (New Haven, Connecticut) houses in its special and archival collections tens of thousands of items on religious and theological subjects, including a significant amount of material on world Christianity and the history of missions. The Yale Divinity School was founded in 1822 for graduate students with vocational interests in church ministry, education, and missionary service. The Day Missions Library and Collection—the largest of the library’s archival collections—originated in part as a gift from Edward S. Salisbury, professor of Arabic and Sanskrit at Yale University. In the 1840s,

Professor Salisbury gave Yale College \$5,000 along with his private collection of “Oriental Studies” to generate a research collection, “befitting a true university” (Peterson 1993, 3). The Day Collection was also later sourced by benefactor William E. Dodge, who gave the Divinity School a generous donation of several hundred Bibles that had been published by the American Bible Society and by presses of Protestant missionary organizations throughout the world (5).

The Day Missions Library and Collection received its name from benefactors George Edward Day and Olivia Hotchkiss Day. George Day graduated from YDS in 1838. He worked as Professor of Hebrew Language and Biblical Literature at YDS for several decades, eventually serving from 1888 to 1891 as dean of the Divinity School. During his tenure, dozens of Yale College and Divinity School graduates went on to work as missionaries throughout the world and, by 1900, a total of one hundred and sixty-five Yale alumni had departed New Haven. In 1888, Professor Day toured Europe to explore libraries that included collections on the history of missions and missionary biography. These trips helped confirm his intention of building a library at Yale with a focus on the study and practice of missions.

Throughout the nineteenth century, Day had been actively collecting his own personal library of printed materials on the study of missions. During his final year as dean, Professor Day proposed to the school’s “Friends of Christian Missions” group the creation of a new research library that became the Historical Library of Foreign Missions. The proposal was accepted, and Day then donated his personal library to Yale. As a result, by the end of the century, the Historical Library of Foreign Missions comprised “the most full and complete collection of works on foreign missions in the United States and perhaps the world” (Stuehrenberg 1994, 3).

George and Olivia Hotchkiss Day insisted that the library include materials for use by Yale faculty and students. They also envisioned the library as a research collection available for patrons from around the world (Divinity School of Yale University, March 19, 1891, Library of Modern Missions, record group 92, Yale Divinity Library Special Collections). The Days had earmarked funding in their estate for this purpose, alongside an additional endowment of \$100,000 raised by YDS mission studies professor Harlan Page Beach (Robert 2020, 113). Following the death of the Days, the Historical Library of Foreign Missions was formally renamed the Day Missions Library.

The original Day Missions Library and Collection comprised six categories of collecting. These resources included the history of mis-

sions, missionary biography, the published annual reports of missionary societies, periodicals with mission and missionary statistics and stories, items published by missionaries for missionaries, and material on mission work to Jews. Additional items collected for the library included works on comparative religions, ethnology, geography, and cartography, as well as translations of the Bible, dictionaries and grammars, and printed material prepared and published by missionaries in the original languages of the people where they worked. The original library housed a printing press, photography room, map-making room, and carpentry shop. These spaces were designed to help prepare students going into missionary service with training and vocational skills as printers, photographers, cartographers, and carpenters.

By 1932, YDS and its library had been relocated from its downtown New Haven location to a new space about a mile from central campus along Prospect Street. The property had long ago been the home of the Winchester family, noted for their earlier production of the popular and controversial Winchester rifle. By this time, the Day Missions Library and Collection amounted to over twenty thousand volumes (Tayler 1978, 54). The original vision of the Days—to build a research library with the most complete collection on mission studies—continues in 2021. Current library staff continue to provide researchers with print-based and digitized resources, regardless of whether one visits the special collections reading room in person or the collections found online. During the COVID-19 pandemic, our staff have been especially helpful digitizing primary sources for patrons who cannot spend time on site because of restricted access to our special and archival collections.

The current collection strengths of the Day Missions Library and Collection include print and archival primary sources on the history of Protestant and Catholic missions, items on the religious activities of college and university students (e.g., the Student Volunteer Movement and the World Student Christian Federation), and historical biographies of clergy in the New England area. The Day Missions Library and Collection includes much of the original library alongside a significant collection of manuscripts and ephemera and a wide assortment of print materials, including periodicals, annual reports, and over 325 archival collections, comprised of correspondence, diaries, photographs, and drawings. Our largest archival collection, the China Records Project, spotlights the work of missionaries in China. This collection is a collaboration between the National Coun-

cil of Churches and Yale Divinity Library and resulted in over three thousand former missionaries and their families being contacted and urged to consider donating their records of missionary work in China (Smalley 1996, 126). The collection documents the work of women as missionaries, how missionaries portray non-Western peoples and cultures, and the institutional histories of missionaries and their roles in the creation of hospitals and centers of higher education around the world.

Day Missions Library books can be discovered by searching the [Yale University Library catalog](#), and archival collections can be located through finding aids available at [Archives at Yale](#). The Yale Divinity Library also houses a comprehensive assortment of mission-related microforms showcasing archival collections held in other repositories around the world. Finally, grants from the Arcadia Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities have supported the digitization of more than fifty-five hundred [print volumes of annual reports and periodicals of missionary agencies, benevolent societies, and religious organizations](#).

## *Introducing Religious and Theological Primary Resources into the Classroom*

Academic librarians have an array of opportunities to conjoin religious and theological primary resources within the classroom environment. Special and archival collections built into the design of a course can shape and enhance the student experience and help reinforce classroom content by making faculty lectures more interesting for students as well as more useful for data mining for their course projects. At the Yale Divinity Library, teaching and learning opportunities function as a component of the overall outreach program. As part of our library's mission, we believe that we are charged with connecting faculty and students with primary resources in the classroom. We look for opportunities to help students immerse themselves in our special and archival collections. Once they become aware of the availability and potential uses of our primary sources, they can more critically review and assess the materials. In turn, these experiences help students consider how archival evidence and archival

silence apply to or even disrupt their present educational journey or life situation.

Preparing and implementing engaging sessions allows librarians and archivists to assist faculty as their students discover, access, and experience primary sources in physical and online sessions. Introduction and access to these materials create a sense of wonder and promote needed critique and evaluation regarding the past. Hubbard and Lott (2013, 34) note, “The aesthetic qualities of the items, the hands-on experience, and the act of leaving the classroom to visit a new space all seemed to generate excitement and enthusiasm in the students, which encouraged them to engage in the class investigation of the items and the discussion that followed.” At the Yale Divinity Library, we have been proactively connecting special and archival collections with Yale University and non-Yale classroom environments in three forms, including: traditional face-to-face teaching, the more recent Zoom online environment, and non-traditional chapel services and group showcase events.

### *Religious and Theological Primary Resources in a Traditional Classroom Context*

The Yale Divinity Library has been actively engaged in connecting religious and theological special and archival collections into the traditional classroom context for many years. By “traditional classroom context,” I mean a class session that is held in a brick-and-mortar, physical classroom setting with faculty and students in the room or in the special collections reading room alongside the actual material. For us, the interdisciplinarity of religious and theological studies with other academic disciplines allow for prime opportunities to collaborate with librarians and archivists in classrooms across the Yale University Library system. When Yale faculty request archival sources for their classes, I am often contacted to provide religious and/or theological materials for the teaching session. We also participate with other Yale University Library repositories as part of our teaching and learning program. For example, we have taken our physical primary source materials to the Beinecke Rare Books & Manuscripts Library or to the Yale Manuscripts & Archives classrooms for joint

sessions with librarians, archivists, and curators across the Yale Library system.

Germek (2016, 401) confirms that academic libraries can broker teaching opportunities with special and archival collections as primary source information literacy sessions, while also spotlighting the library and archive as an “evolving and holistic learning space.” The physical classroom environment allows students to experience primary sources in firsthand, personal ways. Students are encouraged to engage with the material through the use of their senses. Those who are able are allowed to touch the material, actively page through the rare books, and even carefully smell the residual scent put off by the items in order to appreciate the age and materiality of the objects. Irmischer (2016, 136) notes, “Manuscripts allow us a behind-the-scenes look where none seemed possible; they allow us to risk a glance at stories that might and should have been told but weren’t.” By providing students with a full range of experiential opportunities to view these one-of-a-kind items in a traditional classroom environment, they are given a chance to look back on the past, to physically engage with history firsthand, and to discover stories and narratives that both captivate and inspire.

Three examples of our teaching and learning program in traditional classroom environments include the graduate courses *The Bible as Literature*, *The Bible and the Reformation*, and *China Mission*. For *The Bible as Literature* and *The Bible and the Reformation*, I work alongside my colleague Suzanne Estelle-Holmer, who is associate director for research, collections, and access for the Yale Divinity Library. Suzanne and I reach out to the faculty of record for the courses to learn which Bibles and other materials they want made available for their class sessions. We then order, retrieve, and prepare the materials in the library classroom or in our special collections reading room. We have an assortment of foam cradles and book snakes that hold the items for review. Bibles from our collection that we have made available for classes include a 1537 copy of the Matthew’s Bible, a 1599 edition of the Geneva Bible, and a 1613 copy of the King James Bible. We also include an assortment of complimentary texts for *The Bible and the Reformation*, including a 1516 copy of Erasmus’s *Novvm Instrumentu[m] omne, diligenter ab Erasmo Roterodamo recognitum & emendatum* and a 1524 copy of Martin Luther’s *Eyn Christlicher trost-brieff an die Miltenberger: Wie sie sich an yhren feynden rechen sollen, aus dem 119. Psalm*.

For the China Mission course, I work closely with YDS Professor Chloë Starr. For the first session, I provide an introductory overview to our mission-related collections and bring printed special collections materials (e.g., Chinese-language Bibles and missionary society annual reports) to the session, along with original archival items (e.g., handwritten or typescript correspondence authored by nineteenth- and twentieth-century missionaries and sent to missionary board agencies or the missionary's family and friends). Professor Starr also builds "Library Lab" opportunities into her weekly class sessions. These sessions are held in the special collections reading room, and students are invited to experience the materiality of the items first-hand through active engagement with the collections. Professor Starr attends these sessions and provides content overview, and the students discuss weekly readings, while also working with the original primary source materials. My library staff colleagues Joan Duffy and Sara Azam also assist with ordering materials through our Aeon request tool and then prepare the materials on tables for review.

### *Religious and Theological Primary Sources in a Virtual Classroom Context (Zoom)*

Teaching with digitized religious and theological primary sources is a way to bring special and archival collections from the table to the screen for students who are taking courses online or who are not able to attend classes in person due to COVID-19 restrictions. Librarians and archivists have opportunities to scan, reformat, and ultimately repackage material items through digital imagery and its accompanying online metadata. These formats present faculty and students with multiple modes of viewing and assessing in a virtual environment (Anderson and Shetler 2019, 162). For example, original paper correspondence or glass lantern slide photographs transferred into high-resolution formats can provide a helpful way for students to encounter fragile or unique items in a virtual classroom.

Germek (2016, 401) has effectively argued that, if at all possible, digital surrogates should not replace actual special and archival materials. While it is certainly accurate to claim that providing students with opportunities to interact with archival objects in person presents them with ideal ways to experience special and archival

collections, providing digital copies of an original object onscreen can function as an adequate way for students to view the electronic replica of an original item. Depending on equipment availability and pedagogical context, virtual students can even closely examine an object by using the zoom feature provided by most computers and tablets, which allows them an experience similar to using a magnifying glass in a physical reading room. Gore and Koelling concur that, while digital copies of special and archival collections should not replace physical items, they can complement each other, depending on the situation or the educational context (Gore and Koelling 2020, 469).

For several years, I have been using Skype and Zoom video conferencing as an extension of the library's teaching and learning program. In 2018, two years before the COVID-19 pandemic and the proliferation of video classroom technology, I made the decision to begin teaching with digitized primary sources in an online environment, since I had been unaware of other Yale library staff using this approach. These sessions provide us with opportunities to showcase Yale's digitized religious and theological primary sources for non-Yale students. Each interactive session includes a 45-minute virtual in-class experience with faculty and students from colleges and universities throughout the United States. For example, I have met virtually with classes at Albion College, Boston University, Brigham Young University, Prairie View A&M University, and Westmont College. The sessions are broadcast live from my office at the library and from home, depending on the location and time zone of the school.

During the live sessions, I walk students virtually through the Yale Divinity Library website and present examples of digitized primary sources related to the topic of the course. These sessions encourage and enable faculty and students to identify and locate primary sources at the Yale University Library from their classrooms and homes across the country. I explain and assess the similarities and differences between original print-based archival objects and their digitized surrogates. By explaining these differences, students can better appreciate the analog materials and understand that the scanned item on a screen has its source in a static archival object elsewhere (unless the object is born digital). This can be especially enlightening when students are told that the original item has been destroyed or lost to the public and that the only way to currently view the object is through its digitized form.

Each session includes a brief overview of the various Yale University Library special collections and archives repositories and col-

lections. I then narrow the focus of my presentation to the divinity library and spotlight its Day Missions Collection, while showing faculty and students how to access Yale's digitized primary sources, including its thousands of digitized historical images. During the sessions, I also highlight Yale's historical manuscripts, periodicals, and ephemera. Each session concludes with several minutes reserved for student questions and comments, and I invite both faculty and students to contact me following the session so that I can help connect them to Yale's rich and expansive physical and digitized resources. The initiative has been a success, and students from several schools have responded and incorporated Yale's digitized collections into their course projects.

The faculty with whom I have worked have been especially pleased with this virtual presentation discussing our primary sources. I have included several notes sent to me from faculty to show the effectiveness of this approach to online instruction.

Dr. Christopher Jones, assistant professor of history at Brigham Young University, commented,

Chris has provided an overview of relevant digital and manuscript collections housed at Yale Divinity Library, and several students have used those materials for research papers and projects in my classes, including one student who secured funding to travel to New Haven and take advantage of manuscript sources housed on-site in YDS's archive... Chris has gone above and beyond to assist students in my classes, introducing them to a variety of sources they would otherwise not know about, fielding their questions about those sources, and, in one instance, welcoming a BYU student to New Haven on her first major research trip outside Utah. (email message, May 8, 2019)

Dr. Joseph Ho, assistant professor of history at Albion College, noted,

Chris's video conference brought Yale Divinity School Library's wealth of visual primary sources directly to my students at Albion College, guiding them through untapped collections of fascinating material as well as fundamental archival practices. Several students explored images and topics recommended by Chris in their final projects, demonstrating the teaching power of such collaborations between a world-class archive and the liberal arts classroom. (email message, May 13, 2019)

More recently, Dr. Marco Robinson, assistant professor of history at Prairie View A&M University, stated,

Dr. Christopher Anderson's Zoom presentation introduced the students in my Introduction to Historical Methods of Research course to various types of primary sources and ways to utilize these items in their research efforts. Anderson's discussion of the holdings of the archive gave my students a firsthand view of the process of researching in special collections and manuscript collections. Using the zoom platform, Dr. Anderson was able to bridge the distance gap and adjust to the threat of the pandemic because we could not physically be in the facility. By the end of the semester my students were able to apply this knowledge to conducting archival research and composing their research paper. (email message, January 28, 2021)

Ultimately, these sessions have become a useful tool for outreach, both for our library and for the Yale University Library at large. The potential of these teaching sessions is unlimited and, if promoted more widely, the sessions could become an essential component of the library's program to provide access to digitized resources for colleges and universities around the world.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, I have also been teaching sessions with digitized archival resources on Zoom for Yale University and YDS. One example was the graduate course Chinese Poetic Form, 1490–1990, taught by Professor Kang-i Chang. My former YDS library archivist colleague Elizabeth Peters co-taught the session with me. We showcased several digitized copies of original handwritten and typescript poems authored by American missionaries serving in China during the early twentieth century. We also had the students perform an in-class exercise searching for poetry in some of our digitized mission-themed periodicals. During the Spring 2021 semester, I will be working with additional classes in blended formats. Depending on the situation with the evolving pandemic, the sessions might become a hybrid opportunity of some in-person classroom opportunities working with physical archival items, while also teaching sessions online using digitized archival materials.

## *Religious and Theological Primary Resources*

## *in a Non-Traditional Classroom Context*

The opportunity to showcase and discuss special and archival collections outside the traditional classroom can bring attention to the religious and theological primary sources at one's institution. Staff at the Yale Divinity Library have been actively seeking ways to bring students into contact with special and archival collections in non-traditional, non-intimidating environments. At the divinity library, staff have showcased primary sources in several ways, including the YDS chapel service and through a series of showcases to local religious groups. These opportunities enhance our outreach program to the school's students and to the non-Yale organizations of various local religious communities. These events also allow our staff to see first-hand how people react to and engage with our special and archival collections.

### *Chapel Service with Special and Archival Collections*

In 2018, I met with Yale Divinity School chapel staff to discuss and consider innovative ways to integrate special and archival collections within the daily chapel service. The chaplain agreed to allow library staff to plan, organize, and lead one service per semester. A series of unique chapel services resulted, which included several of our collections. These events provided us with opportunities to showcase original archival materials on the history of the Yale Black Seminarians, the seven oversized and illustrated volumes of the St. John's Bible, and several of our special collections Bibles, written in a variety of languages and published by missionary presses around the world.

For example, for the session with our missionary Bibles, we included a variety of our under-utilized nineteenth- and early twentieth-century volumes from the library's special collections. The chaplain asked the YDS administration to supply us with a listing of the various first languages spoken by students at YDS. We then tracked down and selected several volumes from our collection in those languages. The Bibles were taken to the chapel by library staff and placed on foam cradles with book snakes securing the pages that had been opened to various scriptural passages that were part of the chapel readings for that day.

The staff spotlighted the care that goes into using special and archival collections, including the requirement to wash and dry one's hands prior to handling primary source materials. The chaplain's staff provided and monitored a large basin of water that was placed outside the entrance of the sanctuary. Several dozen towels were made available, and attendees were asked to wash and dry their hands before walking into the service to interact with the Bibles. During the service, I spoke on the "ritual" of handwashing as part of using archival materials and provided a brief reflection on how one's experience with an archive can become a spiritual or sometimes painful reminder of the past.

YDS students read texts from the displayed Bibles in their own languages. Students who read from the volumes actively engaged with special collections materials, and the remainder of the faculty and students who attended the service were able to spend time viewing the various volumes, turning the pages, and engaging with the primary sources. This brought material directly to the students in a comfortable and familiar space and also helped raise awareness of the types of Bibles available for research and use at the library. The service also gave opportunities for students to read and speak in their own languages with peers present. The service drew over seventy-five administrators, staff, and students, and the chaplain and library staff considered the event a successful endeavor.

### *Special Collections Showcases for Local Religious Groups*

Finally, the library also hosts events for local religious organizations in our special collections reading room. These events are similar in style to the "Out of the Vault" program that I helped plan and implement at my former place of employment. Out of the Vault was a series of archival showcases with related talks, sponsored by the Drew University Library. The title of the series originated from staff conversations and an effort to foster and create an image of library staff bringing special and archival collections out of the protected confines of restricted library vaults.

We especially wanted underutilized collections to be viewed, touched, and analyzed in person. Each session lasted forty-five minutes and included brief, informal talks prepared by Drew faculty, library staff, or student staff. Each presenter was limited to fifteen minutes to speak on the provenance, donor information, and re-

search value of the collection on display. Thirty minutes was then reserved for attendee engagement with the collection, which had been mounted and displayed on Wilson Reading Room tables. Each session was designed as a non-intimidating, public venue to explore our collections, and attendees were free to come and go at their leisure and availability (Anderson and Brand 2017, 91–2).

Presently, we offer a similar program for local religious groups. These showcases provide visitors opportunities to interact with our special and archival collections, while also allowing time to touch and closely examine firsthand the materials displayed. To date, we have hosted several New Haven-area groups, and we are planning to broaden the reach of the program to include adherents from a variety of religions and houses of worship. One example of our showcases included hosting a women's group from a regional Episcopal church. The event was organized around our seven-volume set of the St. John's Bible. These lavishly illustrated Bibles were produced in a calligraphic style, and our staff set up and prepared the items in our special collections reading room.

The event began in our library classroom, where the group watched several videos on the history and production of the St. John's Bible. We then gave the group a tour of the library and made our way to the special collections reading room. We discussed the acquisition of the volumes and then allowed participants to examine the materials and to ask questions of staff monitoring the session. The series is currently on hiatus during the COVID-19 pandemic but has been well-received. It provides us with opportunities for teaching and learning outside the four walls of the traditional classroom, and we look forward to expanding the series in the future.

## *Conclusion*

Over the past several years, the staff of the Yale Divinity Library have been intentionally integrating religious and theological primary sources into the classrooms of Yale University and in academic settings across the United States. Our goal has been to bring attention to our collections and to demystify the special and archival collections we manage. As a result, we've learned there are multiple ways to do so. These include traditional face-to-face classroom contexts, online video conferencing environments, and nontraditional classroom

outreach, such as chapel services and group showcases. By implementing these interactive classroom sessions in their many modalities, librarians and archivists can increase the visibility of their collections and can help students search, locate, access, and experience primary sources in both physical and digitized formats.

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