

# Exploring the Chanticleer

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## BRIEF OVERVIEW

This class session encourages students to engage with the *Chanticleer*, Duke University's student yearbook, which was first published in 1913. As most, if not all, students would have owned a copy of the yearbook, it is a centralized history of an academic year—but, as with all histories, that does not mean that it is comprehensive in its depiction of Duke student life, nor that it is without bias in its choices of what to depict and what to exclude.

Universities and colleges across the country have been rediscovering harmful and discriminatory texts and images in their yearbooks and reckoning with this evidence of white supremacy and oppression among their campus communities. The work of this class session, then, is a step towards fostering an anti-racist culture at Duke University.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- **Appreciate** the role of students as Duke University history-makers.
- **Practice** textual and visual analysis using a familiar format and cultural environment.
- **Understand** broad themes in the history of Duke student life and **comment** on how they reflect United States (and sometimes international) history.
- **Analyze** the editorial choices made in a volume of the *Chanticleer*, paying attention to possible bias, exclusion, or overemphasis.

## BEFORE CLASS

- Watch The [Rubenstein Library's Collections](#) and [Using Duke's Digital Collections](#).
- Read this [brief article on the creation of the Chanticleer](#).
- Spend 10–15 minutes looking over the [Duke University Archives' website](#). They might come up with a working definition of the UA's role at Duke, as well as a question or two about the UA. Make time to discuss these definitions during your class session or as part of a forum discussion in Sakai.

## SESSION OUTLINE

### Activity:

For this class session, students will work in small groups to explore a volume of the *Chanticleer*. Digitized copies of the *Chanticleers* from 1912–2014 are [available online](#). You may assign pre-selected volumes or allow students to choose their own—but consider coordinating across the class to make sure that each group selects a *Chanticleer* from a different decade.

The class activity is a think-pair-share exercise, and it can work for a synchronous (e.g., a Zoom class session that includes breakout rooms) or asynchronous (e.g., a multi-step discussion on a Sakai forum) class sessions.

Ask students to begin by spending some time reviewing their group's *Chanticleer* individually. Encourage them to take notes (include page numbers!) on anything that intrigues, surprises, or puzzles them.

Then, working in their small groups, ask students to share what they observed in their Chanticleer and work together to answer (some of) the discussion questions below. This group discussion could happen either via a Zoom breakout room or in Sakai discussion forum posts.

Finally, ask each group to share their Chanticleer discoveries with the whole class, either by welcoming (and responding to) comments on their Sakai posts or by an informal report at the end of the class Zoom session.

## Group Discussion Questions:

The following questions are intended for the small group discussion portion of the class session. Students may not get to discuss every question and are welcome to choose to discuss the question(s) that they (or you) like best!

- Choose one area of student life that is represented in your yearbooks (examples might be athletics, dating, dorm life, classes and studying, etc.). How is that aspect of student life depicted in your yearbook? How does it compare to your own experience at Duke?
- In your *Chanticleer*, where do you see evidence of Duke students engaging with national or international events? How does this evidence add to what you already know about those national or international events?
- Do you find examples of bias or discrimination in your *Chanticleer*? (Think about what isn't included in your *Chanticleer*, as well as what is included.)
- Based on your *Chanticleer*, can you develop a thesis about Duke student life during that year? How might you research your thesis further?
- A single primary source sometimes raises more questions than it answers. What questions do you still have about your *Chanticleer*? Spend some time brainstorming with your groupmates about how to find answers.

## Additional Resources:

Browse through [Chanticleers](#) from 1912 to 2014.

## SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ASSIGNMENT:

Ask students to revisit the [article on the creation of the Chanticleer](#) that they read before the class session. As they'll see, our history of the Chanticleer is woefully incomplete!

Working in groups, students will divide and review the remaining Chanticleers from the decade of the yearbook they looked through in class. The groups should work together to create a brief history of the Chanticleer during that decade (this could take the form of a paper, a video, an online exhibit or website, etc.).

As part of their history, the group should write a supplemental paragraph explaining their process: did they choose to focus on any particular themes and why? How did they choose what to include/exclude?

### QUESTIONS?

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