

**EN 338, Narratives of Contact and Captivity
Visit to Special Collections
Thursday March 9, 2017**

Your small group will rotate through four stations today, viewing texts and images by Samuel Drake, Thomas McKenney, Henry Rowe Schoolcraft and George Catlin. You will spend 15 minutes at each station, and at the end of class you will share with the rest of the class your interpretations. The following prompts should guide your small group discussion.

For the Drake, McKenney and Schoolcraft stations:

1. Carefully study the title page. Who published the work and where was it published? What information does the layout and typographical details of the front matter and any accompanying images give you about the purpose of the text, the author's own cultural position, and the intended audience? Comment on the title and subtitle.
2. Survey the entire text, beginning with the table of contents. What is the organizing principle of the text? What sorts of images are included? What appears to be the function of the images? If the images are captioned, what do the captions emphasize? Skim the text near the images. What meanings does the written text give to the image? Are there contradictions between the textual description and the image?

For the Catlin station:

Erin Rhodes and I have selected portraits and scenes from Catlin's traveling Indian gallery. Some scenes are accompanied by textual commentary; what meanings does the written text give to the image? Are there contradictions between the textual description and the image?

For all of the stations:

Once you have answered the above questions, examine the images we have flagged. In your approach to the images, consult the handout, Elpeth H. Brown, "Reading the Visual Record." Reflect on the following:

Corporeal disposition: how is the person's body posed and what is the effect of this pose? If there is more than one figure, how are the figures posed in relation to each other?

Gaze: Where is the person looking? Comment on the effect of a gaze directed at the viewer versus away from the viewer. How does the figure's gaze position the viewer in relation to what is presented in the image?

Props and Clothing: Comment on how the figure is dressed and how objects are positioned on or in relation to the figure. Be attentive to signifiers of gender and

status while keeping in mind that such signifiers are culturally and historically variable.

Background: Is there a background? If so, what is its function? If not, what is the effect of the white space around the figure?

The image as a whole: Comment on how the figure is lit and colored (if it is in color)

By the end of your 15 minutes at each station, discuss how you might relate one or more of the images (or captions or textual commentary) to the representations, tropes and ideologies we have encountered so far in our class.