

IOE, UCL'S FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIETY

UCL SPECIAL COLLECTIONS



UCL

Material culture at UCL: Curating, teaching and researching student histories

The stuff of student life: material culture and ephemera workshop, NUS100, 14 September 2022

Georgina Brewis, Kathryn Hannan and Colin Penman





Material culture of student life at UCL

- Relatively limited material culture in UCL's institutional archive
- Challenges of collecting, preserving, cataloguing, displaying
- Some historical objects not accessioned by UCL Special Collections or UCL Culture
- Silver collection – medals, trophies, urns, dinner service
- Clothing – gowns, jackets, scarves, bow ties
- Students' Union ephemera (reel to reel and record players c. 1960s, trophies, medals, sporting memorabilia, Phineas)
- Items in museum collections (UCL Art Museum, Grant Musuem, Petrie Musuem, Science Collection)
- Physical spaces on campus – e.g. Beadle Boxes

Student life at UCL...

Teaching

- Since 2020 ‘The Worlds of UCL: Critical Histories of Education, Nation and Empire’ first year module, BA Education Studies
- From 2022 new project about UCL history on core first year module ‘Making History’ for BA History
- Generation UCL – research internships & placement students

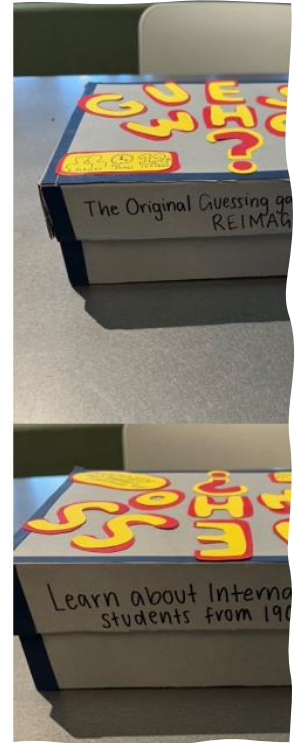
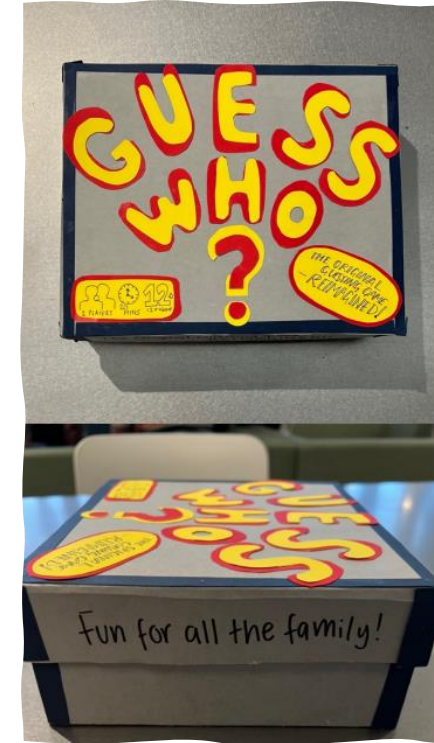
Researching

- In run up to 2026 bicentenary project ‘Generation UCL’
- Other projects include #IOE120, Slade150



The Worlds of UCL

- Taught in UCL's Object Based Learning Lab with UCL Special Collections and UCL Culture colleagues
- Creative pedagogies: object based learning; campus as a site of memory and learning landscape – through campus scavenger hunt, visit to Petrie & Grant Museum, through the 'secret' tunnel!
- Assessment: group public history project and blog post
- Introduction to history as a discipline (sources, methods, approaches); history of education as sub-field; UCL as a university
- Strong focus on student culture and campus life; international students and student mobilities; gender, class and race, empire, eugenics



I love it! Knowing the history and stories behind the objects is the coolest thing ever

It was fun to learn by using real objects and explore the history of them

It was hard to conceptualise each object though I really enjoyed trying to do so.

I enjoyed it quite so. It was very interesting to be learning in such a fun style. We could have a tangible feel of the items and it really is different to when you see it as a picture

I really liked the object based learning because I found that I was more engaged

Its really interesting to touch the objects related to the history of UCL. I enjoy this process of going on a quest that is discovered by myself.

It is very enjoyable to discover the UCL history through explore different objects. The only challenge is the time was a bit limited



OBL definitely makes seminars more interesting, we get to physically see and touch the objects, it is really cool to know that I am holding an object that dates way back in history. Also, the OBL [Lab] is based in the Main Campus, and this is the only module I have done somewhere outside of IOE, so it was very exciting.

Really enjoy the mini classroom furniture for classroom display



The seminars were always interesting and it was fascinating observing and discovering about information about objects and individuals, but I thought some seminars should have been longer or maybe the groups should have been not combined in one seminar because there isn't enough time for everyone.





Material culture and Generation UCL project

- What does it mean to put students centre stage in institutional histories?
- Through the eyes of students - Generation UCL: Two Hundred Years of Student Life in London is a new research and engagement project
- Using material culture in research
- Collecting objects and ephemera from alumni as we interview them....
- Curating exhibition on student life in 2023