

Personal Archive Prompt: Article of Clothing

This prompt asks you to identify, create, or modify an **article of clothing** to include in your PA. Likely, this will be an article of clothing already in your possession that you will not alter. However, you're also welcome to modify (with embroidery, patches, paint, screen-printing, etc.) or fully create an article of clothing. **Mark for yourself (and your viewer) how do I clothe myself?**

[Be sure to scan/take a photograph of the article of clothing to include as the item in your papers.]

Why clothing?

Covering the surface of our bodies, clothing can communicate who we are, how we identify (gender, etc.) what we believe, and what causes we align ourselves with. Many of us spend significant time and resources acquiring, maintaining (washing, mending), and wearing clothing -- clearly, we take great pains in deciding how we want to appear to the world.

With this in mind, think carefully about what is communicated in the article of clothing you choose as your item:

- Where/how did I acquire this article of clothing?
- What are the systems (economic, labor, trade) systems I relied on to acquire this article of clothing?
- Does this article of clothing communicate any information about who I am - what my identity/ies are? If so, what?
- Do I align myself culturally or politically in wearing this article of clothing? If so, with whom? Did I modify this clothing in any way? If so, how? why?
- When do I wear this article of clothing? Is it meant for everyday use; special occasions? How would I (and others) know this?

The answers to these questions should help you compose the description of the item.

After you create/identify your image, follow the directions under the heading [How to Complete Personal Archive Prompts] in the document [Introduction for Students: The Personal Archive Assignment].

Example from the Archives

***Instructor's Choice:** insert an example from an institutionally affiliated archive or archive of your choice. Alternately, use the example below.*

UWM's Libraries do not have any articles of clothing available in their digitized collection. The examples below come from the [DPLA \(Digital Public Library of America\)](#). (You'll notice that the metadata categories in these examples are not exactly the same as the ones utilized by UWM Libraries; there are different systems preferred by different libraries.)



- [Shoes worn by Dr. Jamal Harrison Bryant to a protest in Ferguson, Missouri](#)
- [Women's March 2017 pussy hat](#)
- [T-shirt worn by Rahiel Tesfamariam at a protest commemorating Michael Brown](#)

Another example, from the Wisconsin 101 Project: [Cherryland T-Shirt](#)

- Information about this example is in the form of a historical narrative, which contains several other helpful illustrations. This differs from our approach of contextualizing items, which is creating a set of metadata. Both approaches are meant to inform the audience and provide necessary context for understanding and interpreting the item.

