UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

GUIDELINES FOR FORMULATING SUBJECT HEADINGS FOR ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS

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Guidelines for University of Miami Libraries staff using Archon to add Library of Congress Subject Headings and related Form/Genre terms to records for archival collections

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OVERVIEW

The Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) system is our primary controlled vocabulary for subject description of archival collections. LCSH terms may be consulted in print or online at http://authorities.loc.gov. LCSH has the advantage of widespread adoption and robust support. However, it is important to keep in mind that it was first developed as an in-house subject cataloging solution for the bibliographic holdings of the Library of Congress. It was not originally intended to be used for archival collections, so a degree of flexibility is warranted in its application.

For catalogs containing millions of records, LCSH allows for a high degree of specificity in subject description. As it has evolved over time, it has become both more extensible and more complex. Headings that have been enumerated (spelled out) in the list of authorized headings usually cover most scenarios, but new headings may also be created by combining existing terms according to established guidelines.

LCSH SYNTAX

Headings in LCSH are usually created by adding subdivisions to a main element. Section H 1075 of the Library of Congress *Subject Headings Manual* spells out the basic syntax that governs the four types of subdivisions in LCSH: topical, geographic, temporal, and form/genre. There are two basic patterns for combining headings with subdivisions: **[Place] -- [Topic]** and **[Topic] -- [Place]**. Most—but not all—topical terms may be subdivided by place. When in doubt, consult the printed LCSH list, which specifies whether a term may or may not be subdivided geographically (this information may also appear in the 06 position of an authority record's MARC 008 field, but the printed list seems to be more reliable).

The pattern for **[Place] -- [Topic]** headings is usually **[Place] -- [Topic] -- [Temporal period] -- [Form/Genre]**. For example:

> **United States -- Social conditions -- 1980 -- Juvenile literature**

The pattern for **[Topic] -- [Place]** headings is usually one of the following: **[Topic] -- [Place] -- [Topic] -- [Temporal period] -- [Form/Genre]** or else **[Topic] -- [Topic] -- [Place] -- [Temporal period] -- [Form/Genre]**. For example:

> **Education -- United States -- History -- 19th century – Periodicals**
> **Tuberculosis -- Patients -- Maryland -- History -- 20th century – Bibliography**

These examples are provided only to illustrate proper LCSH syntax. As stated under "Local best practices," below, actual collection-level headings should generally not be this complex. For example, **United States -- Social conditions**, **Education -- United States**, or **Tuberculosis -- Maryland** would be appropriate headings by themselves.

The use of genre terms such as **Periodicals** and **Bibliography** is also addressed under "Local best practices."

GUIDELINES FOR DESCRIPTION

The *Subject Headings Manual* provides the following general guidance (based on LC practice) for judging how many headings to include in a record. These are general guidelines that should be adapted to local requirements.

Assign to the work being cataloged one or more subject headings that best summarize the overall contents of the work and provide access to its most important topics. Assign headings only for topics that comprise at least 20% of the work. [. . .] The number of headings that are required varies with the work being cataloged. Sometimes one heading is sufficient. Generally a maximum of six is appropriate. In special situations more headings may be required. Do not assign more than ten headings to a work. (H 180)

In assigning subject headings, it is helpful to keep the following basic questions in mind:

WHAT?
What is this collection about? Try to be as precise as you can and avoid including subject headings for everything. If you had to describe the collection in a few words, what would they be? Think of access points that will be beneficial to researchers and that will connect them to other collections with the same subject headings.

What physical form do the materials take (clippings, photographs, audiocassettes)? Do they represent a particular genre or type of resource (letters, government records, reports)?

WHO?
Who is this collection primarily about? Who are the primary contributors or historically significant people represented in this collection?

WHERE?
What geographic locations are prominently featured in this collection? Does this collection relate to a specific country, city, town, or landmark? Or did the creator do a lot of work in a specific place that is well represented in the materials?

WHEN?
Does this collection document a specific period in history, e.g., a war or conflict, or a specific governmental administration?

LOCAL BEST PRACTICES

The following list of local best practices addresses specific requirements for adding or creating subject headings in Archon.

1. **Keep subject headings to two subdivisions or fewer whenever possible.**

   For our archival records, the degree of specificity that LCSH allows for is usually not necessary—in fact, it may even be a hindrance to discovery and retrieval. For our purposes, a "lite" approach to LCSH seems preferable, using it more as a set of keywords than as a system for synthesizing complex precoordinate headings. At the same time, it is still important to follow LCSH guidelines in order to ensure internal consistency and interoperability with other institutions.

2. **Keep genre/form headings separate from subject headings.**

   The Encoded Archival Description (EAD) contains a separate <genreform> element to identify "the types of material being described, by naming the style or technique of their intellectual content (genre); order of information or object function (form); and physical characteristics." In the Archon interface, these terms are presented separately from a record's subject headings.

   In general, use an appropriate controlled vocabulary (not LCSH) for assigning form/genre terms. In most cases, the LCSH **-- [Form/Genre]** subdivision should be avoided when assigning subject headings in Archon. Form/genre terms should be assigned as standalone headings using an appropriate controlled vocabulary or thesaurus.

   The current default thesaurus to be used for form/genre terms is the Thesaurus for Graphic Materials (TGM). However, when necessary, terms may also be drawn from other thesauri, including the Art and Architecture Thesaurus (AAT), the Library of Congress Genre/Form Terms for Library and Archival Materials (LCGFT), or the Genre Terms Thesaurus of the ALA Rare Books and Manuscripts Section (RBMS).

   For example, for a collection containing letters from King Philip II, the personal name heading **Philip II, King of Spain, 1527-1598**—as established in the Library of Congress Name Authority File—should be entered by itself. It should not be followed by the LCSH subdivision -- **Correspondence**. Instead, the genre term **Correspondence**, taken from TGM, should be entered as a standalone heading.

   However, for photographic or general image collections representing a particular place (for example, **Cuba** or **University of Miami**), a heading with the LCSH subdivision -- **Pictorial works** should be assigned. Specific form/genre terms should also be added to reflect the different types of materials in the collection (e.g., **Photographs**, **Aerial photographs**, **Slides**, **Postcards**).

3. **When a finding aid has a creator, a subject heading should also be entered for that name.**

4. **Avoid temporal subdivisions unless they are vital to discovery.**

   Temporal subdivisions may be used to describe specific events such as wars, conflicts, or revolutions: **United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Sources**

For CHC collections, temporal subdivisions may be used to facilitate research on particular historical events or political periods in Cuba. For example:

>**Cuba -- History -- Revolution, 1959 -- Sources**
>**Cuba -- Politics and government -- 1810-1899**
>>**-- 1899-1902**
>>**-- 1902-1906**
>>**-- 1906-1909**
>>**-- 1909-1933**
>>**-- 1933-1959**
>>**-- 1959-1990**
>>**-- 1990-**

5. Avoid using the subdivision -- **History** by itself.

It can usually be assumed that archival collections contain material that has historical value or interest. Instead of assigning subject headings of the form **[Main heading] -- History**, look for other subdivisions that will provide a more specific description of a collection's content. See the list of topical subdivisions, below, for some commonly used terms.

In LCSH syntax, temporal subdivisions usually cannot follow a main heading directly (except for certain cases such as those involving art and literature). When a collection focuses on a particular historical period or event, the -- **History** subdivision may be used to link a main heading to a temporal subdivision. For archival material, headings with -- **History** should be followed by the subdivision -- **Sources**. For example: **Cuba -- History -- Revolution, 1895-1898 -- Sources**. The subdivision -- **Sources** is needed when the materials being described are primary (archival) sources. Without the -- **Sources** subdivision, headings with -- **History** would apply only to works of history or historiography (secondary sources).

6. Avoid adding temporal subdivisions for centuries.

For example, use **Brazil -- Social conditions** rather than **Brazil -- Social conditions -- 20th century**.

7. Avoid using broad geographic headings by themselves.

Headings for places at or above the country level should be subdivided by topic. For example, **Cuba** or **Caribbean Area** should not be used as stand-alone headings. See section on geographic headings, below.

8. Make sure all subject headings are relevant to the broad themes of the collection.

SUGGESTED SUBJECT HEADINGS AND SUBDIVISIONS FOR ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS

MAIN HEADINGS

GEOGRAPHIC HEADINGS

The following geographic headings should always be followed by an appropriate subdivision:

Caribbean Area -- [Topic]
Cuba -- [Topic]
Florida -- [Topic]
Havana (Cuba) -- [Topic]
Latin America -- [Topic]
Miami (Fla.) -- [Topic]
Spain -- [Topic]
United States -- [Topic]
West Indies -- [Topic]

If judged to be appropriate, specific geographic headings below the country level may be used by themselves. For example:

Coconut Grove (Miami, Fla.)
Coconut Grove Playhouse (Miami, Fla.)
Everglades (Fla.)
Florida Keys (Fla.)
Miami-Dade County (Fla.)

NAME HEADINGS

Consult the online LC authority files (http://authorities.loc.gov) before creating local name headings. Format personal names according to LC Name Authority File conventions (Last name, First name, Date range: e.g., Smith, John, 1900-2000).

For corporate and geographic names, add geographic or other qualifying information in parentheses, as appropriate, according to AACR2 or LC Rule Interpretations. For example:

Saint Mary's Church (Wilmington, Del.)
Aberdeen (Ship)
Red Sea (Restaurant : Washington, D.C.)
Wilmington (Del.)
Ile de la Cité (Paris, France)

Unique names or names that already include distinguishing geographic information do not require parenthetical qualifiers. For example:

Freer Gallery of Art
Delaware Cultural Arts Center

TOPICAL HEADINGS

The following list reflects some of the most commonly used topical headings that have been assigned to existing archival collections in Archon.

Unless otherwise noted, all headings listed below may be subdivided geographically.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR ART, LITERATURE, AND MUSIC

For headings related to art, use linguistic, national, regional, or ethnic qualifiers in inverted for (e.g., **Art, Cuban**). However, for U.S. ethnic groups, use direct form (e.g., **Cuban American art**). For most headings related to artists, use the term **Artists** subdivided geographically (e.g., **Artists -- United States**), but for U.S. ethnic groups, use direct form (e.g., **African American artists**).

For headings related to literature and literary genres, use linguistic, national, regional, or ethnic qualifiers followed by a genre term (e.g., **American drama**). For headings related to authors, use inverted form (e.g., **Authors, American** or **Dramatists, Spanish**). However, for U.S. ethnic groups, use direct form (e.g., **Filipino American authors**, **Mexican American dramatists**). For additional instructions, **s**ee comments under **American literature**.

LIST OF TOPICAL HEADINGS (TOP 40)

American drama
> To highlight particular topics, use the subdivision **-- Drama**. For example:
> > **Refugees -- Drama**
> > **Slavery -- Drama**
> For dramatic works by members of a U.S. ethnic group, follow the patterns described under **American literature**.

American literature
> For literary collections in English written by members of a U.S. ethnic group, give the ethnic group as a subdivision. For example: **American literature -- Cuban American authors**. For literary collections in Spanish by members of a U.S. ethnic group, use the pattern **Cuban American literature (Spanish)**.

American poetry
> See note on **Poetry**, below. For poetry by members of a U.S. ethnic group, follow the patterns described under **American literature**.

Architecture
Art, American
Art, Cuban
Art, European
Artists
Authors, Cuban
Cities and towns
City planning
Civil rights
Composers
Costume design
Cuban American art
> Compare with the inverted form (e.g., **Art, Cuban**) used for national artistic traditions.

Cuban American artists

> For Cuban artists, use the heading **Artists -- Cuba**.

Cuban American authors

> May be used as a standalone heading or as a subdivision under **American literature**.

Cuban Americans

Cuban drama

Cuban literature

Cuban poetry

Cubans

Dramatists, Cuban

Education

Emigration and immigration *(Not Subd Geog)*

> Do not subdivide geographically. Instead, use the free-floating subdivision **-- Emigration and immigration** under names of regions, countries, cities, etc. (see below under topical subdivisions). Assign the heading **Emigration and immigration** to general works on the process of resettling in a new country, including the administration of the emigration/immigration process, the reasons why persons leave their native land, their arrangements for transportation and the moving of personal and household goods, their trip to another country, their arrival, etc.

Exiles

> Subdivide geographically to indicate the country of origin and/or the destination of the exiles.

Exiles' writings, Cuban

> Use inverted form to indicate national or ethnic identity. Do not subdivide the heading **Exiles' writings** geographically by itself.

Government, Resistance to

Human rights

Journalists

Latin American literature

Little magazines

Music

> Subdivide geographically to indicate national musical traditions.

Musicians

Oral history

Poetry *(Not Subd Geog)*

> Avoid using **Poetry** as a main heading. As a main heading, **Poetry** should only be used for general works on poetry and works limited to the philosophy of poetry. Best practice is to use a heading for poetry qualified by linguistic, national, or regional terms (e.g., **American poetry**, **Cuban poetry**, **Brazilian poetry**) or to use -- **Poetry** as a subdivision under names of countries, cities, etc., [. . .] and under classes of persons, ethnic groups, and topical headings. For example, assign the following headings to a collection of English poetry about the Atlantic Ocean:
>
> > **English poetry**
> > **Atlantic Ocean -- Poetry**

Poets, Cuban

Political refugees

> Narrower term for **Refugees**.

Refugees

> May be subdivided geographically to indicate the country of origin and/or the destination of the refugees.

Slavery

> Subdivide **Slavery** geographically. It is not necessary to add the subdivision **-- History** to the main heading **Slavery** unless a specific time period is represented in the collection.

Sugarcane industry

Theater

Use **Theater**, subdivided geographically, for works of drama as acted on the stage. For drama as a literary form, use **Drama** or the appropriate phrase heading with a linguistic, national, or ethnic qualifier (see **American drama** and **Cuban drama**, above).

Theaters

Use **Theaters** for facilities used to stage dramatic works.

Tourism

Underground press publications

Women

World War, 1939-1945

SUBDIVISIONS

The following lists contain some common topical and geographic subdivisions useful for describing our archival collections.

TOPICAL SUBDIVISIONS

[Main heading] -- Description and travel

Use the subdivision **-- Description and travel** under names of both cities and larger places for descriptive works and accounts of travel, including the history of travel, in those places. This subdivision is not used for broad geographical works about a specific place. The subdivision **-- Geography** is used under names of places for works of that type.

[Main heading] -- Economic conditions

Use the free-floating subdivision **-- Economic conditions** under names of regions, countries, cities, etc.; under names of ethnic groups; and under classes of persons, including occupational groups, for works discussing the economic history or economic conditions in general of a place, ethnic group, or class of persons. Use **-- Economic conditions** under headings for specific occupational groups, when appropriate.

[Main heading] -- Emigration and immigration

Use the free-floating subdivision -- **Emigration and immigration** under names of regions, countries, cities, etc., for works on the process of emigration from or immigration to a place. [. . .] For works on migration from one country to another, or to a particular place within another country, assign a heading to indicate the place from which emigrants came and a heading for the place to which they moved. For example, in a collection documenting Mexican immigration to California, the following headings would be used:

> **California -- Emigration and immigration**
> **Mexico -- Emigration and immigration**
> **Immigrants -- California**
> **Mexicans – California**

Use the free-floating subdivision **-- Emigration and immigration -- Government policy** under names of regions, countries, cities, etc., for works on the policies adopted by individual governments to encourage or discourage specific types of migration, such as quotas for particular groups, lifting of restrictions for certain occupations, etc.

[Main heading] -- Foreign relations

The free-floating subdivision **-- Foreign relations** is used under names of countries (or regions made up of two or more countries) for works that discuss the diplomatic relations between these countries and other sovereign states. [. . .] For works that discuss general relations or military relations, the subdivisions **-- Relations** or **-- Military relations** are used. [. . .]

Further subdivide the subdivision **-- Foreign relations** by place for works that discuss the diplomatic relations between two regions or countries. Make an additional subject entry with the two places in reversed positions.

> **Great Britain -- Foreign relations -- Argentina**
> **Argentina -- Foreign relations -- Great Britain**

Do not further subdivide headings of this type by period subdivisions. If appropriate, assign additional headings to bring out a specific time period. Example:

> **Austria -- Foreign relations -- Soviet Union**
> **Soviet Union -- Foreign relations -- Austria**
> **Austria -- Foreign relations -- 1918-1938**
> **Soviet Union -- Foreign relations -- 1917-1945**

[Main heading] -- Political activity
Assign the free-floating subdivision –Political activity *(May Subd Geog)* under classes of persons, types of corporate bodies, names of individual corporate bodies, persons, families, individual military services, and Christian denominations for works on the political participation of these persons or organizations.

[Main heading] -- Politics and government
The free-floating subdivision **-- Politics and government** is assigned to works that discuss the theory, practice, and history of politics and government and citizen participation in the political process.

[Main heading] -- Race relations
The free-floating subdivision **--Race relations** is used under names of countries, cities, etc.

[Main heading] -- Social conditions
Use the free-floating subdivision **-- Social conditions** under names of regions, countries, cities, etc.; under names of ethnic groups; and under classes of persons, including occupational groups. Use the subdivision for works discussing the social history or sociology of a place, ethnic group, or class of persons, including such subtopics of sociology as social problems, stability, change, interaction, adjustment, structure, social institutions, etc.

[Main heading] -- Social life and customs
Use the free-floating subdivision **-- Social life and customs** under regions, countries, cities, etc., to works on the customs and habits of people in these places. Do not subdivide headings of the type **[place] -- Social life and customs** by **-- History**. Further subdivide headings of the type **[place] -- Social life and customs** by established chronological subdivisions [. . .]. Assign century subdivisions only when they do not conflict with established subdivisions for specific time periods. Establish new subdivisions for other significant periods, usually covering forty years or more, under headings of the type **[place] -- Social life and customs** where there is sufficient material to warrant it.

[Main heading] -- Study and teaching (Higher)
Assign the free-floating subdivision **-- Study and teaching** *(May Subd Geog)* under names of individual persons, corporate bodies, and places, and under classes of persons, ethnic groups, and topical headings for works on

study and teaching about these subjects. [This subdivision will generally apply to any archival collections of faculty papers that include teaching materials like lecture notes, etc.]

GEOGRAPHIC SUBDIVISIONS

Geographic subdivisions are used to limit a topic to a specific place where it occurs. The pattern **[Topic] -- [Place]** can be taken to mean **[Topic]** *in* **[Place]**. For example: a book titled *Songs and dances in Quebec* would have the heading **Folk music -- Quebec (Province)**.

For national groups outside their own country, however, assign headings to bring out both localities (this would apply to headings for **Cuban Americans** or other U.S. ethnic groups). For example:

Title: *A Colorado Dutch hop sampler*

German Americans -- Colorado -- Music
Folk music -- Colorado
Folk music -- Germany

The following list reflects some of the most common geographic subdivisions in our collections:

[Main heading] -- Caribbean Area
[Main heading] -- Cuba
[Main heading] -- Cuba -- Havana
[Main heading] -- Florida
[Main heading] -- Florida -- Miami
[Main heading] -- Latin America
[Main heading] -- United States