

APPROACHES TO PUBLIC HISTORY

Spring 2011

Wednesdays 4:55-7:35 pm

KJCC Room 607

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Description

This course will explore the practice of public history in a range of venues, including museums, walking tours, documentary film, websites, and social media. Students will read about, engage with, and critically discuss a variety of public history methods and projects.

Goals

- Gain an understanding of the different media/venues in which public historians work today
- Gain an understanding of the professional issues and challenges faced by practicing public historians
- Gain an understanding of the planning/funding process for public history projects
- Gain insight into the differences between how scholars understand history and how the public experiences history

Assignments

- Complete weekly readings and other class preparation as required and arrive prepared to talk!
- Choose a public history related twitter feed and/or blog to follow throughout the semester; be prepared to reflect and comment on your blog/twitter feed as a public history tool in class periodically throughout the semester
- Take a walking tour (guided or self-guided via downloadable app) and be prepared to present an oral critique of it
- Submit a 3-4 page analysis of how a history website implements principles of history education in its teaching materials and approach
- The course's major project will entail working in small groups to develop a funding proposal for a public history project (website, museum exhibit, film, oral history project, education program, etc.) using guidelines from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). Guest professionals will help to lead in-class peer reviews of the proposals. Assignments leading toward this culminating project will take place over the course of the semester and will include forming groups, choosing a topic and mode of presentation, reviewing funding guidelines and sample proposals, conducting research to identify historical themes and sources to be used, and drafting the proposal and budget.

Grading

- class participation (including informal oral presentations on twitter/blog and walking tour) — 50%
- written education web critique — 10%
- major project — 40%

Schedule

Date/Topic	Reading/In Class Work	Final Project Work
Wednesday January 26 — Introduction: How Does “The Public” Understand History?	Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, <i>The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Presence of the Past: Patterns of Popular History Making” • “Beyond the Intimate Past: Americans and Their Collective Pasts” • “Afterthoughts Roy Rosenzweig: Everyone a Historian” • “Afterthoughts David Thelen: A Participatory Historical Culture” Samuel Wineburg, “Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts,” <i>Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts</i>	Think about what topic and venue you would like to work on for your final project.
Wednesday February 2 — Museums and Historic Sites: Ellis Island, Angel Island	Michael Frisch, “Audience Expectations as Resource and Challenge: Ellis Island as Case Study,” in Frisch, <i>A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Public History</i> Mike Wallace, “Boat People: Immigrant History at the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island,” from Wallace, <i>Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American Memory</i> Erika Lee and Judy Yung, “Saving Angel Island,” <i>Angel Island: Immigrant Gateway to America</i>	Form groups of 3-4 students based on interest in topic and venue (ex. museum exhibit, website, etc.). Submit group rosters to professor.
Wednesday February 9 — Involving the Public in Community History	Guests: Marci Reaven, City Lore Kate Fermoile, Brooklyn Historical Society	Discuss grant proposal guidelines and sample proposals.
Wednesday February 16 — Public History and Controversy	Amy Bass, “Her Proudest Contribution to History,” “Where Will Lived and Played,” and “A Prophet without Honor,” <i>Those About Him Remained Silent: The Battle over W. E. B. Du Bois</i>	

	<p>Gary B. Nash, Charlotte Crabtree, and Ross E. Dunn, "In the Matter of History," <i>History on Trial: Culture Wars and the Teaching of the Past</i></p> <p>Mike Wallace, "The Battle of the Enola Gay," from Wallace, <i>Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American Memory</i></p>	
<p>Wednesday February 23 — Understanding Oral History</p>	<p>"Making Sense of Oral History," <i>History Matters: The U.S. Survey Course on the Web</i>, http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/oral</p> <p>Alessandro Portelli, "The Death of Luigi Trustulli: Memory and the Event," <i>The Death of Luigi Trustulli and Other Stories</i></p> <p>Ronald Grele, "On Using Oral History Collections: An Introduction," <i>Journal of American History</i> 74:2 (September 1987): 570-578.</p>	<p>One page summary of proposed project and group workplan due in class. Everyone in the group must have some writing and research responsibility. Consult with professor over email or schedule an in person meeting to get feedback and research leads.</p>
<p>Wednesday March 2 — Using Oral History in Public History Projects</p>	<p><i>Bracero History Archive</i> (braceroarchive.org)</p> <p><i>Remembering Jim Crow</i> (http://americanradioworks.publicradio.org/features/remembering/)</p> <p><i>The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter</i> (Clarity Films, 1980)</p>	
<p>Wednesday March 9 — Digital History: Exhibits and Archives</p>	<p><i>The Lost Museum</i> (lostmuseum.cuny.edu)</p> <p><i>For All the World to See</i> (http://www.umbc.edu/cadvc/foralltheworld/)</p> <p><i>Calisphere</i> (http://www.calisphere.universityofcalifornia.edu/)</p> <p><i>Digital Harlem: Everyday Life 1915-1930</i> (http://www.acl.arts.usyd.edu.au/harlem/index.php)</p> <p><i>Southern Nevada: The Boomtown Years</i> (http://digital.library.unlv.edu/boomtown/)</p> <p><i>Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project</i> (http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/)</p>	<p>Check in with professor on progress of final project.</p>

	OPTIONAL Reading: Daniel J. Cohen and Roy Rosenzweig, "Introduction" and "Exploring the History Web," <i>Digital History: A Guide to Gathering, Presenting, and Preserving History on the Web</i>	
	SPRING BREAK	
Wednesday March 23 — Digital History: Education	<i>Historical Thinking Matters</i> (historicalthinkingmatters.gmu.edu) <i>National History Education Clearinghouse</i> (teachinghistory.org) <i>National Archives DocsTeach</i> (docsteach.org) *Education web critique due in class*	
Wednesday March 30 — History and Documentary Film	<i>The Civil War</i> (Ken Burns/Florentine Films, 1990) (define selection) <i>Radio Bikini</i> (Robert Stone/Crossroads Films, 1988) In class clips from: <i>Eyes on the Prize</i> ; <i>Banished</i> , <i>Africans in America</i> (The Terrible Transformation)	
Wednesday April 6 — When the Public Makes Public History: Social Media and Crowdsourcing	Stephen Mihm, "Everyone's a historian now," <i>Boston Globe</i> May 25, 2008 Library of Congress Flickr feed British Library oral history collection: http://sounds.bl.uk/Browse.aspx?collection=George%20Ewart%20Evans%20collection&browseby=Browse+by+interviewee&choice=A-C	
Wednesday April 13 — History and Videogames	Guest: Leah Potter, American Social History Project Game: <i>Mission U.S.</i> (mission-us.org)	
Wednesday April 20 — Public History on Foot	*Report on walking tours in class*	Final check ins/work time on final projects
Wednesday April 27 — Final	Read two project proposals scheduled for peer review	Submit personal reflection on day your

Projects I	and participate in class discussion of them	group is peer reviewed
Wednesday May 4 — Final Projects II	Read two project proposals scheduled for peer review and participate in class discussion of them	