

## APPROACHES TO PUBLIC HISTORY

Spring 2012

Wednesdays 4:55-7:35 pm

KJCC Room 607

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Public historians build bridges between the work of academic historians and the interests of audiences who reach far beyond college classrooms. Through readings, media, visits by working public historians, and project work, this course explores the intellectual and pragmatic issues public historians face as they build those bridges in a variety of settings from the brick-and-mortar precincts of museums and public sites to the vast digital reaches of the internet.

### Your Responsibilities

- Complete weekly readings and other class preparation as required and arrive prepared to participate
- Follow a public history related twitter feed and/or blog throughout the semester; be prepared to reflect and comment on it as a public history tool in class
- Take a walking tour (guided or self-guided via downloadable app) and be prepared to present an oral critique of it in class
- Submit a 3-4 page analysis of how a history website implements principles of history education in its teaching materials and approach
- Submit a 3-4 page casual Two Stories writeup evaluating an online exhibit or archive
- 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.). 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.

### Assignment Due Dates

- February 22: History Education analysis paper
- February 27: Preliminary research and project plan
- March 28: Two Stories website paper
- April 11: Twitter/Blog discussion
- April 18: Walking tour oral critique
- April 20: Final Project
- April 25: Final Project reflection

### Grading

- Class participation — 40%
- Short papers and project plan — 20%

- Final project — 40%

## Housekeeping

- If you need to contact me, please use ellen.noonan@gmail.com rather than my NYU email
- If you are sick or have an emergency that will prevent you from attending class, you must contact me in advance; you must also let me know in advance if you need to arrive late or leave early.
- Assignments turned in after the due date will be penalized by half a grade (e.g., an A will automatically drop to an A-) unless you have obtained advance permission from me.
- If you are experiencing technical difficulties with preparing for class (for example, a website that is down or audio that you can't get to play on your browser), please let me know in advance rather than coming to class without having looked at the site.
- Most weeks there will be at least 30 minutes of class time for groups to meet together and discuss/work on their final projects. This time is not optional (e.g., if your group has plans to meet at another time, that doesn't mean you can leave class early).

## Schedule

January 25: Introduction

February 1: Public History and Controversy

- Amy Bass, "Her Proudest Contribution to History," "Where Will Lived and Played," and "A Prophet without Honor," *Those About Him Remained Silent: The Battle over W. E. B. Du Bois*
- Gary B. Nash, Charlotte Crabtree, and Ross E. Dunn, "In the Matter of History," *History on Trial: Culture Wars and the Teaching of the Past*
- Mike Wallace, "The Battle of the Enola Gay," from Wallace, *Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American Memory*

February 8: Historic Sites (Guest: Liz Sevchenko, founding director, International Coalition of Sites of Conscience and Guantanamo Public Memory Project)

- Michael Frisch, "Audience Expectations as Resource and Challenge: Ellis Island as Case Study," in Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Public History*
- Mike Wallace, "Boat People: Immigrant History at the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island," from Wallace, *Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American Memory*
- Erika Lee and Judy Yung, "Saving Angel Island," *Angel Island: Immigrant Gateway to America*

February 15: History Education

- Samuel Wineburg, "Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts," *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts*
- Common Core standards
- *Historical Thinking Matters* ([historicalthinkingmatters.org](http://historicalthinkingmatters.org))
- National History Education Clearinghouse ([teachinghistory.org](http://teachinghistory.org))

- National Archives *DocsTeach* ([docsteach.org](http://docsteach.org))
- *The Triangle Factory Fire* (<http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/trianglefire/>)
- *The Geography of Slavery in Virginia* (<http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/gos/index.html>)

February 22: History and Videogames (Guest: Leah Potter, American Social History Project)

- *Mission U.S.* ([www.mission-us.org](http://www.mission-us.org))

February 29: Understanding Oral History

- "Making Sense of Oral History," *History Matters: The U.S. Survey Course on the Web*, <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/oral>
- Alessandro Portelli, "The Death of Luigi Trustulli: Memory and the Event," *The Death of Luigi Trustulli and Other Stories*
- Ronald Grele, "On Using Oral History Collections: An Introduction," *Journal of American History* 74:2 (September 1987): 570-578.

March 7: Using Oral History in Documentary Radio and Film

- *The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter* (Clarity Films, 1980)
- *New Yorkers at Work* (selections TBD)

## SPRING BREAK

March 21: Using Oral History in Exhibits (Guest: Sady Sullivan, Brooklyn Historical Society)

- *Like a Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World* (<http://www.ibiblio.org/sohp/laf/>)
- *Remembering the Flint Sit Down Strike* (<http://www.historicalvoices.org/flint/#>)
- Anna Green, «The exhibition that speaks for itself: oral history and museums,» in *The Oral History Reader* (Routledge, 1998)

March 28: Digital History: Exhibits and Archives

- *The Lost Museum* ([lostmuseum.cuny.edu](http://lostmuseum.cuny.edu))
- *For All the World to See* (<http://www.umbc.edu/cadvc/foralltheworld/>)
- *Calisphere* (<http://www.calisphere.universityofcalifornia.edu/>)
- *Digital Harlem: Everyday Life 1915-1930* (<http://www.acl.arts.usyd.edu.au/harlem/index.php>)
- *Southern Nevada: The Boomtown Years* (<http://digital.library.unlv.edu/boomtown/>)
- *Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project* (<http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/>)

April 4: History and Documentary Film

- *The Civil War* (Ken Burns/Florentine Films, 1990) (episode 3, «Forever Free»)
- *Radio Bikini* (Robert Stone/Crossroads Films, 1988)

April 11: When the Public Makes Public History: Social Media and Crowdsourcing

- Stephen Mihm, "Everyone's a historian now," *Boston Globe* May 25, 2008
- [Historypin.com](http://Historypin.com)
- [www.whatwasthere.com](http://www.whatwasthere.com)

- Library of Congress Flickr Feed (Great Comments—Thank You! set [http://www.flickr.com/photos/library\\_of\\_congress/sets/72157623212811048/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/library_of_congress/sets/72157623212811048/))

April 18: Public History on Foot (Guest: Carol Groneman, creator of Five Points self-guided walking tour)

April 25: Final Project Peer Review (I) (Guest: Josh Brown, American Social History Project)

May 2: Final Project Peer Review (II) (Guest: Leah Nahmias, New York Council on the Humanities)