

HIS 626 – The Practice of Public History

Fall 2007, Tuesdays, 3:30-6:20 p.m.

Classroom: MHRA 1207

Professor Benjamin Filene

office hours: Thursdays 2:00-4:00 and by appointment: MHRA 2137

office phone: 336/334-5645

home phone: 919/932-7722 (don't call after 10:00 p.m.)

bpfilene@uncg.edu

What you're getting yourself into:

This course is not an instructional in how to claw your way to the top; rather it's an introduction to what it is like to work to within a public history institution and what it takes to thrive in one.

“You gotta serve somebody,” croaks Bob Dylan. Everyone at every level of every organization is simultaneously a leader and a follower. This course is about understanding both sides of that relationship and how to do productive and fulfilling work from both ends.

The course starts from a few key premises:

- The day-to-day, nuts-and-bolts parts of an institution's work take on life only when you understand the goals these practices were created to achieve. The policies, procedures, and programs that fill professional manuals and “how to” books exist to achieve big-picture goals for institutions.

- Fundamentally, these goals involve relationships—relationships between
 - an institution and its constituencies (“Reaching Audiences”)
 - an institution and other institutions (“Reaching Partners”)
 - an institution and its employees (“Reaching Colleagues”)

The course is structured around the theory and practice involved in building these three kinds of relationships. Throughout, the course links practical skill—writing a mission statement, creating a marketing plan, writing a budget—with discussion of the broader purposes these tools are intended to accomplish.

How we'll go about it

The course doesn't pretend that public history is either rocket science (specialized and really complicated) or theoretical physics (fascinating to talk about but tough to try out in practice). The best way to learn about public history work is to do some. So, in this course you will not only have regular readings, discussions, and writings but you will also each be involved in designing, collaboratively, a history project that will be practical, useful, and enticing to a real, local public institution—the Senior Center at the Greensboro-based Senior Resources of Guilford. Next semester (HIS627) we'll create these projects!

How you'll be evaluated

The skills that you need to succeed in this course are ones that you will need to thrive in the workplace:

- **reading and analyzing** thoughtfully and with an eye for new ideas
- **speaking** with passion, clarity, and respect
- **writing** clearly and persuasively
- **collaborating** with energy, sensitivity, and an awareness of how much you can learn from your peers

You will be graded on

Class participation—15%: attending class, doing the reading, completing the Information Interview assignment, writing thoughtful and on-time weekly responses to the reading (see below), speaking up in discussions, and helping to foster a sense of shared exploration within the classroom

Weekly responses: Each week, short, informal reactions to that week's readings (roughly a couple of paragraphs) will be due. These must be posted on our class's Blackboard Discussion Board by 8:00 a.m. each Tuesday.

Information interview (ungraded): 10-minute in-class presentation based on interview with museum professional: students sign up for due dates—*August 28-November 13*

Essay #1—15%: Analytical essay #1: history, the public, and public history—due October 9

Essay #2—20%: Analytical essay #2: institutional “personality assessment,” assessing the clarity and coherence of a local institution's mission, brand, marketing, fund-raising, and interpretive program—*due October 30*

Final Project and Presentation—30%: project plan for Senior Resources of Guilford—due November 29

Note: Each student's grade for the collaborative final project will be determined by the quality of the product and presentation and, as well, by each individual's contributions to the project. Each student will be asked to assess the contributions that each team member (including they themselves) made to the project and to the collaborative process.

Final paper—20%: reflection essay on the final project—due December 6

Grading scale:

A=93-100; A-=90-92; B+=87-89; B=83-86; B-: 80-82; C+=77-79; C=73-76

If things go awry...

...it's your responsibility to tell me—right away. If papers are late without direct, prior approval from me, I deduct ½ a letter grade per day—no exceptions. If your project is dead-ending or your peer collaboration imploding, I need to hear about it *before* it's too late to resolve the issues.

Books to Buy

Collins, Jim. *Good to Great and the Social Sectors: A Monograph to Accompany Good to Great; Why Business Thinking Is Not the Answer*, 2005.

Deutsch, Jennifer and Tamara Real. *Just Who Do Your Customers Think You Are? A Guide to Branding Your Organization* (Michigan Museums Association), 2002.

Falk, John H. and Beverly K. Sheppard. *Thriving in the Knowledge Age*, 2006.

Genoways, Hugh and Lynne M. Ireland. *Museum Administration: An Introduction*, 2003.

Lundin, Stephen C., Harry Paul, and John Christensen. *Fish! A Remarkable Way to Boost Morale and Improve Results*, 2000.

McLean, Kathy. *Planning for People in Museum Exhibitions*, 2005.

Rosenzweig, Roy and David Thelen. *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life*, 2000.

Academic Integrity Policy

All students have a responsibility to uphold the standards of “*Honesty, Trust, Fairness, Respect, and Responsibility*” detailed in the Academic Integrity Policy. Instances of cheating, plagiarism, misuse of academic resources, falsification of information, and facilitating of academic dishonesty are treated with utmost seriousness by the history department and dealt with severely by the University administration. The full policy appears in the *Student Calendar/Handbook* and at academicintegrity.uncg.edu.

Per university policy, you will be asked to sign a copy of the Academic Integrity Pledge for each major assignment in this class.

Special Needs

If you require accommodations for special learning needs, please do not hesitate to contact the Office of Disability Services, located within the Elliot University Center (334-5770)—and please let me know!

CLASS SCHEDULE AND READINGS

Whose History? Who's History?

August 21—Introductions

Assignment: administer audience survey

August 28: Whose History? Who's History?

Rosenzweig, Roy and David Thelen. *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (2000): Introduction, Chapters 1, 4, 5, and Afterthoughts (everything *except* Chapters 2-3).

Kelley, Robert. "Public History: Its Origins, Nature, and Prospects." *Public Historian* 1 (Autumn 1978): 16-28.

Conard, Rebecca. "Facepaint History in the Season of Introspection." *Public Historian* 25 (Autumn, 2003): 9-24.

Kidder, Tracy, Excerpt A. In *Old Friends* (1993): 221-244.

Dibble-Dieng, Meadow. "A Modest Proposal." *Brown Alumni Monthly* (September-October 2004): 30-33.

Assignment: Look at "Older Americans 2004: Key Indicators of Well-Being"—an electronic resource available as a .pdf through UNCG library's catalogue—and bring in a fact or table about elderly populations that interest you.

Reaching Colleagues I

September 4: Working Collaboratively

and team dynamics

**CLASS MEETS AT 3:30 AT SENIOR RESOURCES OF GUILFORD
(301 East Washington St., Greensboro; 336-373-4816)**

Fisher, Roger and Alan Sharp. "Lateral Leadership." In *Getting It Done: How to Lead When You're Not in Charge* (1998): 14-34.

Schrage, Michael. "Collaboration and Creativity." *Museum News* (March/April 2004): 44-48.

McLean, Kathy. "Problem-Solving in Exhibitions." In *Planning for People in Museum Exhibitions*: 81-91.

Ayan, Jordan. "Tapping into the Creative Process." In *Aha! 10 Ways to Free Your Creative Spirit and Find Your Great Ideas* (1996): 40-44.

Zenger-Miller, Inc. “The Four Phases of Team Development.” In *Building A Foundation of Trust*: 16-17.

Cole, Thomas R. “Introduction.” In *The Journey of Life: A Cultural History of Aging in America* (1992): xv-xxxv.

Kidder, Tracy, Excerpt B. In *Old Friends*: 23-53; 61-72.

Assignment: Look at one of these websites (we’ll divide them up in class)

- **National Council on Aging:** <http://www.ncoa.org>
- **NC Division of Aging and Adult Services:**
<http://www.dhhs.state.nc.us/aging>
- **AARP:** <http://www.aarp.org>

Reaching Audiences

September 11: Making Public Institutions Matter and mission statements

Carr, David. “In the Context of the Possible.” In *The Promise of Cultural Institutions* (2003): 37-54.

Anderson, Gail, ed. *Museum Mission Statements: Building a Distinct Identity* (2000 [1998]): 12-24.

Sevcenko, Liz. “Putting Mission First.” In *The Importance of Mission in Guiding Museum Practice* (2003): 9-11.

Durel, John. “Mission and Profit.” In *The Importance of Mission in Guiding Museum Practice* (2003): 21-23.

Cole, Thomas R. “In a Different Voice,” “The Aging of ‘Civilized’ Morality,” and “Epilogue.” In *The Journey of Life*: 139-158, 161-190, 227-251.

September 18: Getting on the Radar Screen and marketing plans/branding CLASS MEETS AT 3:30 IN WRITING CENTER, MHRA 3110

One-page project proposal due

Pine, B. Joseph II and James H. Gilmore. “Welcome to the Experience Economy.” *Harvard Business Review* (July 1998): 97-105.

Twitchell, James B. "Museumworld." In *Branded Nation: The Marketing of Megachurch, College, Inc., and Museumworld* (2004): 193-272.

Deutsch, Jennifer and Tamara Real. *Just Who Do Your Customers Think You Are? A Guide to Branding Your Organization* (2002)

Genoways and Ireland, Chapter 11: 247-272.

**September 25: Preserving (and Deserving) the Public's Trust
and ethics and collections management policies**

Carr, David. "Museums and Public Trust." In *The Promise of Cultural Institutions* (2003): 109-131

Chew, Ron. "Taking Action!" *Museum News* (March/April 2004): 38-43.

Boyd, Willard L. "Museums as Centers of Controversy." *Daedalus* 128 (summer 1999): 185-228.

Crosson, David. "Museums and Social Responsibility: A Cautionary Tale." *History News* (July-August 1988): 6-9.

Simmons, John. "Managing Things: Crafting a Collections Policy." *Museum News* (January/February 2004): 28-31.

Gardner, James B. and Elizabeth Merritt. "Collections Planning: Pinning Down a Strategy" (2002). In *Reinventing the Museum: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on the Paradigm Shift*, Gail Anderson, ed. (2004): 292-6.

Genoways and Ireland, Chapter 10: 223-245.

Optional: Genoways and Ireland, Chapter 8: 175-195.

In class: "Team Self-Evaluation" sheet

Reaching Partners

**October 2: Collaborating with Communities
and organizing for civic engagement**

Revised one-page project proposal due

Archibald, Robert R. "Friends and Colleagues." In *A Place to Remember: Using History to Build Community* (1999): 155-178.

- Archibald, Robert R. "Introduction." In *Mastering Civic Engagement: A Challenge to Museums* (2002): 1-6.
- Hirzy, Ellen. "Mastering Civic Engagement: A Report from the American Association of Museums." In *Mastering Civic Engagement: A Challenge to Museums* (2002): 9-20.
- Thelen, David. "Learning Community: Lessons in Co-Creating the Civic Museum." *Museum News* (May/June 2001): 56-59, 68-9, 71, 73, 92, 94-5.
- Sevcenko, Liz, The Reverend Deacon Edgar W. Hopper, and Lisa Chice. "St. Augustine's Episcopal Church and The Lower East Side Tenement Museum." In *History as Catalyst for Civic Dialogue: Case Studies from Animating Democracy*, Pam Korza and Barbara Schaffer Bacon, eds. (2005): 1-25.

**October 9: Pursuing Outreach vs. "In-Reach"
and diversity hiring plans**

Essay #1 due

- Archibald, Robert R. "Everybody's Business." In *A Place to Remember: Using History to Build Community* (1999): 178-197.
- Sullivan, Robert. "Evaluating the Ethics and Consciences of Museums." In *Reinventing the Museum: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on the Paradigm Shift*, Gail Anderson, ed. (2004): 257-63.
- Chew, Ron. "Community Roots." In *Mastering Civic Engagement: A Challenge to Museums* (2002): 63-64.
- Lusaka, Jane. "Reflecting a Nation: Museum Fellows Program Expands Its Reach." *Museum News* (July/August 2000): 36-39.
- Bernard, Pamela J. "When Seeking a Diverse Faculty, Watch Out for Legal Minefields." *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (September 29, 2006): B28-31. [**BF will hand out in class**]
- "Seek and You Shall Find." *Minneapolis Star-Tribune* (February 16, 2005): D1, D6. [**BF will hand out in class**]

October 16—no class (fall break)

**October 23: Collaborating with Donors I—Listening
and development plans**

In class: 10-second and 1-minute project presentations

Guest speaker: Fred Goss, Director, Greensboro Historical Museum

Falk, John H. and Beverly K. Sheppard. *Thriving in the Knowledge Age* (2006), Chapter 8: 161-181.

Wolfe, Michael and Robert Ferguson. “New Money, New Demands: The Arrival of the Venture Philanthropist.” *Museum News* (January/February 2001): 56-59.

Gibson, Eric. “The Corporate Seduction of Museums.” *Chicago Tribune* (February 16, 2003): 6 pp.

Jahnke, Art. “Losing the Win-Win Game?” *Museum News* (September/October 1993): 34-35, 50-52.

Genoways and Ireland, Chapter 6: 121-160.

Optional: Jones, Chris. “The Enronification of a Museum Near You.” *Opinion Journal* (February 15, 2002): 2 pp.

**October 30: Collaborating with Donors II—Stating Your Case
and budgets and grant-writing**

Essay #2 due

Guest speaker: Dr. Harlan Gradin, Associate Director/Director of Programs & Community Development, North Carolina Humanities Council

Radock, Michael. “Words to the Wise.” *NSFRE Journal* (winter 1990): 19-24.

Hoffman, Marilyn. “Writing Realistic Grant Budgets.” *Museum News* (January/February 1980): 48-53

“Five Steps to Easier Proposal Writing”: 2-9.
[*BF will hand out in class*]

Staff, Grizzard. “13 Proven Elements to Make Your Direct Mail Sizzle”: 2 pp.

Genoways and Ireland, Chapter 5: 91-119.

Reaching Colleagues II

November 6: Building a Vision and board management

Gardner, Howard. "Preface to the Paperback Edition," "Preface," "The Leader's Stories," **and** "Lessons from the Past, Implications for the Future." In *Leading Minds: An Anatomy of Leadership* (1996 [1995]): ix-xv, 41-65, and 285-306.

[Kegan, Robert]. "Encouraging Leaders: New Models for Leadership in Museums: An Interview with Harvard Psychologist Robert Kegan." *Museum News* (November/December 2003): 34-39.

Kotter, John P. "What Leaders Really Do." *Harvard Business Review* (May-June 1990): 103-111.

Genoways and Ireland, Chapter 3 (excerpt): 39-55.

**[November 8: Resume/Cover-Letter Workshop at Career Planning Office,
1:00-3:00 p.m.]**

November 13: Managing Change I—Business Models and strategic planning

Weil, Stephen E. "New Words, Familiar Music: The Museum as Social Enterprise." In *Making Museums Matter* (2002): 75-80.

Collins, Jim. *Good to Great and the Social Sectors: A Monograph to Accompany Good to Great; Why Business Thinking Is Not the Answer*, 2005.

Bridges, William. Introduction and Chapter 1. In *Managing Transitions: Making the Best of Change* (2003 [1991]): ix-xi; 1-10.

Zenger-Miller, Inc. "Creating a Safe Setting for Change." *Building A Foundation of Trust*: 2-11.

Franco, Barbara and Laura Roberts. "The Change Cycle": 2 pp.

Roberts, Laura. "Reinterpretation and Change: The Amos Smith House" and "Is It All History? The Burlington History Museum" (2004): 2-12.

Genoways and Ireland, Chapter 4: 75-90.

November 20: Managing Change II—New Models for Museums

Falk, John H. and Beverly K. Sheppard. *Thriving in the Knowledge Age* (2006),
Preface and Chapters 1-4, 6-7, 10.

Drafts of full project due

November 27: Leading from Below

and human resources/personnel management and finding your niche

Fisher, Roger and Alan Sharp. “Engagement” and “Choose to Help.” In *Getting It Done: How to Lead When You’re Not in Charge* (1998): 136-57; 200-4.

Lundin, Stephen C. Harry Paul, and John Christensen. *Fish! A Remarkable Way to Boost Morale and Improve Results*, 2000.

Durel, John. “Qm2 Work Style Assessment” (2004): 4 pp.

Bryan, Charles F., Jr. *Museum News*. “Am I A Historian?” *History News* (summer 2002): 5-8.

Parson, Frank. “The Vital Signs of ‘Being’”: 1p.

Genoways and Ireland, Chapter 7: 161-173.

December 4:

Revised final projects due

In class: final project presentations/Celebration!

December 11: Final papers due