



MUSEUMS AND HISTORIC SITE INTERPRETATION: PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE

UNCG HIS/IAR 627
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course comprises the first of a three-semester sequence that introduces you to the practices and scholarship of public history and skills that will help you thrive in the profession. Over the course of three semesters, the sequence will merge theory and practice through a public history project. The 2013/2014 academic year marks the 50th anniversary of the creation of UNCG, previously known as Woman's College (WC). To commemorate this transition, the class will embark on an oral history project, public outreach and exhibition work with campus groups and alumni/ae. You will interpret this institutional history of UNCG, while also placing it in the broader context of the dramatic changes of the Sixties, including the ongoing racial integration of the college and Greensboro and the rising women's movement.

In the first semester, the HIS 627 class will focus on the practices and theories of interpreting history while making a small-scale exhibit at Jackson Library based on oral history interviews with individuals on campus in '63-'64. In HIS 626, as you explore the policies and practices of museums and historic sites, you will work on the nuts and bolts of developing funding and community partnerships. In particular, you will conduct outreach during the Reunion 2014 weekend using exhibit materials created in the previous semester. The sequence culminates with HIS 633 during fall 2014, when you will design and construct an exhibition to go up on campus. The project will build upon the connections established during the previous two semesters, and will coincide with a symposium at the Weatherspoon Art Museum about an artist/quiltmaker at UNCG in '63/'64. Throughout the core sequence, you will gain exposure to multi-media techniques including audio and video recording, editing, and web-based content.

HIS 627 Core Concepts

The Museums and Historic Site Interpretation class will encourage you to learn about and engage with the following core concepts:

- How the interpretation of museums and historic sites has changed over time, and how historical moments have shaped how those places presented the past;
- The dilemmas of historic interpretation, which include ownership and authority, the role of the curator, silences and omissions, and the history of marginalized communities; and,
- Contemporary practices and models of making history meaningful to the public by partnering with communities, creating participatory exhibits and incorporating oral histories, material culture and new technologies.

HIS 627 Core Skills

This class will train you in skills that historians of all stripes use to interpret the past, and that will serve you well in the public history profession.

- Reading, analyzing and evaluating primary and secondary sources
- Speaking publicly in a way that engages and activates your audience
- Writing concisely, clearly and creatively
- Collaborating with your peers and community partners with sensitivity and a stance of listening and learning
- Using multi-media tools including digital recordings, WordPress, and Prezi
- Conducting and depositing oral history interviews

EXPERIENCES, PROJECTS & EVALUATION

To build these skills, you will engage in the experiences and projects listed below. You must hand in each assignment on-time and I will deduct a third of a grade for each 24 hours past the deadline. Unless you have a specific accommodation from the [Office of Accessibility Resources and Services](#), I will only grant extensions in advance of the due date. That said, contact me if you sense that you will not meet the deadline. I will post the grades to Blackboard, and if you see a discrepancy, please contact me immediately.

Grade Scale: A 93-100 / A- 90-92 / B+ 87-89 / B 83-86 / B- 80-82 / C+ 77-79 / C 73-76 / F 72 and below

Class Participation – 10%

Participation makes up a central part of this course, as you will most often grapple with the texts and learn from each other's point of view in the classroom. Attendance is mandatory and if you have any conflicts because of religious holidays, family emergencies or health issues, please contact me as soon as possible and no later than the day of class to request an excused absence and arrange for making up that work.

In-Class Presentation – 10% – Dates Determined By Students

Each of you will choose one class session in which you will give an in-class presentation of no more than 5 minutes on the readings and lead a discussion about them. You may select a session that has an asterisk after the heading in the class schedule. In the presentation and discussion, be sure to cover the context of the readings, the authors' perspectives and the core themes that emerge. If you decide to use multimedia components, please use [Prezi](#).

WordPress Blog Posts – 20% – Due Weekly

Each week, you will write a 300-350 word blog post in WordPress that responds to the readings. In the posts, please present and comment on the core issues the authors raise, with a focus on clarity and creativity (the word limit will force conciseness). Be sure to experiment with formatting and definitely use images, maps, video, audio, or hyperlinks to bring it to life! Also, please read the posts of your fellow students, and comment on at least one per week.

Oral History Package – 20% – Due Sept. 25

As part of the project on the fiftieth anniversary of UNCG, you will locate one person on campus in the '63/'64 academic year and conduct an oral history interview with him/her. At the end of the project, the class will deposit the oral histories with the UNCG University Archives. The oral history package should consist of the interview recording, a release form, and an indexed transcription.

Exhibit Review – 15% – Due Oct. 16

Please visit an exhibition at a museum or historic site this semester, and write a review of it (3-4 pages double-spaced). The review should include a *brief* overview of the exhibition and the strengths and weaknesses of its over-arching themes, historical content, design and layout, and interactivity. You will also give a five-minute presentation of what you found to the class that day. If you choose to re-write or revise the piece, submit it to me no later than Nov. 13.

Public Project – 25% – Installed during the Week of December 4th

You will install a public exhibit about the UNCG in 1963/1964, using the oral history interviews you conducted. You will also design this exhibit with an eye towards re-using the materials in spring 2014 as the backdrop for interactive programming with Class of '64 reunion-goers.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro greatly values integrity in the work of its students. You must appropriately cite any information that you use from your sources and you must submit work that you yourself have written or created. Copying the work of others and passing it off as your own (known as plagiarizing) is taken very seriously and will be handled by the university administration. You can read more about the policy at: academicintegrity.uncg.edu, and per university policy, you will sign a copy of the Academic Integrity Pledge for each major assignment.

ACCESSIBILITY & RESOURCES

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro seeks to promote meaningful access to educational opportunities for all students. Should you have any needs or questions related to disability issues, please contact the [Office of Accessibility Resources and Services](#) (OARS), located in the Elliot University Center, #215. As an instructor, I am committed to making this course accessible to all of the students in it, and will work with OARS to accommodate students' requests. N.B. You do not need to disclose details about your disability to the instructor in order to receive accommodations.

For assistance with writing assignments, contact the [UNCG Writing Center](#), where staff members hold appointments both in person and via instant-messaging. [The Digital Media Commons](#) in Jackson Library provides help with Prezi, Powerpoint, WordPress, web design, posters/flyers, video and audio. Finally, UNCG's [Speaking Center](#) offers a great resource for building public, small-group or individual speaking skills.

READINGS

The following readings are available at the bookstore and on Amazon.com, and I have also placed them on reserve at the Jackson Library. Most of the books on reserve are available in hardcopy for one-day check outs from the library, although a few are available only as E-Books.

Required

Adair, Bill, Benjamin Filene and Laura Koloski. *Letting Go? Sharing Authority in a User-Generated World*. The Pew Center for Arts and Heritage, 2011.

Lonetree, Amy. *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums*. The University of North Carolina Press, 2012.

McLean, Kathy. *Planning for People in Museum Exhibitions*. Association of Science Technology Center, 1993.

Ritchie, Donald. *Doing Oral History*, 2nd Edition. Oxford University Press, 2003.

Rolph-Trouillot, Michel. *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. Beacon Press, 1995.

Rosenzweig, Roy and David Thelen. *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life*. Columbia University Press, 1998.

Schwarzer, Marjorie. *Riches, Rivals and Radicals: 100 Years of Museums in America*. American Association of Museums, 2013.

Sturken, Marita. *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, The AIDS Epidemic and the Politics of Remembering*. University of California Press, 1997.

CLASS SCHEDULE

HISTORY AND MEMORY

Aug. 21

Introductions

[Larry Cebula, "How to Read a Book in One Hour," *Northwest History Blog*, April 26, 2013.](#)

Lindsay Waters, "The Time of Reading," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 9, 2007.

Carol Dweck, "Beliefs that Make Smart People Dumb," in *Why Smart People Can Be So Stupid*, ed. by Robert J. Sternberg.

Tony Schwartz, "Relax! You'll Be More Productive," *New York Times*, February 9, 2013.

[National Council on Public History, "What Is Public History," NCPH Website.](#)

Aug. 28

The Power of Historical Memory – Meet at UNCG Special Collections* "Celebrating 50 Years of UNCG," *Spartan Stories Blog*, July 1, 2013.

[UNCG Libraries, "Race Relations at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro," Civil Rights Greensboro Website.](#)

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

Paul Boyer, "Whose History Is It Anyway? Memory, Politics and Historical Scholarship," in Engelhardt and Linenthal, eds., *History Wars*.

Richard H. Kohn, "History at Risk: The Case of the Enola Gay" in *History Wars*.

Sept. 4

Personal Memories as Evidence: Oral Histories*

Donald Richie, *Doing Oral History*.

Kathryn Anderson and Dana C. Jack, "Learning to Listen: Interview Techniques and Analyses," in *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*, ed. by Sherna Gluck and Daphne Patai.

Sherry Thomas, "Digging Beneath the Surface: Oral History Techniques," *Women's Oral History: The Frontiers Reader*, Armitage, Hart and Weathermon, eds.

Cress, Collier, Reitenauer, eds., *Learning Through Serving*, pp. 67-79.

- Sept. 11** **Multiple Perspectives, Multiple Histories***
Alessandro Portelli, “The Death of Luigi Trastulli: Memory and the Event,” in *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History*, pp. 1-26.
- Kate Willink, *Bringing Desegregation Home: Memories of the Struggle toward School Integration in North Carolina*, Introduction, Ch.’s 1, 2, 9, and 10.
- Peggy McIntosh, “White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences through Work in Women’s Studies,” *Gender Basics: Feminist Perspectives on Men and Women*, Anne Minos, ed.
- [One oral history from UNCG’s integration and coeducation collection.](#)
- Due: Be prepared to give an update about locating an interviewee.*
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- Sept. 18** **Elisions and Revisions***
Michel Rolph-Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*.
- Marita Sturken. *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, The AIDS Epidemic and the Politics of Remembering*, Introduction & Ch.’s 2, 3, 5 and 6.
- Hugh Ryan, “How to Whitewash a Plague,” *New York Times*, August 3, 2013.
- Due: Be prepared to give an update about your oral history interview.*
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- Sept. 25** **Voices on Display – Meet at Greensboro Historical Museum**
Adair, Filene, Koloski, *Letting Go?* pp. 138-193.
- Due: Oral history package – No blog post.*
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- Oct. 2** **Race and Gender on Campus***
Kimberle Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics and Violence against Women of Color,” *Stanford Law Review*, 43 no. 6 (July 1991).
- Leslie Miller-Bernal and Susan L. Poulson, eds., *Challenged by Coeducation: Women’s Colleges since the 1960s*, Ch.’s 1, 2 and 5.
- Martha Biondi, *The Black Revolution on Campus*, Introduction, Chs. 1 and 2.

Barbara Miller Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women*, Ch. 12.

EXHIBITING PRACTICES

Oct. 9 Making Museums*

Marjorie Schwarzer, *Riches, Rivals & Radicals*, Introduction, Ch.'s 3 and 4, and Afterword.

Nancy McLean, *Planning for People in Museum Exhibitions*, Introduction, Ch.'s 1-5.

Oct. 16 Evaluating Exhibitions

Alan Teller, "Assessing Excellence in Exhibitions: Three Approaches," *Exhibitionist* (Fall 2007).

Beverly Serrell, *Judging Exhibitions*, 17-46.

Due: Exhibit review and presentation – No blog post.

Oct. 23 Exhibit Design*

Kathy McLean, *Planning for People in Museum Exhibitions*, Ch.'s 6-10.

Beverly Serrell, *Exhibit Labels: An Interpretive Approach*, pp. 1-36.

Donna Braden, Ellen Rosenthal, and Daniel Spock, "What the Heck is Experience Design?" *Exhibitionist* 24 (Fall 2005).

Oct. 30 How Visitors Learn*

Beverly Serrell, *Exhibit Labels: An Interpretive Approach*, pp. 37-110.

John Falk, *Identity and the Museum Visitor Experience*, pp. 17-37, 56-65, 91-110, 215-251.

Richard Rabinowitz, "Story Time, Exhibit Time," *Culturefront* (Summer 1997).

Due: Bring to class ideas for themes and formats of exhibit

HISTORY ON DISPLAY

Nov. 6 Object-Based Histories* – Meet at The Elsewhere Museum

Lisa Corrin, *Mining the Museum*, pp. 1-22.

Steven Lubar, and W. David Kingery, eds., *History from Things: Essays on Material Culture*, Introduction, Chs. 1 and 2.

Adair, Filene and Koloski, *Letting Go?* pp. 56-67.

Rainey Tisdale, "Do Museums Still Need Objects?" *History News* (Summer 2011).

Optional: Marjorie Schwarzer, *Riches, Rivals & Radicals*, Ch. 2.

Due: Bring photocopies of images, artifacts and primary source documents you would want to incorporate into the final project..

Nov.13 The Participatory Museum

Adair, Filene, Koloski, *Letting Go?* pp. 10-43, 67-97, 124-137.

Due: Design of final project.

Nov. 20 Complicating Participatory History

Amy Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums*.

Due: Rough draft of final project components.

FINAL PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Nov. 27 Thanksgiving Break – No Class

Due: Email me with update about your work on the final project.

Dec. 4 Exam Week – Final Project Installed & Celebration!

N.B. This syllabus is subject to change.