

# PUBLIC HISTORY CAPSTONE I

## FALL 2014

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UNCG HIS 720  
DR. ANNE E. PARSONS  
OFFICE: MHRA, #3209

THURSDAYS, 6:30-9:20  
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OFFICE HOURS: TUESDAYS, 11:30-1:30

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### OVERVIEW OF COURSE

In both your classes and internships with the Museum Studies program, you have studied major principles and best practices of public history, strengthened your historical research skills, expanded your knowledge of the historiography of United States history and improved your skills in writing, public presentation, and project planning. The Museum Studies capstone classes HIS 720 and 721 offer you the opportunity to bring together all of what you have learned and apply it toward a public history project of your own creation.

In the first semester of the capstone, HIS 720, the class will focus on conducting primary and secondary research, identifying the project's contributions to the history already created in scholarly and public history settings, and drafting a preliminary plan that outlines the project's major themes and narratives. HIS 721 will consist of creating design mock-ups, prototypes or drafts, conducting additional research as needed, editing and finalizing the project, and implementing the plan.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

During HIS 720, you will strengthen your historical skills in the following ways:

- **by communicating with your community partner** to identify the needs of the institution and the audience (August – December)
- **by identifying and evaluating bodies of academic and public history work** that tell the history of your subject (August – September),
- **by articulating in writing how your project will build upon and contribute** to the academic and public history scholarship on your topic (September – October),
- **by identifying and analyzing relevant primary sources** that inform your narrative and that you can use in your project. (October – November)
- **by writing a preliminary project plan** that weaves together the interests of your community partner and audience, your historical contributions, and the primary source research you conducted. (November – December)

Finally, the independent nature of this project will offer you the opportunity to compassionately practice self-confidence in the face of doubt and uncertainty, and patience and endurance as you complete a long-term project.

## **TEACHING METHODS**

In the capstone course, you as students have as much, if not more, influence over what you learn and the skills that you build as the professor does. As the instructor of the course, I facilitate the research and writing process by establishing the basic deadlines and goals, facilitating class discussions and peer reviews. I will also offer comments on the non-graded assignments (main question, bibliography, outline, rough draft, etc.) due on the class dates listed below and available to offer any other edits you request. Beyond that, the majority of the work will occur outside of the classroom setting where you will control how you conduct your research, writing, collaborations with community partners, and project planning. The primary purpose of this capstone project lies not just in the end product that serves the community, but also in the means to that end. How you go about your work is where most of the learning lies. As a result, class sessions will include not just time for peer review on the content of the work but also time for reflection on your experiences as you do long-term research-driven public history projects.

## **EXPERIENCES, ASSIGNMENTS & 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 – 15%**

Participation makes up a central part of this course, as the classroom is the primary place for grappling with the research process and the challenges that arise with developing a preliminary plan. I base the participation grade on your engagement with group discussions about both content and the capstone project process. 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.

### **Peer Review and Self-Evaluation – 15%**

In select weeks, you will conduct self-evaluations and peer reviews of each other's work, offering comments on your own writing and that of one other student. How will this peer review happen? I will assign pairs in advance of class and then all of you will submit your written assignments to Blackboard no later than Tuesday at 6:30 PM – giving a full 48 hours for the other students to peer review them. I will also distribute guidelines for the peer review and self-

evaluation, you will complete them and then you will hand in a hardcopy peer review and self-evaluation on the day of class. Dr. Parsons will base the peer review/self-evaluation grade on the your thoughtfulness and thoroughness in your feedback.

### **Paper on Contribution of Project and Annotated Bibliography– 35%**

The grade will be based upon how well the paper articulates how the project builds upon and contributes to select bodies of academic and/or public history work. The grade will assess the paper’s thesis and structure, the appropriateness of your secondary sources, the cohesion of your historiographic review, and how well you incorporated peer review, self-evaluation, and instructor comments into the final draft.

### **Preliminary Project Plan and Annotated Bibliography – 35%**

The preliminary project plan grade will assess the quality of the big idea, the overarching narrative and structure of the project, and the use of primary sources to both build the narrative and to bring the story to life. The grade will also evaluate how well the plan fits with the major contribution identified in the first class paper. Finally, the grade will assess how well the student incorporated peer review, self-evaluation, and instructor comments into the final draft.

## **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](http://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 your requests. N.B. You do not need to disclose details about your disability to me 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](#) and the [Digital ACT Studio](#) in Jackson Library provide help with multimedia projects and UNCG’s [Speaking Center](#) offers a great resource for building public speaking skills.

## **CLASS SCHEDULE**

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### **August 21<sup>st</sup> – Class Meeting**

Students will read each other's design proposals in preparation for the first class. The class will discuss how historiography (both academic and public history) will inform the capstone projects and how to plan for the historiographical research.

### **September 4<sup>th</sup> – Class Meeting**

Students will pre-circulate a document that contains the main historiographical question and an initial bibliography. Each student will read and evaluate one other student's document and will self-evaluate his/her own.

### **September 18<sup>th</sup> – Class Meeting**

Dr. Parsons will clarify the expectations of the contributions paper and the class will discuss the ways the projects make historiographical interventions and contributions.

### **October 2<sup>nd</sup> – Class Meeting**

Students will pre-circulate rough drafts of their contributions paper in advance of class. Each student will read and evaluate one other student's rough draft and will complete a self-evaluation of his/her own paper.

**Due: October 9<sup>th</sup> at Noon – Contributions Paper with Annotated Bibliography and Academic Integrity Pledge (Hardcopy)**

### **October 16<sup>th</sup> – Class Meeting**

Students will come to class with a plan for their primary source research that includes a main research question, a rough schedule and an initial list of places to conduct research (archives, people, museums, libraries). N.B. The class does not have to pre-circulate these documents.

### **October 30<sup>th</sup> – Class Meeting**

Students will pre-circulate annotated bibliographies and each student will read one in advance of class, offering critiques on how the primary source research matches the main question and ideas for improving research strategies.

### **November 13<sup>th</sup> – Class Meeting**

We will discuss the expectations of preliminary project plan and I will provide any needed clarifications.

**November 20<sup>th</sup> – Last Class Meeting**

Students will pre-circulate detailed outlines/rough drafts of their preliminary plan in advance of this class. The outlines/drafts will include an introduction that lays out the main argument/big idea of the project. Each student will read and evaluate one other student's outline and will also do a self-evaluation of his/her own.

**December 1<sup>st</sup> at Noon – Optional Rough Drafts Due**

I will review rough drafts at any time prior to 12/1, but will not review them after this date.

**Due: December 9<sup>th</sup> at Noon – Preliminary Plan with Annotated Bibliography and Academic Integrity Pledge (Hardcopy)**

N.B. This syllabus is subject to change.