HIS/IAR 633—Community History Practicum
Fall 2015
Mondays and Wednesdays 2:00-3:15
MHRA 3209

Professor Benjamin Filene
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Credits: 3 hours
Prerequisites: Restricted to HIS and IAR graduate students who have completed
HIS/IAR 626 (The Practice of Public History), unless permission is granted by instructor

<u>**Course Description**</u>**:** In this hands-on course, students work collaboratively and engage
community partners as they research, design, and complete public projects—previously
planned in HIS/IAR 626—that engage audiences in local/regional history. These projects
involve original research in both primary and secondary printed sources and, as well,
draw on a range of sources that drive public history work, including public records, oral
interviews, images, and artifacts.

In 2015, the work will focus on the mill village exhibition in Revolution Mill Studios.
Working together and with the professional design team at Design Dimension and the
Self-Help community development organization, students will conduct original research
and engage community partners and public audiences in the exhibition's content.

<u>**Student Learning Outcomes:**</u>
In completing these project, the course will hone skills and techniques utilized by public
history professionals, including the ability to

1. **identify** and **compile** historical sources;
2. **analyze** them for meanings and **discover** connections among them;
3. **collaborate** with your peers, area professionals, and community partners as
   you **plan** how to sequence the work of project development;
4. **design** a public product that **demonstrates** and **shares** your findings;
5. and **discuss, reflect** on, and **evaluate** the successes and limitations of your
   work.

<u>**Teaching Methods:**</u>
The class will meet regularly as a full group to provide peer support and critique and to
help build a sense of community among the collaborators. The bulk of the work for the
class, however, will occur outside the classroom. Each week will involve a *substantive*
engagement with me about your progress, meaning that you will have to work
individually and in your project groups to generate ideas and materials so that we can
have sufficient grounds for discussion.

As well you will be expected to arrange meetings to receive feedback and input from both community partners and outside academic advisors.

Assignments and Evaluation:

You will be evaluated on your creative contributions to the projects; your ability to foster a collaborative, supportive, and yet rigorous work environment with your peers; your skill at forging respectful, professional, and fruitful relationships with community partners; and your ability to plan and complete a project that reflects a high degree of interpretive sophistication, adheres to historical accuracy, reflects sustained engagement with community partners, and that creatively engages and rewards public audiences.

You will maintain a **weekly blog entry** (on Canvas) charting your progress and reflecting on your process of research, design, and community/professional engagement. Typically these blogs will be due **Friday by noon**. As well, you will receive feedback from me, your peers, and, where appropriate, outside reviewers at several key mileposts:

- Preliminary Development Review: **September 19**
- Detailed Development Review: **October 24**
- Production Review: **November 19**
- Exhibition Opening: **Friday, December 6**

Grades will be calculated as follows:
> Process Blog: 15% **(learning outcome #5)**
> Class participation—20**%**: **(learning outcome #s 3, 4, 5)**
> Preliminary Development Review: 5% **(learning outcome #s 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)**
> Detailed Development Review: 5% **(learning outcome #s 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)**
> Production Review: 5% **(learning outcome #s 3, 4, 5)**
> Final project: 50% **(learning outcome #s 1, 2, 3, 4)**

 (There will be no final exam.)

Grading 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

If things go awry…

…it's your responsibility to tell me—right away. If your project is dead-ending or peer collaboration imploding, please let me hear about it *before* it's too late to resolve the issues!

> **LATENESS POLICY**:
> It is important to turn in assignments on time so as to be fair to other students and to ensure timely grading. I am receptive to *advance* requests for extensions; however, if an assignment, **including a blog entry**, is turned in late without an

agreed-upon extension, I will deduct 1/3rd of a letter grade per day (e.g., A to A-) unless an appropriate written excuse (e.g., medical, counselor's, dean's) is provided.

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 or other challenges, please do not hesitate to contact the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services, located within the Elliot University Center (334-5440; http://ods.uncg.edu)! I will be very receptive to any steps to help make your learning experience more healthy and successful.

Required Books

Learning Through Serving, Christine M. Cress., Peter J. Collier, Vicki L. Reitenauer and Associates eds., 2013 (second edition).

Serrell, Beverly. *Exhibit Labels: An Interpretive Approach*, 2015 (second edition).

McLean, Kathy. *Planning for People in Museum Exhibitions*, 1993.

Additional readings will be distributed by the instructor.

CLASS SCHEDULE AND READINGS

In this class, the group will explore the shifting dynamics of project-based public history work. Adaptability and adjustment will be keys to success! With that in mind, the course is structured in phases, described below, that culminate in milepost reviews. Within each phase, tasks and duties will evolve as needed, just as they do in creating projects in museums.

While, the class will meet regularly throughout each phase, traditional reading and discussion will take place primarily in the first phase (see below), during which we will be exploring historical background and group dynamics relevant to our work. Throughout, I will expect significant independent and collaborative work, with constant communication among team-members and with me.

Preliminary Development/Pre-Schematic Design:
This is an idea-driven phase, in which team-members revisit the project's goals, solidify themes, conduct research, create a preliminary design approach, and make a work plan for the duration of the project.

August 17: (Re)-Introductions

August 19: Setting the Stage: Understanding Group Dynamics, and the Project-Development Process
"Groups Are Fun, Groups Are Not Fun," In *Learning through Serving* Chapter 4: 51-75

McLean, Kathleen. *Planning for People in Museum Exhibitions,* 48-67.
Note: You already read some of these pages for HIS627, but please re-read.

August 24: Building Blocks: Interpretation and Civic Engagement
Meet at Terra Cotta Heritage Museum: 504 Norwalk Street, Greensboro
Archibald, Robert. "Common Ground." In *A Place to Remember: Using History to Build Community* (1999): 87-108. [**on e-reserve in Canvas**]

Archibald, Robert R. "Introduction." In *Mastering Civic Engagement: A Challenge to Museums* (2002): 1-6. [**on e-reserve in Canvas**]

Veverka, John A. "Exactly What Is Interpretation?" In *10 Must Reads: Interpretation* (2014): 337-344. [**BF will hand out**]

August 26: Reflection
"Reflection in Action," In *Learning through Serving*, Chapter 6: 95-111

- **September 9: Preliminary Development/Pre-Schematic Review**

Schematic Design:
In this phase, we develop ideas further, assess their depth, consistency, and historical accuracy, and test them against the realities of space, budget, and audience. Significant research and image-gathering happens in this phase, including contacting community members to address gaps and uncertainties in the exhibit outline.

September 14: In So Many Words: Exhibit Text

> Serrell, Beverly. *Exhibit Labels: An Interpretive Approach*
> If you have the *2015 edition*: ix-xi, 1-68, 86-106,117-165—no additional pp.
>   necessary
>
> If you have the *1996 edition*: ix-xv; 1-49; 65-100; 112-114, 125-130.
>   *Note: You already read some of these pages for HIS627, but please*
>   *review, along with the additions.*
>   *AND* **BF will hand out** pp. 1-3 and 147-165 from the 2015 edition.
>
> McLean, Kathy. *Planning for People in Museum Exhibitions*: 103-114.
>   *Note: You already read these pages for HIS627*, but please review.
>
> Borowsky, Larry. "Telling a Story in 100 Words: Effective Label Copy."
>   *History News* 62 (autumn 2007): 8 pp. [**BF will hand out**]

- **October 7: Schematic Design Review**

Design Development
This is a form-driven phase, in which team-members finalize content (conducting targeted research as needed), write full drafts of all text, solidify design decisions, and finalize budget priorities.

- **November 16: Design Development review**

Construction Documentation
This is a production-centered phase in which team members complete any final edits of text, and shift into fabricating the exhibit's physical components.

- **December 7: Extra class session: Construction Documentation review**