

Public History Capstone I Fall 2015

HIS 720
Thursday, 6:30-9:20
MHRA 3209

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W 9-12, Th. 12-1

Course Overview

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 history and historiography of the United States, and improved your skills in writing, public presentation, and program planning. The Museum Studies capstone—HIS 720 and HIS 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.

This is, essentially, your Master's thesis, an opportunity to demonstrate that you have mastered the art of public history.

In HIS 720 you will create an *interpretive justification* document and a *development plan* prior to initiating the implementation of that plan. The *interpretive justification* will be your opportunity to demonstrate that you understand the most relevant themes, theories, and issues from the discipline of public history, explain how these will shape/are shaping the development of your interpretive product. The *development plan* will be the document that defines the institutional requirements, learning goals, audience research, storylines, methods and tools, marketing, estimates of time and material costs, planned historical research, and a schedule for implementation.

When your development plan is approved by your professor and your community partner, you will begin the actual implementation. Submission milestones for the *interpretive justification* and the *development plan* will be in the Fall semester, but the larger project spans the entire school year and is not pegged to the ends and beginnings of the Fall and Spring semesters. Implementation will begin in late Fall and continue into Spring, under HIS 721. At the end of the Spring semester, you will compose a *reflection paper* in which you evaluate your own work, focusing on successes, failures, and how the end product may or may not have conformed to your expectations in the planning process.

At the end of the spring semester you will combine your *interpretive justification* document, *development plan*, a representation of *your project* as delivered, and a *reflection paper* into a portfolio that you will submit to your professor.

Learning objectives

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

- **By communicating with your community partner** to identify the needs of the institution and the audience
- **By identifying and evaluating bodies of academic and public history work** that tell the history of your subject and best ways to interpret it
- **By articulating in writing how your project will build upon and contribute** to the academic and public history scholarship on your topic
- **By identifying and analyzing relevant primary sources** that inform your narrative and that you can use in your project
- **By writing a program proposal** that weaves together the interests of your community partner and audience, describes your historical contributions based on the primary source research you conducted, the storyline or interpretive goals, a narrative of how public history theory undergirds your proposal, and a plan for implementation.

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

A note on your submissions

Each of your projects will be different. That means that each of your documents will take on different organizational and narrative forms. Therefore, there is no single template, length requirements, or pre-determined expectations for what you produce. *We will develop individual expectations as your work progresses.*

Coordination between you, your partner, and the department.

To ensure that expectations and obligations of all three parties are clear at the outset, you will arrange a conference call between yourself, your partner, and your professor within the first two weeks of class.

Teaching methods

In this 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, and directing class discussions and peer reviews. I will also offer comments on all drafts.

Our class meetings will consist of review of everyone's work to date. You will describe your progress, the problems you are encountering, and the breakthroughs

you are having. Everyone else will be engaged in your report, and will be expected to offer suggestions, resources, ideas, and criticism. This face-to-face engagement will be just as important as the more formal peer review and self-reflection.

Beyond that, the majority of the work will occur outside of the classroom setting where you will control how you conduct your research, writing, and collaborations with community partners, and project planning.

Assessment

You must hand in each assignment on time. (I will deduct a third of a grade for each twenty-four 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 Canvas, 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.

For HIS 720 (Fall 2015), your grade will be assessed this way:

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 not just on your engagement with group discussions about both content and progress of your own project, but your level of engagement with your peers' projects. 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 Canvas no later than Tuesday at 6:30 PM—giving a full forty-eight 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 review and self-evaluation on the day of class. I will base the peer review/self-evaluation grade on your thoughtfulness and thoroughness in your feedback.

Interpretive justification document, with bibliography -- %45

The grade will be based upon how well the document articulates how the project builds upon and contributes to select bodies of academic and/or public history work, and in how you anticipate that literature will shape the specific program you are developing.

Development plan -- %45

See the form below for items that will be considered in your development plan.

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. Plagiarism is easily detected, 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 your requests. Please note that 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. The Digital Media Commons and the Digital ACT Studio in Jackson Library provide help with multimedia projects and UNCG's Speaking Center offers resources for building public speaking skills.

Schedule for HIS 720 (Fall 2015)
(subject to change)

August 20 (Thursday): Class meeting

Students will introduce themselves and their project proposals. Class will define expectations for this capstone project.

>Plan to schedule a conference call with your partner.

September 8 (Tuesday): *Submit draft interpretive justification document for pre-circulation.*

September 10 (Thursday): Class meeting

Bring peer reviews of interpretive justification documents and discuss individual progress as a group.

September 17 (Thursday): *No class meeting*

Submit final draft, hard copy, of interpretive justification document to professor by 3:00pm.

October 6 (Tuesday): *Submit draft development plan for pre-circulation*

October 8 (Thursday): Class meeting

Bring peer reviews of draft development plan and discuss individual progress as a group.

October 15 (Thursday): *No class meeting*

Submit final draft, in hard copy, of development plan to professor by 3:00pm.

October 29: Class meeting

Accountability session. Be prepared to discuss progress with group.

November 19: Class meeting

Accountability session. Be prepared to discuss progress with group.

Development Plan

This document should consider the following items as applicable:

Program title.

Vision. One paragraph description of what this project is, how it fits into museum's interpretive goals, with reference to lifespan, parameters, and estimated cost.

Program description. This will more fully discuss the following issues in no more than three paragraphs.

- **Description of design and experience expectations,** including storyline.
- **Why is this important** for the museum to do this program? (How does it relate to the museum's mission and interpretive goals? Does it fill a pressing gap? Does it correspond to an anniversary or event?)
- **What are the learning goals?** What do you want the audience to get from this? (Describe these goals in specific ways that will be measureable.)
- **What is the targeted audience?** Can't be "anyone." Can't be "visitors." How does targeted audience shape learning goals and other planning elements?
- **Why is this method the best way** to achieve the interpretive mission and the learning goals?

Plans for audience surveys. What questions do you anticipate having regarding the development of your program. What survey instruments will you employ to collect answers? What are your plans for testing prototypes or mockups?

Research needs. What further historical research do you need to perform? How will you accomplish this research?

Materials and costs. What actual materials and tools will you need to complete this program? What will this cost? Will you need to acquire photographs and permissions? Will you use software, hardware, or other physical material?

Marketing plan. How will you reach your target audience(s)?

Implementation. How will you actually implement this program? This may take the form of a **schedule or timeline.**

Measurement. How will you measure and report success or failure in achieving your learning goals after the program is implemented?