

# **HIS/IAR 633 – COMMUNITY HISTORY PRACTICUM**

## **ANNE E. PARSONS – FALL 2018**

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LOCATION: PUBLIC HISTORY LAB  
OFFICE HOURS: THURSDAYS, 1:00-4:00  
EMAIL: [AEPARSON@UNCG.EDU](mailto:AEPARSON@UNCG.EDU)

TIME: MONDAYS, 3:30-6:20 PM  
OFFICE: MHRA, #2137  
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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

In this hands-on course, you will work collaboratively with each other and with community partners as you conduct your public history project to commemorate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Greensboro's polio hospital. Over the course of the semester, you will serve an important community need by applying for a state highway historic marker on the site of the former institution and by commemorating the anniversary of the hospital with a travelling exhibit and series of programs. You will learn by doing, taking the time to both practice new skills and reflect on the connections between this public history project and your graduate courses in a way that helps you absorb the principles you have learned at UNCG.

### **Course Promises**

Some of you have worked on projects like this one before and all of you will work on something similar in the future. So what is different about this practicum class – how does this project stand apart from your other jobs, internships, and class projects?

What makes this project different is that it intentionally connects your project work to what you have studied in other classes such as your U.S. History, Practice of Public History, Museum and Historic Site Interpretation, Museum Education, Historic Preservation, and Museum Curatorship classes. We will focus not only on getting the job done, but on the process of designing, developing and implementing a public history project. In particular, this course promises to train you in the following ways:

- to consider the connections between public history theory and practice,
- to practice building relationships with community partners,
- to collaborate with and support your fellow team members and listen to their feedback with an open mind,
- to increase your cultural competency as you work with a diverse set of community members and stakeholders,
- to build your project planning skills (setting a calendar, budgeting, task management, communication),

- to put together the historic marker application, exhibition and programming in a way that engages the audience and encourages participatory approaches,
- to reach out to individuals and organizations through marketing and communication with the media,
- to create programming that connect to the humanities themes of the exhibit and are engaging to audience members, and,
- to evaluate your audiences through surveys and shadowing and to summarize what you find.

### **Teaching Methods and Service Learning**

*Why does service learning matter?* Studies show that service learning classes such as Community History Practicum succeed because they: 1) offer a chance for students to assess how theories play out in real-world settings, 2) improve job skills such as empathy, project planning, and working in a team, and 3) provides more student ownership of the learning process. Service learning is multi-directional and comes from students' own initiatives and reflections, facilitation by the professor, and interactions with peers and community partners. To make this process successful, each person involved in the service learning class has certain responsibilities to uphold.

**As students,** you have the responsibility of taking charge of your own learning. You will identify areas to strengthen and then will put effort into improving those areas. Think about the tasks you do in this course as *learning opportunities* rather than merely task items on a checklist. Whether things go right or wrong, the main purpose lies in learning and serving the community. To that end, you will write reflection pieces throughout the class in order to consciously evaluate your progress. Finally, as students you will build a supportive environment with your classmates.

**The primary responsibility of the instructor** in this class lies in facilitating learning by designing and implementing the service experience (directing the project, crafting the schedule and syllabus, and evaluating student work). The instructor will also give feedback on your efforts in designing the exhibit, working with community partners, and collaborating with peers. Finally, the instructor will respond to any major issues that arise among students or with community partners to work toward a positive experience for everyone involved.

**The community partners** (in this case People and Paws 4 Hope, the Greensboro History Museum, the International Civil Rights Center and Museum, the NC Humanities Council, and other organizations) will offer constructive feedback and support over the course of the project, modeling the approaches of professionals and experts in their fields. The instructor will mediate between students and community partners if issues arise.

## **EXPERIENCES, PROJECTS & EVALUATION**

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+ 97-100 / A 93-96 / A- 90-92 / B+ 87-89 / B 83-86 / B- 80-82 / C+ 77-79 / C 73-76 / F 72 and below

### **Class Participation – 20%**

Participation makes up a central part of this practicum course. This grade will assess your participation in the project planning sessions and the ways that you create a supportive and positive work environment. Attendance in class 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 work as needed. Your participation grade also includes an evaluation of the amount of work that you put into the group project. I assess this work through your blog posts in which you describe your work and through your weekly log in which you write what you intended to accomplish and what you did accomplish. As part of your participation grade, please submit the weekly log of tasks on November 26 (see Canvas for the form).

### **Reflection Blog – 30% – Due Throughout the Semester (Final Due on November 26)**

Over the course of the semester, you will create a new blog roll in your current website. This blog roll will focus solely on this class's public history project. Over the course of the semester, you will write at least seven posts on your blog. Each reflection post should have three components: 1) a description of what you did; 2) an analysis of how your work connected to what you've learned in your MA in History/Museum Studies degree; and 3) a discussion of how this applies to your future career.

This blog offers you the chance to step back and discuss what you have taken away from any successes or breakthroughs, collaborations with peers or community partners, and responses to challenging situations. Please draw connections between your on-the-ground experiences in this project and what you have studied in your other classes at UNCG. To that end, there are two additional requirements:

- Please discuss at least one or two articles or books in each reflection post and cover at least ten throughout the semester. Remember to discuss them – don't just give a brief mention.
- Please mention at least one of the learning objectives in each post that you write. If there are learning objectives that you are meeting that aren't listed above, you may discuss them.

Finally, this blog is your chance to continue building your web-design skills. Please work on improving the design of your blog – working with the Digital ACT Studio or me to get feedback.

By the end of the semester you will have a professional website with which to showcase your work.

### **Final Project Portfolio – 30% – Due November 26**

You will submit a final project portfolio at the end of the semester that will summarize the work that you did and the final deliverables that you created. Using that information and my own observations of the project work, I will give you a final project grade. Please note that the quality of a project does not lie in only the final project, but in the creativity, thoughtfulness and rigor that you put into each step along the way. Please upload the final portfolio to Canvas and include the following documents in one main PDF file. If you cannot put the documents into one file, you may submit a link to a GoogleDrive file and I'll access the materials that way. The portfolio should include:

- The project plan your team created at the beginning of the semester (See Canvas for instructions),
- Deliverables (flyers/photographs of the events; final drafts of the exhibit with photographs; the historic highway marker application),
- An impact statement of 3-4 pages double-spaced in which you describe the impact of your part of the project on the community, and,
- A 2-page double-spaced assessment of how well you met the learning objectives of the class and the community's objectives.

### **Evaluation Poster – 20% – Due November 26**

Finally, you will conduct audience evaluations (surveys, shadowing, questions) on any topic you want to evaluate. For instance, you could evaluate the effectiveness of the programming, the audience experience of the exhibit, the experience of oral history interviewees, or the community partners' feedback on the project. You will then prepare a poster of your findings using the InDesign program (there will be a training on InDesign during the semester) and you will share the posters with each other in class on November 26.

## **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).

## 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](#) 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, small-group or individual speaking skills.

## READINGS

Over the course of the semester, I may suggest readings to help you as you draft exhibit components, plan your schedule, conduct outreach, plan programming, and evaluate audiences. The readings include the following, which you may have read in other classes:

Beverly Serrell, *Exhibit Labels*.

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

Ritchie, Donald. *Doing Oral History*.

Simon, *The Participatory Museum*.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

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Below is the main schedule for the entire class. Each small group will also develop a plan for their work in the semester, which they will use as well.

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| <b>August 20</b>    | First class meeting – Project planning   |
| <b>August 27</b>    | Class Meeting<br>Due: Small Groups' Draft Project Plan – Will edit and finalize in class.<br><br>Dr. Parsons will hand out instructions for leading classes. |
| <b>September 3</b>  | Labor Day – No class meeting   |
| <b>September 10</b> | Class meeting  |

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| <b>September 17</b> | Class meeting   |
| <b>September 24</b> | Class meeting   |
| <b>October 1</b>    | Class meeting   |
| <b>October 8</b>    | Fall Break – No class   |
| <i>October 11</i>   | <i>Polio Hospital 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. All expected to attend. (Main instructors notified.)</i> |
| <b>October 15</b>   | Class meeting   |
| <b>October 22</b>   | Class meeting   |
| <i>October 24</i>   | <i>Program on Polio. All expected to attend. (Main instructors notified.)</i>                           |
| <b>October 29</b>   | Class meeting   |
| <b>November 5</b>   | Class meeting   |
| <b>November 12</b>  | Class meeting   |
| <i>November 17</i>  | <i>Program on polio hospital and civil rights. All expected to attend.</i>                              |
| <b>November 19</b>  | Class meeting   |
| <b>November 26</b>  | Final class meeting – share evaluation posters.   |