

# COMMUNITY HISTORY PRACTICUM 633 ~ FALL 2019

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**Dr. Joey A. Fink**

Class Meetings: Tuesdays, 3:30-6:20pm, in MHRA Room 1304  
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 2:30-3:20, and 6:30-7:50pm, MHRA, Room 2110, and by  
appointment

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## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

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 and draw on a range of sources that drive public history work, including public records, oral interviews, images, and artifacts. Final products may involve exhibitions, web-based products, public programs, curricula, or other formats that engage public audiences in issues emerging from the past around us. This course is restricted to graduate students in History and Interior Architecture who have completed HIS/IAR 626 (The Practice of Public History) unless permission is granted by instructor.

## **Learning Objectives**

- Gain practical experience in working collaboratively with each other and with community partners on an exhibit, including design, development, and implementation
- Supervise the hosting of a travelling museum exhibit, as well as create original installations to complement the existing components
- Increase cultural competency in working with diverse community members and stakeholders
- Create programming around the exhibit's themes and engages audiences, and manage budgetary considerations
- Develop and execute marketing and communication strategies to maximize the impact of the exhibit on targeted audiences
- Evaluate your audiences through surveys and shadowing and summarize your findings
- Reflect on your roles as public historians, curators, community partners, and scholars

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS AND INSTRUCTOR**

This course is a little different from a traditional graduate-level seminar. There is an intentional service learning component, as well as an emphasis on hands-on experience and practical learning opportunities. Therefore, it's important to clarify the responsibilities of students and the instructor.

**Students:** In this course, you're asked to take a greater responsibility for your own learning. You will identify areas in your individual skillset and knowledge base, as well as the team's collective skillset and knowledge base, to strengthen and improve. You will not be performing tasks that the instructor sets for you so much as you'll be "learning as you do." Whether things go right or wrong, remember that the main purpose lies in learning and serving the community. To that end, in addition to the work you'll perform to execute this traveling exhibit, you will also read, write, and reflect in ways that seek to constantly and consciously elevate your progress and promote intellectual and professional growth.

**The instructor:** My primary role in this class lies in facilitating learning. To this end, I have designed a schedule intended to encourage reflection and provide students with opportunities to be heard, to hear each other, to receive feedback, and to lead. I take responsibility for helping to facilitate collaboration in this course: collaboration between the students, between this course and the department/university, and between students and community partners. In this capacity, I will respond to and arbitrate any major issues that arise and I will approve plans. But I do not plan to manage and direct so much as I hope to guide and support. This project ultimately belongs to the students in the course, and I hope that this will be opportunity for students to exercise greater authority and responsibility, while also feeling supported throughout the experience.

## **EXPERIENCES, PROJECTS & EVALUATION**

In courses that emphasize experiential learning and community engagement, it becomes even more crucial to provide transparency in expectations and evaluation. To a certain extent, I can lay out the type of work you'll be expected to do for this course, provide the deadlines, and explain how it will be graded. Yet in this community history practicum, there is no way to entirely predict what problems you may be asked to solve, issues you may need to handle, and 'bumps in the road' you will be expected to navigate. I ask that you trust that you have your instructor's support throughout this semester and to always keep the lines of communication open – when things aren't clear, meet with me to discuss; when you have questions, ask; when you need help, say so.

Your evaluated work for this course will fall within four components, described below. We will discuss the expectations and specific instructions for each component. At any point, if you have questions or need clarification or guidance, don't hesitate to email or meet with me.

## **1. Scholarly and Professional Engagement – 20%**

Scholarly Engagement: Part of this course will include seminar-style discussions of readings and active participation in workshops. Attendance in class meetings 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. Merely attending is, however, a minimal effort. A-level scholarly engagement means consistently offering significant vocal contributions throughout the class meeting, demonstrating active listening through body language/non-verbal communication, being prepared for each meeting with reading notes/questions, and actively participating in workshops and group work. In the first half of the semester, each student will be responsible for leading one seminar meeting. This will include working with the professor and classmate partner(s) to choose reading(s), develop a lesson plan for the seminar, and lead the discussion that day. We will discuss this on the first day of class and more information on this will be provided.

Professional Engagement: Part of this course involves work beyond the classroom, such as on-site work at the museum, events related to the exhibit, group work at the Public History Lab and library, and meetings with classmates and the instructor. The expectations for this are similar to those for scholarly engagement; that is, attendance is mandatory, but merely showing up is not enough. Your professional engagement will be evaluated on your performance as an active contributor to the work, your preparedness for the task at hand, and how you demonstrate respect for the people you're working with (including, but not limited: punctuality, not being distracted by phones/social media, and your communications/interactions with community partners).

**Deadline:** This portion of your grade is cumulative and will be assessed throughout the semester. There will be regular check-ins regarding your performance. If you have questions or concerns at any time, please feel free to speak with me during office hours or request a time to meet.

## **2. Written Work – 20%**

Throughout the semester, you'll be asked to produce short pieces (typically 1-2 pages, typed, double-spaced). This written work includes things like blog posts, reflection pieces, reading analyses, in-class free writings, and peer reviews. Specific instructions and expectations will be distributed and discussed in advance of deadlines. Unless otherwise noted, you'll be asked to submit written work in Canvas.

**Deadline:** This portion of your grade is cumulative and will be assessed throughout the semester. For the first half of the semester, assignment and deadlines are listed in the course schedule. In the second half of the semester, written work will be geared towards the project portfolios and may include short self- and peer-evaluations. Students will receive timely feedback on their written work (typically, within 1 week; sometimes sooner). You are always welcome to meet with me during office hours or request a time to meet if you have questions or concerns.

### **3. Project Portfolio – 30%**

Over the course of the semester, you will produce a project portfolio and submit it at the end of the semester. Overall, the contents of the portfolio should reflect the work you did and demonstrate what you learned. Because each student's workload and deliverables will vary slightly over the course of the semester, I will work with each student to establish clear expectations for your project portfolio. At a minimum, a portfolio should contain:

- the project plan that you and your teammates created at the beginning of the semester and a 2-3 page (typed, double-spaced) assessment of the plan (how well your team met goals, the strengths of the team, what didn't work and why, what you would do differently)
- the deliverables produced (varies according to you and your team's contributions to the project)
- a 3-4 page (typed, double-spaced) impact statement in which you describe the impact of your part of the project on the community/audience(s) you worked with and reached
- a 3-4 page (typed, double-spaced) self-evaluation of how well you met the expectations or fulfilled the objectives of this class and the project

Please note that quality does not lie solely in the final outcome. As I evaluate your project portfolio, I will be taking into account how your work demonstrates creativity, thoughtfulness, flexibility, and resourcefulness. While you want your portfolio to showcase the amazing work you did, you also want to show how far you've come since the beginning of the semester, in terms of intellectual growth, professional experience, knowledge base, and skill set, as well as how you addressed adversity or overcame obstacles.

**Deadline:** Final and complete version of the project portfolio is due no later than midnight on Thursday Dec. 5<sup>th</sup>. Students are asked to submit their work in Canvas, ideally as one document, but specific methods of delivery may vary depending on the portfolio. Throughout the semester, I have built in times for check-ins and to look at work-in-progress.

### **4. Audience evaluations and final assessments – 30%**

Once the exhibit is open to the public, 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, or focus on the experiences of audiences in the museum, or the feedback of community partners. You'll be responsible for collecting information, analyzing it, and presenting your findings. There are two ways you'll present your findings. One, you'll give a short presentation (10-15 minutes) during the last class meeting and use visuals (physical or digital – more on this later) during your oral presentation. Two, you'll complete a final assessment (your evaluation of the success of the project as a whole). Altogether, this will amount to about 4-5 pages of writing (typed, double-spaced).

**Deadline:** Both parts of this must be completed and ready to submit/present by the start of the last class meeting (Tuesday, Dec. 3). More information and specific instructions will be distributed and discussed in class.

**Citations in written work:**

For the project portfolio and audience evaluation/final assessment, students are asked to cite sources in their written work in Chicago style (end/footnotes and a bibliography). For the less formal written work assigned throughout the first half of the semester, parenthetical and in-text citations. Minor errors in citations are not likely to impact your grade. Serious omissions in citations or a failure to cite sources at all can have a serious impact on your grade. (See below regarding Academic Integrity.) We will discuss these expectations in class and you're always welcome to meet with me to discuss specific questions or concerns.

**Policy on Late Work/Missing Assignments:**

You must turn in all assignments on-time. I will deduct one letter grade for each hour 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.

**Grade Scale:** A 93-100 / A- 90-92 / B+ 87-89 / B 83-86 / B- 80-82 / C+ 77-79 / C 73-76 / C- 70-72 / F 70 and below.

**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 (and you alone) wrote/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. Equally egregious are “sins of omission” – these are instances where a student did not intend to cheat or be dishonest, but the work they produced failed to meet standards of academic integrity. Consult the university website or speak with me directly if you have questions about this.

**Accessibility:**

We seek 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. You do not need to disclose details about your disability to the instructor in order to receive accommodations.

**Resources:** 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**

All of the assigned readings will be available in Canvas, through the library, or via open source online sites. You do not need to purchase any books for this course.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

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**Please note the following:**

- Unless otherwise noted on the schedule, class meetings will be held in MHRA 1304. There are some days set aside for on-site work in the museum, and there may be some days that we meet in the Public History Lab. If there is no location designated for that day, assume we're meeting in MHRA 1304.
- Any readings and assignments should be completed before class begins on the day on which they are listed in the course schedule.

## **FIRST THREE CLASS MEETINGS:**

These three classes will be devoted to introductions, orientations, and project and semester planning. Assignments due are noted below, on the days they are due.

**Aug 20**            Introductions and review of syllabus  
                         Orientation on project groups and work accomplished thus far  
                         Selection of topics/themes/skillsets, teams & days for peer-led classes (see below)

**Aug 27**            Project and semester planning: no readings assigned for today's class  
**Due by the start of class:** Each group should have a draft of their work plan for the semester. I will work in class with each group to review your plan and offer feedback. It will be easiest if you have document(s) printed out so we can work with hard copies of your plan/schedule. We will talk in the first meeting about what these work plans should contain. The essential components are: big picture goals for the group; an explanation of each group member's roles/allocation of labor; proposed deliverables and deadlines.

Additionally, each student should write a 2-3 page reflection piece. This can be relatively informal and it will be confidential (only I will read it). In this reflection piece, I'm looking for writing that helps me get to know you as a person and scholar and that helps me understand the goals and vision you have for this class/project. We'll talk more about this in the first class meeting. I ask that students email this to me **by midnight on Sunday Aug. 25** so that I have time to read and respond to them before today's class.

**Sept 3**            Project and semester planning: no readings assigned for today's class  
**Due by the start of class:** Each team of peer leaders for class discussions should turn in a 1-2 page outline for their plan to lead class on the day they've chosen. This should be a collaborative effort that each team member contributes to. Please only submit one document per team (email to me or hand in).  
In this document, please do the following:  
-summarize the topic/theme the class will focus on that day and why it matters  
-explain your goals for the class meeting (knowledge and/or skills)  
-identify 2-3 readings or sources you wish to assign/have your peers use  
-optional: share a draft of the lesson plan

## **NEXT FOUR CLASS MEETINGS:**

These four class meetings will begin with a discussion of readings and/or a skillset workshop. This part of class will be peer-led. On the first day of class, we'll decide on the topics/themes or skillsets we want to focus on in these classes, and students will choose which day they want to lead. Each day will have a team of 2-3 students serving as the peer leaders. On those days, you and your team will be responsible for selecting the readings/sources that we will use, developing a lesson plan, and posing discussion questions/in-class exercises for the rest of the class. I will work with teams on their prep work and provide feedback and guidance on their plans.

Written work due for each individual student: On one of the three days when you are not part of the team leading the discussion/workshop, you will need to post a reading/source analysis in Canvas at least two days before that class begins (so by midnight on the Sunday before that class), in which you identify what you think are the 2-3 big take-aways from the readings/sources and explain the ways that you see the readings/sources for this class fitting in with the project/benefiting the class. This piece of writing should be 2-3 pages (typed, double-spaced), written to the best of your ability, and include citations.

**Sept 10**      Part One of class: discussion of readings and/or skillset workshop, peer-led  
Part Two: group work on project

**Sept 17**      Part One of class: discussion of readings and/or skillset workshop, peer-led  
Part Two: group work on project

**Sept 24**      Part One of class: discussion of readings and/or skillset workshop, peer-led  
Part Two: group work on project

**Oct 1**         Part One of class: discussion of readings and/or skillset workshop, peer-led  
Part Two: group work on project

## **LAST CLASS MEETING BEFORE FALL BREAK:**

**Oct 8**         Wild Card – we'll leave this class meeting open for now; it may be used for:  
Guest speaker(s)  
Group work on project  
Check-ins of work-in-progress and mid-semester performance evaluations  
In the event of an unanticipated obstacle, this open day provides a buffer  
**Due by the start of class:**  
In a 2 page paper, explain the progress you have made and the one or two most important things you've learned or skills you've developed thus far, and describe the challenges or issues you've encountered and how you have dealt with them/plan to deal with them. This writing can be fairly informal and will be confidential. You can email it to me by the start of class or hand in a print copy.

- Oct 15**      **Fall Break – No Class**
- Oct 22**      Class time reserved for on-site work at museum and/or off-site group work
- Oct 29**      Class time reserved for on-site work at museum and/or off-site group work  
\*Meetings with individual students and/or teams will be scheduled for check-ins on work-in-progress and performance evaluations
- Nov 5**      Class time reserved for on-site work at museum and/or off-site group work
- \*Nov. 4-5:** Exhibit arrives; all students are expected to contribute to set up (we will develop a work plan and schedule together; more details on this forthcoming)
- Nov 7**      Exhibit soft opening (all expected to attend and contribute to set up/breakdown)  
**(Thurs)**
- Nov 8**      Exhibit Opening Night (all expected to attend and contribute to set up/breakdown)  
**(Friday)**
- Nov 12**      Class time reserved for on-site work at museum and/or off-site group work
- Nov 19**      Class time reserved for on-site work at museum and/or off-site group work
- Nov 22**      Campus event (all expected to attend and contribute to set up/breakdown)  
**(Friday)**
- Nov 26**      Class time reserved for on-site work at museum and/or off-site group work  
\*Meetings with individual students and/or teams will be scheduled for check-ins on work-in-progress and performance evaluations
- Dec 3**      Audience evaluations and final reflections due. We'll use class time for presentations; written work should be submitted in Canvass by the start of class
- \*Dec 2-3:** Exhibit breakdown; all students are expected to contribute to set up (we will develop a work plan and schedule together; we may be able to adjust these dates with the museum -- more details on this forthcoming)

**Project Portfolio due by midnight on Thursday Dec. 5**

Upload your portfolio to Canvas, ideally as one document (a Word Doc or PDF). Specific deliverables will be discussed with individual students.