MUSEUM AND HISTORIC SITE INTERPRETATION:
PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE

FALL 2022 - UNCG HIS/IAR 627
DR. ANNE E. PARSONS
MONDAYS, 2:00-4:50 SOEB 208
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OFFICE HOURS (VIRTUAL AND IN PERSON): THURS, 11:30-1:30
IN PERSON LOCATION: MHRA 2137 VIRTUAL LOCATION: GO.UNCG.EDU/ZOOM
SIGN UP IN ADVANCE TO GUARANTEE A SPOT: GO.UNCG.EDU/TALKWITHDRPARSONS

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course comprises the first of a three-semester sequence that introduces you to the practices and scholarship of public history and the skills that will help you thrive in the profession. Over the course of three semesters, the sequence will merge theory and practice through readings, guest speakers, field trips, and hands-on projects. In the first semester of this sequence, the HIS 627 class will focus on the practices and theories of interpreting history for the public. Throughout the class, you will immerse yourself in core questions about public history: the history of museums, shared authority, power and memory, historic trauma, and community engagement. Then, in Spring 2023 and Fall 2023, you will work on a project as a group in HIS 626 and HIS 633 respectively, which will help you put the theory into practice.

Learning Objectives
Enduring Understandings

- Students understand how museums have changed and the potential for change in the future
- Students articulate the value of public history, museums, and historic sites in society
- Students understand sharing authority and engaging with the community – the principles and practice

Core Concepts
• Students articulate and evaluate how practitioners make history meaningful to the public
• Students understand the principles of cultural competency and know how to apply best practices
• Students can articulate and apply best practices in interpreting traumatic and contested histories

Skills

• Students can write clearly, concisely, and compellingly for public audiences
• Students will curate a piece using a Knight Lab digital storytelling tool (a Timeline, Storymap, and/or Juxtapose)
• Students will give a brief public speaking presentation that is clear and compelling

Experiences, Projects & 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. Finally, I post grades to Canvas, 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 course, as you will grapple with the texts and learn from each other’s point of view in the classroom. Your participation in both in person and online discussions will count towards this grade. 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 if appropriate.
Presentations – 15% – Dates Chosen by Students
You will get into pairs and each pair will choose one week in which you will give a brief presentation on the main reading for that week. On the Thursday before class at 12 PM, you will post a 5-minute video presentation onto Canvas and will then lead a brief online discussion (3 questions max) prior to class. Please work to make your presentation as visually appealing and engaging as possible. Required components of the presentation are: brief background information about the authors and their perspectives, the core arguments of the book, and why it is important in the literature. Then, please come up with three substantive questions for the students to discuss, and make sure that these questions relate to the core argument of the book and what the class might learn from it.

Timeline Assignment – 15% – Due September 19
For your first assignment, please make a KnightLab Timeline. In the timeline, please describe five major turning points that made modern history museums and historical sites what they are today. To make it easier, you may choose a topic to focus on: the building, the collection, the exhibition, or people & money. Be sure to give specific examples about the changes that occurred and explain why you consider them important. Remember to include discussions of major historical events—such as periods of war, economic change, and social activism—that contextualizes these changes.

You may do this on your own or with a partner – whichever you prefer. Be sure to use the readings and discussions from the class in the paper and cite them with footnotes, using the brief Chicago citation style. To cite the class discussions, write "HIS 627 Class Discussion, [DATE].” Submit the link to the Timeline in Canvas. If you choose to revise the timeline after you receive a grade, please submit it to me no later than November 27.

Exhibition Review – 20% - Due: October 24
Please visit an exhibition at a museum or historic site and write a review of it (5-7 pages double-spaced). The review should focus on assessing how well the institution handles the core questions in the class: public memory, power, traumatic histories, and sharing authority. You may assess the institution’s interpretation, programming, exhibit design, and layout as part of the review. The review should not merely describe the exhibition, it should have an over-arching main point that you prove with specific examples. If you choose to re-write or revise the piece, submit it to me no later than November 27.

StoryMap of Field Trips – 25% – Due November 27
Throughout the semester, we will visit a series of museums and historic sites. For this project, please create a Knight Lab StoryMap that teaches people about 4 places that
you visited. Each site on the map should reflect on how the museums represent or do not represent best practices in the field and how museums could better incorporate cutting-edge developments that you have studied in class.

**Academic Integrity**

UNC 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.

**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 Elliott University Center, #215. As an instructor, I am committed to making this course accessible to all 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 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 provides technical help with web design, posters/flyers, video, and audio and help with making digital projects more visually appealing. Finally, UNCG’s Speaking Center offers a great resource for building public, small-group, or individual speaking skills.

**Covid Statement from University**

As we return for Fall 2022, all students, faculty, and staff and all visitors to campus are required to uphold UNCG’s culture of care by actively engaging in behaviors that limit the spread of COVID-19. While face-coverings are optional in most areas on campus, individuals are encouraged to wear masks. All individuals and visitors to campus are asked to follow the following actions:

- Engaging in proper hand-washing hygiene.
- Staying home when ill.
- Complying with directions from health care providers or public health officials to quarantine or isolate if ill or exposed to someone who is ill.
- Completing a self-report when experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, testing positive for COVID-19, or being identified as a close contact of someone who tested positive.
- Staying informed about the University's policies and announcements via the COVID-19 website.

Students who are ill, quarantining, or isolating should not attend in-person class meetings, but should instead contact their instructor(s) so alternative arrangements for learning and the submission of assignments can be made where possible. As we continue to manage COVID-19 on our campus, we are following the lead of the local health department and we will adjust our plans to balance student success, instructional requirements, and the hallmarks of the collegiate experience with the safety and wellbeing of our campus community.

**REQUIRED BOOKS**
The following required books are available at the UNCG bookstore, on Amazon.com, and through other booksellers. You may purchase or use an e-book – just be sure that you have an e-reader that you can bring to class to use. You may not refer to the book on your phone as I find that this has hindered students referencing the book in class. If you use an e-book, be prepared to use specific examples from the text and have a method of retrieving them easily from the e-book. During the semester, we have many readings which are excerpted from books; you are welcome to purchase the entire book if you would like.


CLASS SCHEDULE

GENEALOGIES OF PUBLIC HISTORY
Aug. 22  What is Public History?

Aug. 29  How Have Museums and Historic Sites Changed?
Begin Reading Marjorie Schwarzer, Riches, Rivals & Radicals, focusing on the Introduction, Ch.’s 3, 4, and Afterword.

Sept. 5  No Class – Labor Day – Rest!

Sept. 12  Key Moments in Museums’ History – No Class (Asynchronous Work)
Finish Schwarzer, Riches, Rivals, & Radicals

Due: Timeline on Key Moments in Museums

HISTORY AND PUBLIC MEMORY
Sept. 19  Public Memory of Genocide – Guest Speaker Yael Dinur, Former Docent at Yad Vashem
Watch virtual tour of Yad Vashem: The World Holocaust Remembrance Center; Read “Holocaust History,” in The Inclusive Historians’ Handbook

Sept. 26  Sharing Authority – Virtual Guest Speakers from the Museum of the Cherokee Indian

Oct. 3  Reckoning with Slavery at Historic Sites – Field Trip to Historic Stagville in Durham 3-4:30 (Carpool)
Read Clint Smith, How the Word is Passed

Oct. 10  No Class – Fall Break – Recharge and Reboot
Oct. 17  Best Practices in Sharing Authority with the Community – Field Trip to Elsewhere Museum in Greensboro
Read excerpts from Bill Adair, Benjamin Filene, and Laura Koloski, eds. *Letting Go?* Taylor, 2011.

Oct. 24  Discussion of Students Exhibition Reviews

Due: Exhibit Review

**PUTTING PRINCIPLE INTO PRACTICE**

Oct. 31  Reimagining Historic Houses – Field Trip to Old Salem
Turino and Balgooy, *Reimagining Historic Houses*

Nov. 7  Museums as Agents of Change – Field Trip to the International Civil Rights Center and Museum
Read Murawski, *Museums as Agents of Change*

Nov. 14  Queering the Museum – Virtual Guest Speaker with the Staff of the Pauli Murray Museum in Durham
Read excerpts of *Interpreting Queer History*

Nov. 20  Putting the Visitor First and Inviting Them In – Field Trip to the Greensboro History Museum
Read excerpts from *The Participatory Museum* and excerpt from John Falk, *Identity and the Museum Visitor Experience*

Nov. 27  Reflecting on What We’ve Learned ~ Sharing StoryMaps

Due: StoryMap of Museums and Historic Sites
Thank you for an awesome semester!