

## MUSEUM AND HISTORIC SITE INTERPRETATION: PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE

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FALL 2022 - UNCG HIS/IAR 627  
DR. ANNE E. PARSONS (SHE/THEY)

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](https://go.uncg.edu/zoom)

SIGN UP IN ADVANCE TO GUARANTEE A SPOT: [GO.UNCG.EDU/TALKWITHDRPARSONS](https://go.uncg.edu/talkwithdrparsons)

[CLICK HERE FOR THE COURSE DESCRIPTION](#)

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### **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.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

#### **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
- Students understand sharing authority and engaging with the community – the principles and practice

#### **Core Concepts**

- Students articulate and evaluate how practitioners make history meaningful
- 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 strengthen their ability to communicate digitally pieces using digital timelines and storymaps
- Students will be able to present clearly and concisely

## **ASSIGNMENTS, ASSESSMENT, & GRADING POLICY**

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.

**Grading 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 – 15%**

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. 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.

### **Homework Assignments – 20%**

Throughout the semester, I will give assignments such as discussion posts, small activities, and brief responses to the readings. These homework assignments will strengthen your understandings of the readings and advance the learning objectives of the course. I will post these on Canvas, so please check regularly.

### **Timeline Assignment – 15% – Due September 12**

For your first assignment, please make a timeline in which you 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 brief discussions of major historical events—such as periods of war, economic change, and social activism—that contextualizes these changes. If you choose to re-write or revise the piece, submit it to me no later than November 28.

### **Exhibition Review – 15% - 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, although you do not have to address all these things. 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 28.

### **StoryMap of Field Trips – 20% – Due November 28**

Throughout the semester, we will visit a series of museums and historic sites. Please create a Knight Lab StoryMap that teaches people about 3-5 places that you visited. Each site on the map should engage with 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.

### **Presentations – 15% – November 28**

You will give seven-minute presentations to the class in which you share what you have learned from the field trips and the readings. You may use your StoryMap as a guide for what you share, and you may present as an individual or in a pair of two people. There will be additional requirements if you present in a pair.

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

By submitting an assignment, each student is acknowledging their understanding and commitment to the Academic Integrity Policy on all major work for the course. Refer to the following URL: <https://osrr.uncg.edu/academic-integrity/>.

### **ACCOMMODATIONS & RESOURCES**

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities. If you encounter any barriers to full participation in this course due to the impact of a disability/condition impacting a major life activity, please contact the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS). OARS will engage students in an interactive process to determine the need for any reasonable accommodations. Connect quickly via this brief [Welcome Form](#). Upon receipt, OARS will contact you to schedule a convenient, virtual consultation. You may also request a consultation by calling 336-334-5440, emailing [oars@uncg.edu](mailto:oars@uncg.edu), or walking into the OARS suite in 215, EUC. Additional OARS info may be found at <https://oars.uncg.edu/>.

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.
- Self-monitoring for symptoms of COVID-19.
- 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.

Balgooy, Max, and Kenneth Turino, *Reimagining Historic House Museums*. AASLH: 2019. [UNCG has made this available as a free e-book textbook]

Lonetree, Amy. *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums*. The University of North Carolina Press, 2012.

Murawski, Mike. *Museums as Agents of Change*. AAM, 2021.

Schwarzer, Marjorie. *Riches, Rivals and Radicals: 100 Years of Museums in America*. American Association of Museums, 2013.

Smith, Clint. *How the Word is Passed*. Little & Brown, 2021.

## **CLASS SCHEDULE**

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**DETAILS ABOUT THE READINGS, WEEKLY HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS, AND ONLINE DISCUSSIONS ARE POSTED IN CANVAS. THE COST OF FIELD TRIPS AND GUEST SPEAKERS ARE COVERED BY THE PUBLIC HISTORY PROGRAM – YOU DO NOT HAVE TO PAY, EXCEPT FOR THE EXHIBIT YOU VISIT YOURSELF FOR THE EXHIBITION REVIEW.**

### **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 and Ch.'s 3 and 4.

**Sept. 5      No Class – Labor Day**  
Finish Schwarzer, *Riches, Rivals, & Radicals*

Rough Draft of Timeline Due

**Sept. 12      Museums in International Perspective – Guest Speaker Yael Dinur, Former Docent at [Yad Vashem](#) (Israel) and [Dachau](#) (Germany)**  
Watch virtual tour of *Yad Vashem: The World Holocaust Remembrance Center* and review virtual tour of Dachau Concentration Camp

Review contents of at least two issues of *International Public History Journal*

Due: Timeline on Key Moments in Museums

### **HISTORY AND PUBLIC MEMORY**

**Sept. 19      New Directions in Holocaust Public Memory**  
Read “Holocaust History,” in *The Inclusive Historians’ Handbook* and selections from *Stages of Memory* and review [Roots of Resistance](#) digital exhibit

- Sept. 26**      **Sharing Authority – Virtual Guest Speakers Dakota Brown and Evan Mathis from the [Museum of the Cherokee Indian](#)**  
Read Amy Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums*. The University of North Carolina Press, 2012.
- 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 – Learning about the [Elsewhere Museum](#) in Greensboro**  
Read excerpts from Bill Adair, Benjamin Filene, and Laura Koloski, eds. *Letting Go?* Taylor, 2011.
- Oct. 24**       **Discussion of Exhibition Reviews**  
  
Due: Exhibit Review

#### **PUTTING PRINCIPLE INTO PRACTICE**

- Oct. 31**       **Reimagining Historic Houses – Guest Speakers Melissa Knapp and Rebecca Barefoot from [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](#) in Greensboro**  
Read Murawski, *Museums as Agents of Change*
- Nov. 14**       **Putting the Visitor First and Inviting Them In – Field Trip to the [Greensboro History Museum](#)**  
Read excerpts from *The Participatory Museum* and *Identity and the Museum Visitor Experience*
- Nov. 21**       **Queering the Museum – Virtual Guest Speaker with the Staff of the [Pauli Murray Center](#)**  
Read excerpts of *Interpreting LGBTQ History*
- Nov. 28**       **Reflecting on What We've Learned ~ Presentations**  
  
Due on 11/28: StoryMap of Museums and Historic Sites & Presentations

Thank you for an awesome semester!