

HIS/IAR 626 – The Practice of Public History

Spring 2011, Tuesdays, 3:30-6:20 p.m.

Classroom: Gatewood Studio Arts Center (STAC) 204

Professor Benjamin Filene

office hours: Tuesdays 1:30-3:00 and by appointment: MHRA 2137

office phone: 336/334-5645

home phone: 919/932-7722 (don't call after 10:00 p.m.)

bpfilene@uncg.edu

Course Description:

This course is not an instructional in how to claw your way to the top; rather it's an introduction to what it is like to work to within a public history institution and what it takes to thrive in one.

“You gotta serve somebody,” croaks Bob Dylan. Everyone at every level of every organization is simultaneously a leader and a follower. This course is about understanding both sides of that relationship and how to do productive and fulfilling work from both ends.

The course starts from a few key premises:

- The day-to-day, nuts-and-bolts parts of an institution's work take on life only when you understand the goals these practices were created to achieve. The policies, procedures, and programs that fill professional manuals and “how to” books exist to achieve big-picture goals for institutions.

- Fundamentally, these goals involve relationships—relationships between
 - an institution and its constituencies (“Reaching Audiences”)
 - an institution and other institutions (“Reaching Partners”)
 - an institution and its employees (“Reaching Colleagues”)

The course is structured around the theory and practice involved in building these three kinds of relationships. Throughout, the course links practical skills—writing a mission statement, creating a marketing plan, writing a budget—with discussion of the broader purposes these tools are intended to accomplish.

Student Learning Outcomes

Through a mix of classroom- and project-based work, you will gain:

- a richer understanding of the role of history in public life;
- a working knowledge of the processes and procedures that sustain public history institutions
- the ability to recognize the values underlying such processes and procedures;
- a richer understanding of how museums and sites establish sustainable niches in their communities; and
- an awareness of the dynamics involved in the interpersonal relationships that drive public work.

As well, you will hone a set of skills that you will need to thrive in the workplace:

- **evaluating and analyzing primary and secondary sources** thoughtfully, with attention to argument and point of view;
- **speaking** with passion, clarity, and respect;
- **writing** clearly and persuasively;
- **collaborating** with energy, sensitivity, and an awareness of how much you can learn from community members and your peers; and
- **experimenting** fearlessly to build your skills.

Teaching Methods

This seminar depends on active and engaged discussions that allow you and your classmates, individually and collectively, to wrestle with what it means to become a practicing public historian. The classroom will be a setting for engagement with multiple voices—not only the professor’s but those of the students, our community partners, and historical “informants” revealed through a range of sources. You are expected to complete reading assignments before every class meeting and to arrive ready to share personal opinions on the material. Class sessions will regularly involve informal full-group discussions, oral presentations, small-group conversations, and on-the-spot analyses of primary sources. As detailed below, class participation is a significant part of your grade. In addition, you will engage with the course content through formal and informal writing assignments that invite you to apply the approaches we are discussing to original work in your own voice.

Beyond regular readings, discussions, and writings, the best way to learn about public history work is to do some. You will be involved in designing, collaboratively, a history project that will be practical, relevant, and engaging to real local institutions and public audiences. This semester will focus on planning online projects that will document and share stories associated with downtown Greensboro, with an eye toward implementing those plans and projects in fall 2011.

Assignments and Evaluation

You will be evaluated on

Class participation—15%: attending class, doing the reading, writing thoughtful and on-time weekly responses to the reading (see below), speaking up in discussions, and helping to foster a sense of shared exploration within the classroom

Weekly responses: Each week, short, informal reactions to that week's readings (roughly a couple of paragraphs) will be due. These must be posted on our class's Blackboard Discussion Board by 8:00 a.m. each Tuesday.

Information Interview & Reflection Essay—5%: *due in class; students sign up for presentation dates, one per week*

After reading in *Museum Careers* (Schlatter) conduct an interview with a museum professional, by phone or in person. Then write a short reflection piece about the interview and give a 5-8-minute in-class presentation about it to the class.

“Institutional Integration” Assessment—25%: *due February 22*

an analysis of the clarity and coherence of a local institution’s mission, brand, marketing, fund-raising, and interpretive program

Downtown Greensboro project—30%:

- **small-group grant application *due Sunday, March 27 (5:00 p.m.);***
- **whole-class grant application *due April 19;***
- **in-class presentation *April 19 (tentative)***

Note: Each student’s grade for the collaborative grant application will be determined by the quality of the product and final presentation and, as well, by each individual’s contributions to the project. Each student will be asked to assess the contributions that each team member (including they themselves) made to the project and to the collaborative process.

Final paper—25%:

Reflection essay on the final project—*due April 28*

Grading 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

If things go awry...

...it’s your responsibility to tell me—right away. If papers are late without direct, prior approval from me, I deduct ½ a letter grade per day—no exceptions. If your project is dead-ending or your peer collaboration imploding, please do tell me *before* it’s too late to resolve the issues.

Required Books

Collins, Jim. *Good to Great and the Social Sectors: A Monograph to Accompany Good to Great; Why Business Thinking Is Not the Answer*, 2005.

Genoways, Hugh and Lynne M. Ireland. *Museum Administration: An Introduction*, 2003.

Lundin, Stephen C., Harry Paul, and John Christensen. *Fish! A Remarkable Way to Boost Morale and Improve Results*, 2000.

McLean, Kathy. *Planning for People in Museum Exhibitions*, 2005.

Schlatter, N. Elizabeth. *Museum Careers: A Practical Guide for Students and Novices*, 2008.

Academic Integrity Policy

All students have a responsibility to uphold the standards of “*Honesty, Trust, Fairness, Respect, and Responsibility*” detailed in the Academic Integrity Policy. Instances of cheating, plagiarism, misuse of academic resources, falsification of information, and facilitating of academic dishonesty are treated with utmost seriousness by the history department and dealt with severely by the University administration. The full policy appears in the *Student Calendar/Handbook* and at academicintegrity.uncg.edu.

Per university policy, you will be asked to sign a copy of the Academic Integrity Pledge for each major assignment in this class.

Special Needs

If you require accommodations for special learning needs, please do not hesitate to contact the Office of Disability Services, located within the Elliot University Center (334-5770)—and please let me know!

CLASS SCHEDULE AND READINGS

Introduction

January 11: Practicing Public History: What, Why, and How?

Kelley, Robert. "Public History: Its Origins, Nature, and Prospects." *Public Historian* 1 (Autumn 1978): 16-28.

Conard, Rebecca. "Facepaint History in the Season of Introspection." *Public Historian* 25 (Autumn, 2003): 9-24.

Reaching Audiences I

January 18: Making Public Institutions Matter and mission statements

Weil, Stephen E. "From Being about Something to Being for Somebody: The Ongoing Transformation of the American Museum." In Weil, *Making Museums Matter* (2002): 28-52.

Weil, Stephen E. "Creampuffs and Hardball: Are You Really Worth What You Cost or Just Merely Worthwhile?" In *Reinventing the Museum* (Gail Anderson, ed.), 2004 [1994]: 343-347.

Carr, David. "In the Context of the Possible." In *The Promise of Cultural Institutions* (2003): 37-54.

Anderson, Gail, ed. *Museum Mission Statements: Building a Distinct Identity* (2000 [1998]): 12-24.

Sevcenko, Liz. "Putting Mission First." In *The Importance of Mission in Guiding Museum Practice* (2003): 9-11.

Durel, John. "No Mission, No Money; No Money, No Mission." *Journal of Museum Education* 35 (summer 2010): 193-200. **[BF will distribute]**

Reaching Partners I

January 25: Collaborating with Communities and civic engagement strategies

Archibald, Robert. "Common Ground." In *A Place to Remember: Using History to Build Community* (1999): 87-108.

- Archibald, Robert R. "Introduction." In *Mastering Civic Engagement: A Challenge to Museums* (2002): 1-6.
- Hirzy, Ellen. "Mastering Civic Engagement: A Report from the American Association of Museums." In *Mastering Civic Engagement: A Challenge to Museums* (2002): 9-20.
- Simon, Nina. "Defining Participation at Your Institution." In *The Participatory Museum* (not on e-reserve): 183-202.
- Emlyn Koster, titled "The Relevant Museum: A Reflection on Sustainability," *Museum News* (March/April 2006): 65-70, 85-89.
- Baskin, Jonathan Salem. "An Alternate Future for Museums: Part II" [blog posting] (November 16, 2010):
<http://futureofmuseums.blogspot.com/2010/11/alternate-future-for-museums-part-ii.html>

No Blackboard posting. In class: report on community case studies

Reaching Colleagues I

February 1: Working Collaboratively and team dynamics

- Fisher, Roger and Alan Sharp. "Lateral Leadership." In *Getting It Done: How to Lead When You're Not in Charge* (1998): 14-34.
- Schrage, Michael. "Collaboration and Creativity." *Museum News* (March/April 2004): 3 pp..
- McLean, Kathy. "Problem-Solving in Exhibitions." In *Planning for People in Museum Exhibitions*: 81-91.
- Ayan, Jordan. "Tapping into the Creative Process." In *Aha! 10 Ways to Free Your Creative Spirit and Find Your Great Ideas* (1996): 40-44.
- Zenger-Miller, Inc. "The Four Phases of Team Development." In *Building A Foundation of Trust*: 16-17.
- "The Process: What You Can Expect" [***BF will distribute***]

Reaching Audiences II

February 8: Getting on the Radar Screen and marketing plans/branding

Pine, B. Joseph II and James H. Gilmore. "Welcome to the Experience Economy." *Harvard Business Review* (July 1998): 97-105.

Deutsch, Jennifer and Tamara Real. *Just Who Do Your Customers Think You Are? A Guide to Branding Your Organization* (2002)
[BF will distribute]

Wilkening, Susan. "Suck It Up: Curated Brand Experiences." *Museum News* (November-December 2007): 7 pp.

Genoways and Ireland, Chapter 11: 247-272.

February 15: Preserving (and Deserving) the Public's Trust and ethics and collections management policies

Carr, David. "Museums and Public Trust." In *The Promise of Cultural Institutions* (2003): 109-131.

Chew, Ron. "Taking Action!" *Museum News* (March/April 2004): 38-43.

Friedman, Thomas L. "Why How Matters." *New York Times* (October 15, 2008): 2 pp.

Crosson, David. "Museums and Social Responsibility: A Cautionary Tale." *History News* (July-August 1988): 6-9.

Witchey, Holly. "New Technologies, Old Dilemmas: Ethics and the Museum Professional." In *The Digital Museum: A Think Guide*, Herminia Din and Phyllis Hecht, eds. (2007): 189-196.

Gardner, James B. and Elizabeth Merritt. "Collections Planning: Pinning Down a Strategy" (2002). In *Reinventing the Museum: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on the Paradigm Shift*, Gail Anderson, ed. (2004): 292-296.

Vaughan, James M. "Rethinking the Rembrandt Rule." *Museum* (March/April 2008): 2 pp.

Genoways and Ireland, Chapter 10: 223-245.

Optional: Genoways and Ireland, Chapter 8: 175-195.

One-page project proposals due

Reaching Partners II

**February 22: Pursuing Outreach vs. “In-Reach”
and diversity hiring plans**

***Extra class meeting: MSHP Career Forum, February 22, 6:30-8:00 p.m.
MHRA faculty lounge (3rd floor)***

Archibald, Robert R. “Everybody’s Business.” In *A Place to Remember: Using History to Build Community* (1999): 179-197.

Sullivan, Robert. “Evaluating the Ethics and Consciences of Museums.” In *Reinventing the Museum: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on the Paradigm Shift*, Gail Anderson, ed. (2004): 257-63.

Chew, Ron. “Community Roots.” In *Mastering Civic Engagement: A Challenge to Museums* (2002): 63-64.

Lusaka, Jane. “Reflecting a Nation: Museum Fellows Program Expands Its Reach.” *Museum News* (July/August 2000): 36-39.

Bernard, Pamela J. “When Seeking a Diverse Faculty, Watch Out for Legal Minefields.” *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (September 29, 2006): B28-31.

“Seek and You Shall Find.” *Minneapolis Star-Tribune* (February 16, 2005): D1, D6. [*BF will distribute*]

In class: 10-second and 1-minute project presentations

**March 1: Collaborating with Donors I—Stating Your Case
and budgets and grant-writing**

***Guest speaker: Darrell Stover, Program Officer and Statewide Coordinator
for Museum on Main Street, North Carolina Humanities Council***

Radock, Michael. “Words to the Wise.” *NSFRE Journal* (winter 1990): 19-24.

Hoffman, Marilyn. “Writing Realistic Grant Budgets.” *Museum News* (January/February 1980): 48-53

“Five Steps to Easier Proposal Writing”: 2-9.
[*BF will distribute*]

Staff, Grizzard. “13 Proven Elements to Make Your Direct Mail Sizzle”: 2 pp.

Genoways and Ireland, Chapter 5: 91-119.

No Blackboard posting: Come with a question for Darrell Stover.

Slogans/logos and solicitation letters due in class (each person chooses to do one or other).

March 8: No class (spring break)

**March 15: Collaborating with Donors II—Listening
and development plans**

Guest speaker: Fred Goss, Director, Greensboro Historical Museum

Falk, John H. and Beverly K. Sheppard. “Attending to the Bottom Line.” In *Thriving in the Knowledge Age* (2006): 161-181.

Wolfe, Michael and Robert Ferguson. “New Money, New Demands: The Arrival of the Venture Philanthropist.” *Museum News* (January/February 2001): 56-59.

Daniel, Pete. “History with Boundaries: How Donors Shape Museum Exhibits.” *OAH Newsletter* 36 (August 2008): 6 pp. ***and***
“A Challenge to ‘History with Boundaries.’” *OAH Newsletter* 36 (November 2008): 9 pp.

Jahnke, Art. “Losing the Win-Win Game?” *Museum News* (September/October 1993): 34-35, 50-52.

Genoways and Ireland, Chapter 6: 121-160.

Draft of small-group grant application due

March 20-21: North Carolina Museums Council conference, Greensboro.

Reaching Colleagues II

March 22: Building a Vision and board management

Gardner, Howard. "Preface to the Paperback Edition," "Preface," "The Leader's Stories," **and** "Lessons from the Past, Implications for the Future." In *Leading Minds: An Anatomy of Leadership* (1996 [1995]): ix-xv, 41-65, and 285-306.

[Kegan, Robert]. "Encouraging Leaders: New Models for Leadership in Museums: An Interview with Harvard Psychologist Robert Kegan." *Museum News* (November/December 2003): 34-39.

Kotter, John P. "What Leaders Really Do." *Harvard Business Review* (May-June 1990): 103-111.

Wiseman, Liz. "The Multiplier Effect." In *Multipliers: How the Best Leaders Make Everyone Smarter* (2010): 1-31.

Genoways and Ireland, Chapter 3 (excerpt): 39-55.

Rich, Frank. "Don't Get Mad, Mr. President. Get Even." *The New York Times* (June 6, 2010): 4 pp. [**BF will distribute**]

Sunday, March 27: Final small-group grant application due

March 29: Managing Change and strategic planning

Collins, Jim. *Good to Great and the Social Sectors: A Monograph to Accompany Good to Great; Why Business Thinking Is Not the Answer*, 2005.

Falk, John H. and Beverly K. Sheppard. "Preface and "A World in Transition." In *Thriving in the Knowledge Age* (2006): vii-xi and 3-25.

Bridges, William. Introduction and Chapter 1. In *Managing Transitions: Making the Best of Change* (2003 [1991]): ix-xi; 1-10.

Franco, Barbara and Laura Roberts. "The Change Cycle": 2 pp.

Roberts, Laura. "Reinterpretation and Change: The Amos Smith House" and "Is It All History? The Burlington History Museum" (2004): 2-12.

Moe, Richard. "Are There Too Many House Museums?" *Forum Journal* 16

(spring 2002): 4-11.

Durel, John and Anita Nowery Durel. "A Golden Age for Historic Properties." *History News* 62 (summer 2007): 7-15.

Genoways and Ireland, Chapter 4: 75-90; and 313-355.

April 5: *Early class meeting*: Work session, 2:30-3:45

***Guest speaker*: Sean Kelley, Program Director, Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site (Philadelphia):**

Public talk 4:00-5:00; session with class 5:00-6:00

Draft of whole-class grant application due

April 12: Leading from Below

and human resources/personnel management and finding your niche

Fisher, Roger and Alan Sharp. "Engagement" and "Choose to Help." In *Getting It Done: How to Lead When You're Not in Charge* (1998): 136-57; 200-4.

Lundin, Stephen C. Harry Paul, and John Christensen. *Fish! A Remarkable Way to Boost Morale and Improve Results*, 2000.

Durel, John. "Qm2 Work Style Assessment" (2004): 4 pp.

Bryan, Charles F., Jr. *Museum News*. "Am I A Historian?" *History News* (summer 2002): 5-8.

Genoways and Ireland, Chapter 7: 161-173.

April 19: Last class meeting: *In-class final project presentations*

Whole-class grant application completed

April 21: *Whole-class grant application submitted to NC Humanities Council*

April 28: *Final papers due* (no final exam)