

## **HIS/IAR 626 – The Practice of Public History**

Spring 2013, Wednesdays, 3:30-6:20 p.m.

MHRA 2209

### **Professor Benjamin Filene**

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### **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 each side 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 and to create rich public products.

### **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, community partners, and historical and professional “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 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 a public project that documents, interprets, and shares the history of the Guantánamo naval base for Greensboro residents, in conjunction with the arrival of the Guantánamo Public Memory Project’s traveling exhibit’s opening at the International Civil Rights Center and Museum in December 2013. You will collaborate with each other and with community partners to write a “Mini-Grant” application to the North Carolina Humanities Council. We will submit the application with an eye toward implementing those plans and projects in fall 2013.

### **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 Wednesday.*

**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.

**One-page project proposal—5%: *due in class February 6***

Write a plan for a project component that extends the class's work on the history of the Guantanamo Bay naval base. In doing so, pay attention to how to describe the project in a clear, pithy, and yet inspiring way.

**“Institutional Integration” Assessment—25%: *due in class February 20***

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

**Guantánamo Public Memory Project —25%:**

- **small-group grant application**
  - **first full draft *due March 6***
  - **revised full draft *due in class, March 27***
  - **in-class presentation *April 3 (tentative)***
- **whole-class grant application**
  - **first full draft *due via email April 8 (by 9:00 a.m.)***
  - **revised full draft *due in class April 24***
  - **turned in to North Carolina Humanities Council *April 26***

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

**Final paper—25%:**

**Reflection essay on the final project—*due May 1, 9:30 a.m.***

**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.

Hansen, Jonathan M. *Guantánamo: An American History*, 2011.

*Learning Through Serving*, Christine M. Cress., Peter J. Collier, Vicki L. Reitenauer and Associates eds., 2005.

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](http://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**—read *before first class*

#### **January 16: 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.

Sevcenko, Liz. "Guantánamo Bay's Other Anniversary: 110 Years of a Legal Black Hole." *The Guardian* (December 28, 2012):  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/dec/28/guantanamo-bay-usa>

Explore these Guantánamo Public Memory Project-related websites:

<http://gitmoproject.org/stories/> *and*  
<http://gtmoproject.umn.edu/thinglink.html>

*No Blackboard posting*

### **Reaching Audiences I**

#### **January 23: 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 [1999]): 28-52.

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.

Hansen, Jonathan M. *Guantánamo: An American History*. Preface and Chapters 1 and 2

## **Reaching Partners I**

### **January 30: 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*: 183-202. (not on e-reserve)  
(<http://www.participatorymuseum.org/buy/>).

Knight, Keith and Mat Schwarzman. "Packing for the Trip." In *Beginner's Guide to Community-Based Arts* (2006): xviii-xxvi.

Hansen. *Guantánamo*, Chapter 3.

**No Blackboard posting. In class: Report on community case studies**

***Before class: Visit the International Civil Rights Center and Museum if you have never been there***

***In class: Meet with representatives of International Civil Rights Center and Museum (tentative)***

## **Reaching Colleagues I**

### **February 6: 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.

*Learning through Serving*, Chapter 4: 45-65.

Download and read the application form, guidelines, and instructions for Mini-Grants from the North Carolina Humanities Council:  
<http://nchumanities.org/content/mini-grants>

"The Process: What You Can Expect" [*BF will distribute*]

Hansen, *Guantánamo*, Chapter 4  
*One-page project proposals due*

## **Reaching Audiences II**

### **February 13: 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.

Hansen. *Guantánamo*, Chapter 5

## **Reaching Partners II**

### **February 20: Collaborating with Donors I—Stating Your Case and budgets and grant-writing**

Genoways and Ireland, Chapter 5: 91-119.

Roberts, Laura B. "Assessment and Planning Using Portfolio Analysis." *Journal of Museum Education* 35 (summer 2010): 181-186.

Durel, John. "Strategic and Inclusive Budgeting" (2004): 1-20.

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.

**Optional:** Ruppel, Warren. "Basic Financial Statements of a Not-for-Profit Organization." In *Not-for-Profit Accounting Made Easy* (2007): 43-63.

**No Blackboard posting**

***Institutional Integration essays due***

### **Reaching Audiences III**

#### **February 27: 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.

Hansen. *Guantánamo*, Chapter 6

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

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

### **Reaching Partners III**

#### **March 6: Pursuing Outreach vs. “In-Reach” and diversity hiring plans**

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.

McLean, Kathleen. “Convivial Practice.” In *The Convivial Museum* (2010): 158-184.

Hansen. *Guantánamo*. Review Chapter 7 (assigned in HIS627); Chapter 8; Epilogue.

*Draft of small-group grant app. due in class*

**March 13: No class (spring break)**

**March 20: Collaborating with Donors II—Listening  
and development plans—**

**Guest speaker: Carol Ghiorso Hart, 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.

Genoways and Ireland, Chapter 6: 121-160.

***In class: Discuss BF's comments on small-group grant apps***

***+ (March 23: NC History Day Regional, held at UNCG—extra credit for those who judge!)***

***+March 24-25: NC Museums Council conference in Raleigh***

**March 27: Collaborating with Donors III—  
 and sustaining the team process**

***Guest speaker: Darrell Stover, Program Director, North Carolina Humanities Council***

Zenger-Miller, Inc. "The Four Phases of Team Development." In *Building A Foundation of Trust*: 16-17.

*Learning through Serving*, 105-109, 111.

Lenconi, Patrick. "An Overview of the Model." In *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable* (2002): 187-194.

"ABC's for Dealing with Stress" (Berkeley Health Services, undated): 1-7.

***In lieu of Blackboard posting, answer prompt re: team dynamics***

***Final small-group grant app. due in class***

**April 3: Work Session +**

***Present project proposals to community partners [tentative]***

**Monday, April 8 (by 9:00 a.m.): Turn in full draft of whole-class grant application**

## **Reaching Colleagues II**

### **April 10: 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.

Robinson, Maureen K. “Assigning Value: Do Boards Matter?”; “Defining the Role of the Board”; and “A Working Partnership: The Executive Director and the Board.” In *Nonprofit Boards that Work: The End of One-Size-Fits-All Governance* (2001): 5-13, 27-38, 111-123.

Anderson, Katie. “Marry Me! The Relationship between the Director and the Board,” In *The Small Museum Toolkit, Book 1: Leadership, Mission, and Governance*, Cinnamon Catlin-Legutko and Stacy Klingler, eds. (2012): 117-143.

Westen, Drew. “What Happened to Obama?” *The New York Times* (August 7, 2011): [Sunday Review section] 1, 6, 7.

“AASLH Board Organizer.” [**BF will distribute**]

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

**In class: Discuss BF’s comments on whole-class grant application**

### **April 17: Managing Change and strategic planning**

**CLASS TIME TO BE RESCHEDULED**

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," "A World in Transition," and "Creating a New Business Model," In *Thriving in the Knowledge Age* (2006): vii-xi and 3-25.

West, Patricia. "Of Babies and Bathwater: Birthplace 'Shrines' and the Future of the Historic House Museum." In *Born in the U.S.A.: Birth, Commemoration, and American Public Memory*, Seth C. Bruggeman, ed. (2012): 259-266.

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

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.

Genoways and Ireland, Chapter 4: 75-90; and 313-326.

**Optional:**

Moe, Richard. "Are There Too Many House Museums?" *Forum Journal* 16 (spring 2002): 4-11.

Norris, Linda. "Are County Historical Societies Dinosaurs?" <http://uncatalogedmuseum.blogspot.com/2010/09/are-county-historical-societies.html> **and** "History Museums as Dinosaurs Take Two" <http://uncatalogedmuseum.blogspot.com/2010/09/history-museums-as-dinosaurs-take-2.html>. In The Uncataloged Museum [blog] (September 19 and September 28, 2010).

**April 24: 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.

Dilenschneider, Colleen. "We Can't Keep Our Mouths Shut." In *A Life in Museums: Managing Your Museum Career*, Greg Stevens and Wendy Luke, eds. (2012): 101-104.

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

Genoways and Ireland, Chapter 7: 161-173.

*Finalize whole-class grant application*

*April 26: Deliver grant application to NC Humanities Council*

*+ (April 28: North Carolina History Day—State Finals, held at NC Museum of History, Raleigh)*

**May 1: *Final papers due, via email by 9:30 a.m.* (no final exam)**