

# THE PRACTICE OF PUBLIC HISTORY

## SPRING 2014

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UNCG HIS/IAR 626  
ANNE E. PARSONS  
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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course comprises the second semester of the museum studies track. The first class, HIS 627, focused on historic interpretation and the final class, HIS 633, will center on a community history practicum project. This seminar introduces students to the various ways people work and thrive within public history institutions. It revolves around the theories and practices involved in building relationships with community partners, connecting with audiences, and creating a sustainable team and institutional environment. The class will also study how these relationships and practices shape the trajectory of public history institutions and the projects that they create. At the same time, students will build their skills in writing, fundraising, working with colleagues, and creating institutional strategic plans and will consider the relevance of public history to today's cultural landscape.

In the spirit of public history practice, students will learn by doing. The readings include texts on best practices in museum and non-profit settings and students will discuss case studies during class sessions that bring to life the issues raised in the readings. Students will also visit a number of historic sites and museums and speak to professionals in the field, conducting one in-depth analysis of an institution of his/her choosing. Finally, the course culminates in collaborative work to conceive of, identify funding for, and begin to plan a public history project to go up in Fall 2014. The group will choose the topic for the project based on an assessment of partner and funding possibilities and the project will also fit the following parameters: 1) it will have at least one community partnership, 2) the entire class will work on the same general project, and 3) it will relate to a historical theme that will interest an intended audience. To that end, the project will support the skill set emphasized in this seminar.

### **Learning Objectives –Concepts for Understanding**

The Practice of Public History seminar will enable students to understand and engage with the following core concepts:

- the ways in which the practical aspects of history shape how history gets made, whether in the funding of museums, creation of public history projects, interaction with audiences, or collaboration with communities,
- best practices in connecting and collaborating with partners and donors, including identifying community needs and interests, fostering civic engagement and the principles of fundraising. Students will also work to understand the dynamics in these relationships and how they shape public history projects.

- strategies to reach audiences and articulate how public institutions matter, make plans, increase participatory practices, evaluate audiences and work to preserve the public trust. Students will consider the potential conflicts embedded in serving the general public and multiple audiences.
- how to a sustainable team and institution through strategic planning, leadership and management skills and best practices in group work.

### **Learning Objectives – Skills**

This class will train you in the following skills, which are central to the craft of history, including:

- writing concisely, clearly and creatively, particularly grants and project development plans,
- speaking publicly in a way that engages and activates your audience,
- reading and critically engaging with texts, while placing them in the context of their field,
- working in a team and collaborating with peers and community partners with sensitivity and a stance of listening and learning,
- fundraising skills such as development planning, identifying grants, building membership, budgeting money, and,
- experimenting with fearlessness and an aim for excellence.

### **EXPERIENCES, PROJECTS & EVALUATION**

To build these skills, students 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. I will post the grades to Blackboard, and if you see a discrepancy, please contact me immediately.

**Grade 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.

### **Class Participation – 15%**

Participation makes up a central part of this course, as it is where students most grapple with the texts and learn from other points of view. 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.

**Institutional Case Study Work – 40% Total (Full Assignment Passed out on January 30<sup>th</sup>)**

One major set of assignments will be a case study of a historical site or museum of the student's choosing. Students will conduct informational interviews with staff people at their site, and will present their findings on the institution during a class session. Finally, students will write a critical assessment of the place.

**Informational Interview – 5% – Due: February 20**

Students will read Schlatter's *Museum Careers* and will conduct an informational interview with an individual at the institution that they choose.

**Institutional Assessment – 25% – Due: February 20**

Write an 8-10 page analysis of the institution, assessing the clarity and coherence of the organization's brand, marketing, fundraising, interpretation and outreach programs.

**In-Class Presentation– 10% – Dates Chosen By Students**

Each student will give a 30-minute presentation about their institution and the informational interview during a class of their choosing (possible dates marked with an asterisk), particularly focusing on the central topic of that class session. Students are strongly encouraged to include specific examples and discussion components.

**Final Class Project – 45%**

The final class project will consist of one minor and two major components. First the class will draft a preliminary project and funding plan at the beginning of the semester. The class will then draft a grant application for the project and finally, it will begin planning the Fall 2014 project, culminating in a written document.

**Preliminary Project and Funding Plan – 5% – Due February 6**

The class as a whole will draft a preliminary project and funding plan, approximately 4-6 pages long. The document will identify the core topic the project will focus on and a fundraising plan (complete with deadline).

**Fundraising Document – 20% – Deadline and Format Determined by Feb. 6**

Students will draft and edit a grant or funding letter to apply for the final project. If the final project does not require a sizeable grant application, however, students will draft a mock grant application to build grant skills.

**Project Planning Document – 20% – Due: 5:00 Monday, May 5**

In the end of the semester, the class will begin planning the Fall 2014 public history project, resulting in a project-planning document that lays the groundwork for HIS 631.

N.B. Small groups will draft components of the preliminary plan, grant application and project planning document. The quality of the products will determine the students' grades, as will the students' contributions to the project. To assess the latter, students will conduct evaluations of their own participation and that of their team members.

## **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 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](http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu), and per university policy, you will sign a copy of the Academic Integrity Pledge for each major assignment.

## **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 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. N.B. You do not need to disclose details about your disability to the instructor in order 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](#) 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**

The following readings are available at the bookstore, on Amazon.com, and through the UNCG library or Interlibrary Loan.

### **Required**

Salvatore G. Cillela, Jr., *Fundraising for Small Museums* (AltaMira, 2011).  
Jim Collins, *Good to Great and the Social Sectors* (Jim Collins, 2005).  
Herminia Din and Phyllis Hecht, eds., *The Digital Museum* (AAM, 2007).  
Darian Rodriguez Heyman, ed., *Nonprofit Management 101* (Jossey-Bass, 2011).  
Margot Morrell and Stephanie Capparell, *Shackleton's Way* (Penguin, 2002).  
N. Elizabeth Schlatter, *Museum Careers* (Left Coast Press, 2008).  
Nina Simon, *The Participatory Museum* (Museum 2.0, 2010).

### **Optional**

Hugh Genoways and Lynne Ireland, *Museum Administration: An Introduction* (AltaMira, 2003).

## CLASS SCHEDULE

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**Jan. 16**      **Introduction, Evaluation of Fall 2013 Project & “What Is Public History Again?”**

### **COLLABORATING WITH PARTNERS (AND DONORS)**

**Jan. 23**      **Community Collaboration & Civic Engagement**

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

Archibald, Robert R. “Introduction,” 1-6 and Hirzy, Ellen. “Mastering Civic Engagement: A Report from the American Association of Museums.” In *Mastering Civic Engagement: A Challenge to Museums* (2002): 1-6, 9-20.

Simon, Nina. “Defining Participation at Your Institution.” In *The Participatory Museum*: 183-202.

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

*Due: Visit The Museum of Anthropology, Winston Salem – Particularly the exhibit on Quilts and Crafts of the Lakota Tribe*

*Guest Speakers: Potential community collaborators, Lawrence Jenkins and Erin Lawrimore*

*Preliminary Project Plan and Institutional Case Study Assignments Passed Out*

**Jan. 30**      **The World of Fundraising**

Cilella, *Fundraising for Small Museums*, Chapters 1-6.

Heyman, *Non-Profit Management 101*, pp. 287-324.

**Feb. 6**      **Grant Writing**

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

Heyman, *Non-Profit Management 101*, pp. 325-340.

Cilella, *Fundraising for Small Museums*, Chapters 7-8.

*Guest Speaker: Benjamin Filene*

*Due: Preliminary Project and Fundraising Plan (Deadline and Format for Grant Assignment Determined)*

**Feb. 13 Collaborating with Donors & Budgeting – Visit Old Salem (Time TBD)**  
Genoway and Ireland, Chapter 5 on Budgets.

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

Heyman, *Non-Profit Management 101*, Chapter 13 Financial Management, 197-216.

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.

### **REACHING AUDIENCES**

**Feb. 20 Making History Institutions Matter & Mission Statements\***

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

Weil, Stephen E. “From Being about Something to Being for Somebody: The Ongoing Transformation of the American Museum.” In *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

*Due: Institutional Assessment and Informational Interview*

**Feb. 22-25 – Trip to Washington, D.C.**

- Feb. 27**      **Sustaining the Team Process & Best Practices in Creative Work**  
 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.
- Ayan, Jordan. "Tapping into the Creative Process."
- Your Creative Spirit and Find Your Great Ideas* (1996): 40-44. *Learning through Serving*, Chapter 4: 45-65.
- Mar. 6**      **Connecting to Audiences Digitally & D.C. De-Brief\***  
 Din and Hecht, *The Digital Museum: A Think Guide*.
- Mar. 13**      **No Class – Spring Break!**
- Mar. 20**      **Participatory Techniques and Listening to Audiences\***  
 Nina Simon, *The Participatory Museum*.
- Diamond, Luke and Uttal, *Practical Evaluation Tool Guide*, Chapters 1, 5-7, 10
- Mar. 27**      **Ethics & Preserving the Public's Trust\***  
 Carr, David. "Museums and Public Trust." In *The Promise of Cultural Institutions* (2003): 109-131.
- 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.
- 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.
- Genoways and Ireland, Chapter 10 on Ethics and Professional Conduct.
- Cohen and Rosenzweig, *Digital History*, Chapter 7 on Copyright and Images.

*Workshop on InDesign*

*Hand out Assignment for Final Planning Document*

**Apr. 3      Marketing and Branding to Communicate to Audiences**

Heyman, *Non-Profit Management 101*, Chapters 25-29.

Genoways and Ireland, Chapter 11.

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

**CREATING SUSTAINABLE TEAMS AND INSTITUTIONS**

**Apr. 10      Leadership & Managing a Board and Volunteers – Visit  
Weatherspoon Art Museum**

Morrell and Capparell, *Shackleton's Way*.

Heyman, *Nonprofit Management 101*, Chapters 3, 30, 32-33.

**Apr. 17      Strategic Planning in the Face of Change\***

Heyman, *Nonprofit Management*, Chapters 5 and 10.

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.

Collins, *Good to Great and the Social Sectors*.

Genoways and Ireland, *Museum Administration*, ch. 4 on Strategic Planning.

**Apr. 24      Leading from Below and Personnel Management**

Heyman, *Nonprofit Management 101*, Chapter 9.

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).

Genoways and Ireland, Chapter 7: 161-173.

**May 5**      **Final Project Planning Document Due by 5:00 PM**

N.B. This syllabus is subject to change.