

HIS 626 – The Practice of Public History

Spring 2017, Tuesdays, 3:30-6:20 p.m.
MHRA 1207

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're gonna have to serve somebody,” croaks Bob Dylan sagely in a 1979 song (https://play.google.com/music/preview/Tt7e3fusfr4ajvz2lccbzr7s6ka?lyrics=1&utm_source=google&utm_medium=search&utm_campaign=lyrics&pcampaignid=kp-songlyrics&u=0#).

Indeed, 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—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, crafting 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;
- **planning** thoughtfully and efficiently, with attentiveness to multiple stakeholders;
- **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 informed 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 launch, collaboratively, a history project that will be practical, relevant, and engaging to real public institutions and audiences. This semester will focus on planning an exhibition that explores and shares the life and legacies of Governor Charles B. Aycock. You will collaborate with each other and with community and professional partners to create an exhibition proposal that will be presented to UNCG’s Board of Trustees and then implemented next fall.

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, you will submit short, informal reactions to that week’s readings (roughly a couple of paragraphs). These must be posted on our class’s Canvas Discussion Board by **9:00 a.m. each Tuesday.

Information Interview & Reflection Essay—5%: due in class (hard copy); 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.

“Community Relevance Readiness” Assessment—20%: due February 28 (in class, hard copy + email)

Choose a real public history institution and, using the tools we’ve discussed in class, assess its readiness to respond to a community crisis.

Small-group grant application: North Carolina Humanities Council Grassroots Grants—20%:

Working in pairs, develop plans for an exhibition component

- first full draft *due March 24 (via email)*
- revised full draft *due March 31st (hard copy + email)*

Final exhibition proposal—20%

- first full draft *due April 22 (by 9:00 a.m., via email)*
- revised full draft *due April 30 (by 5:00 p.m., via email)*
- presentation to UNCG Board of Trustees: *May 11 (8:30 a.m.-noon)*

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—20%—due May 3, 4:00 p.m. (hard copy + email):

Reflecting on your experiences with the term project, write an essay that connects the theories of key authors to your experience in practice.

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

LATENESS POLICY:

It is important to turn in assignments on time so as to be fair to other students and to ensure timely grading. I am receptive to *advance* requests for extensions. However, if an assignment is turned in late without an agreed-upon extension, I will deduct 1/3rd of a letter grade per day (e.g., A to A-) unless an appropriate written excuse (e.g., medical, counselor’s, dean’s) is provided.

If things go awry...

...it’s your responsibility to tell me—right away. If your project is dead-ending or your peer collaboration imploding, I need to hear about it so that I can help resolve the issues!

Required Books

Bergeron, Anne and Beth Tuttle. *Magnetic: The Art and Science of Engagement*, 2013.

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 (revised by Cinnamon Catlin-Legutko). *Museum Administration 2.0*, 2017.

Lundin, Stephen C., Harry Paul, and John Christensen. *Fish! A Proven Way to Boost Morale and Improve Results*, 2014.

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

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

Simon, Nina. *The Art of Relevance*, 2016.

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 <http://sa.uncg.edu/handbook/academic-integrity-policy/>. 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 or other challenges, please do not hesitate to contact the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services, located within the Elliot University Center (336/334-5440; <https://ods.uncg.edu>)! I will be very receptive to any steps to help make your learning experience more healthy and successful!

CLASS SCHEDULE AND READINGS

Introduction—read *before first class*

January 17: 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.

Meringolo, Denise D. "A New Kind of Technician: In Search of the Culture of Public History." In *Museums Monuments, and National Parks: Toward a New Genealogy of Public History* (2012): xiii-xxv.

Rizzo, Mary. "Finding the Roots of Civic Engagement." *History@Work* (July 21, 2014): <http://ncph.org/history-at-work/finding-the-roots-of-civic-engagement/> (also on e-reserve): 2 pp..

"Letter of the Committee to Establish Principles on Renaming" [Yale University] (November 21, 2016): 24 pp. [***BF will send .pdf***]

No Canvas posting

Audience evaluation surveys due to team leaders by January 20th

Reaching Audiences I

January 24: 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.

Read the History Relevance campaign's "value statement"—<http://www.historyrelevance.com/value-statement> (*not* on e-reserve)—and explore its website.

Simon, Nina. *The Art of Relevance*: 20-156, 179-183.

Rose, Julia. "Toward Commemorative Museum Pedagogy." In *Interpreting Difficult History at Museums and Historic Sites* (2016): 169-187 (*not* on e-reserve; already purchased for HIS627).

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.

Reaching Colleagues I

January 31: 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.

Duhigg, Charles. "What Google Learned from Its Quest to Build the Perfect Team." *The New York Times Magazine* (February 25, 2016): 22-26, 75-77.

Pagan, Peter. "How to Cultivate the Art of Serendipity." *The New York Times* (January 2, 2016): 6 pp.

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.

Cress, Christine M., Peter J. Collier, Vicki L. Reitenauer and Associates. "Groups Are Fun, Groups Are Not Fun: Teamwork for the Common Good." In *Learning through Serving* (2013): 51-75.

Genoways and Ireland, 1-4.

Download and read the application form, guidelines, and instructions for North Carolina Humanities Council Grassroots Grants:

<http://www.nchumanities.org/content/grassroots-grants>

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

Optional: Miller, Claire Cain. "Why What You Learned at Preschool Is Crucial at Work." *The New York Times* (October 15, 2016): 5 pp.

Reaching Partners I

February 7: 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; already purchased for HIS627; also at <http://www.participatorymuseum.org/buy/>)

Simon, Nina. "Does Community Participation Scale to Destination Institutions?" *Museum 2.0* (March 30, 2016): 3 pp.

Merritt, Elizabeth. "On Morning Coffee & Museum Activism." Center for the Future of Museums (March 26, 2015): 2 pp. <http://ht.ly/2WwXGE> (also on e-reserve)

"Michelle Obama, 'Activism,' and Museum Employment," **Part I and Part II.** *The Inluseum* (May 12, 2015 and June 5, 2015): 16 pp. <https://inluseum.com/2015/05/12/michelle-obama-activism-and-museum-employment-part-i/> and <https://inluseum.com/2015/06/05/michelle-obama-activism-and-museum-employment-part-ii/> (also on e-reserve)

Moore, Porchia. "The Danger of the 'D' Word: Museums and Diversity." *The Inluseum* (January 20, 2014): 7 pp. <https://inluseum.com/2014/01/20/the-danger-of-the-d-word-museums-and-diversity/> (also on e-reserve)

Genoways and Ireland, Chapter 8 (excerpt): 201-218.

1-paragraph proposals due

Reaching Audiences II

February 14: 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 10: 259-281.

Meet with Design Dimension staff

Reaching Partners II

**February 21: Pursuing Outreach vs. “In-Reach”
and diversity hiring plans**

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

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.

Thorpe, Angela. “Rethinking Diversity: Introduction.” History@Work (November 13, 2014): <http://ncph.org/history-at-work/rethinking-diversity-introduction/> (not on e-reserve).

Thorpe, Angela. “Rethinking Diversity: Who Does History Belong To?” History@Work (January 8, 2015): <http://ncph.org/history-at-work/author/angela-thorpe/> (not on e-reserve).

Pelaez, Nina and Alyssa Greenberg. “Museums and Social Justice: Supporting Self-Assessment.” Center for the Future of Museums: <http://futureofmuseums.blogspot.com/2015/06/museums-and-social-justice-supporting.html> (also on e-reserve).

“Michelle Obama, ‘Activism,’ and Museum Employment: Part III.” The Inluseum (November 6, 2015): <https://inluseum.com/2015/11/06/michelle-obama-activism-museum-employment-part-iii/> (not on e-reserve).

Taylor, Chris. “Announcing the Department of Inclusion and Community Engagement at the Minnesota Historical Society: Part II.” The Inluseum: (April 22, 2015): <https://inluseum.com/2015/04/22/announcing-the-department-of-inclusion-and-community-engagement-at-the-minnesota-historical-society-part-ii/> (not on e-reserve).

Optional: Taylor, Chris. “Announcing” Part I (April 21, 2015): <https://inclusion.com/2015/04/21/announcing-the-department-of-inclusion-and-community-engagement-at-the-minnesota-historical-society-part-i/> (*not* on e-reserve).

February 28: Work Session

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

Community Relevance Readiness Essay due

No Canvas posting

**March 7: Collaborating with Donors I—Stating Your Case
and budgets and grant-writing**

Genoways and Ireland, Chapter 4: 61-93.

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

Durel, Anita. “Eliminating the Fear Factor in Fundraising.” *Hand to Hand* 23 (summer 2009): 3 pp.

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

March 14: No class (spring break)

**March 21: Collaborating with Donors II—Listening
and development plans—**

Guest speaker: Glenn Dobrogosz, Director, Greensboro Science Center

Bergeron, Anne and Beth Tuttle. *Magnetic: The Art and Science of Engagement* (2013): 7-33, 193-198, 213-215, 58-87, and 138-159.

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 5: 95-139.

Draft of small-group grant app. due Friday, March 24 (via email)

+March 26-27, NC Museums Council conference in Wilmington

Reaching Colleagues II

March 28: Building a Vision

and board management

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

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

Vedantam, Shankar. "'Double Bind' Explains The Dearth Of Women In Top Leadership Positions." National Public Radio (October 26, 2016). Listen and/or read <http://www.npr.org/2016/10/26/499409051/double-bind-explains-the-dearth-of-women-in-top-leadership-positions> (not on e-reserve).

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 [note: e-reserve includes additional pp.].

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.

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

Optional: Genoways and Ireland, Chapter 6 (excerpt): 164-176.

In class: peer critique of grant apps

Final small-group grant app. due Friday, March 31st (hard copy + email)

+ (*April 1st: Piedmont History Day Regional, held at UNCG—extra credit for those who judge!*)

**April 4: 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.

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 3: 41-59.

***Optional*:**

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

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.

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>. The Uncataloged Museum (September 19 and September 28, 2010).

**April 11: Work Session
and sustaining the team process**

Zenger-Miller, Inc. “The Four Phases of Team Development.” In *Building A*

Foundation of Trust: 16-17.

Cress, Christine M., Peter J. Collier, Vicki L. Reitenauer and Associates.
“Failure with the Best of Intentions” [excerpts]. In *Learning through Serving* (2013): 144-147, 150.

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 Canvas posting, answer prompt re: team dynamics

Meet with Design Dimension staff

Reaching Audiences III

April 18: “Futurecasting”

and seeing beyond one’s walls

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.

Merritt, Elizabeth. *Trendwatch 2016*: 52 pp.

Durel, John. “Building a Sustainable Nonprofit Organization.”

“New Report Reveals...” (February 23, 2016 email): 1 p. [**BF will distribute**]

Draft of final exhibition proposal due Saturday, April 22, 9:00 a.m. (email)

Reaching Colleagues III

April 25: 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 Proven Way to Boost Morale and Improve Results*, 2014.

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.

Ackerson, Anne and Joan Baldwin. “Is Negotiating Not a Museum Thing?”

Leadership Matters (October 11, 2015): 3 pp.
<https://leadershipmatters1213.wordpress.com/2015/10/11/is-negotiating-not-a-museum-thing/> (also on e-reserve)

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

Genoways and Ireland, Chapter 6 (excerpt): 141-149.

+ (April 29: North Carolina History Day—State Finals, held at NC Museum of History, Raleigh)

April 30, 5:00 p.m. (email): Final exhibition proposal due

May 3: Final paper due, via email and hard copy by 4:00 p.m. (no final exam)

May 11 (8:30-noon): Presentation to Board of Trustees