

Public History Capstone II
HIS 721—Spring 2017
Mondays 3:30-6:20, MHRA 3207

Professor Benjamin Filene

office hours: Tuesdays 2:00-3:00 and by appointment: MHRA 2137

office phone: 336/334-5645

bpfilene@uncg.edu

Credits: 3 hours

Prerequisites: HIS 720

Course Description:

This hands-on course is part of a two-semester sequence in which you complete an original public history project. That might mean creating an exhibition, educational program, digital product, or curriculum (individually or perhaps in a pair) for an area museum or site.

What makes it a capstone is that this process brings together so many of the public historian skills you have built during your time in the program: your skills in reading and historiographical analysis, your ability to do original primary source research, your reflectiveness and sensitivity in collaborating with community partners, your attention to learning styles and audience needs, the can-do attitude and adaptability that you honed through your internship and other projects. Now is your chance to draw on these experiences and apply them toward an original project that you care about personally, one that you can lead in an fruitful, creative, original direction and that you enrich through partnerships and collaborations that you sustain.

In the second half of the course sequence, you will complete detailed development and project production. *Detailed development* is a form-driven phase, in which, working closely with your community or institutional partners, you finalize content (conducting targeted research as needed), write full drafts of all text, solidify design decisions, create mock-ups or prototypes, secure any outside resources needed, and decide production schedule. *Production* is a fabrication-centered phase in which team-members complete final edits of text, implement design decisions, and build all physical components as needed.

Student Learning Outcomes:

In completing these capstone projects, you will hone skills and techniques utilized by public history professionals, including the ability to

1. **plan** how to sequence the work of project development;
2. **collaborate** with community partners;
3. **design** and **construct** a public product that **demonstrates** and **shares** your findings; and
4. **discuss, reflect** on, and **evaluate** the successes and limitations of your work.

Teaching Methods:

The bulk of the work for this course will occur outside the classroom and will be completed independently by you the student in collaboration, as needed, with institutional and community partners. Several times per semester, the students in the course will meet as a full group to discuss models, provide peer support, and offer constructive critique. In these moments, the course will function like a workshop . As well, you and I will meet individually several times to discuss your progress and work through any obstacles you may be encountering. Finally, throughout the semester, you will advance the project by reaching the development mileposts detailed below.

All of the above is designed to provide you with a structure to succeed in your work and to help teach you how one builds a framework to ensure steady progress on large projects. That said, it is ultimately **your responsibility** to contact me if you feel your project is not progressing effectively or drifting into trouble. Please do not hesitate! It's always easier to fix things earlier on, and I'm happy to help.

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.

Attendance policy: Students must attend all required meetings and meet individually with the instructor as needed.

Final Exam: There is no final exam for this course.

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!

If things go awry...

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

Assignments and Evaluation:

- **Detailed development plan:** Compilation of all materials in advance of project production: text, images, graphics, objects, and plan of work for completion of the project, including steps for ongoing community collaboration as needed: 15%
(learning outcomes #1, 2)
—*due Friday, March 10th, noon (via email);*
see note regarding due dates under “Course Calendar,” below

- **Capsule Methodological Case Study:** an investigation of a *specific* challenge that you faced in your project's execution—a touchy historical subject you had to address, a label that was hard to write, a thorny design obstacle—and how you addressed it. Write it as a “through-written” essay but build it around the “S-T-A-R” approach often recommended for job interviews:
 - S – Situation: background; set the scene
 - T – Task or Target: specifics of what needed to be addressed, the challenged you faced (including when, where, and with whom)
 - A – Action: what you *did* to address the challenge (including the skills you used to do so)
 - R – Result: outcome, what happened and what you *learned* (including what you might have done differently)—the “moral” of the story
 (approximately 3 pages): 10%
(learning outcome #4)
—*due April 3rd (in hard copy and via email)*

- **The project** itself, a multifaceted work of public historical interpretation that shares original ideas with audiences in provocative, accurate, and engaging ways, involves community and institutional collaboration where appropriate, and employs formats that are appropriate to the historical content and the needs of its audiences: 35%
(learning outcomes #2, 3)
—*due April 24th (see note regarding due dates)*

- **Public presentation** about the project at the history department's annual conference, including assembling and presenting project portfolio: 15%
 - The **project portfolio** compiles all the project elements together for review by colleagues, partners, peers, advisors, and potential future employers:
 - Project proposal

- Historiographical essay/literature review
- Audience statement
- Preliminary development plan
- Detailed development plan
- Capsule methodological case study
- Personal reflection essay
- PowerPoint images from conference presentation

(learning outcomes #3, 4)

—conference held Friday afternoon, April 28th (approximately 1:00-5:00; exact times TBD)

- **Personal reflection** on how the project led you to new understandings of your goals, skills, work style, and future place in the field (5-7 pages): 10%
(learning outcome #4)
—due May 2nd, 11:00 a.m. (in hard copy and via email)
- **Participation**, including your ability to contribute to a collaborative, respectful, professional, and fruitful relationships with community partners and your peers and your dedication, adaptability, and open-mindedness in pursuing this project work: 10%

Course calendar:

Note: At the first class session, I'll meet with each student individually to create an individualized schedule that fits the needs of your project and your community partner.

General Outline

Weeks 1-8: Prepare detailed development plan in consultation with institutional partners

Weeks 9-13: Execute/install public project

Weeks 14-15: Complete reflection assignment, assemble project portfolio, and give public conference presentation

Class Meeting Schedule (additional meetings will be held as needed)

- **January 23**
- **February 6**
- **February 27**
- **March 20**
- **April 10**