

THE PRACTICE OF PUBLIC HISTORY

SPRING 2018

UNCG HIS/IAR 626
ANNE E. PARSONS
OFFICE: MHRA, #2112

THURS., 3:30-6:20 – PUBLIC HISTORY LAB
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OFFICE HOURS: BY APPOINTMENT

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 conducting oral histories, 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.

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 that bring to life the issues raised in the readings. The class will complete two major assignments related to the three-semester public project. First, the class will conduct an oral history project about the site, interviewing people who had personal experiences with it. Second, you will write a proposal for a North Carolina Humanities Council (NCHC) Grassroots Grant that lays out the plan for next Fall's public history project and makes the case for funding it.

The public project will commemorate the 70th anniversary of the construction of the polio hospital throughout Fall 2018. The project will at a minimum include an event on October 11th and a final project completed by December. The group will choose the topic for the project based on an assessment of community members' and partners' interests and it 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, even if it breaks into smaller sub-groups, and 3) it will relate to a historical topic that students will research in primary and secondary sources.

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 public history shape how history gets made: whether in the funding of museums; creation of public projects; interaction with audiences; or collaboration with communities,
- strategies for conducting high-quality oral histories, preserving them, and interpreting them as primary sources,

- best practices in connecting and collaborating with partners and donors, including identifying community needs and interests, fostering civic engagement, and 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 cultivate 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,
- 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 think you will not meet the deadline. I will post the grades to Canvas, and if you see a discrepancy, please contact me immediately.

Class Participation and Homework Assignments – 30%

Participation makes up a central part of this course, as it is where students directly 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. This class also merges reading and practice and so each week you will have a homework assignment that you should complete by the beginning of class and post to Canvas in the Assignments section. These assignments will be posted no less than two weeks before class.

Oral History Project – 20% – Due on 2/26

As part of the project on the polio hospital site, you will locate one person and conduct an oral history interview with him/her. At the end of the project, the class will deposit the oral histories with the UNCG Library's Special Collections. The oral history package you submit should consist of the interview recording, a release form, and a transcription. You will also use the Oral History Metadata Synchronizer to generate metadata for the transcript.

NCHC Grant Proposal – 40% – Due 4/13 & Assignment passed out on 2/5

The main project of the class will be a grant proposal to the North Carolina Humanities Council, which we will submit on April 13th, the deadline. This project is a wonderful opportunity with three main benefits. First, it will give you direct experience with applying for grants. Second, the grant is a good opportunity for you to plan the Fall 2018 project – identifying what we will do, who our community partners will be, and so on. Finally, the grant requires applicants to write up their mission, audience, key themes, budget, marketing plan, and more – all of which are topics we will study in class. Small groups will draft components of the grant application and the quality of the products and your personal contribution will determine your grades. To assess the latter, you will conduct evaluations of your own participation and that of your writing partners.

It is possible that during the planning process of this project, you decide as a group that you do not need funding for this project. For instance, you might decide to apply for a historic neighborhood nomination, which does not require money. In this case, you will draft the grant application as a mock assignment to build your skills.

Informational Interview – 10% – Due on April 23

For this project, think about where you see yourself in ten years. What type of site do you want to work at? What type of job? What will you do in your day-to-day? Then, take some time and identify someone who is doing what you dream of doing. Please contact the person and set up an informational interview. Ask them questions about their career path, their experience with their job, and finally, ask about their institution based on what we've discussed (the organization's mission, marketing, fundraising, strategic plan, and so on). You will then give a ten-minute presentation of what you learned to the class on April 23rd.

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.

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 me 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 and on Amazon.com.

Required

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

Salvatore G. Cilella, Jr., *Fundraising for Small Museums* (AltaMira, 2011).

Hugh Genoways and Lynne Ireland, *Museum Administration: An Introduction* (RLPG, 2016).

Donald Ritchie, *Doing Oral History* (Oxford, 2014).

Julia Rose, *Interpreting Difficult History at Museums* (RLPG, 2016).

Samantha Chmelik, *Museum and Historic Site Management* (RLPG, 2015).

CLASS SCHEDULE

Jan. 8 **Introductions**

ORAL HISTORIES

Jan. 15 **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – No Class**

HW Due: Identify & contact a minimum of 2-3 people/groups who might lead to interviews and invite them to the public event when appropriate. Be sure to check the Canvas discussion board first and then report what you did.

- Ritchie, *Doing Oral History* in preparation for oral history interviews.

Jan. 22

Oral Histories: Practices & Problems

HW Due: Complete edits to class website

- Kathryn Anderson and Dana C. Jack, "Learning to Listen: Interview Techniques and Analyses," in *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*, ed. by Sherna Gluck and Daphne Patai.
- Sherry Thomas, "Digging Beneath the Surface: Oral History Techniques," *Women's Oral History: The Frontiers Reader*, Armitage, Hart and Weathermon, eds.
- Cress, Collier, Reitenauer, eds., *Learning Through Serving*, pp. 67-79.
- Alessandro Portelli, "The Death of Luigi Trastulli: Memory and the Event," in *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History*, pp. 1-26.

Jan. 29

Difficult Histories

HW Due: Prepare for Public Event

- Rose, *Difficult Histories*.

[Feb. 3]

Tentative Date for Public Event re. Polio Hospital Site

FUNDRAISING & BUDGETS

Feb. 5

The World of Fundraising

NCHC Grant Proposal Assignment passed out

HW Due: Read NCHC Grant online and do assignment posted to Canvas

- Cilella, *Fundraising for Small Museums*, Ch.'s 1-6.

Feb. 12

Grant Writing

HW Due: Do assignment posted to Canvas

- Heyman, *Non-Profit Management 101*, pp. 325-340.
- Cilella, *Fundraising for Small Museums*, Chapters 7-8.

Feb. 19

Budgets

HW Due: Do assignment posted to Canvas

- Hoffman, "Writing Realistic Grant Budgets," *Museum News* (1980): 48-53.
- Genoways, *Museum Administration*, Chapter 4.

CONNECTING TO AUDIENCES

Feb. 26 Public Programming and Prepare for D.C. Trip

Due: Oral History Project

- Genoways, *Museum Administration*, Ch. 11.
- Chmelik, Ch's 6 and 7.

[Mar. 2-4] Trip to Washington, D.C.

Mar. 5 No Class – Spring Break!

Mar. 12 Marketing & Outreach

HW Due: Outline of NCHC Grant and organize supplemental materials

- Genoways, Chapter 10.
- Chmelik, Chapter 8.

Mar. 19 Listening to the Public: Evaluations

HW Due: Assignment posted to Canvas

- Diamond, Luke and Uttal, *Practical Evaluation Tool Guide*, Chapters 1, 5-7, 10.

CREATING SUSTAINABLE INSTITUTIONS

Mar. 26 Missions: Making Museums Matter & Strategic Planning

HW Due: Rough Draft of NCHC Grant

- Anderson, Gail, ed. *Museum Mission Statements: Building a Distinct Identity* (2000 [1998]): 12-24.
- Durel, John. "No Mission, No Money; No Money, No Mission." *Journal of Museum Education* 35 (summer 2010): 193-200
- Genoways, *Museum Administration*, Ch. 3

Apr. 2 Working with and Leading Teams

HW Due: Revised Draft of NCHC Grant

- Fisher, Roger and Alan Sharp. "Lateral Leadership." In *Getting It Done: How to Lead When You're Not in Charge* (1998): 14-34.
- 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).

Apr. 9 **Ethics**
HW Due: Final Draft of NCHC Grant – No readings due

[Apr. 13] *Due: NCHC Grant Submitted online to NCHC*

Apr. 16 **Making Museums Magnetic**
Bergeron, Magnetic: The Art and Science of Engagement

Apr. 23 **Last Class – Informational Interviews & Planning for Fall 2018**
Due: Informational Interview Presentations