



HIS 512: Public History Doing History with Things

COURSE GUIDE

History 512

Spring 2019

Prof. L. Tolbert

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Hours: 3:15-4:15, MW
and by appointment

History Department Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/UNCGDepartmentofHistory/>

History Department Website: <https://his.uncg.edu/>

Course Overview and Learning Outcomes

Why study things? Some parts of the human past are only documented by the tools they used or other objects they left behind. This human experience is literally understood as PRE-historic because early humans did not leave behind a written record. The writing of history begins with the analysis of texts. Yet even in our modern era, an object as small and ordinary as a paper clip can be studied to understand something about the society that created and used it—the technology to mass-produce bent wires, why such a clip might be in demand, the purposes of such a clip. A 1958 study, for example, discovered that only one in ten was ever used to hold papers together. Other uses included cleaning finger nails, picking teeth, fastening clothing,

game tokens, and making decorative chains or even weapons. This course will focus on strategies for interpreting objects as evidence that must be understood in particular historical contexts.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to demonstrate the following knowledge, skills, and habits of mind:

- Evaluate the purposes of public history, the importance of audience, and the difference between history and memory.
- Apply a variety of methods for using objects as historical evidence.
- Interpret objects as both material and social constructions.
- Analyze the ways that objects are used to represent and construct power relationships.
- Restate concisely and substantively central arguments of each reading assignment and evaluate major points of agreement or disagreement among particular authors.
- Apply specific arguments and methodologies in assigned readings to your own original evaluation of particular objects appropriate to the content of each unit.

Readings

Books: (available at UNCG Bookstore and on reserve in Jackson Library)

Petroski, Henry. *The Evolution of Useful Things: How Everyday Artifacts—From Forks and Pins to Paper Clips and Zippers—Came to Be as They Are*. New York: Vintage Books, a division of Random House Inc., 1992.

Rampolla, Mary Lynn. *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*. NY: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2012. This book will serve as the style standard for the final paper. It is based on Turabian style.

Journal Articles and Book Chapters: (available in the Reserve Room of Jackson Library, on electronic reserves, and/or electronically on JSTOR or other databases.)

Bruggeman, Seth. *Here George Washington Was Born: Memory, Material Culture, and the Public History of a National Monument*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008. Selected chapters.

Clarke, Alison J. "Tupperware: Product as Social Relation." In *American Material Culture: The Shape of the Field*. Edited by Ann Smart Martin and J. Ritchie Garrison. Winterthur, Del.: Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum; Knoxville, Tenn.: Distributed by University of Tennessee Press, 1997.

- Gregson, Nicky, Louise Crewe and Kate Brooks, "Shopping, Space, and Practice," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, Vol. 20 (1992) , pp. 597-617.
- Gudis, Catherine. "Pushed Around: Material Culture, Dispossession, and the American Shopping Cart." In *History and Material Culture: A Student's Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources*, Second edition. Edited by Karen Harvey. (NY: Routledge, 2017)
- Hill, Sarah H. "Weaving History: Cherokee Baskets from the Springplace Mission," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 53, No. 1, Material Culture in Early America (Jan., 1996), pp. 115-136.
- Hoelscher, "Making Place, Making Race: Performances of Whiteness in the Jim Crow South." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol 93, No. 3 (Sep. 2003), pp. 657-686.
- Hull, Elizabeth Arnold, MA "Family Pictures 'Out of Place'" Race, Resistance, and Affirmation in the Pope Family Photograph Collection, 189001920 (2006). Selected chapters.
- Martin, Ann Smart, "Material Things and Cultural Meanings: Notes on the Study of Early American Material Culture." *William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 53, No. 1, Material Culture in Early America (Jan. 1996): pp. 5-12.
- Monteiro, Lyra D. "Race-Conscious Casting and the Erasure of the Black Past in Lin-Manuel Miranda's Hamilton." *The Public Historian*. Vol. 38, No. 1 (February 2016): 89-98.
- Prown, Jules David. "Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method." *Winterthur Portfolio*. Vol. 17, No. 1 (Spring 1982): 1-19.
- Riello, Giorgia. "Things that shape history: material culture and historical narratives" In *History and Material Culture: A Student's Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources*, Second edition. Edited by Karen Harvey. (NY: Routledge, 2017):
- Smith, Shawn Michelle, "Looking at One's Self Through the Eyes of Others': W. E. B. Du Bois's Photographs for the 1900 Paris Exposition," *African American Review* 34:4 (Winter 2000): 581-599.
- Turner, Patricia A. "Contemptible Collectibles" In *Ceramic Uncles & Celluloid Mammies: Black Images and Their Influence on Culture*. NY: Anchor Book, published by Doubleday, 1994.
- Ulrich, Laurel Thatcher. "Woodsplint Basket: An Everyday Object Reveals the History of New England's "Disappearing" Indians." *Harvard Magazine* (March-April 2002): 50-56; 102-103.

Assignments

Unit 1: Object analysis	25%
Unit 2: Exhibit analysis	25%
Unit 3: Spatial analysis	25%
Units 1-3: Discussion Board Assignments	25%

These assignments will vary in length and format. They will require application of assigned readings rather than additional research.

Course Policies

Participation and Attendance Policy

1. Consistent attendance— Attendance is mandatory. This is a seminar, not a traditional lecture course. We will be critically evaluating the content of the readings and practicing the application of analytical skills during each class period. You will not be able to make up for your absences by copying someone else's notes. For this reason, consistent attendance is essential to your learning in this course. I will take attendance at the beginning of every class. You must attend at least one hour of the class period to be counted for full attendance for the class. If the University is closed for inclement weather you will not, of course, be counted absent. If it snows and the University is open, class will be held as scheduled and attendance counts. If I am unable to attend class due to unforeseen circumstances, I will distribute an email message and post an announcement to Canvas at least two hours (if possible) before class is scheduled to begin. Documentation for absences will not be collected except in cases where an extended absence may be necessary (for example, hospitalization). **There will be a 3% reduction of the student's final grade for each absence after the first 3.** Beyond even this penalty, a student who seriously neglects attendance and class preparation risks failing the course. If you are experiencing a personal crisis that requires you to miss more than 2 classes, please let me know *at that time* (not afterwards). Practice the kind of responsible communication and professional behavior you will be expected to demonstrate as a teacher.
2. Thorough preparation for class—readings must be completed before class and assignments must be turned in on time, including Discussion Board postings. Postings must be complete and must fully address the question for credit. Discussion Board assignments are typically due before class because they will form the basis for class discussion and peer review. For this reason, late Discussion Board assignments cannot be accepted for credit.

3. Regular contributions to class discussions—participation is not formally graded as a specific percentage of the final grade but the success of this course for your learning depends on active intellectual engagement with your peers. Peer review will be integral to development of your archive project.

Academic Integrity

UNCG considers academic dishonesty to be a serious offense. Dishonest behavior in any form, including cheating, plagiarism, deception of effort, and unauthorized assistance, may result in such sanctions as a failing grade on an assignment or failure in the course depending on the nature of the offense. Students must follow the guidelines of the University Policy on Academic Integrity: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B0rFGGhJvbDHUEXSZmFFaWFmb00/view>

Electronic Communication

Students are responsible for checking UNCG email on a regular basis to keep up with communications sent outside of class time. Students are encouraged to utilize email and other forms of digital communication when interacting with the instructor (lctolber@uncg.edu). When using email, students are to be professional and courteous. Students should also remember email is an asynchronous form of communication. Thus, while a prompt response may be desired, it may not always be possible (especially late at night and on weekends). Students should allow at least 24 hours (48 hours on weekends) for a response. That said, the instructor answers emails in the timeliest fashion possible.

Late Assignment Penalty

Meeting deadlines is an essential element of professional behavior. Please note that *unless arrangements have been made well in advance of due dates*, graded assignments will be penalized by a **3% reduction in the final assignment grade for every day the assignment is late**. Graded assignments later than one week will not be accepted for credit without an extremely impressive explanation. Using effective quantitative reasoning, your grade average can recover from an F on an individual assignment more successfully than it can recover from a “0”. It is better to turn in an incomplete assignment on time than to turn in nothing at all. As explained in the participation policy above, late Discussion Board assignments will not receive credit.

Academic Accommodations

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities. If you feel you will encounter any barriers to full participation in this course due to the impact of a disability, please contact the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS). The OARS staff can meet with you to discuss the barriers you are experiencing and explain the eligibility process for establishing academic accommodations. You can learn more about OARS by visiting their website at <https://ods.uncg.edu/> or by calling [336-334-5440](tel:336-334-5440) or visiting them in Suite 215, EUC.

Health and Wellness

Your health impacts your learning. Throughout your time in college, you may experience a range of health issues that can cause barriers to your learning. These might include physical ailments, illnesses, strained relationships, anxiety, high levels of stress, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, or loss of motivation. Student Health Services and The Counseling Center can help with these or other issues you may be experiencing. You can learn about the free, confidential mental health services available on campus by calling 336-334-5874, visiting the website at <https://shs.uncg.edu/> or visiting the Anna M. Gove Student Health Center at 107 Gray Drive. Help is always available.

Course Schedule

14 January Introductions

16 January What is History? What is Public History

Read:

Monteiro, Lyra D. "Race-Conscious Casting and the Erasure of the Black Past in Lin-Manuel Miranda's *Hamilton*." *The Public Historian*. Vol. 38, No. 1 (February 2016): 89-98.

Listen: Cast of *Hamilton*, "Who Lives, Who Dies, Who Tells Your Story?"

21 January MLK Holiday, No Class

Unit 1: Analyzing Objects



23 January Things that Shape History

Read:

Riello, Giorgia. "Things that shape history: material culture and historical narratives" In *History and Material Culture: A Student's Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources*, Second edition. Edited by Karen Harvey. (NY: Routledge, 2017):

28 January No Class

30 January Using Objects as Historical Evidence: Indian Baskets

Read:

Ulrich, Laurel Thatcher. "Woodsplint Basket: An Everyday Object Reveals the History of New England's "Disappearing" Indians." *Harvard Magazine* (March-April 2002): 50-56; 102-103.

4 February Using Objects as Historical Evidence: Indian Baskets

Read:

Hill, Sarah H. "Weaving History: Cherokee Baskets from the Springplace Mission," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 53, No. 1, Material Culture in Early America (Jan., 1996), pp. 115-136.

Discussion Board Assignment. Essay draft due by 5:00 p.m. on Feb. 5. The difference between the history of objects and objects as history.

6 February Writing Workshop: Reading Like a Material Culture Historian

Read:

Ann Smart Martin, "Material Things and Cultural Meanings: Notes on the Study of Early American Material Culture." *William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 53, No. 1, Material Culture in Early America (Jan. 1996): pp. 5-12.

11 February Reading Objects/ Object Analysis Workshop, Part I

Read:

Prown, Jules David. "Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method." *Winterthur Portfolio*. Vol. 17, No. 1 (Spring 1982): 1-19.

13 February Technology Matters

Read:

Petroski, *The Evolution of Useful Things*, chapters 1-7

18 February Technology Matters

Read:

Petroski, *The Evolution of Useful Things*, chapters 8-14.

20 February Object Analysis Workshop II

Discussion Board Assignment due 19 Feb. by 5:00 p.m.

25 February Contextualizing the Object

Read:

Seth Bruggeman chapters, "Birthing Washington" and "A Contest of Relics"

27 February Object Analysis Workshop III

Discussion Board Assignment due 26 Feb. by 5:00 p.m.

Object Analysis due March 1

4/6 March Spring Break



Unit 2: Assemblages and Exhibits: Telling Stories with Objects

11 March Introduction to the Case Study: The W.E.B. DuBois Exhibit at the 1900 Paris Exposition

Read:

Smith, Shawn Michelle, "Looking at One's Self Through the Eyes of Others': W. E. B. Du Bois's Photographs for the 1900 Paris Exposition," *African American Review* 34:4 (Winter 2000): 581-599.

African American Photographs Assembled for 1900 Paris Exposition

<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/anedub/dubois.html>

Du Bois, W.E. Burghardt, "The American Negro at Paris" *American Monthly Review of Reviews* 22:5 (November 1900): 577.

https://books.google.com/books?id=hTllg_nfB3YC&pg=PA575&as_brr=1#v=onepage&q&f=false

<http://www.africanamericanhistorymonth.gov/exhibits-and-collections/>

13 March The Role of the data charts in the exhibit

Read:

<https://towardsdatascience.com/discovering-a-new-chart-from-w-e-b-du-boiss-the-exhibition-of-american-negros-part-6-66e7b340b90c>

18 March Exhibiting Other Cultures

Read:

Lidchi, Henrietta, "The Poetics and The Politics of Exhibiting Other Cultures," In *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. Edited by Stuart Hall, London: Sage Publications, 1997.

20 March The Spectacle of the 'Other'

Read:

Hall, Stuart, "The Spectacle of the 'Other'." In *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. Edited by Stuart Hall, London: Sage Publications, 1997.

25 March Exhibit Analysis Workshop

Discussion Board Assignment due 24 March by 5:00 p.m.

27 March Exhibit Analysis due.

Unit 3: Objects and Spaces of Consumption



1 April Introduction to the spatial history of shopping

Read: TBD

3 April Tupperware Parties

Read:

Clarke, Alison J. "Tupperware: Product as Social Relation." In *American Material Culture: The Shape of the Field*. Edited by Ann Smart Martin and J. Ritchie Garrison. Winterthur, Del.: Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum; Knoxville, Tenn.: Distributed by University of Tennessee Press, 1997.

8 April Shopping Carts: New Technology for Shopping

Read:

Gudis, Catherine. "Pushed Around: Material Culture, Dispossession, and the American Shopping Cart." In *History and Material Culture: A Student's Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources*, Second edition. Edited by Karen Harvey. (NY: Routledge, 2017)

10 April Spatial Analysis Workshop

15 April Geographers study shopping

Read:

Gregson, Nicky, Louise Crewe and Kate Brooks, "Shopping, Space, and Practice," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, Vol. 20 (2002) , pp. 597-617.

17 April Geographers study shopping

Read:

Gregson, Nicky, Louise Crewe and Kate Brooks, "Shopping, Space, and Practice," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, Vol. 20 (2002) , pp. 597-617.

21 April Discussion Board Assignment-Draft due by 5:00 p.m.

22 April Writing Workshop I

24 April Writing Workshop II

29 April Spatial Analysis Workshop

1 May Last Day of Classes. Course Evaluations
Spatial Analysis due.