Dr. Lee Simpson  
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Office Hours: Mon. Wed. 9:00-11:00 and by appointment

Course Purpose: This course is an introduction to the field of public history and public history research techniques. Students will be reading literature on the profession in addition to working on a public history project. Students will complete a number of short research based assignments, and all students will work on a large group project. For this course, the class will be creating a detailed database of New Deal projects conducted in the Sacramento area. This is a research intensive course and students should be prepared to work independently at libraries, archives and other historical sites around the city and county of Sacramento.

Required Texts:
Anthony Badger, The New Deal (1985)

Grades: Grading will be based on one historic site critique (25%), class participation (20%), and completion of the group project (65%).

General Information: Readings should be done before the class on the date assigned. All assignments should be completed and turned in by the due date, and students should be prepared to discuss their assignments in class. Students should arrive on time and not leave class early. While in class, please do not read books or materials for other classes or other purposes. Attendance is important for doing well in this class, and excessive absences will result in a 1/2-1 grade level decline in your final grade. Due to the nature of this course, the syllabus is subject to change. These changes will only be announced in class.

Class Meetings:
January 25: Course Introduction: Project Planning
January 27: What is Public History Research?  
Readings: Kyvig, ch. 1-2
February 1: Library Reference Day with Ben Amata  
In Library 2023
February 3: Historic Sites Research: Storytelling  
Readings: Kyvig, ch.3 and 10
February 8: The New Deal  
Readings: Badger, Begin
February 10: The New Deal  
Readings: Badger, finish
February 15: Using Written Records
Readings: Kyvig, ch. 4-5

February 17: Using Oral Sources
Readings: Kyvig, ch. 6

February 22: Library Research Day

February 24: The New Deal in Local Perspective
Readings: Assigned articles
**Book Reviews Due**

March 1: Using Visual Documents and Artifacts
Readings: Kyvig, ch. 7-8

March 3: Landscapes and Buildings
Readings: Kyvig, ch. 9

March 8: The Art of Interpretation:
Readings: Kyvig, 11-12
**Historic Site Critique Due**

March 10: Research

March 15: Data entry

March 17: Research

March 22-24 **No Class – Spring Break**

March 29: Data entry

March 31: Research

April 5: Data entry

Apr. 7: Research

April 12: Data entry

April 14: Research

April 19: Data entry

April 21: Research

Apr. 26: Data entry

Apr. 28: Research

May 3: **Rough Draft Due**

May 5: Research

May 10: **Draft’s returned**
May 12: Writing

May 20: Final Report Due

Assignments:

**Historic Site Critique:** For this assignment you will visit a local historic site and critique it as a public history site in a 3-5 page essay. You may choose any site that you wish, but it should be open to the public. Your critique should include the following:

1) Name and location of site
2) Hours and days of operation (is this sufficient?)
3) Target audience and ability to serve this audience
4) Mission statement and ability to meet the mission statement
5) Narrative description of the site and any significant exhibits (keep this brief)
6) Assessment of the quality and quantity of the presentation and whether the site meets its stated goals

I suggest the following sites:

Sutter’s Fort  
Governor’s Mansion  
Folsom Power House  
Fountain-Tallman Museum (Placerville)  
Old Sacramento  
Golden State Museum  
California Indian Museum  
California State Railroad Museum

**Book Review / Article Review:** A book review should include the following elements:

- Title (your own – not the book’s)
- Full citation of the book reviewed on the first page (including total pages, and cost)
- Introductory paragraph that states the theme of the review and the importance of the review
- Body should address the book’s thesis, methodology, sources and audience
- Conclusion which addresses the book’s overall effectiveness

3-5 pages, typed, double spaced.

Potential books for review include:


Potential articles for review include:

Roger Biles, “The Urban South in the Great Depression” *Journal of Southern History*, vol. 56, no. 1 (Feb. 1990) 71-100.

**Final Project:** Your grade for this portion of the class will be based on your ability to work with your other group members and to integrate your research into the class database. In addition to your raw data and photographs, you will write a 15-20 page essay summarizing your research findings and conclusions about the role of the New Deal in Sacramento history.

I suggest the following sources on local history:

Joseph McGowan’s History of the Sacramento Valley
Steven Avella’s *Indomitable City*
Sacramento Bee
Sacramento Union
Oak Park Ledger
Private papers of local residents
School Board Records
Sacramento Northern Records
Southern Pacific Records
Livermore family records