

Syllabus
History 203: Public History Principles and Techniques
Fall 2005

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Catalog Description: Provides an introduction to public history by surveying the major topics in the field through readings, discussion, and guest lectures. Students will learn about the history of public history, employment opportunities for public historians, and public historical issues.

Course Purpose: This course is designed to familiarize students with the principles, techniques and ethics behind the professional practice of public history. This course is not designed to provide students with a formula for public history work. Rather, it will suggest the range and limitations public historians face in their everyday work. The overall theme for the course will center on the following questions: “whom do we serve?” and “who owns history?” Class time will be spent discussing these questions by focusing on the professional in the job field who must serve his or her own needs as well as a myriad of patron needs and institutional goals. Class participants will also visit local repositories and historic sites to view public history at work.

Readings:

James B. Gardner and Peter S. La Paglia, eds., *Public History: Essays from the Field* (2004)
Edward Linenthal and Tom Engelhardt, *History Wars: The Énola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past* (1996)
John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (1992)
Martha Norkunas, *The Politics of Public Memory: Tourism, History, and Ethnicity in Monterey, California* (1993)
Timothy W. Luke, *Museum Politics: Power Plays at the Exhibition* (2001)
Paul A. Shackel, *Memory in Black and White: Race, Commemoration, and the Post-Bellum Landscape* (2003)
Catherine M. Lewis, *The Changing Face of Public History: The Chicago Historical Society and the Transformation of an American Museum* (2005)

Requirements/Assessment: (See Paper Guidelines on Last Page)

- Participation: Includes general participation in class discussion and participation in project reports, etc. (20%)
- Book Review: One short book review (4-5 pages) related to the class session topic. The reviewers will lead discussion that evening. (10%)
- Grant application (Follow application guidelines). (10%)
- Ethics Interview: Interview an individual working in public history about a major ethical issue they have faced in their career (4-5 pages). (10%)
- Simulated Project: Each student will simulate a public history project and present it to class (17-25 pages) (40%)
- Historic site/website review: Visit a historic site or website and critique the contents and quality (4-5 pages). (10%)

Class Meetings:

- Aug. 29: Introductions
- Sept. 5: **Labor Day – No Class**
- Sept. 12: Professional Practices
Readings: Gardner, all
- Sept. 19: Historical Societies: Past and Future
Readings: Lewis, all
- Sept. 26: Project Proposal Presentations (see Proposal Guidelines)
Assignment: Bring a copy of your draft Project Proposal for each member of class. Proposals will be discussed and critiqued in class.
- Oct. 3: History and Tourism
Readings: Norkunas, all
- Oct. 10: Virtual History: Web sites vs. historical sites
Assignment: Web site/historic site critique due.
- Oct. 17: Money
Assignment: Grant Application due
- Oct. 24: Race and Public Commemoration
Readings: Shackel, all
- Oct. 31: Ethics
Assignment: Ethics interview due
- Nov. 7: Public Commemoration
Readings: Bodnar, all
- Nov. 14: Culture Wars
Readings: Linenthal, all
- Nov. 21: Politics and Public History
Readings: Luke, all
- Nov. 28: Presentations
- Dec. 5: Presentations
- Dec. 12: Papers due by 12:00 in the history office

Assignment Guidelines:

Historic Site/Web Site Critique: Visit a public history site or web site and write up a report with these essential elements:

- site location, presentation(s), date(s)
- mission statement / purpose (is it obvious and does the site meet its mission)
- site's major theme(s)
- evaluation of presentation
- factual (is it accurate)
- interpretive (what is your impression)
- accessibility
- audience
- what would you do differently had you been in charge and why?

3-5 pages, typed, double spaced.

Book 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
 - audience
- conclusion which addresses the book's overall effectiveness

3-5 pages, typed, double spaced.

Ethics Interview: Interview an administrator or appropriate department head of a museum, library, archives, or historical agency and write up a report with these essential elements:

- ask the individual about one or two major ethical considerations that he or she has faced in historical resources management and how they dealt with the issue.
- ask the individual about what he or she sees as a particular problem / challenge area related to public history
- what solutions would you offer to these issues and why?

3-5 pages, typed, double spaced.

Grant Application: Write a grant to fund a Sacramento neighborhood history project using one of the following funding sources:

Save Our History (http://www.saveourhistory.com/pres_org/index.html)

California Stories Fund (http://www.calhum.org/guidelines/guidelines_main.htm)

CCPH mini-grants (<http://www.csus.edu/org/ccph/Mini-grants/>)

RCA grants (<http://www.csus.edu/rsp/RCAA.htm>)

Follow the guidelines for the appropriate granting institution.

Simulated Project: Create an imaginary public history institution / or consultant's project with the following elements (project will be broken into two parts):

Part I (project proposal, 3-4 pages in length):

- preface (includes statement of purpose)
- a discussion of the need for the institution or project
- a brief survey of comparable institutions or projects
- a preliminary budget for the project (including preservation/conservation)

- a timeline for completion

Part II (final report):

- Cover Page
- Title Page
- Table of Illustrations (maps, photos, tables, charts, etc.)
- Preface (includes mission statement /statement of purpose)
- Report should be 17-25 pages long. For institution include:
 - a collections policy (provide context of existing collection)
 - an acquisitions policy
 - an institutional affiliation (if any)
 - an interpretive exhibit or interpretive program
 - 1) nature of exhibit / program
 - 2) justification / rationale
 - interpretive thrust
- Report for Consultant
 - narrative of findings of the study
- Endnotes
- Budget (where will monies come from and where will they go?
 - detail as to income
 - expenses
 - fundraising – operating and endowment
 - bookkeeping / accounting procedures
- Staff policy
 - job descriptions
 - minimum educational requirements
 - applicant assessment form
- Timeline for completing the full project
- Vita (resume)

Feel free to let your imagination take over but keep it logically consistent. Your project will be evaluated by two class members. Your proposal is due Oct. 3 and you need to bring one copy per student to class. The final report is due for presentation on Nov. 28 or Dec. 5. Provide a copy of the report to me prior to your presentation date (preferably by the Thursday before class). You should also provide at least an outline of your report for all other seminar members. You may make changes to your report before submitting the final version to me on Dec. 12.

Web Sites / Historic Sites

Web Sites:

U. S. Census Bureau
The Great Chicago Fire and Web of Memory (Chicago Historical Society)
Black History Project (Center for History and New Media)
Colonial Williamsburg
1970 Hard Hat Riots (Center for History and New Media)
Henry Ford Museum
Lost Museum (Landscapes in Time)
American Memory Project (Library of Congress)
On-Line Exhibit Hall (National Archives and Records Administration)
Mystic Seaport's Exploring Amistad Site
Exploring the American South (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill)
The Valley of the Shadow (University of Virginia's Virginia Center for Digital History)
Anti-Imperialism in the United States, 1898-1935
The Virginia Center for Digital History (University of Virginia)
National Park Service
Union Pacific Railroad (History Section)
Musee-McCord Museum (Keys to History)
Wells Fargo (History Section)

Historic Sites:

Old Sacramento
Sutter's Fort
California State Governor's Mansion
Levi Strauss Museum (San Francisco)
Petaluma Adobe
General Mariano Vallejo Home (Sonoma)
Fountain-Tallman Museum (Placerville)
Coloma Gold Discovery State Park
Empire Mine State Historic Park
Bidwell Mansion (Chico)