Introduction to Public History

21:512:217; Spring 2024
Tuesdays: 2:30pm - 5:20pm
Location: HIL-107 (Hill Hall)

Kristyn Scorsone
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Office Hours: Virtual by Appointment

Course Description

*How can public history projects help shape our future to be more just and equitable?*

To answer this and other questions, this course will examine the field of public history alongside existing public history and public memory projects including the Queer Newark Oral History Project, Black Power! 19th Century, and Humanities Action Lab’s Climates of Inequality exhibit. With a focus on Newark’s history, we will explore how public historians interpret, analyze, and produce stories about the past for public audiences.

As we explore different projects, we will look at how public historians elevate marginalized histories, hold themselves accountable to the communities whose stories they are documenting, and the different methods used to produce and share stories in ways that underline their importance to the present.

Ultimately, we will consider the extent to which public history can be used to identify and redress past harms, influence policy, and provide a roadmap for resistance that brings us closer to liberatory goals.

Objectives:

By the end of this class, students will be able to:

- Define public history.
- Discuss how historians create stories about the past and the power inherent in historical narratives.
- Describe key figures, events, and ideas in Newark’s history.
- Analyze historical narratives, documents, and public history projects.
- Connect the presentation of history with contemporary issues.
- Synthesize class sources in original academic analyses and public humanities projects.

Course Website

We will use Canvas for this course. All readings, assignments, quizzes, and discussion board questions and posts can be found there.
To access Canvas, go to: https://canvas.rutgers.edu/.
If you have any problems, please contact Canvas help at help@canvas.rutgers.edu.

Academic Integrity
Rutgers University treats cheating and plagiarism as serious offenses. Cheating is both a moral and an ethical offense. When you cut corners and cheat, you undermine those students who took the time to work on the assignment honestly. As a standard minimum penalty, students who are suspected of cheating or plagiarism are reported to the Office of Academic Integrity. Pending investigation, further penalties can include failure of the course, disciplinary probation, and a formal warning that further cheating will be grounds for expulsion from the University.

All students are required to sign the Rutgers Honor Code Pledge. To receive credit, every assignment must have your signature under the following phrase: “On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this assignment.

Generally speaking, it is a violation of the academic integrity code to:
- Use someone else’s words or ideas without attribution
- Copy content from someone else’s paper, quiz, or exam or purchasing assignments (including but not limited to term papers, essays, and reports) and other written assignments
- Cut and paste from the web without citing
- Using concealed notes or crib sheets during examinations
- Leaving out in-text citations
- Submitting substantial portions of your past work for credit without prior approval.
- Have someone else complete course assignments for you.

I strictly follow the University’s rules regarding plagiarism and other academic irregularities. Please consult me if you have any questions about what is and is not appropriate regarding the use of sources or citation. If you are unsure if something needs to be cited - to be safe just cite it, and then you can always ask me about it later.

The university’s policy on academic integrity is available at: https://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/pdfs/current.pdf

****PLEASE NOTE - REGARDING CHATGPT****
Use of AI such as ChatGPT is ONLY permitted to help you brainstorm ideas and see examples. All course work that you submit must be your own!
This course challenges you to use historical and contemporary sources to create original work that analyzes public history as a tool of social change. I would rather see imperfect grammar and your original ideas than academic jargon from an AI writing generator. Please know, it’s obvious when AI is being used on assignments rather than student/human generated analysis. YOUR VOICE MATTERS! USE IT.

Keep the following quote in mind as your north star during this course:

*In the cause of silence, each of us draws the face of her own fear — fear of contempt, of censure, of some judgment, or recognition, of challenge, of annihilation. But most of all, I think, we fear the visibility without which we cannot truly live.*

*And that visibility which makes us most vulnerable is that which also is the source of our greatest strength. Because the machine will try to grind you into dust anyway, whether or not we speak. We can sit in our corners mute forever while our sisters and our selves are wasted, while our children are distorted and destroyed, while our earth is poisoned; we can sit in our safe corners mute as bottles, and we will still be no less afraid.* - Audre Lorde

Names and Pronouns:
An important part of creating a respectful learning environment is knowing and using the name you use, which may differ from your legal name, as well as the gendered pronouns you use. Please feel free to let me know your name and/or the pronouns you use at any time in class or privately.

The Writing Center
The Writing Center (http://www.ncas.rutgers.edu/writingcenter), located in Room 126 of Conklin Hall, offers writing tutoring and writing workshops to all undergraduate students currently enrolled in classes on the Rutgers-Newark campus. Their tutors work to help students become more independent readers and writers capable of responding well to the demands of writing within the university. Please inform your students that The Writing Center is available to them free of charge and encourage them to take advantage of their services to strengthen their reading, writing, and research skills.

Students with Disabilities
Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University’s educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation. https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus’s disability services office will provide you with a Letter of
Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS website at https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form. For more information, please visit the Office of Disability Services in the Paul Robeson Campus Center, Suite 219 or contact odsnewark@rutgers.edu.

Violence Protection and Victim Assistance
Rutgers faculty are committed to helping create a safe learning environment for all students and for the university as a whole. If you have experienced any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or 4 (Rev. 6/19) harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available. Rutgers has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. The University strongly encourages all students to report any such incidents to the University. Please be aware that all Rutgers employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as advocates, counselors, clergy and healthcare providers as listed in Appendix A to Policy 10.3.12) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the University. This means that if you tell a faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment or sexual violence, or other related misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the University’s Title IX Coordinator. If you wish to speak with a staff member who is confidential and does not have this reporting responsibility, you may contact the Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance at (973)-353-1918, or at run.vpva@rutgers.edu. Learn more about the office here: http://counseling.newark.rutgers.edu/vpva

Technology Rules:
If any tech issues arise, let me know immediately. Please don’t come to class unprepared because “the link didn’t work.” You can often search materials on the Rutgers Library website or Google the item and find it somewhere else on the web.

Link to RU-N “Technology LaunchPad”: https://mytech.newark.rutgers.edu/tlp

Contact information for Tech Support:
https://mytech.newark.rutgers.edu/techsupport

You will be expected to complete readings and assignments on time and be able to participate in online discussions.

Late Assignments:
I expect assignments to be completed on the day/time they are due. If there are circumstances that make it impossible for you to hand in assignments on time, please contact Kristyn Scorsone by email as soon as possible so that we can discuss an arrangement that works for both of us.
Assignments and Grading:
- Class Participation and Attendance: 20%
- In class assignments: 20%
- Midterm: 30%
- Final Project Proposal: 5%
- Final Project: 25%

Grading Scale:
- 90 - 100 A
- 87 - 89 B+
- 80 - 86 B
- 77 - 79 C+
- 70 - 76 C
- 60 - 69 D
- 59 or less F

Class Participation and Attendance: 20%
Attending class is not optional. Attendance will be taken at the start of class.

You will be expected to attend class having completed readings and assignments and be prepared to actively participate. Bring your readings with you to each class meeting to facilitate discussion. In-class participation will improve your grade in the course, whereas unexcused absentness and lateness will negatively affect your grade.

Your course grade will be reduced by a half grade after two unexcused absences and a full grade after three unexcused absences.

NOTE: Any student who misses four or more sessions through any combination of excused and unexcused absences will not earn credit in this class. Such students should withdraw to avoid getting an F.

Three lates will be counted as 1 absence.

What counts as an excused absence?
Recognized grounds for absence are illness requiring medical attention, curricular or extracurricular activities approved by the faculty, personal obligations claimed by the student and recognized as valid, recognized religious holidays, and severe inclement weather causing dangerous traveling conditions.

Please alert me in advance whenever possible and provide some form of written evidence.
In Class Assignments: 20%
**FOUR** times during the semester you will have to submit an in-class assignment.

This might range from group work, completing minor research, or responding to a discussion board prompt.

**These assignments will be graded as Complete/Incomplete and will be announced in class.**

If you are absent on the day of an in-class assignment, please reach out to me via email to make it up: k.scorsone@rutgers.edu.

Midterm: 30%
The midterm will be an essay analyzing a Newark-based public history project.

*Details TBD.*

Final Project: 30%
Your final project will involve a **proposal (5%)** and a **short video project/presentation or similar public history project (25%)** in which you will interpret an aspect of Newark history for a general audience and demonstrate why this history matters now. This could also take the form of an imagined public history project where you propose what a public history project about an aspect of Newark’s history could/should look like.

*Details TBD.*

**Required Texts:**
There are no required books for this course.

All required readings will be available through Canvas or online. Additional materials, including films or other media, may be required as well and will be available through Canvas or Rutgers Library’s website.

*Readings and assignments may be subject to change during the semester.*
Schedule:

WEEK 1 - January 16

Welcome to class! Course expectations and schedule

• READ: Syllabus.

• The following materials are resources to assist you with research and writing for class:
  o THOMAS document.
  o primary and secondary sources document.

WEEK 2 - January 23

What is Public History?

• READ: “Social Justice and Public History” by Denise Meringolo in Radical Roots: Public History and a Tradition of Social Justice Activism, page 1-20

• READ: Excerpt from Silencing The Past by Michel-Rolph Trouillot

• READ: “About the field” on the National Council on Public History’s website --read this page as well as the others linked in the “About the Field” box on the left of the page: https://ncph.org/what-is-public-history/about-the-field/

WEEK 3 - January 30

Slavery and Public Memory in Newark


• LISTEN TO: 1619 Project’s podcast, episode 1: The Fight for a True Democracy: https://open.spotify.com/episode/4wA1RLFNOWCJ8iprngXmM0
  o Also available on iTunes

• IN CLASS: We will explore the digital exhibit: “Black Power! 19th Century” created by Noelle Lorraine Williams, Director of the African American History Program at the New Jersey Historical Commission and her Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/blackpower_19thcentury/
WEEK 4 - February 6

Agency in Interpretation

- READ: “Recollections on Interpreting Slave Life and Falling into Your Purpose,” Nicole A. Moore, in Radical Roots, page 483-499
- READ: Excerpt from Saidiya Hartman’s Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments
- IN CLASS: We will explore the Harriet Tubman Monument, Wars of America, and other monuments in Newark.

WEEK 5 - February 13

Why is Newark a Burdened Community?

- READ: “Toxic Heritage and Reparations: Activating Memory for Environmental and Climate Justice,” - Liz Ševčenko
- IN CLASS: We will look at the Humanities Action Lab’s, Climates of Inequality online exhibit. Particularly the Newark (Building Resistance) local story: https://climatesofinequality.org/story/climate-justice-is-worker-justice/
- IN CLASS: We will watch The Sacrifice Zone (2020).

WEEK 6 - February 20

Public History as Mutual Aid

- READ: “What’s the Use of Crying?” - Ricia Chansky
- IN CLASS: We will look at the work of the Newark Water Coalition and HAL’s Climates of Inequality story on Puerto Rico.
WEEK 7 - February 27

The Newark Rebellion

- READ: Robert Curvin, *Inside Newark*, Chapter 4
- IN CLASS: We will explore RiseUpNewark.com

******DUE: Mid-Term by Sunday March 3 at 11:59pm ******

WEEK 8 - March 5

Demanding Inclusion

- What is an Archive? - [https://www2.archivists.org/about-archives](https://www2.archivists.org/about-archives)
- Potential visit to the Puerto Rican Community Archives at the Newark Public Library during this class.

WEEK 9 - March 12

****** NO CLASS *****

*Spring Break: 3/9 - 3/17*

WEEK 10 - March 19

The Queer Newark Oral History Project

- READ: Moore, Satter, Stewart-Winter, Strub, “A Community’s Response to the Problem of Invisibility”
• LISTEN TO: Season 1, Episode 6 of the Queer Newark Podcast - On Queer Loss: Interview with Aleix Martinez in Memory of Ray Rivas, https://queer.newark.rutgers.edu/resources/queer-newark-podcast

• IN CLASS: We will visit At Home in Newark: Stories From the Queer Newark Oral History Project and From Rebellion to Review Board: Fighting for Police Accountability in Newark - both exhibits are located on the 3rd floor of Conklin Hall.

WEEK 11 - March 26
States of Incarceration
• READ: “Remembering Rikers” - Liz Ševčenko
• IN CLASS: We will look at The Rikers Public Memory Project, https://rikersmemoryproject.org, and HAL’s States of Incarceration exhibit, particularly New Jersey’s local story on immigrant detention. https://statesofincarceration.org

WEEK 12 - April 2
“Silence Equals Death”
• READ: Reflections on Stonewall: Fifty years after the “Stonewall Riots,” not much has changed about how we commemorate LGBTQ+ history - Megan Crutcher, https://ncph.org/history-at-work/reflections-on-stonewall/
• LISTEN TO: Season 2, episode 2 of the Queer Newark Podcast on James Credle: https://queer.newark.rutgers.edu/resources/queer-newark-podcast
• IN CLASS: We will learn how to do oral history.
• IN CLASS: We will watch excerpts from the documentary, United in Anger. We will look at the AIDS Quilt, the Stonewall monument, and plans for a monument to Marsha P. Johnson in Elizabeth, NJ. What might a monument to Newark’s LGBTQ+ history look like?
WEEK 13 - April 9

Creating a Walking Tour of Absences


- IN CLASS: Weather permitting - We will meet in Military Park for a Queer Newark Walking Tour. If we have inclement weather - we will do a digital version of the walking tour in class.

- DUE: Final project proposal due Wednesday April 10, 11:59pm

WEEK 14 - April 16

Newark Museum visit

- We will meet at the Newark Museum to see the Ballantine House: https://newarkmuseumart.org/exhibition/the-ballantine-house/
  - You will need your student ID to enter for free!

WEEK 15 - April 23

- Ironbound Community Corporation (ICC) Toxic Tour - TBD

TBD: DUE DATE FOR FINAL PROJECTS

Accommodation and Support Statement:
Rutgers University Newark (RU-N) is committed to the creation of an inclusive and safe learning environment for all students and the University as a whole. RU-N has identified the following resources to further the mission of access and support:

- For Individuals with Disabilities: The Office of Disability Services (ODS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter barriers due to disability. Once a student has completed the ODS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and reasonable accommodations are determined to be necessary and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be
provided. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at ods.rutgers.edu. Contact ODS at (973)353-5375 or via email at ods@newark.rutgers.edu.

- For Individuals who are Pregnant: The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance is available to assist with any concerns or potential accommodations related to pregnancy. Students may contact the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance at (973) 353-1906 or via email at TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu.

- For Absence Verification: The Office of the Dean of Students can provide assistance for absences related to religious observance, emergency or unavoidable conflict (e.g., illness, personal or family emergency, etc.). Students should refer to University Policy 10.2.7 for information about expectations and responsibilities. The Office of the Dean of Students can be contacted by calling (973) 353-5063 or emailing deanofstudents@newark.rutgers.edu.

- For Individuals with temporary conditions/injuries: The Office of the Dean of Students can assist students who are experiencing a temporary condition or injury (e.g., broken or sprained limbs, concussions, or recovery from surgery). Students experiencing a temporary condition or injury should submit a request using the following link: https://temporaryconditions.rutgers.edu.

- For English as a Second Language (ESL): The Program in American Language Studies (PALS) can support students experiencing difficulty in courses due to English as a Second Language (ESL) and can be reached by emailing PALS@newark.rutgers.edu to discuss potential supports.

- For Gender or Sex-Based Discrimination or Harassment: The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance can assist students who are experiencing any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking. Students can report an incident to the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance by calling (973) 353-1906 or emailing TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu. Incidents may also be reported by using the following link: tinyurl.com/RUNReportingForm. For more information, students should refer to the University’s Student Policy Prohibiting Sexual Harassment, Sexual Violence, Relationship Violence, Stalking and Related Misconduct located at http://compliance.rutgers.edu/title-ix/about-title-ix/title-ix-policies/.

For support related to interpersonal violence: The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance can provide any student with confidential support. The office is a confidential resource and does not have an obligation to report information to the University’s Title IX Coordinator. Students can contact the office by calling (973) 353-1918 or emailing run.vpva@rutgers.edu. There is also a
confidential text-based line available to students; students can text (973) 339-0734 for support run vpva@rutgers.edu. There is also a confidential text-based line available to students; students can text (973) 339-0734 for support.

• For Crisis and Concerns: The Campus Awareness Response and Education (CARE) Team works with students in crisis to develop a support plan to address personal situations that might impact their academic performance. Students, faculty and staff may contact the CARE Team by using the following link: tinyurl.com/RUNCARE or emailing careteam@rutgers.edu.

• For Stress, Worry, or Concerns about Well-being: The Counseling Center has confidential therapists available to support students. Students should reach out to the Counseling Center to schedule an appointment: counseling@newark.rutgers.edu or (973) 353-5805.

• For emergencies, call 911 or contact Rutgers University Police Department (RUPD) by calling (973) 353-5111.

Learning Resources:
• Rutgers Learning Center (tutoring services) Room 140, Bradley Hall (973) 353-5608 https://sasn.rutgers.edu/student-support/tutoring-academic-support/learning-center
• Writing Center (tutoring and writing workshops), Room 126, Conklin Hall (973) 353-5847 nwc@rutgers.edu_ https://myrun.newark.rutgers.edu/writing-center