

INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC HISTORY

21:512:217

Mondays and Wednesdays, 10:00-11:20am

Conklin Hall, room 424

Spring 2016

Professor Lyra D. Monteiro

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Office Hours: Mondays, 1:30-3:30pm, or by appointment

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will introduce students to the field of public history by teaching them the skills to become savvy consumers of the historical narratives they will encounter in the rest of their lives, as well as introducing them to the profession of the public historian. In contrast to academic research in history, public history seeks to capture the interest of the public in order to engage, entertain, influence, and inspire. Through a combination of lectures, readings, guest speakers, field trips, and group work, this class will explore how public histories are never neutral or apolitical, but instead are always engaged in broader social issues of power, identity, and belonging. By identifying and studying the various meanings of these invocations of the past – within our holidays, the names of our streets, as well as at historic sites and museums – students will gain an understanding of some of the ways in which the past is operationalized in the present, in order to shape the future.

Public history, broadly considered for the purposes of the class, is about instances in which the past is invoked within a public-facing setting, such as a museum exhibition, a historic house, a Hollywood film, or a public statue. These settings represent the most significant points of encounter that adults who have completed their formal education have with historical material, and are also important sites for intergenerational learning. As we will see over the course of the semester, all public history projects engage in some way with controversial issues from the past or the present. Students will learn about attempts to challenge and re-interpret dominant historical narratives in public spaces, through emphasis on local histories, the histories of women, workers, and queer people, and the histories of people of color. The class will also include discussion of digital humanities tools, and how they are changing the perceptions, presentation, and practice of public history.

Students will be introduced to a range of public history skills, including archival research, empathy-based interviewing, and the transcription of oral histories. For their final project, students will work in small groups on a topic of their choice related to the history of Newark, which is celebrating its 350th anniversary in 2016, or the history of Rutgers University, which celebrates its 250th in 2016. They will research this topic using various techniques, and share aspects of their research on a Twitter account, creating a series of 140-character tweets that invite followers to engage with their findings in a digital public space.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The learning outcomes for this course include:

- Students will learn to analyze the quality and coherence of oral and written communication at public history sites and events, and on the web
- Students will learn how to use Twitter for public history projects
- Students will learn how to analyze a range of cultural texts, including public history events and exhibits, news clips/articles, monuments and memorials, websites, and film and television accounts of the past. Additionally, students will practice these techniques on cultural artifacts and performances
- Students will learn and practice how to perform historical research online and in archives
- Students will learn and practice basic interviewing and audience research techniques
- Students will learn how to create a coherent and accessible narrative out of historical research

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

10% Class Participation

Attendance and active participation in class are required—see details under “Policies” below. After each class, students will be required to complete a brief, anonymous survey on Blackboard. For each unexcused absence beyond three, your FINAL GRADE will drop by 5%.

40% Public History Reports (2-3 pages, 10% each)

1. Monuments Report, Due: February 15: Students will select a monument in Newark to research using tools from the library and the internet, as well as on-site observation and interviews, in order to answer questions such as, who erected it? Why? What does it mean to people in the area today?
2. Website Report, Due: March 7: Students will select from a list of public history websites, evaluate it according to the Public History Research Council’s rating criteria for public history websites, and produce a report explaining and justifying their rating.
3. Film Report, Due: March 23: To explore the differences between documentary and fictionalized films about the past, we will watch and discuss a documentary in class, and students will then watch a fictionalized version of the same events. The films and TV episodes for this project will be available via online streaming services (Netflix, Hulu, Amazon Prime), or on reserve in the Media Center at the Dana Library.
4. Audience Report, Due: 1 week after event/visit: In order to gain a stronger understanding of who the audiences for public history actually are, students will work in groups of two to observe and analyze the audiences they see engaging with public history events and exhibits. A sign-up sheet will be distributed, but if there is a different event or site that you are eager to explore for this assignment, it needs to be approved in advance by Professor Monteiro. This project will require observation, interviews, and comparison with existing audience data for that institution or event.

20% Midterm Exam, In-Class on Monday, March 28

30% Twitter Project

During the final unit of the course, students will work in small groups to research and develop projects that share an aspect of the history of Newark or the history of Rutgers University with the public, via Twitter. Key due dates for this project include:

April 6: Project Proposal (one per group): Describe topic and voice, include Twitter handle, hashtags (original and existing), bibliography, and inspirations.

April 18-May 8: After approval of Project Proposal, each project must include at least 3 tweets/day for 10-14 days.

May 9: Final Paper due (one per student): write a 5-page paper in which you describe your project, the challenges you faced, and the ways that your Twitter project engaged with its audience.

POLICIES

Academic Integrity All assignments submitted for this class must be your own original work, and information derived from other sources—whether or not you quote it directly—must be cited appropriately. All instances of plagiarism and cheating will be investigated fully, in accordance with the Rutgers Policy of Academic Integrity (<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu>).

Accommodations If you require accommodations to meet course requirements, please inform me as early in the semester as possible. If you do not already have a Letter of Accommodation from Disability Services, please contact the Paul Robeson Campus Center Office of Student Life and Leadership to obtain one (<http://robeson.rutgers.edu/studentlife/disability.html>).

Attendance Students are expected to make every effort to attend class regularly. Excused absences require documentation in writing, and are defined by the course catalog as: “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.” For each unexcused absence beyond three, your FINAL GRADE will drop by 5%. Any student who misses eight 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.

Cell Phones Except in cases of emergency, cell phones must be turned completely off during class.

Citations All written work should use Chicago-style footnotes and bibliography, unless otherwise specified.

Communication Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions related to the class. I strongly urge everyone to take advantage of my office hours—or to make an appointment if you are unable to come then. I will respond to all emails within 24 hours, so please plan ahead if you have a question related to a paper or exam.

Computers and Tablets Laptops and tablets are permitted in class for the purposes of accessing the readings and taking notes only. Please do not use facebook/email/etc during class time, as it can be a distraction for yourself and other students.

Field Trips All field trips are required, unless otherwise noted. While every effort will be made to find times that work for all students, any student who is unable to visit a museum or historic site with the rest of the class must make-up the visit within two weeks, and meet with Professor Monteiro after their visit to discuss it.

Written Work All written work must be submitted in **hardcopy**, either in class, or to the folder outside of my office. Late work will be penalized an automatic ½ letter grade reduction for each day (i.e., the maximum grade that can be earned on a paper that is turned in the day after it is due is an A, the following day an A-, etc.), unless a doctor's note or similar official excuse can be provided.

LECTURES AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

There are three required texts for this course, which can be purchased at the campus bookstore, at NJ Books, and on Amazon:

1. Hilda Kean and Paul Martin, editors, *The Public History Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013).
2. David Kyvig and Myron Marty, *Nearby History: Exploring the Past Around You*, 3rd Edition (Plymouth, UK: Altamira Press, 2010). Available as an e-book.
3. Andrew Hurley, *Beyond Preservation: Using Public History to Revitalize Inner Cities* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010). Available as an e-book.

All other required readings and online exercises will be posted on Blackboard.

Please bring your readings and notes with you to every class

Wednesday, January 20

Introductions – What Is Public History?
(no readings)

Unit I: The Work of Public History

Monday, January 25

Nationalism: “Our” history

- *Nearby History*, Chapter 1: Why Nearby History?
- *Public History Reader*, Part I intro and Ch. 2 (pgs. 1-10, 30-55)

Wednesday, January 27

Who Owns the Native American Past?

- Francis P. McManamon, "The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), in Linda Ellis, ed, *Archaeological Method and Theory: An Encyclopedia*
- Elizabeth Archuleta, "Gym Shoes, Maps, and Passports, Oh My! Creating Community or Creating Chaos at the NMAI?" *The American Indian Quarterly* 29.3/4 (2005): 426-449.

Monday, February 1

Colonialism: "Their" history

- Carol Duncan, "Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship," in Karp & Lavine, eds, *Exhibiting Cultures*
- *Public History Reader*, Ch. 17
- William McCarter, "There is a White Sale at Macy's: Reflections on Black History Month," *Radical Inquiry* 1.2 (2012).

Wednesday, February 3

Memorials and Historic Preservation

- Erika Doss, "Remembering 9/11: Memorials and Cultural Memory," *OAH Magazine of History* 25.3 (2011).
- *Nearby History*, Chapter 10: Historic Preservation

Monday, February 8

Public History as Activism

- *Beyond Preservation*, Ch. 1
- *Public History Reader*, Ch. 5 and 18

Wednesday, February 10

New Jersey Historical Society Visit

Monday, February 15

The Official Memories of Newark

Monument Report Due

Wednesday, February 17

Public History of Slavery

- John Michael Vlach, "The Last Great Taboo Subject," in Horton and Horton, eds, *Slavery and Public History*
- *Public History Reader*, Ch. 19

Monday, February 22

Heritage From Below

- *Public History Reader*, Ch. 3
- *Beyond Preservation*, Ch. 2

Wednesday, February 24

Case Study: North St. Louis

- *Beyond Preservation*, Chs. 3-5

Unit II: The Past in Popular Culture

Monday, February 29

Cultural Heritage Tourism

- *Public History Reader*, Ch. 1
- Gerald Figal, "Between War and Tropics: Heritage Tourism in Postwar Okinawa," *The Public Historian*, 30.2 (2008).

Wednesday, March 2

Twitter History

- Daniel Cohen and Roy Rosenzweig, "Promises and Perils of Digital History," <http://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/introduction/>
- *Public History Reader*, Ch. 11
- Brian McKenzie, "Teaching Twitter: Re-enacting the Paris Commune and the Battle of Stalingrad," *The History Teacher* 47.3 (2014): 355-372.
- The Lower East Side Tenement Museum's website and Twitter feed: www.tenement.org and @tenement
- Look at tweets from @samuelpepys and @TweetsofOld

Monday, March 7

History Websites

Website Report Due

Date and time TBA: Optional visit to the Lower East Side Tenement Museum

Wednesday, March 9

Recreating the Past: Plays, First-Person Interpretation, Reenactment, and Film

- David Dean, "Theatre: A Neglected Site of Public History?" *The Public Historian* 34.3 (2012): 21-39.
- Rachel Lee Rubin, "Faire Grounds" from *Well Met: Renaissance Faires & The American Counterculture*
- Pierre Sorlin, "How to Look at an 'Historical' Film," from *The Film in History*

No Class Monday, March 14 or Wednesday, March 16: Spring Break

Monday, March 21

History and Politics: Immigration

- Felix Matos Rodriguez, "'The 'Browncoats' Are Coming': Latino Public History in Boston," *The Public Historian*, 23 (2001): 15-28.
- Maggie Russell-Ciardi, "Building Institution: Reflections on the Shared Journeys Program at the Lower East Side Tenement Museum," *Public Historian* 30.1 (2008): 39-52.

Wednesday, March 23
Hollywood's History
Film Report Due

Monday, March 28
Midterm Exam

Unit III: Creating Public History

Wednesday, March 30
Local History: Newark's 350th anniversary
In-class screening: "The Once and Future Newark"

- *Nearby History*, Ch. 2: What Can Be Done Nearby?
- *Beyond Preservation*, Chs. 6-7

Monday, April 4
Rutgers 250

- Explore the Rutgers 250 website: <http://rutgers250.rutgers.edu>
- Harold Wechsler, "Brewing Bachelors: The History of the University of Newark"

Wednesday, April 6
Robeson Library Resources for Local History Research

- Explore "The Newark Experience": <http://libguides.rutgers.edu/newark>

Twitter Project Proposals Due

Monday, April 11
Census Records

- *Nearby History*, Ch. 5: Unpublished Documents

Wednesday, April 13
Oral History
Guest Speaker: Sam Boardman

- Watch "Castle Newark: The Krueger Scott Mansion" on YouTube, Part I: <http://youtu.be/g8W9nY1OUfk> and Part II: http://youtu.be/oEyX27O_osw
- *Nearby History*, Ch. 6: Oral Documents

Monday, April 18
Putting it all together: Storytelling

- *Nearby History*, Ch. 3: Traces and Storytelling

Wednesday, April 20
Finding Historical Documents Online

- *Nearby History*, Ch. 4: Published Documents

Monday, April 25

Image Research

- *Nearby History*, Ch. 7: Visual Documents

Wednesday, April 27

Material Culture

- *Nearby History*, Ch. 8: Artifacts & Ch. 9: Landscapes and Buildings
- *Public History Reader*, Ch. 8

Monday, May 2

Connecting to the Bigger Story

- *Nearby History*, Ch. 12: Linking the Particular and the Universal

Final Papers Due: Monday, May 9