

Place, Community, and Public Humanities

26:050:545 / 26:510:565

Thursdays, 5:30pm-8:10pm

Conklin Hall 446

Instructor Information:

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Description:

Since 2011, the Queer Newark Oral History Project (queer.newark.rutgers.edu) has been collecting the stories of LGBTQ Newarkers through oral history interviews, public programs, and archival research. Growing out of a partnership between the LGBTQ community in Newark and faculty and staff based at Rutgers University-Newark, Queer Newark seeks to raise the visibility of this diverse community, which has not otherwise been documented in the historical record in any consistent or accessible way. Through life history interviews, our narrators tell their stories—of daily life, school, work, leisure, spirituality, sex, love, and, at times, tragedy. Using this archive we will collaboratively create an interpretive exhibit about LGBTQ life in Newark, to be displayed at the Newark Public Library.

We will place these stories within the context of Newark history, LGBTQ history, African American Studies, women's and gender studies, ethnic studies, American studies and public history. We will also think about how geography shapes LGBTQ life in Newark. Historians have become more interested in geography in the recent past. We will be applying this "spatial turn" to our work, thinking through how place is socially created, how communities remake space, and how the movements of certain populations are monitored and controlled through surveillance tactics, policing, and so on. How we take a sophisticated theoretical analysis and make it accessible to the public is one of our key tasks this semester.

This is an experiential public history/humanities class. Public history is the co-creation of historical knowledge between historians and the public. The class will ground students in the history, theory, and methods of place-based public history and community engagement. We will be working closely with the Newark Public Library and advisors on campus and in the community as well as an advanced graphic design class at Rutgers University-Newark. Students will use oral histories, original research, archival collections, and digitized materials, over the semester to develop the class' public project. We will collaboratively move through the process of exhibit creation, from audience analysis to research to writing to evaluation.

I look forward to engaging in this process with you.

Expectations:

This course will blend the theory and practice of public history with analytical readings in American Studies on place and social, political and cultural history. **You will be treated as both graduate students who are expected to complete required readings and contribute thoughtfully to class discussions and as members of a project team who will work collaboratively to produce public history texts and materials.** Collaborative work is a key skill for all public historians (and pretty much anybody who isn't a hermit). We will practice it throughout this course.

Because of the nature of our project, this syllabus is subject to change.

Community Advisory Board:

A unique aspect of this class is our work with a community advisory board and a community partner. Public history is collaborative work with communities that have the ability to shape the project. Our community partner, the Newark Public Library, has served the residents of Newark for more than a century and will host the exhibit. In addition to its borrowing services, programs, and events, it houses remarkable collections about Newark's history and people, including the New Jersey Information Center and the New Jersey Hispanic Research and Information Center, both of which we will make use of this semester.

Our community advisory board includes scholars of Newark and LGBTQ history, representatives from the Newark LGBT Community Center, the Rutgers-Newark Intercultural Resources Center, Queer Newark and members of the LGBTQ community in Newark. Our advisors will offer advice and critique of the project along the way.

Objectives:

By the end of this course, students will have:

- Learned about Newark's history, particularly with regard to race, gender, sexuality and social justice movements in the mid-20th century;
- Interpreted primary sources, especially oral histories;
- Synthesized secondary readings and interpreted primary sources into a public exhibition;
- Conducted a summative evaluation of the exhibition;
- Worked with community partners and community advisory board;

Assignments:

Students will be divided into collaborative groups for our semester-long assignment.

Unlike other graduate seminars, your work will not just be seen by me, but will be readily accessible by the public through our final exhibition. To ensure that we produce the best possible work in our time together, there will be a staged editorial review process. Every student is expected to engage in thoughtful and constructive peer review.

- Drafts of exhibit panels
- Oral history coding
- Written analyses of oral histories

- Final exhibit panel text and captions
- Project presentation at opening event
- Final project evaluation

As part of our research and interpretation process, students will listen to and read oral histories from Queer Newark (queer.newark.rutgers.edu) for several weeks. Each week, you will be required to analyze and code the interviews you read. Two or more students will also present their interviews to the class. After several weeks, each student will analyze the interviews they've read (and/or others) within the context of our class discussion, readings, and emerging exhibition themes.

Attendance and Participation:

You will be expected to attend class having completed readings and assignments and be prepared to actively participate. If you cannot attend class, please let me know at least 24 hours before class (except in the case of emergencies when you should let me know as soon as possible).

In order for us to accomplish our ambitious agenda, it is necessary for me to communicate with you and for you to communicate with each other outside of our formal class time. The easiest way to do this is by email. **You are required to check your email regularly and to respond to emails from me or your classmates in a timely manner.** If you use a different email address than your Rutgers' one, I suggest that you either forward email from your Rutgers account to your other address or you make sure that I have your correct email address.

Grading:

In-Class Presentation of Oral Histories: 10%

Community Focus Group: 15%

Oral History Analysis: 20%

Exhibit Text & Audio: 30%

Exhibit Evaluation: 15%

Participation, Attendance and Peer Review: 10%

Required Texts:

Susan Ferentinos, *Interpreting LGBT History at Museums and Historic Sites* (ISBN-10: 075912373X)

Kevin Mumford, *Newark: A History of Race, Rights, and Riots in America* (ISBN-10: 0814795633)

Beverly Serrell, *Exhibit Labels: An Interpretive Approach* (ISBN-10: 144224903X)

Articles and readings as assigned below. Those marked (BB) can be found on the blackboard site for this class. Those not marked can be found through a search of the Rutgers University library databases (<https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/>).

As a class, we will use a shared [google drive](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0BzE6T8Scx7pzeXZLZ0dGTEFTZDQ?usp=sharing) for our research. You can also find the google drive here: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0BzE6T8Scx7pzeXZLZ0dGTEFTZDQ?usp=sharing> .

Check to make sure you have access to the drive. If there are problems let me know immediately.

Academic Integrity

Rutgers has a strict policy against plagiarism and cheating. If you have questions about what counts as either, please see me before completing assignments. You can review the academic integrity policy here: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/>

Disability Statement

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 web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>. For more information please contact the Office of Disability Services in the Paul Robeson Campus Center, in suite 219 or by contacting odsnewark@rutgers.edu.

Weekly Schedule:

Week 1/Sept. 7: Greetings and Salutations

Week 2/Sept. 14:

Readings:

"Our Voices, Our Histories," Queer Newark Conference, 2011.

<http://queer.newark.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/files/2011-11-12%20QNOVOH%20complete.pdf>

Darnell Moore, Beryl Satter, Whitney Strub, and Timothy Stewart-Winter, "A Community's Response to the Problem of Invisibility: The Queer Newark Oral History Project," *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking*, 1.2 (2014). (BB)

Horacio N. Roque Ramirez and Nan Alamilla Boyd, "Close Encounters: The Body and Knowledge in Queer Oral History," in *Bodies of Evidence*. (BB)

"Combahee River Collective Statement," <http://circuitous.org/scraps/combahee.html>

In Class: Speakers from the Queer Newark Oral History Project

Week 3/Sept. 21:

Readings:

Sue Ferentinos, *Interpreting LGBT History at Museums and Historic Sites*

Sabrina Marie Chase, "Unpacking Newark's Epidemic," *Surviving HIV/AIDS in the Inner City*. (BB)

Oral history interview

Week 4/Sept. 28: Newark

Readings:

Kevin Mumford, *Newark: A History of Race, Rights, and Riots in America*

Oral history interview

Week 5/Oct. 5:

On-Campus Event: Denise Meringolo, public historian, UMBC will be speaking on the roots of radical public history.

Readings:

Zenzele Isoke, "The Politics of Homemaking," *Urban Black Women and the Politics of Resistance*. (BB)

Zenzele Isoke, "Mobilizing After Murder," *Urban Black Women and the Politics of Resistance*. (BB)

Yamil Avivi, "Queering Political Economy in Neoliberal Ironbound Newark," *Dialogo*. (BB)

Christina Hanhardt, "Butterflies, Whistles and Fists: Safe Streets Patrols and Militant Gay Liberalism in the 1970s," *Radical History Review*. (BB)

Oral history interview

Week 6/Oct. 12:

Readings:

Jen Jack Giesecking, "LGBTQ Places and Spaces." <https://www.nps.gov/articles/lgbtqtheme-places.htm>

Whitney Strub, "Mondo Rocco: Mapping Gay Los Angeles Sexual Geography in the Late-1960s Films of Pat Rocco," *Radical History Review* (Spring 2012)

Karen McCarthy Brown, "Mimesis in the Face of Fear: Femme Queens, Butch Queens, and Gender Play in the Houses of Greater Newark," *Passing: Identity and Interpretation in Sexuality, Race, and Religion*. (BB)

Peter Savastano, "St. Gerard Teaches Him That Love Cancels That Out," *Gay Religion*. (BB)

Oral history interview

Week 7/Oct. 19: Interpreting for the Public

Readings:

Jason Ruiz, "Private Lives and Public History: On Excavating the Sexual Past in Queer Oral History Practice," *Bodies of Evidence*. (BB)

Jennifer Tyburczy, "Queer Curatorship," *Sex Museums*. (BB)

Michael Frisch, "From a Shared Authority to the Digital Kitchen, and Back," *Letting Go*. (BB)

Serrell, *Exhibit Labels* PART I

Oral history interview

Week 8/Oct. 26: Interpreting for the Public

Readings:

Serrell, *Exhibit Labels* PART II

Brandon Walsh, "Editing Audio with Audacity," *Programming Historian*.
<https://programminghistorian.org/lessons/editing-audio-with-audacity>

Oral history interview

In Class: Audacity training

Paper Due

Week 9/Nov. 2: Workshop

Readings:

Linda Shopes, "Oral History and the Study of Communities: Problems, Paradoxes and Possibilities." (BB)

Serrell, *Exhibit Labels* PART III

In Class: Sue Ferentinos Talk

Week 10/Nov. 9: Workshop

Readings:

Michelle Caswell, "Seeing Yourself in History: Community Archives and the Fight Against Symbolic Annihilation," *The Public Historian*.

Serrell, *Exhibit Labels* Ch. 17 & 18

Week 11/Nov. 16: Present draft exhibit to advisors

Week 12/Nov. 21: THURSDAY CLASSES RESCHEDULED FOR TUESDAY

In-class peer review and final text rewrite

Nov 23: Thanksgiving break

Week 13/Nov. 30: Space and Place

Readings:

Henri Lefebvre, excerpt from *The Production of Space*. (BB)

Doreen Massey, "A Global Sense of Place," *Space, Place and Gender*. (BB)

David Harvey, "Space as a Keyword," Marx and Philosophy Conference. (BB)

Finalize MP3 files

Week 14/Dec. 7: Power of Place

Readings:

Dolores Hayden, Chs. 2, 8 & 10 in *The Power of Place*. (BB)

Serrell, Ch. 21

Week of December 11: Exhibit Opening

Dec. 19: Final analysis and evaluation due

Oral History Coding and Analysis

As preparation for writing text for the exhibit, you will be reading, coding, analyzing and writing about interviews from the Queer Newark Oral History Project throughout the semester. These activities will allow us to share information about the interviews easily.

Each week you will be assigned interview(s) to listen to and read the transcripts of. Then you will:

- *Code* each interview according to these themes:
 - Arts
 - Religion and Spirituality
 - Coming Out and LGBTQ Identity
 - Education
 - Family
 - Gentrification
 - HIV/AIDs, Health and Wellness
 - Housing
 - Lesbian Motherhood
 - Marriage and Legal Issues
 - Military
 - Newark
 - Police and State Violence
 - Race and Class
 - Violence and Harassment
 - Work

If there are other themes that you think should be added, please raise them with me before or during class.
- You will add your analysis of these themes *WITH TIME STAMPS FROM THE AUDIO* to "[Queer Newark Oral History Themes](http://bit.ly/2gH0MjH)." (also here at: <http://bit.ly/2gH0MjH>) This is to be done every week for each interview you analyze. If your interview has already been coded, verify that the coding is correct and add time stamps to the document.
- *Summarize* the interview in light of the topics raised by our readings each week. These summaries will not be graded, but you will be called on or assigned to discuss how specific interviews fit with the readings during our discussions. This will prepare you for those discussions.
- *Present* an oral history to the class. Once during the semester, you will be assigned to present an oral history to the class in five minutes, focusing on how that oral history reflects themes from the readings and discussions.
- *Write* an analysis of the oral histories you've read and those discussed and coded by your peers. Due **October 26**, this paper will be a focused examination of a specific topic through the oral histories and the readings. More details will be provided during the semester.