

Introduction to Public History

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Thursdays, 230pm-520pm

Online

Instructor Information:

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Course Description:

The stories we tell about the past are often hotly contested. Recent debates over the confederate flag and monuments show that just because something happened more than a century ago, it still matters deeply to defining who counts as part of our society and who is excluded.

Understanding, examining, and producing stories about the past for public audiences is the heart of the field and career known as public history. In this class, we will examine how we learn about the past, from our own families to popular culture. We will then address how historians study the past through the use of the historical method. Through several case studies, we will analyze how public historians have successfully and unsuccessfully used the tools of history to engage the public, including exhibits, embodied practice, social media, and public programs. We'll think about the power of history to shape what we know about the present in controversial topics like immigration. Finally, we'll hear from professionals in the field about their work and the challenges facing institutions due to Covid-19 and other issues.

Throughout the semester we will be guided by a key question: can public history help create more just and equitable societies in the future?

I look forward to exploring these ideas with you.

Objectives:

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

- Define public history;
- Become more critical consumers of historical narratives in public, such as those in the news, popular culture, exhibits, etc..;
- Discuss how historians create stories about the past;
- Analyze historical narratives, exhibits, and documents;
- Connect the presentation of history with contemporary issues;

- Synthesize readings in original academic analyses.

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 .

Expectations:

This class will use a hybrid model of synchronous and asynchronous engagement.

Every Thursday, we will meet online for a synchronous lesson that will include lecture and discussion. Prior to that meeting, on most weeks (see syllabus and Canvas site) students will respond to discussion questions on Canvas, which will be counted towards your participation grade. Some weeks there will be reading quizzes on Canvas as well.

As I write this syllabus, the pandemic continues to disrupt people’s lives. It’s impossible to know what the semester will hold for us. I will be as flexible as possible with you as long as you communicate with me about your needs and issues in a timely manner. In return, I ask for your flexibility with us in case our situations change and we have to adjust our class plans along the way.

Attendance and Participation:

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.

Attendance is mandatory. An excessive number of absences will negatively impact your grade, whether excused or unexcused. In the case of illness or other issues, please be in touch with Mary Rizzo or Sydney Johnson by email as soon as possible. For further detail on university regulations on class attendance see http://catalogs.rutgers.edu/generated/nwk-ug_0608/index.html

Academic Integrity:

Integrity is fundamental to the academic enterprise. It is violated by such acts as borrowing or purchasing assignments (including but not limited to term papers, essays, and reports) and other written assignments, using concealed notes or crib sheets during examinations, copying the work of others and submitting it as one’s own, and misappropriating the knowledge of others. The sources from which one derives one’s ideas, statements, terms, and data, including Internet sources, must be fully and specifically acknowledged in the appropriate form; failure to do so, intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes plagiarism. Violations of academic integrity may result in a lower grade or failure in a course and in disciplinary actions with penalties such as suspension or dismissal from the College. The university's policy on academic integrity is available at <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/>

All students are required to sign the Rutgers Academic Integrity Pledge and the Rutgers Honor Pledge on each exam. “On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this examination / assignment.”

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.

Assignments and Grading:

- Attendance: 10%
- Participation (online discussions and discussion boards): 10%
- Reading Quizzes: 10%
- Short paper on popular culture as public history 15%
- Engaging audiences with history 20%
- Short paper on immigration public history 20%
- Short paper on public history near you 15%

Grading Scale:

- A = 90-100
- B+ = 85-89
- B = 80-84
- C+ = 75-79
- C = 70-74
- D = 59-69
- F = 0-58

Late Assignments:

I expect assignments to be completed on the day they are due. Any late submissions without an approved excuse will lose a half-grade every day it is late. If there are circumstances that make it impossible for you to hand in assignments on time, please contact Mary Rizzo or Sydney Johnson by email as soon as possible so that we can make arrangements with you.

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.

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.
- 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. If you are not quite ready to make an appointment with a therapist but are interested in self-help,

check out TAO at Rutgers-Newark for an easy, web-based approach to self-care and support: <https://tinyurl.com/RUN-TAO>.

- 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://sasn.rutgers.edu/student-support/tutoring-academic-support/writing-center>

Weekly Schedule:

Discussion Board Posts are due by 12pm on Thursday.

Quizzes are due by Friday at 11pm.

Section 1: What is Public History? What is History?

Sept. 3/Week 1 – Intro to Public History and Class

- Readings: None
- Discussion Board: Yes (This week's post is due by Friday at midnight)
- Quiz:
- Assignment Due: None

Sept. 10/Week 2 – Thinking about history

- Reading: Ch. 1 of Intro to Public History
- Discussion Board: Yes
- Quiz:
- Assignment Due: None

Sept. 17/Week 3—Historical method or how do historians write history?

- Reading: Leslie Madsen-Brooks, "I Nevertheless Am a Historian": Digital Historical Practice and Malpractice around Black Confederate Soldiers," *Writing History in the Digital Age*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/d/dh/12230987.0001.001/1:5/--writing-history-in-the-digital-age?g=dculture;rgn=div1;view=fulltext;xc=1>
- Discussion Board: Yes
- Quiz:
- Assignment Due: None

Sept. 24/Week 4—Case study of the Tulsa Race Massacre – How do we recover history when it's been hidden?

- Readings:

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- Amy Comstock, “Now Tulsa Does Care,” *Survey*.
- Walter White, “The Eruption of Tulsa,” *The Nation*.
- B.C. Franklin, “The Tulsa Race Riot and Three of Its Victims,” National Museum of African American Culture and History
- “Commemorating the Tulsa Massacre” <https://ncph.org/history-at-work/commemorating-tulsa-massacre>
- “The Mass Graves of Tulsa,” *Vox* (video) <https://www.vox.com/videos/2019/2/27/18243144/mass-graves-tulsa-wall-street>
- Discussion Board: Yes
- Quiz:
- Assignment Due: No

Oct. 1/Week 5—Representing historical events in culture, or the complicated case of *Watchmen*

- Readings:
 - Watch 1st episode of *Watchmen* on HBONow (If you don’t have HBO, you can access the show by going to <https://www.hbo.com/watch-free-episodes> . The first row of titles is "2020 Emmy Nominees." These are listed alphabetically, so you need to click on the ">" on the right to get to the "W"s. You will need to supply an email and your birthdate prior to streaming.)
 - David Lowenthal, “The Past is a Foreign Country,” 214-237
- Discussion Board: Yes
- Quiz:
- Assignment Due: No

Section 2: Interpreting the Past for the Public

Oct. 8/Week 6—What is Interpretation? What is Curation?

- Readings:
 - Edward Linenthal, “Anatomy of a Controversy,” *History Wars*.
 - Martin Harwit, “The Enola Gay: A Nation’s, and a Museum’s, Dilemma,” *Washington Post*.
 - Documents on The Enola Gay Exhibit, *Journal of American History*.
- Discussion Board: Yes
- Quiz:
- Assignment Due: No

Oct. 15/Week 7—Making History Relevant: Triangle Shirtwaist Fire and Chalk Case Study

- Readings:
 - See You in the Streets, excerpts, p. 9-29; 89, 113-119; 163-170
 - “Five years after deadly factory fire, Bangladesh’s garment workers are still vulnerable,” The Conversation. <https://theconversation.com/five-years-after-deadly-factory-fire-bangladeshs-garment-workers-are-still-vulnerable-88027>
- Discussion Board: Yes
- Quiz:
- Assignment Due: Paper 1 Due

Oct. 22/Week 8—Engaging Audiences: Instagram

- Readings:
 - “All Poetry to the People! Black Arts Movement Poetry as Public History,” History@Work, <https://ncph.org/history-at-work/black-arts-movement-poetry-as-public-history>
 - “Decolonizing the Digital Literary Canon through Digitizing “Chicory,”” History@Work, <https://ncph.org/history-at-work/decolonizing-the-digital-literary-canon/>
 - “Doin’ it for the Gram: How Baltimore’s Chicory Revitalization Project uses Instagram to Engage the Public,” History@Work, <https://ncph.org/history-at-work/doin-it-for-the-gram/>
- Discussion Board: No
- Quiz:
- Assignment Due: No

Section 3: Im/migration and Public History

Oct. 29/Week 9 – The Ellis Island Narrative

- Readings:
 - “Island of Hope, Island of Tears,” Ellis Island intro video from the 1980s <https://www.c-span.org/video/?440119-1/island-hope-island-tears>
 - Mike Wallace, “Hijacking History: Ronald Reagan and the Statue of Liberty,” Radical History Review.
 - “Crossing the Borders: A Young Central American Mother’s Story,” <https://www.rescue.org/article/crossing-border-young-central-american-mothers-story>
 - Becky Little, “The Birth of Illegal Immigration,” <https://www.history.com/news/the-birth-of-illegal-immigration>
- Discussion Board: Yes
- Quiz:
- Assignment Due: No

Nov. 5/Week 10 – Latinx Im/migration as Public History Case Study

- Readings:
 - Felix V. Matos Rodriguez, “The Browncoats are Coming: Latino Public History in Boston,” The Public Historian, 2001.
 - Mireya Loza, “From Ephemeral to Enduring: The Politics of Recording and Exhibiting Bracero Memory,” The Public Historian, 2016.
- Discussion Board:
- Quiz:
- Assignment Due: Engaging Audiences Assignment Due

Nov. 12/Week 11 - Using Dialogue to Talk about Immigration Public History

- Readings:
 - Sarah Pharaon, excerpt from “Using Dialogue to Interpret Immigration,” Interpreting Immigration at Museums and Historic Sites.

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- Ruth Abram, “Kitchen Conversations: Democracy in Action at the Lower East Side Tenement Museum,” *The Public Historian*.
- Discussion Board: Yes
- Quiz:
- Assignment Due: No

Nov. 26: No class for Thanksgiving Holiday

Section 4: Public History at Work in the World

Nov. 19/Week 12: Community Archives - Virtual Tour of Hispanic Resource and Information Center, Newark Public Library

- Readings:
 - “Newark archivist revives lost history of Puerto Rican riots,” NJ.com, https://www.nj.com/essex/2016/03/newark_archivist_revives_lost_history_of_puerto_ri.html
 - What is an Archive? <https://www2.archivists.org/about-archives>
- Discussion Board: No
- Quiz:
- Assignment Due: No

Dec. 3/Week 13: Decolonizing American Art at the Newark Museum – Session with Tricia Bloom, Newark Museum

- Reading:
- Discussion Board:
- Quiz:
- Assignment Due: Immigration Public History Paper Due

Dec. 10/Week 14: Public History in the Age of Covid

- Reading: For class, research online how museum, historic sites, parks, and archives have been impacted by Covid over the last few months. Be prepared to talk about what you’ve found.
- Discussion Board:
- Quiz:
- Assignment Due: No

Public History Near You Paper Due: TBD