

## **HIST 502: Applied Historical Research**

Mondays, 4:30 to 7:15 p.m. • Center on Main, Room 310 (Alaska Building, 1020 Main Street)

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Course website: <http://502.doinghistory.com>

### **Introduction**

What is public history, and in what ways does it differ from academic history? Should “the public” be the audience for, participants in, or creators of programs and projects that fall under the banner of “public history”? What role should—and do—professional historians take in public history? How do historians working outside the academy make a living? How do they fund their projects?

These are but a few of the questions we will address in this course.

This is a course about methods, controversies, ideas and ideologies, and the ways history gets deployed in everyday life in the United States. We’ll learn from changing cultural landscapes, consider the politics of museum practice, and survey the pleasures and perils of historic preservation in the U.S. We’ll also plan our own public history apps. Along the way, we will meet practicing historians and think through what it means to practice and preserve history in an increasingly digital world.

### **Learning goals**

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- identify significant contemporary projects in public history practice
- identify contemporary issues in, and explain several major methods of, historic preservation
- address the necessity of considering identity politics in public history
- plan, and make the case for funding, digital history projects
- make an argument about the place of “the public” in public history

**Course materials** (available at the campus bookstore)

Required:

- Gail Anderson, *Reinventing the Museum: The Evolving Conversation on the Paradigm Shift* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, red and orange cover—not the dark blue one)
- Thomas King, *Our Unprotected Heritage*

- Norman Tyler, Ted Ligibel, and Ilene Tyler, *Historic Preservation: An Introduction to Its History, Principles, and Practice*
- Chris Guillebeau, *The \$100 Startup*

Recommended:

- Beverly Browning, *Grant Writing for Dummies* (3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> edition). You'll want to have access to some kind of grantwriting book or instructions; many of these should be available at local libraries, online, or at other bookstores.

In addition, you will need to purchase or borrow an iPad or similar mobile device. This course is part of the MAHR program's mobile learning initiative, in which participating faculty explore the utility of mobile devices to the teaching and learning of public history and the digital humanities.

## Participation

The day-to-day requirements of this class are simple: do the required reading, reflect on it, and come to class prepared to engage in thoughtful discussion. (I promise to do the same.)

Your presence in class is very important. Participation in course discussions constitutes a significant portion of your grade (10%). To receive an A for your participation, you must participate meaningfully in class just about every day. Merely attending class will earn you a C- for participation.

A note about digital devices: In most courses, I ask students to turn off digital devices during class, unless they need to use them as an accommodation for a disability. In this seminar, however, on several days we'll be exploring digital history, so in many cases you'll find a laptop, a tablet, or other wireless-enabled mobile device useful or even necessary. That said, I prefer that when we meet for our seminar, students use their computers and phones only for course-related activities. Using them for outside activities—e.g. checking e-mail, updating Facebook, or texting—tends to divide our attention, so I appreciate your restraint.

## Writing

The quality of your writing—both its clarity and the depth of thought expressed in it—contributes significantly to your final grade in this course. It is imperative, then, that you schedule sufficient time to conduct the research required for each project, write a solid first draft, and conduct several revisions. I recommend you form a writing group with two or three other students to swap papers or projects at least a few days before they are due.

## Late assignment policy

In the historical professions, deadlines matter. Exhibitions must open on time. Grant proposal deadlines aren't negotiable. Collaborative public history endeavors—like building digital tools and organizing festivals—require everyone to contribute in a timely manner so that work may proceed on schedule. The same holds true for this class. **Assignments must be turned in at the**

**beginning of class on the day they are due.** Late assignments will be penalized 1/3 of a grade (e.g. a B becomes a B-) after the beginning of class, and I will deduct an additional 1/3 grade for each 24 hours that pass before you turn in the paper.

That said, I'm not heartless. If you have an emergency or anticipate not being able to turn in your paper on time, come see me and we'll see if we can work something out.

Please note: **Technological failure does not constitute an emergency.** Hard drives fail, servers go down, file transfers time out, and files get corrupted. You must plan for such contingencies: keep backups of your files, have extra ink cartridges handy, know where the local wifi hotspots are in case your home internet connection goes down. Technological issues are not excuses for late work. Please protect yourself (and your grades) by managing your time and backing up your work.

### **Grade distribution**

- Class participation: 10%
- Public history career introduction (blog post): 10%
- Reflections on assigned readings (on blog), plus comments on others' reflections: 10%
- Wiki contributions: 20%
- Mobile app development plan: 20%
- Grant proposal to fund app development: 20%
- Technology reflection: 10%

### **Grading scale**

At the end of the course, I enter letter grades into Blackboard, and Blackboard converts letter grades into percentages (so, for example, a student who received a B- on every assignment would end the course with a final percentage of 81%). Students with the following cumulative percentages will receive the associated final course grades:

A+: 97-100	A: 93-96	A-: 90-92
B+: 87-89	B: 83-86	B-: 80-82
C+: 77-79	C: 73-76	C-: 70-72
D+: 67-69	D: 63-66	D-: 60-62
F: 59 and below		

### **Plagiarism**

A student commits plagiarism not only if she turns in someone else's work as her own, but also if she borrows others' ideas or phrases without giving them credit. We can discuss this in class if anyone has any questions. Any student who plagiarizes or cheats on any assignment may receive a grade of zero on the assignment and an F in the course and may be subject to academic discipline by the university.

I am interested in *your* thoughts and *your* creative and analytical work. Please share them with me!

### **Accommodations**

I need to hear from anyone who has a disability that may require some modification of seating, assignments, or other class requirements so that appropriate arrangements may be made. Please see me after class or during my office hours.

### **Talk to me**

I will be available during my office hours to address your concerns with the class and assignments. I encourage you to come see me if you feel you have not been offered a chance to participate in class discussion, you are troubled by a particular assignment, you would like to talk more with me about an issue raised in class, or you have concerns about your performance in the course.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

*Please complete each set of readings before class on the date shown.*

January 28: Introduction

February 4: Museums, part I

From *Reinventing the Museum*:

- “A Framework,” 1-9
- Cameron, “The Museum, a Temple or the Forum,” 48-60
- Hein, “The Constructivist Museum,” 123-129
- Roberts, “Changing Practices of Interpretation,” 144-162
- Silverman and O’Neill, “Change and Complexity in the 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Museum,” 193-201
- Black, “Embedding Civil Engagement in Museums,” 267-285
- Simon, “Principles of Participation,” 330-350

February 11: Museums, part II

From *Reinventing the Museum*:

- Monroe and Echo-Hawk, “Deft Deliberations,” 72-77
- Malaro, “Deaccessioning: The American Perspective,” 78-85
- Cameron, “Museum Collections, Documentation, and Shifting Knowledge Paradigms,” 223-238
- Phelan, “Legal and Ethical Considerations in Museum Acquisitions,” 412-430
- Corrin, “Mining the Museum: An Installation Confronting History,” 114-122

February 18: President’s Day holiday. Class does not meet.

Feb. 25: Museums, part III

From *Reinventing the Museum*:

- Falk and Sheppard, “Creating a New Business Model,” 379-386
- IMLS, “Museums and Libraries in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” 497-507
- Kotter, “Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail,” 521-531

Elsewhere:

- Center for the Future of Museums, <http://futureofmuseums.blogspot.com/>
- Spock, “In defense of nostalgia,” <http://www.scribd.com/doc/18066777/Dan-Spock-In-Defense-of-Nostalgia>

March 4: The public’s practice of history, analog and digital (case studies: reenactment and wikis)

- Kowalczyk, “Embedded with the reenactors,” [http://www.salon.com/2012/01/08/embedded\\_with\\_the\\_reenactors/](http://www.salon.com/2012/01/08/embedded_with_the_reenactors/)
  - Little, “The limited (and queer?) vision of American historical reenacting,” <http://www.historiann.com/2012/01/09/the-limited-and-queer-vision-of-american-historical-reenacting/>
  - Levin, “Why doesn’t anyone think it’s cool to dress up like a Confederate soldier anymore?” <http://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2012/02/why-young-people-arent-interested-in-the-civil-war/253716/>
  - Cohen, “Define Gender Gap? Look Up Wikipedia’s Contributor List,” <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/31/business/media/31link.html>
  - Messer-Kruse, “The ‘Undue Weight’ of Truth on Wikipedia,” <http://chronicle.com/article/The-Undue-Weight-of-Truth-on/130704/>
  - Famiglietti, “Weighing Consensus—Building Truth on Wikipedia,” <http://copyvillain.org/blog/2012/02/20/weighing-consensus-building-truth-on-wikipedia/>
- **Public history career introduction due** (post on blog by Sunday 3/3 at noon)

March 11: Historic Preservation, part I

- Tyler et. al., *Historic Preservation* chapters 1, 2, 3 (in chapter 3, skim pp. 63-102 and read pp. 103-119).
- “Teaching Preservation: What’s Endangered in Boise?” <http://blog.preservationnation.org/2010/06/08/teaching-preservation-what’s-endangered-in-boise/>

March 18: Historic Preservation, part II

- Tyler et. al., *Historic Preservation* chapters 4 (skim), 5, 6 (skim), 7 (read through p. 220; skim 221-235), 9, 11.
  - Explore <http://www.nps.gov/history/nhl/> -- especially <http://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nhl/index.htm>
- **Wiki contributions due**

March 25: Spring break. Class does not meet.

April 1: Entrepreneurialism

- Guillebeau, *The \$100 Startup*: Prologue, chapters 1 through 6, chapter 10, and pp. 255-259
- AHA, “Historians as Consultants and Contractors,” <http://www.historians.org/pubs/careers/chapter7.htm>
- Putman, “Crafting a New Historian,” <http://chronicle.com/article/Crafting-a-New-Historian/136109/>

Explore some of the following pages and sites:

- “The Sister/Sister Team of TAG Historical Research + Consulting,” <http://histpres.com/professional-advice-tag-historical-research>
- “About Clio,” <http://www.cliohistory.org/about/>
- Association of Personal Historians, <http://www.personalhistorians.org/index.php>
- Reel Tributes, <http://www.reeltributes.com/>
- Museumpreneurs, <http://museumpreneurs.org/about-2/about-museumpreneurs/>
- Stevens Historical Research Associates, <http://www.shraboise.com/>
- The History Factory, <http://www.historyfactory.com/>
- History Associates, <http://www.historyassociates.com/>
- Lord Cultural Resources, <http://www.lord.ca/>
- NCPH, Consultants: <http://ncph.org/cms/consultants/>

April 8: Careers

- Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Curators, Museum Technicians, and Conservators,” Occupational Outlook Handbook, <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/Education-Training-and-Library/Curators-and-museum-technicians.htm>
- BLS, “Historians,” Occupational Outlook Handbook, <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/life-physical-and-social-science/historians.htm>
- BLS, “Archivists,” <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/education-training-and-library/archivists.htm>
- BLS, “Anthropologists and Archaeologists,” <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/life-physical-and-social-science/anthropologists-and-archeologists.htm>
- “What Employers Seek in Public History Graduates,” parts I and II:
  - <http://publichistorycommons.org/what-employers-seek-in-public-history-graduates-part-1/>
  - <http://publichistorycommons.org/what-employers-seek-part-2/>
- Read sections of <http://www.historians.org/pubs/careers/index.htm> that are of interest to you
- Go to <https://www.usajobs.gov/> and search for “historian.”
- Join The Versatile PhD (it’s free) and browse the forums: <http://versatilephd.com/>

April 15: Ethical dilemmas, Part I: deploying history for political ends

- DeVega, “They Have Blood on Their Hands” <http://wearerespectablenegroes.blogspot.com/2010/11/they-have-blood-on-their-hands-sons-of.html>
- “Virginia 4<sup>th</sup>-grade textbook criticized over claims on black Confederate soldiers” <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/10/19/AR2010101907974.html>

- Cebula, “Open Letter to the Curators of the Baron Von Munchausen House”  
<http://northwesthistory.blogspot.com/2010/06/open-letter-to-curators-of-te-baron-von.html>
- Cebula, “You as a Professor should stop bringing into the 21<sup>st</sup> century all this negativism,” <http://northwesthistory.blogspot.com/2010/09/baron-von-munchausen-strikes-back.html>
- “Conservative class on Founding Fathers' answers to current woes gains popularity,”  
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/06/04/AR2010060404918.html?sub=AR>
- Robinson, “Don’t frack our history!” <http://publichistorycommons.org/dont-frack-our-history-using-the-past-for-environmental-activism-in-northeastern-pennsylvania/>

*April 17-20: National Council on Public History conference.* Watch for blog posts to find current issues in public history.

April 22: Ethical dilemmas, Part II

- King, *Our Unprotected Heritage*
- Optional: Browse Tom King’s blog, CRM Plus: <http://crmplus.blogspot.com/>

April 29: To be determined by student interest

- **App project plan due**

May 6: To be determined by student interest

- **Tech reflection due**

May 15: **Final exam, 5-7 p.m.**

- **App project presentations**
- **Grant application due**