History 502, Spring 2017

**Public History Project Proposal[[1]](#footnote-1)**

As we have learned in class, public history projects and programming take a wide variety of forms, from permanent exhibits in museums to guerrilla audio podcasts to plays collaboratively authored with community residents.

Your culminating project for this course is to draft a proposal for a small- to medium-scale public history project. It may be analog or digital, but it should be regional, addressing a topic of interest to Boiseans, Idahoans, or residents of the broader American West. This is a group project; each group should have no more than four students.

What might such a project look like? That’s up to you. We’ll work together in class to craft a rubric for what makes a good project plan. In this way, we ensure we’re not taking on too large a project and that we’re all on the same page in terms of quality. We can further refine each project’s scope and content in a series of informal conversations among the members of your project group and the instructor.

The proposal itself should have several sections, each with appropriate subheadings. These may be in whatever order makes sense for your project, with the exception of the executive summary, which comes first.

* An executive summary: 2-3 short paragraphs that provide an overview of the project
* A description of the need for the project
* A description of the project’s content and format, including relevant historical background/context—sources fully cited, of course.
* The project’s learning objectives (what you want people to be able to know or do after experiencing your project)
* A description of the projects’ stakeholders
* A description of the project’s intended audience
* A description of the individuals and groups who would participate in the development and implementation of the project, including yourselves, community members, professional public historians (be specific—e.g. a museum conservator or a historic preservation specialist), subject matter experts, and any other consultants.
* What resources you would need for the project—technological, historical consultants, access to archives, funds to pay for licensing images or audio, etc. You don’t need to calculate costs at this point, but you’re going to find it easier to draft your upcoming grant proposal if you keep the estimated costs under $25,000.
* Images (e.g., photos, sketches, exhibit floor mock-ups, or other relevant visuals) that clarify your vision for the project.

There is no set length for this project proposal, but not counting images, it should be at least 6-7 single-spaced pages.

## On group work

I have very specific policies about group work. Everyone must participate equally. This doesn’t mean everyone has to do the exact same work; after all, some people are going to be better at developing textual or visual content for your project, while others might be more fluent in mobile technologies. You’ll need to help each other by complementing one another’s strengths and weaknesses.

That said, everyone in your group must contribute to

* the selection of the project’s topic, and the refinement of its scope
* the writing of the project plan
* some aspect of the development of the project itself (e.g. historical research, writing content, gathering images, wrangling technology)
* the writing of the paper accompanying the final project
* the production of the final presentation

I will ask each individual in your group, independent of one another, to explain what he or she contributed, as well as assess the contributions of other group members.

**Assuming the above criteria are met, everyone in your group will receive the same grade.** However, if it becomes clear some people did not contribute as fully as they might have to the project, I will investigate and differentiate grades within the group.

If you are experiencing difficulties in your group, please let me know immediately. I reserve the right to break apart groups, reconstitute groups, or ask individuals to complete the project on their own.

Reasons I might have to break up a group include, but are not limited to:

* Group members report to me that someone has been missing group meetings.
* A group member is being domineering, and not letting others participate fully in the project.
* A group member’s effort is determined by others in their group to be significantly less than the efforts put forth by others in the group.

Please keep open communication with each other and with me. I don’t like surprises, and neither do your group members.

## Deadlines

*April 3: Come to class with a project summary to share with the class.*

Your project summary should explain what project your group intends to propose. We’ll use some class time to workshop and refine your plans.

Your project summary should include:

* a list of group members
* a tentative name for the project
* the project’s learning objectives (i.e. what you want users to know or be able to do after experiencing your project)
* other relevant information about the project’s content
* what inspired the project (both its content and its particular format)
* similar existing projects, and their advantages and liabilities
* benefits of this particular format
* a timeline for researching and writing the proposal

Length: as long as you need it to be.

*April 24: Public history project plan due*

Turn in the project proposal as a printed document and via e-mail to LMB.

*May 1: Reflection paper and final presentation*

Deliverables:

1. A group-authored reflection paper of at least three double-spaced pages that

* explains specifically how the project meets the learning objectives you outlined in your project plan;
* reflects on the challenges you encountered as you planned the project and explains how you overcame them;
* cites sources (articles, other projects) that influenced the development of the project.

**\*\*\*Post this reflection paper on the course blog as a blog post.\*\*\***

2. A final presentation during the final exam period (10-15 minutes, plus 15 minutes for Q & A)

3. An individually- (not group-) authored paragraph explaining what work you contributed to the project, as well as (a) what work other group members contributed and (b) the quality of their participation. This will be turned in separately from the group project.

1. Note: On the syllabus, this project is referred to as the “Digital Public History Project Proposal.” However, because there are so many Monday holidays this semester, we’re unable to explore developments in digital history in sufficient depth. Accordingly, you may produce a plan for either an analog or digital public history project. If you would actually like to implement or launch your project, you’re welcome to do so. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)