

HIS9800: PUBLIC HISTORY - THEORY, HISTORY & PRACTICE
HIS9801: PUBLIC HISTORY GROUP PROJECT

****DRAFT****

“The history that lies inert in unread books does no work in the world.”

~Carl Becker, “Everyman His Own Historian”

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Course Description

This seminar course examines history as it is interpreted for and understood by the public including:

- **Public history theory:** Topics and issues such as authenticity, commemoration, ‘imagined communities,’ invention of tradition, ‘usable pasts,’ contested places, colonialism and culture, historical designation and preservation, living history, heritage tourism, cultural legislation, public policy, cultural (mis)representation, oral history, ethics, gender and class, the natural and built environment, intangible heritage, education vs. entertainment, and social memory.
- **The history of public history:** Examination of the establishment of Canadian museums, archives, government agencies and the individuals key to their development.
- **The practice of public history:** Through readings, guest speakers, site visits, workshops and projects, students learn the methods and skills practiced by public historians today.

We meet weekly to discuss assigned readings, hear guest speakers, and participate in workshops. Some classes will be or include meetings with project partners which will not necessarily take place in the classroom. The 3rd hour will mostly be used for our Professional Development series and any additional student-scheduled in-house group project meetings, as needed. Some PD seminars may be slotted on other days when speakers’ schedules conflict with ours or we need more time.

Learning Objectives

At the end of these courses students will have:

- conducted graduate level research in primary and secondary sources;
- a sense of the theory and history of public history;
- an understanding of the main avenues for practicing public history;
- a broad range of the different skills that public historians use;
- an ability to communicate history to the public through a variety of media;
- a familiarity with the major issues public historians face;
- a familiarity with the legislation relevant to public history;
- an ability to examine critically public presentations of history;
- had opportunities to merge theory with hands-on practice;
- had opportunities for reflective, service-based, and experiential learning;
- contacts with practicing public historians.

Readings

Most readings are online, through the library catalogue (**LC**), digital repository (**DR**), or as below. Weldon also has hard copies.

Evaluation

Fall 2013

Participation (class discussion, blogging, PDS) (Individual mark)	30%
City of London Heritage report (Individual mark)	25%
Presentation of (Individual mark)	10%
ARCC exhibit (Group mark)	10%
Ignite Talk	5%
Metras Oral History Project (Group mark)	20%

Winter 2014

Participation (class discussion, blogging, PDS) (Individual mark)	15%
Medical Exhibit	
Research report/annotated bibliography	15%
Draft artifact list/draft design on paper	10%
Draft text panels/potential images for reproduction/revised artifact list/revised design on GoogleSketchup	15%
Draft interpretative plan	15%
Final submission of all elements inc. formal permissions	15%
Budget	5%
WWI Twitter Project	10%

Statement on Academic Ethics and Academic Dishonesty:

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

Due Dates and Late Penalties:

Assignments are due on the listed dates. Penalty for late assignments is 2% each day (including Saturdays and Sundays). Extensions may be granted if legitimate circumstances are presented by the student well in advance of the due date. Poor work planning (eg: "I have XX other work due") is not grounds for an extension. There will be no exceptions unless students provide medical documentation.

Participation

Students are expected to have read and digested the assigned readings before class and participate fully in class seminars. Students must actively participate in all workshops, PD seminars and in group project work that occurs outside of class. Students may also blog about their readings and activities.

Participation Rubric

Participation will be marked weekly and then averaged at the end of each term. You may come and see your weekly marks at any time.

Preparation: Evident preparation for the seminar.

Initiative: Questions asked focus, clarify and summarize discussion.

Response: Quality of response reflects knowledge, comprehension and application of readings.

Discussion: Quality of response extends discussion, and reflects analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

Group Project Meetings (GPM)

Most of the time set aside for group project meetings will be student-run sessions, discussing stages of the project as determined by the students, or conducting group-related research. However, during the first 10-15 minutes of each meeting, groups will provide the instructor with project updates. This is also an opportunity to ask questions or seek advice. Some group project meetings may be, or include, meetings with project partners, and may be outside of the classroom. Groups may also decide to meet at additional times, to be determined by each group and the stage of the project.

Assignments

A. Heritage Designation Project

Don Menard, City Heritage Planner, the London Advisory Committee on Heritage, and the London Branch of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario seek research and documentation on built heritage. LACH will use the information on houses in the Blackfriars/Petersville area for heritage district designation, and the ACO will use research on Old South in their annual heritage home walking tour in early June. An exhibit version of this research will be mounted in ARCC's Schweitzer Gallery in December 2013

B. Oral History Project

In pairs, students will conduct a 1 hour interview with former athletes and alumni from Western for the JP Metras Museum. The Museum will provide us with a list of pre-selected interviewees and the legal paperwork to be completed to conduct and preserve the taped interview and transcript. Deliverables should be ready for the Metras Museum to use.

C. 'Live' Tweeting the First World War

Students will research in the *London Free Press* in order to prepare a year's worth of 'headline' tweets and if warranted, pictures of the full article, illustration or advertisement that can be attached to the tweet. Using HootSuite or a similar program, students will schedule tweets in advance so that while the assignment is due in April, the feed will start automatically on June 28th, 2014. Students will also choose a title and identifying photo/tagline for the twitter feed, and prepare a list of other twitter feeds with military and/or Canadian content that we should follow in order to build an audience.

History 9801 Group Project: Dr. Jones' House: Exhibit at Fanshawe Pioneer Village

Students will curate a late nineteenth/early twentieth-century recreated doctor's office to be installed in a heritage building at Fanshawe Pioneer Village. Extended research will be incorporated into the interpretative plan used by interpreters to expand on the information presented by the exhibit. This exhibit will be based on the archival, book and artifact collection of Dr. William Anson Jones (1867-1949), especially for the time period of 1892-1912 when he practiced in Centralia and later Clandeboye, both in Ontario.

Metcalf Professional Development Series (PDS)

As part of History 9800/01, attendance is **mandatory**, with the exception of the site visits with the Undergraduate History Society. Speakers will generally visit during class in the 3rd hour, but may be scheduled at other times, based on their schedules. Speakers whom are part of the departmental series are scheduled on Thursdays. Site visits and extended workshops generally occur on Fridays in order to allow for more time.

Fall 2013

September 5th: Introduction

Introduction to the syllabus, group projects, the internship, and classmates.

Week 1: What is Public History?

What is 'public' history? Academic, applied, active, and local history? Heritage? Is public history distinct? Is it strictly audience, special tools and skills, or a field of study? Can public history be practiced in the university? Is there a difference between a 'professional,' 'public' or 'local' historian? How do we balance history and heritage, fact and myth, nostalgia and objectivity, education and entertainment, memorabilia and material culture? What is 'authentic'? What is the role of living history? Does commodification of history distort fact? These questions set the stage for our seminars and projects for the rest of the year.

Week 2: History of Public History

How and why did national parks, museums, historical sites and societies develop in Canada? What were (and were not) the important themes and issues explored in these years? What characterized public history in this time period? Who were the public historians? The audience? How do we view these people and institutions today?

Week 3: Designation & Preservation: Built Heritage

We meet with Don Menard, City Heritage Planner, and Sharon Lunau, Architectural Conservancy of Ontario.

Week 3: GPM: Archival Materials Workshop

On Friday, at 10:00am, we are introduced to relevant archival materials for the heritage designation and FPV projects at ARCC.

Week 4: The Public

Who are our public(s)? What do they know, what do they want, and how do we figure it out? How can institutions engage the public? How can Simon's and deGroot's findings be applied to other methods of delivery? We will also assess the results of your surveys, and consider how these relate to our projects.

Week 5: Oral History and Ethics

What does oral history offer the presentation of the past? How does its form affect content? What are the legal and ethical issues which need to be considered? Can there/should there be "shared inquiry"?

Week 6: Oral History Workshop

In our 2nd week on oral history, we compare audio clips to transcripts, and practice interview techniques. In the 3rd hour, we visit the JP Metras Museum.

Week 7: Internships: Preliminary Thoughts

We begin preliminary discussions about internships, possible and past institutions, and how to make initial contacts with your potential host. For this class, students should have given some serious thought about what type of institution (eg: consulting company, government agency, museum, archives etc.) for which they wish to work, and whether or not they wish to intern in a foreign country.

Week 8: Ignite Talks

Each student will present a 5 minute Ignite Talk on a cultural or historical topic of their choice, in order to practice clear and concise communication with the public. Ignite Talks have 15-20 automatically advancing slides which focus on visuals and not text.

Week 9: Dramatizing History

What challenges does a public historian face when turning research into fiction or drama? What characterizes the performance of history? Where is the line between fiction/non-fiction, between documentary/docu-drama? Does the performance of history need to be accurate or authentic? Will the audience notice? Do the subjects of docu-dramas or documentaries have the right to control content? Is the re-enactment of war a commemoration or a trivialization? Can drama enrich more traditional institutions such as museums? How do museums turn ‘visitors’ into an ‘audience’?

Week 10: No Class

Week 11: Heritage Tourism

What is ‘authentic’ in tourism and who decides? What is the ‘tourist gaze’? What is a ‘usable past’ and should we use it? Does commodification and nostalgia distort fact? Is heritage anti-modern? Should topics like spirituality be part of tourist experiences? Does performance of a culture undermine its integrity? How are tourism communities – rather than tourists – affected? Does heritage tourism really produce economic gain?

Week 12: Designation & Preservation: Historic Sites

The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada within Parks Canada says “Canada's program of historical commemoration recognizes nationally significant places, persons and events of Canadian history.” What makes a place, person or event nationally significant? Who decides? Is more than history involved? Using Chatham-Kent and Essex, we will also evaluate historical plaquing, a process conducted by provincial, municipal and federal governments. What types of events, buildings and people have been commemorated or not? Why have these choices been made and not others?

Week 13: History & the Media **Class is 12:30-2:30.

This workshop provides advice on breaking into the world of non-academic publishing. While many of us will never be well-known or well-paid authors, most of us *will* write for the public in some way, whether it be for museum exhibits, blogging or using other social media to increase your institution’s profile, delivering museum educational programs, defending heritage designations, or even just trying to

convince a museum board to accession artifacts. The skills learned in this workshop – assessing audience, gauging level of vocabulary, ‘hooking’ interest, creating a non-academic tone, conveying your point quickly and convincingly – are all applicable to these situations. And of course, the lessons here should be applied to writing our exhibit text.

Winter 2014

Week 1: Material Culture Workshop

An introduction to medical artifacts, to interpreting objects, and best practices in handling objects.

Week 1: GPM

On Friday, we meet Dr. Shanna Dunlop at Fanshawe Pioneer Village to begin our group project.

Week 2: Exhibit Design Workshop

This workshop introduces basic exhibit design principles. We will evaluate several exhibits, according to the readings below and discuss how best to approach our own.

Week 3: Exhibit Design Workshop II

We evaluate exhibit text and discuss how we will approach our own.

Week 4: Living History & Intangible Heritage

Week 5: War, Peace, Human Remains & Commemoration

How do you celebrate an event in which one side was the ‘victor’ and the other the ‘loser’? Are we celebrating war or peace? The living or the dead? Is there a difference between ‘tourists,’ ‘travellers,’ and ‘pilgrims’ to battle sites? Does tourism trivialize war? How does the commemoration of war, death and genocide build a nation? Whose ‘nation’ is it anyway, and who gets marginalized? Is there room for “difficult knowledge” in commemoration? Does the need for commemoration justify myth-making? Why are some human remains respected and others disrespected?

Week 6: Internship Workshop

A more detailed discussion of your individual internship workplan and potential host institutions.

Week 7: Reading Week

Week 8: GPM

Week 9: Environment, Landscape & Sustainability

What can a landscape tell a public historian? How do we balance interpretation with conservation? What values are inherent in conservation and ‘natural’ spaces? How does landscape = identity? How can academics translate environmental history to the public? Is understanding of the past even more important for environmental history? How does environment change affect heritage? Do topics like the

environment turn ‘public history’ into ‘active history’? How do different cultures interpret landscape differently? Can conservation be part of colonialism? Are cities and industries also landscapes?

Week 10: Historical Editing

What is the history of historical editing? How does digital publishing affect such projects? Should projects be comprehensive or selective? Literal or contextual? We also try historical editing ourselves and discuss the issues arising from the process.

Week 11: Representation & Inclusivity

How have concepts of class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and disability shaped museum collections, historic sites and material culture? Why have certain groups been marginalized? How can they be (re)integrated into public history? Can historians tell others’ stories? Why have some groups protested (or not) their portrayal in museum exhibits? What can we learn from past controversies in cultural representation? Is the “indigenization” of the museum a model for other groups?

Week 12: Government, Policy & Litigation

How do the courts and government (mis-)use history? How do the goals of the government and the historian conflict? What are the issues and ethics around being an expert witness? Should historians weigh in on public policy issues?

Week 13: GPM

Week 14: Repatriation & Readdress

Does current cultural property legislation adequately address the legacies of colonial collecting? How does war affect world heritage? Should museums really ‘own’ objects from another culture/country? Are artifacts animate or inanimate? Can history be healing? Is repatriation a loss to society (and which society?) or a way to reinvigorate a culture?