

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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Fall: Tues. 11:30-2:30
Winter: Tues. 11:30-2:30
Office Hours:

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;
- examined 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;
- practiced non-traditional historical skills such as project management, team work, budgeting, and working with community stakeholders;
- had opportunities for reflective, collaborative, service-based, and experiential learning;
- contacts with practicing public historians.

Readings

Almost all readings are online, through the library catalogue (**LC**), digital repository (**DR**), or as below. Weldon has hard copies of most readings. For books to be shared, find a common place to leave them.

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.

Support Services:

As part of a successful graduate student experience at Western, we encourage students to make their health and wellness a priority. Western provides several on campus health-related services to help you achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing your graduate degree. For example, to support physical activity, all students, as part of their registration, receive membership in Western's Campus Recreation Centre. Numerous cultural events are offered throughout the year. Please check out the Faculty of Music web page <http://www.music.uwo.ca/>, and our own McIntosh Gallery <http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca/>. Information regarding health- and wellness-related services available to students may be found at <http://www.health.uwo.ca/>

Students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone they feel comfortable confiding in, such as their faculty supervisor, their program director (graduate chair), or other relevant administrators in their unit. Campus mental health resources may be found at http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/resources.html

To help you learn more about mental health, Western has developed an interactive mental health learning module, found here: http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/module.html. This 30 minute module provides participants with a basic understanding of mental health issues and available campus and community resources. Topics include stress, anxiety, depression, suicide and eating disorders. After completion of the module, participants receive a certificate confirming their participation.

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 will 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 seek research and documentation on built heritage. Each student will research one building, following the city's template to assess under the *Ontario Heritage Act* its: 1. historical or associative value; 2. design or physical value; 3. contextual value. Where applicable, this research should include information on the house's architecture, age, and craftsmanship; its surrounding location, landscape, and contribution to the character of the neighbourhood; any alterations, deletions or additions made; its architects and/or builders and their significance to London; its owners/occupiers from construction until now, and their significance to London; any events or business activities that may have occurred here; associations with organizations, cultural or religious beliefs; local or national trends.

B. Oral History Project

In pairs, students will conduct a 1 hour interview in conjunction with the *Driving Force* project led by the McIntosh Gallery. See http://ssc.uwo.ca/news/2017/public_history_canada_150.html

C. Commemorative History of the Woodland Cemetery

For History 9801, students will research, write and select illustrations for the Woodland Cemetery's commemorative history to be published in 2019. See <http://www.woodlandcemetery.ca/what-makes-us-special/our-history>

Fall Schedule

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: Designation & Preservation: Built Heritage

Week 3: GPM: ARCC Materials Workshop

Week 4: 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 5: Study Break

Week 6: 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 7: 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 discuss how these issues affect our project. **Students can divide reading Kline & Perdue as long as they take good notes and share them, paying attention to issues that affect our project..

Week 8: 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 9: 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”? How has digital technology changed oral history? In our 3rd hour Kevin James of *Ancestors in the Attic* and other historical TV programs joins us.

Week 10: Oral History Workshop

In our 2nd week on oral history, we compare audio clips to transcripts, and practice interview techniques.

Week 11: Ignite Talks

Public historians need to be able to explain clearly and concisely their expertise and their research to potential employers, the public, and in networking situations. This is your “elevator speech.” To

practice these skills, each student will present a 5 minute Ignite Talk on a cultural or historical topic of their choice. Ignite Talks have 15-20 automatically advancing slides (one every 15 seconds) which focus on visuals and not text. Talks of these kind are becoming popular at conferences as well. Students are expected to provide constructive feedback in class for each talk.

Week 12: GPM

Week 13: History & the Media

The class will be devoted to assessing the results of the Prof. Vance's assignments. Prof. Vance will also speak on working with the media and on the historian as public figure.

Week 14: 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? How do these issues affect our projects?

Winter Schedule

Week 1: 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 2: Intangible Heritage

What is tangible/intangible heritage and its implications? How can it be safeguarded? How might museums incorporate it? **First report is due

Week 3: 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 4: GPM

Week 5: 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? Is virtual repatriation really repatriation? **First draft is due

Week 6: Internship Workshop

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

Week 7: Reading Week

Week 8: 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 9: GPM

Week 10: PDS: Grant Writing Workshop

Week 11: Dramatizing History

What challenges do public historians face 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 12: GPM

Week 13: Government, Policy & Litigation

Week 14: 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?