

History 3813E:
PUBLIC HISTORY

2024-2025

Instructor: Professor Mike Dove

Email: mdove2@uwo.ca

Office: Department of History, Lawson Hall 1207

Office Hours: Mondays, 1pm – 3pm, or by appointment



Image: Overlaid London Streetscape © Copyright: W.J. Turkel

This is a **draft** outline. Please see the course site on OWL Brightspace, available during the first week of classes, for a final version.

Course Description

This course provides an overview of public history- applied history, or the many and diverse ways in which history is put to work in the world. The theory and practice of public history will be examined through a variety of sources, including historical novels, websites, apps, television, film, exhibits, artifacts, graphic novels, computer games, guest speakers, and physical sites.

Prerequisite(s):

1.0 course in History at the 2200 level or above; or History 2811F/G and enrolment in the Minor in Public History.

Course Syllabus

Students in this course will be acquainted with the wide range of history-related professional opportunities available outside of academia, namely: archives and records management, film and documentary production, museums, parks, historic sites, heritage conservation, heritage tourism, digital history, oral history, genealogy, and historical research consulting. Students will meet practitioners in the field and experience several public history-related sites.

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By the conclusion of this course, students should have:

- a sense of the origin, growth, and theory of public history;
- an understanding of the primary avenues for practicing public history;
- an awareness of the main issues and challenges faced by public historians;
- a familiarity with the variety of tools used by public historians, including digital media, oral history and documentary filmmaking techniques;
- first-hand experience working with material culture objects;
- an ability to examine and critically assess various forms of historical media;
- the capability of delivering a short presentation of their work to their peers;
- the experience of working in small groups on a public history community project;
- made contacts with public history professionals and institutions;
- experienced in-person several local public history-related sites;
- and a clearer sense of the diversity of career options open to them.

There is one textbook for the course, freely available to be read online through Western Libraries (student login and password required): Thomas Cauvin, *Public History: A Textbook of Practice*. Second Edition. (Taylor & Francis, 2022).

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/west/detail.action?docID=6940543&pq-origsite=primo>

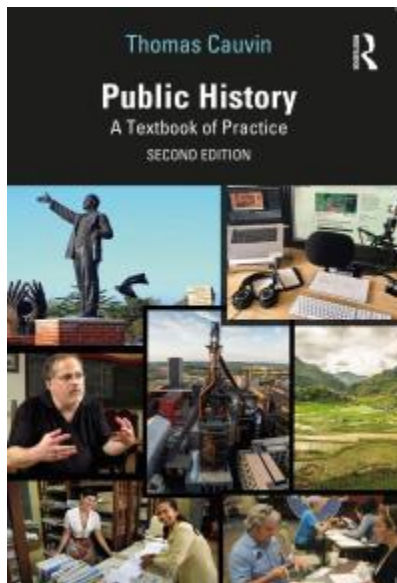


Image: Thomas Cauvin, *Public History: A Textbook of Practice* (Taylor & Francis, 2016).

Additional readings, consisting of book chapters, articles, and videos, are accessible through the course website on OWL Brightspace, as noted in the final version of the course syllabus.

Methods of Evaluation

Class Participation	25%
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‘Me in 3’ Exhibit	10%
Comparative Site Review	20%
Small Group Project	45%

Students must complete all assignments in order to pass this course. Students are expected to attend all classes, including site visits, complete weekly readings, and participate in discussions.

Because public interaction is a key element to practicing public history, scheduled weekly classes will often take the form of a combined lecture-seminar format. **Participation** in discussions is essential to having a quality learning experience. Students are expected to regularly contribute informed and thoughtful opinions on assigned readings. To better prepare students for each discussion, several questions relating to the readings will be posted on the course website. Students are expected to be attentive, make comments, and ask questions, especially during guest lectures and student presentations. Students are also invited to share their personal stories and news of any recent events that relate to a particular week’s topic. To help students better gauge their performance, a participation update and suggestions for improvement will be given at the mid-point of the year prior to returning to classes in January. Participation is valued at 25% of the final course grade.

The **‘Me in 3’ Exhibit** assignment is designed to provide students with the opportunity to tell their own story by curating an exhibit about their own lives. Each student will tell their own story in three minutes using three objects of their choosing. Presentations will take place during class scheduled for Monday, 21 October 2024. If a student must be absent on the day of presentation, they will present in the next available class. More information will be provided through the OWL course website. The ‘Me in 3’ Exhibit is weighted at 10% of the final course grade.

Students will submit a written **Comparative Site Review** on their experiences at the following two sites the class makes during the fall term: Eldon House and the Museum of Ontario Archaeology. The review will be limited to 1500 words and should incorporate material from the relevant course lectures and readings. All submissions should be made to Drop Box via the OWL course website by 11:59pm EST on Monday, 25 November 2024. Late submissions of this written assignment will be penalized 5% the first day, and 2% each day thereafter, including holidays and weekends. More information about this assignment will be provided on the course website. The Review is worth 20% of the final course grade.

Community collaboration and working in groups are important features in public history work, and these skills are particularly valued by employers and admissions committees for graduate and professional programs. The **Small Group Project** is designed to provide students with such prized skills and experiences. Groups of 3-4 members will develop a public history project during the Winter term. All projects will include a group contract and initial proposal, a 30-minute class presentation, and a final written report. Proposed projects may take several forms, for example the creation of a short documentary film, a museum exhibit, an oral history project,

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a historical walking tour, or a heritage website. Although this project is designed to give students practical experience in the field, students are not meant to complete the entire project. It should be kept in mind, however, that student projects may be of interest to those in the public history community and may lead to future collaboration. Students are therefore encouraged to consult with individuals and/or institutions whose work is particularly relevant to their group projects.

The group contract and initial proposal is due by 11:59pm EST on 27 January; the 30-minute presentation of the project to the class will be scheduled on one of the designated class dates in March; and a final written report of 10-12 pages is due by 11:59pm EST on the final day of the term, ie. 04 April 2025. This assignment counts towards 45% of the final course grade (5% - proposal; 20% - presentation; 20% - final report). We will devote our first class back in January to a discussion of the importance of group-work in the public history workplace, when we will focus on group-building techniques and developing effective presentation skills. Class scheduled for 10 March will be set aside for students to work in their groups. More information about the small group project will be provided on the course website. Any accommodation for this assignment will require supporting documentation from each group member.

Course Schedule and Readings

This course will be partially taught through the course website on OWL Brightspace. It contains all readings except the textbook and is where students can access the syllabus, view the course calendar, announcements, and their grades, and submit their written assignments. I hope this will be an enjoyable experience for you. Please let me know as soon as possible if you are encountering issues or have concerns and we will work towards finding a solution. See you soon!



Images: Dunkirk film poster; Assassin's Creed video game; Indigenous protests; Alma College ruins; family history mementos; Maus graphic novel

FALL 2024

SEPTEMBER

09 - Welcome & Introductions: Defining 'Public History' and 'the public(s)'

Readings: Cauvin textbook, TBA
TBA

16 - Museums & Historic Sites

Readings: Cauvin textbook, TBA
TBA

23 - 'Reading Objects': Material Culture Workshop/

SITE VISIT: WESTERN'S MEDICAL ARTIFACT COLLECTION!

Readings: TBA

30 – NO CLASS: NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

OCTOBER

07 – **SITE VISIT: MUSEUM OF ONTARIO ARCHAEOLOGY!**

14 - NO CLASS: FALL STUDY BREAK!

21 - 'Me in 3' Exhibit Presentations!

28 - **SITE VISIT: ELDON HOUSE!**

NOVEMBER

04 - Storytelling: Family & Community

Readings: Cauvin textbook, TBA
TBA

11 - Heritage Conservation

Readings: Cauvin textbook, TBA
TBA

18 - Popular History: Comics, Games, & Novels

Readings: Cauvin textbook, TBA
TBA

25 - Popular History: Television & Film/ DUE: Comparative Site Review!

Readings: Cauvin textbook, TBA
TBA

DECEMBER

02 – Digital Public History

Readings: TBA

WINTER 2025

JANUARY

06 - Careers in Public History/ Group Work & The Small Group Project

Readings: TBA

13 - Archives and Archival Management

Readings: Cauvin textbook, TBA
TBA20 - **SITE VISIT: WESTERN ARCHIVES!**27 – **Documentary Film Workshop I!** DUE: Group Contract & Project Proposal!Readings: Cauvin textbook, TBA
TBA

FEBRUARY

03 – Documentary Film II

10 - Historical Research Consulting/ **GUEST SPEAKER: SEAN STOYLES, CDCI, OTTAWA!**Readings: Cauvin textbook, pp. 250-266.
TBA**17 - NO CLASS: WINTER STUDY BREAK!**

24 - The Business of History, Part I: Corporate Uses of the Past

Readings: TBA

MARCH

03 - The Business of History, Part II: Heritage Tourism

Readings: Cauvin textbook, TBA
TBA

10 – Small Group Project Presentation Preparation - Group Meetings!

17 – Small Group Project Presentations!

24 – Small Group Project Presentations!

31 – Small Group Project Presentations!

NOTE: Small Group Project Final Reports are due on 04 April!

Additional Statements

Only the academic counselling office of a student's home faculty can approve a request for academic accommodation.

The use of generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT, is permitted in this course for activities such as brainstorming and refining your ideas, drafting an outline to organize your thoughts, or checking grammar and style. Any use of such tools should be clearly acknowledged and explained. If in doubt, please ask the course instructor for clarification.

NOTE:

Please review the Department of History's shared policies and statements for all undergraduate courses at: https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html for important information regarding accessibility options, make-up exams, medical accommodations, health and wellness, academic integrity, plagiarism, and more.