

HIS 366/ 666 Introduction to Public History I: Contexts and Current Debates

Instructor: Kathleen Franz

Office: 141 Battelle

Room: SIS 205

Office Hours: Th. 10-1 and by appt.
8:00PM

Course Hours: Th. 5:30-

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Course Description:

This class is the first of a two-course series introducing students to ideas, debates and best practices in the field of public history. Public history is a term that defines a constellation of historical work outside of the academy, but most often refers to historians who work in institutions such as museums, preservation offices, and cultural resource agencies. It can also be used to describe popular history or the various ways the public constructs and maintains ideas about the past. In order to focus the course and provide professional training for students, this class will use such cultural institutions as a point of departure for our examination of public history. The course will introduce students to the historical origins of public history in the United States, to current ideas about community collaboration and working with the public, and to current debates inspired by the culture wars and the relationship between historians, communities, and cultural memory. Class readings and assignments will help students define their own career goals by building an intellectual understanding of the field and practical knowledge about the workings of cultural institutions that employ historians.

Learning Goals:

- Understand the principle areas of work among public historians.
- Become familiar with key intellectual debates in the field of public history.
- Learn the history of public institutions and understand that the representation of the past has often been the site of both community collaboration as well as cultural and political struggle in the United States.
- Understand that interpreting the past is closely tied to the social construction of identity and cultural memory.

Required Books:

James B. Gardner and Peter S. LaPaglia, *Public History: Essays from the Field* (Krieger Publishing, 1999).

David Glassberg, *Sense of History: The Place of the Past in American Life* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2001).

Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past* (Columbia University Press 1998).

Steven Conn, *Museums and American Intellectual Life, 1876-1926* (University of Chicago Press, 1999).

Patricia West, *Domesticating History: The Political Origins of America's House Museums* (Smithsonian Institution Press, 1999).

Max Page, ed., *Giving Preservation a History: Histories of Historic Preservation in the United States* (Routledge, 2003).

Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History*
(MIT Press 1997).

Thomas King, *Thinking about Cultural Resource Management: Essays from the
Edge* (Alta Mira Press, 2002).

Steven Dubin, *Displays of Power: Memory and Amnesia in the American
Museum*. (New York University Press, 1999).

Edward Linenthal and Tom Englehardt, eds., *History Wars: The Enola Gay and
Other Battles for the American Past* (Smithsonian).

Assignments and Evaluation:

Undergraduates

Class Participation 20%

Includes attendance, doing all the reading and coming to class with comments and questions. Since this is a seminar attendance is essential to the success of the class. Missing more than two classes will lower the final grade by 10% or one letter grade.

Reading Journal 20%

The reading journal will consist of a one-page response to each week's readings. The journal entries will be due weekly at the end of each class.

Three Short Papers 60% (20% each, 5-6 pages in length)

Papers will include two site or exhibit reviews (your choice) and one interview. Guidelines will be handed out in class.

Graduates

Class Participation 25 %

-Includes attendance, coming prepared to class, and leading one class discussion.

-Leading class discussion for first hour of seminar. Find something (an image, object, additional reading) with which to focus class and get the discussion started. Secondly, prepare 4-5 questions that will help us examine the main ideas in the reading. Graduate students must email questions and ideas for class discussion to professor one week in advance and meet with her prior to class.

One Review Paper 25 % (5-6 pages in length)

Choose either a site review or an interview.

Scholarly Essay and Final Presentation 50% (12-15 pages)

Guidelines to be handed out in class. This essay should be a more in-depth exploration of one of the topics under discussion in the class and something that will be of interest to you and focus your career goals. Students should meet with professor to define a topic.

Course Schedule:

September 1 Explanation of Course Syllabus and Introductions

What is public history?

Michael J. Devine, "Education of a Public Historian: Thoughts on Public History and Professional Wrestling," *Public Historian* 22:4 (Fall 2000): 10-18.

September 8 Overview of Public History Careers

James B. Gardner and Peter S. LaPaglia, *Public History: Essays from the Field* (Krieger Publishing, 1999).

*Jesse Stiller, "Federal History Programs: Ensuring the Future," *Public Historian* 21:3 (Summer 1999): 83-89.

*James Gardner, "Serving in the Trenches: David F. Trask, Public Historian and Federal Historian. *Public Historian* 22:2 (Spring 2000), 8-28.

(Optional)

*Talk by Bruce Craig, National Coalition for History, www.h-net.org/~nch/

--> Short assignment: Career Goals due.

The Past and Public Memory

September 15

David Glassberg, *Sense of History: The Place of the Past in American Life* (U of Mass. Press, 2001).

Presenters: _____

September 22

Roy Rosenzweig and Thelan, *The Presence of the Past* (Columbia University Press, 1998).

James Horton, "Presenting Slavery: The Perils of Telling America's Racial Story," *The Public Historian*, 2:4 (Fall 1999): 19-38. (On E-Reserves).

Presenters: _____

→ UGrads: Paper 1 Due

→ Grads: Short Paper Due

Institutional Histories

September 29

Steven Conn, *Museums and American Intellectual Life, 1876-1926* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

Presenters: _____

→ Grads: Research Proposal Due

*Gary Kulick, "Designing the Past: History-Museum Exhibitions from Peale to the Present," in Leon and Rosenzweig, *History Museums in the United States: A Critical Assessment*, (1989). E-Reserves.

October 6

Patricia West, *Domesticating History: The Political Origins of America's House Museums* (Smithsonian Institution Press, 1999).

Presenters: _____

Collecting and Preserving

October 13

Max Page, ed., *Giving Preservation a History: Histories of Historic Preservation in the United States* (Routledge, 2003).

Presenters: _____

*Field Trip to Lincoln Cottage. Tour with Angela Brown. Meet at Lincoln Cottage at 4:00PM.

October 20

*Susan M. Pearce, "Collecting: Shaping the World," in Crane, Museums, Objects, & Collections: A Cultural Study (Smithsonian 1992): 68-88.

Visit the Legacies Website: www.smithsonianlegacies.si.edu

** Field Trip to the Smithsonian History Office and Tour by Historian Pam Henson. Meet at Arts and Industries Building on the Mall at 4:30PM.

→ UGrads: Paper Two Due

→ Grads: Bibliography and Research Report Due

Community Collaboration**October 27**

Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (MIT Press 1997).

Presenters: _____Tierra and Sarah_____

Dismiss students at 7:15 for Mandatory Comps Meeting at 7:30PM

November 3 - Reading/Research Day - No Class**Cultural Resources: Perspectives from Archeology****November 10**

Thomas King, *Thinking about Cultural Resource Management: Essays from the Edge* (Alta Mira Press, 2002).

*Guest Speaker: Dr. Joe Dent, Anthropology, American University

Culture Wars**November 17 (students choose 1 book)**

Edward Linenthal and Tom Englehardt, eds., *History Wars: The Enola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past*.

November 24 Thanksgiving Holiday

The Promise of Cultural Institutions

December 1 -- Course Conclusion

- Selected readings from David Carr, *The Promise of Cultural Institutions*. (On E-Reserves)

→ UGrads: Final Paper Due

December 8 Graduate Student Presentations