

History 705/415: Introduction to Public History
Committing History in Public
Wednesdays, 6:00 to 8:30
Spring 2015

Instructor: Dr. Denise D. Meringolo
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Office Hours:

Walk-ins welcome on a first come, first served basis with **no** appointment necessary on: Mondays from 11:00 to 12:30 and Wednesdays from 3:00 to 5:00

Please contact me by email to make an appointment if you need to see me on another day and/or at another time.

Course Learning Objectives:

1. Explore emergence of public history as a profession
2. Provide a forum for expanding our understanding of historical professionalism
3. Analyze and discuss the relationships and responsibilities that compose public history
4. Provide practical experience in collaborative learning, and professional networking, both of which are essential skills for public history practice
5. Develop a history-based product for public consumption
6. Explore scholarship that composes public history as a field of intellectual inquiry

Required Texts:

Bill Adair, Benjamin Filene, and Laura Koloski *Letting Go? Sharing Authority in a User Generated World* (Philadelphia: Pew Center, 2011) 0983480303

Andrea Burns *From Storefront to Monument: Tracing the Public History of the Black Museum Movement* (University of Massachusetts, 2013)

Andrew Hurley, *Beyond Preservation: Using Public History to Revitalize Inner Cities* (Temple University Press, 2010) 1439902291

Ari Kelman *A Misplaced Massacre: Struggling over the Memory of Sand Creek* (Harvard, 2013) ISBN-10: 0674045858

Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen *The Presence of the Past* (Columbia University Press, 2000)

Jesse Swigger *History is Bunk: Assembling the Past at Henry Ford's Greenfield Village* (University of Massachusetts, 2014)

Freeman Tilden *Interpreting Our Heritage* 4th Edition, 50th Anniversary (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press) 2007 0807858676

Amy M. Tyson *The Wages of History: Emotional Labor on Public History's Front Lines* (University of Massachusetts, 2013) 978-1-62534-024-5

Other Readings in Blackboard as Assigned

Course Description

This course provides an introduction to the professional and intellectual field of public history. Believe it or not, there is more than one definition of public history. This is mine:

Public History is a form of public service. Public historians help create historical understanding by sharing authority and inquiry with a variety of partners: audiences, museum professionals, preservationists, business leaders and others. Public historians are trained, first and foremost, as historians—to conduct research, to craft interpretations and to write well. However, public historians must also be prepared to work collaboratively with partners for whom an understanding of history can have immediate practical implications. Public historians produce original interpretations that build bridges between scholarship and everyday life by respecting the ways in which their partners and audiences use history, and by balancing professional authority against community needs.

This course will give you the tools you need to define public history for yourself and to begin to chart your own professional path. We will read a selection of recent and classic scholarship and engage in weekly discussions that fall roughly into four units: (1) The history of the field (2) The role and expectations of the public and best practices for communicating in the public sector; (3) Varieties of professional practice, and; (4) the current state of the field.

During our classroom meetings, we will engage in discussion about the week's readings. In general, I will not lecture. I will typically begin each class by pointing to what I see as the key ethical and professional themes in the weeks' readings. The syllabus also provides you with some questions to guide your reading. You will each take turns shaping and leading classroom discussion, and you will prepare by actively blogging about the course readings.

In addition to classroom work (and in lieu of a more traditional research paper), you will also participate in a semester-long service learning project. This project requires you to put your skills as researchers, writers, and analysts to work in service of an external partner and enables you to find a balance between theory and practice. This project is essential because it makes our discussions more concrete and enables you to bring important and specific questions to our classroom experience.

This semester we will work with two partner institutions.

Our primary partner is [Baltimore Heritage](#). Founded in 1960, Baltimore Heritage is a nonprofit historic and architectural preservation organization. With two staff members, 33 volunteer board members, and a host of volunteers, the organization works to preserve and promote Baltimore's historic buildings and neighborhoods.

Through our working relationship with Baltimore Heritage, we will be building content for a smart phone app – [Explore Baltimore Heritage](#)—on behalf of the UMBC Special Collections. In 2016, UMBC will celebrate its 50th Anniversary as an Institution of Higher Learning. By examining the history of UMBC and preparing public history content about its past, we will encourage students, faculty, administrators, and neighbors to reflect on the impact, value, and meaning. This project is also inherently political. State budgets are shrinking, enrollments are down, and Universities are under pressure to demonstrate their value and impact. You will need to think about how this project might benefit our partners.

What else should I think about?

First: The course schedule is intense, and the service learning project will be due in phases. It is crucial that you make plans **now** to meet each deadline. Because the project is collaborative, your classmates' success depends on your full participation and engagement. I will **not** assign a final grade of "incomplete," except in the most extreme and well-documented circumstances.

Second: This course will **not** teach historical research methods—as young historians, you are already trained or already receiving training in research, historiography, and traditional historical writing. Rather, this course will challenge you to think about the professional ramifications and ethical considerations created when historical research, writing and interpretation are done in a profoundly collaborative environment.

Third: this is a graduate level course with a small section for upper level undergraduate students who are considering graduate school, interested in building a professional portfolio, or looking for an advanced challenge. Students registered for HIST 415 will be required to hand in fewer total pages of writing. They will also be asked to address slightly different questions in their reading blog. However, they are expected to keep up with assignments, and participate fully in the collaborative project, the blog, and classroom discussion.

Is Dr. Meringolo an evil, evil task master?

As you might guess, putting this syllabus together is fairly complicated. As the course evolves, the assignments may evolve as well. Fortunately, I do not only teach collaborative, reflexive learning, I practice it, too. There will be opportunities along the way for us to decide—as a class—to modify the syllabus or shift the due dates in response to collective needs and real-world experiences.

Thus, I reserve the right to change requirements, the weight of each grade, and the schedule in response as we deem necessary.

Stuff the University requires professors to include in the syllabus

GEP Information

This course has NOT been approved to meet any of the requirements of the undergraduate General Education Program.

However, History 415 counts as an elective toward the undergraduate minor in Public History.

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty is a serious matter at UMBC. We expect the absolute highest standards from students and faculty in their pursuit of new knowledge through academic coursework. By enrolling in this course, you assume the responsibilities of an active participant in the UMBC scholarly community. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism and helping others to commit these acts are all forms of academic dishonesty, and they are wrong. Academic misconduct could result in disciplinary action that may include but is not limited to suspension or dismissal. The complete Student Academic Conduct Policy is available through the Provost's website:

http://www.umbc.edu/provost/integrity/acc_policy/

How will I be Graded?

A. Regular Attendance

This is a collaborative, seminar style course. Your experience as a learner will depend on your participation in discussion, your ability to work well in a small group, and your full engagement with the readings and the project. It is imperative that you attend class regularly, keep up with work, and participate actively. *Unexcused* absences, chronic lateness or obvious inattention **will** adversely affect your grade and may jeopardize your ability to pass this course.

B. Reading Response Blog and Class Discussion Leadership (15% of final course grade):

Each student is required to craft **two** posts on your blog over the course of the semester. You will sign up for your turn on the first day of class. If, for some reason, you do not sign up on the first day of class, it is YOUR responsibility to contact me and do so. Posts are due NO LATER THAN 48 hours before the class session --by 6:00 on Mondays.

The deadline is important because I will edit and post your blogs on the class blog – www.committinghistoryinpublic.org-- by 6:00 on Tuesdays. Every member of the class must read the blog postings NO LATER THAN two hours prior to class. Based on what you read, bring your comments, questions, and reflections with you to class so you can engage your classmates in a conversation

C. Two Part, Semester-Long Group Project (70% of final course grade):

During the first portion of the semester, you will work in small groups, conducting significant, thematically driven research that will contextualize specific properties in Druid Hill Park.

During the second portion of the semester you will work more or less individually. Using your group project as your foundation, you will craft content –both visual and textual-- for Explore Baltimore Heritage.

Due dates and project components are as follows

- 1) Part One: Group Research on Relevant Historical Context (40% of Project Grade)
 - a) Preliminary Research Description and Group Plan. Due by midnight on Monday, February 23. (25% of part one grade)
 - b) Group Research Report and Annotated Bibliography (75% of part one grade). Due by midnight, Monday, April 13.
- 2) Part Two: Individual Project, Content for the App (40% of Project Grade)
 - a) Blog Rough Draft of Your Content. Due by midnight on Sunday April 26
Your posts will be open for comment by our class partners. (20% of part two grade)
 - b) Oral Presentations to Baltimore Heritage and Others (30% of part two grade), May 6
 - c) Completed Project (50% of part two grade), due by midnight on Monday, May 18

D. Final Reflective Blog (15% of course grade)

Each student must post one, final, reflective blog. This assignment allows you an opportunity to reflect on the value of the group project and your overall course experience. Due by midnight on Monday, May 11

Class Schedule, History 705/495: Introduction to Public History

COURSE INTRODUCTION			
By This Date	Read This	Think about This	Be Prepared :
January 28	<p>Course Syllabus</p> <p>Article (Blackboard) "A Shared Inquiry into Shared Inquiry"</p> <p>Article "Public History as Reflective Practice" (Blackboard)</p> <p>Prologue (Blackboard) from Meringolo <i>Museums, Monuments and National Parks</i></p> <p>Explore www.ncph.org, make sure to read NCPH Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, accessible under "About the Council" AND Best Practices for Public History Training, accessible under "Teaching and Learning Public History," the link is under "Graduate Student Education"</p>	<p>What do I want or expect from this class?</p> <p>What can I do to make sure the work is manageable and the group project is successful?</p> <p>How does this syllabus reflect Dr. Meringolo's particular philosophy?</p> <p>How does this syllabus reflect Best Practices for Graduate Student Education?</p> <p>Do my ideas about education, ethics, or public history differ from those presented in this course?</p> <p>How can I contribute my perspective in a productive manner?</p>	<p>General intro and discussion.</p> <p>Getting started on the semester long project.</p>
UNIT ONE: HISTORY AND WORK IN THE FIELD			
February 4	<p>Jesse Swigger: <i>History is Bunk</i></p> <p>Explore the website for Greenfield Village http://www.thehenryford.org/village/index.aspx</p>	<p>What seems important about the origins of Greenfield Village for the museum itself?</p> <p>What ideas and interactions shaped the museum's historical collections and presentations?</p> <p>How and why did the museum change over time?</p> <p>What problems did it face over time?</p> <p>What ideas from this book seem most important or most interesting for helping you come to a new understanding public history?</p>	<p>Think about the messages conveyed by Greenfield Village in the context of the Detroit economy.</p> <p>What is the relationship between local and national in public history?</p> <p>Realize this is an ethical question.</p>
February 11	<p>Andrea Burns <i>From Storefront to Monument</i></p> <p>Explore the websites for the Reginald F. Lewis Museum http://www.rflewisemuseum.org/ and the Banneker Douglass Museum http://bdmuseum.maryland.gov/</p>	<p>How does the history of African American Museums differ from that of Greenfield Village?</p> <p>What ideas and interactions shaped their development and evolution over time?</p> <p>What problems have they faced over time?</p> <p>What ideas from this book seem most important or most compelling for helping you come to some new understanding of public history?</p>	<p>Examine the Lewis and Banneker Douglass Museums in light of Burns book.</p> <p>Talk about the social and political role of institutions.</p>

<u>By This Date</u>	<u>Read This</u>	<u>Think about This</u>	<u>Be Prepared For:</u>
February 18	Andrew Hurley, <i>Beyond Preservation</i> Explore the website, Place Matters, http://www.placematters.net/ Explore the website for the Maryland Association of Historic District Commissions: www.mahdc.org	What are some of the problems associated with the history of preservation in American society and culture? What is the role of public history in the field of preservation? What is the value of preservation? What role do public history and preservation play for living communities? How does this book impact your ideas about our project and its goals?	Problem solve: Can preservation be less exclusive?
February 25	Read/Skim Barry Mackintosh, <i>The National Parks: Shaping the System</i> , available online here: http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/shaping/index.htm ALSO read in Blackboard: Alicia Barber on Scotts Bluff Justin Reich on Shenandoah Park Neil Mahar on the CCC	Thinking about these readings as a whole, what was being “shaped” as the National Park Service was “shaping a system?” What is the value of National Parks? What kinds of disconnects and conflicts seem to become institutionalized as parks develop over time? What and how do Park landscapes mean?	Briefly share a bit of your strategy for group research. Take and give advice
March 4	Ari Kelman, <i>Misplaced Massacre</i> Explore the website for Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site: http://www.nps.gov/sand/index.htm And Ari Kelman’s Blog: http://arikelman.org/blog/	What are the conditions of public history practice in the National Park Service? What does this book suggest to you about the role of public historians on contested landscapes? This book documents the process of collaborative interpretation and shared authority. How and when and why was it effective? How and when and why was it less than effective? Who are the various public historians in this narrative and what role did they play? Is the story of the massacre told “correctly?”	Problem solve: How can and should public historians tell difficult stories?
March 11	Amy Tyson, <i>Wages of History</i> WATCH some of these: http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHPZR1IUMS47BAN2Ihrtlg	This book will help you consider public history as work –as labor. What are the “wages” Tyson talks about? Is Living History a valuable educational tool? Who is in control?	Problem solve: Acting is about “reacting” but is there an educational exchange in living history interactions?
March 18	NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK		

UNIT TWO: PUBLIC HISTORY WITH AND FOR PEOPLE			
By This Date	Read This	Think about This	Be Prepared For:
March 25	Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, <i>The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life</i> (New York: Columbia University Press) 2000	What did Rosenzweig and Thelen learn about what people want when they turn to the past? What does this book suggest about how we should consider audiences and expertise when we produce public history content? Is there such a thing as “BAD” public history?	Problem solve: Developing content for the app removes us from audiences. How might we “plug in?”
April 1	Read Selections from Adair, Filene, Koloski, <i>Letting Go?</i>	How does this book challenge your sense of expertise and authority? What do these readings suggest about how people –audiences and stakeholders— interact with public history in various settings? What do these readings suggest about how people learn in various public history contexts? How do you measure whether or not you have “done a good job?”	Problem solve: Think about the app. Where can we “let go?” What will that mean for content building?
April 8	Freeman Tilden, <i>Interpreting Our Heritage</i> Selections from Veverka on Interpretation Selections from Beverly Serrell on Exhibit Labels Article by Sharon Leon about Writing for Digital History	It may be difficult, but take seriously Tilden’s principles of interpretation. Think about how they might apply to your project. See if you can identify additional principles in part II of the book. Make connections to the other readings.	Problems solve: Using readings as a tool, can you begin to develop an interpretive strategy for your project
April 15	NO CLASS: NCPH ANNUAL MEETING	You can follow live tweeting of the conference using #NCPH2015 My twitter handle is @ddmeringolo	
April 22	Explore the web page for the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience: http://www.sitesofconscience.org/ Under “Members,” Click on “Resources” and read <i>Memorialization and Democracy: State Policy and Civic Action</i> and the excerpt from <i>Memorialization after Conflict</i>	Do this site and its resources suggest that there is a common set of problems in public history that transcend national or cultural difference? Do this site and its resources suggest that there are problems in public history that are unique and specific to particular nations or cultures? How does exploring public history in a global context impact your understanding of the field?	Problem solve: Are there sites in Baltimore or in your home town that should be part of a global initiative like Sites of

		How does this site and its resources help you think about –or re-frame for you-- the politics of memory?	Conscience?
April 29	Read “Imperiled Promise,” “A Call to Action” and explore the website and mission of Smithsonian Consortium on Understanding the American Experience	<p>These documents represent an ongoing conversation among scholarly historians, public historians in the academy, and public historians in the field.</p> <p>Do these documents identify a common set of goals or issues?</p> <p>Do these documents have points of conflict or contradiction?</p> <p>What are the concerns they seek to identify and address?</p> <p>Is it clear how these concerns will and/or should be addressed?</p> <p>How?</p>	<p>Problem Solve:</p> <p>What is the role of the NPS and the SI in the 21st century?</p>
May 6	NO ASSIGNED READING		Oral Presentation to Baltimore Heritage and Special Collections Folks
Monday, May 11	Final Reflective Blog Post on the Class Blog		
Monday, May 18	Complete Final Project Packages I will submit these –with my comments, but not your grade—to Baltimore Heritage and Friends of Druid Hill Park		