HISTORY 659: INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC HISTORY
HERTER HALL rm 546 – WEDNESDAYS 2:30 – 5:00 PM

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:
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OVERVIEW:

The purpose of this course is to introduce you to the world of public history – both the ideas and questions that make it tick, and the practical, on-the-ground concerns that confront public historians in a variety of professional settings. The course will turn on five key concept areas that inform the world of public history: History and Memory; Shared Authority and/or Inquiry; Agendas and Audiences; Legal and Ethical Frameworks; and Economics and Entrepreneurship. By the end of the semester, you will have read some of the most significant past and contemporary literature in the field of public history, and, through discussions in and beyond the classroom, have formed your own understanding of what constitutes public history. Through our shared readings, forays into the community, conversations with guest speakers, and through your own public history fieldwork, you will also have a clearer idea of what it means to work in a variety of public history settings in terms of both theory and practice.

EXPECTATIONS:

To succeed in this class you will need to keep up with the reading, participate actively in class discussions, and complete your extended project. If at any time you are having difficulties with the material or the assignments, or just need to talk, please do not hesitate to come see me during office hours or make an appointment for another time to meet.

Attendance: I expect you to be here. You will do yourself a great disservice by not attending class – you will miss material and interpretations from that day’s presentation as well as the opportunity to ask questions and otherwise interact with your classmates – an important part of the learning process. There are occasionally good reasons to miss class (religious holidays, medical mishaps, family emergencies); if you miss something, please contact me to make arrangements.

• Three absences: the highest grade you may receive is a B
• Four absences: the highest grade you may receive is a C
• Five absences: the highest grade you may receive is a D
• Six absences: you will automatically receive an F

Course Requirements:

Formal requirements include: 1) attendance at all seminar discussions and field trips, guided and self-guided; if you must miss something, make arrangements with me in advance; 2) weekly writing assignments (typically ca 2-3 pp); 3) participation in one major project, executed in teams, exploring some facet of public history in more depth (see below); 4) a ca. 8-10 page paper reflecting on the topic chosen; 5) leading class discussion (in pairs) at least twice during the semester.

Though this course explores the work historians do out in the world, it is itself of course a seminar, and the essence of a seminar is discussion; each week, we will meet to discuss, among ourselves and with others, issues and subjects of current concern to the Public History community. It is essential that you come to class prepared to contribute to those conversations, having read the material at hand and having given it some thought as well. I take the idea of contribution very seriously; it is the obligation of each student to guide our shared conversation toward the subjects he or she thinks most important for the course to cover.
Plagiarism and Academic Honesty:

**What is Plagiarism?** According to the UMASS Academic Regulations (2008-2009) Plagiarism is defined as “knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one’s own work in any academic exercise. This includes submitting without citation, in whole or in part, prewritten term papers of another or the research of another, including but not limited to commercial vendors who sell or distribute such materials.” For more info please see page 7 of the regulations at http://www.umass.edu/registrar/media/academicregs.pdf.

**Honesty:** You many not engage in any form of academic dishonesty. This includes, but is not limited to, cheating on exams, helping another person cheat, or plagiarizing on written assignments. This also includes fabricating excuses for absences from class and signing in for another student. If you are caught cheating at any point during the semester, you will fail the entire course and I report you to the Academic Honesty Board.

Writing Center:

The university offers a special resource for students who want some additional assistance with writing and research. The Writing Center is located in the northwest corner of the W.E.B. DuBois Library’s Learning Commons. For more information, please visit the WC Website: http://www.umass.edu/writingcenter. The web site also offers information about the Center, such as current hours of operation and what to bring with you for your first consultation.

Semester-Long Projects:

This course, for practicality’s sake, by and large emphasizes “theory” apart from “practice.” In reality, however, the concepts and ideas that we call theory should never be divorced from practice, and vice versa. To give you an opportunity to consider how theory and practice operate together in the world, you will complete a semester-long field service project that serves the local public history community, reflecting all the while – and, more formally, in a short paper at the course’s conclusion – on how the readings we consider during the semester inform and are informed by everyday experiences in the field of Public History.

There are a variety of projects to be completed over the course of the semester: you will be assigned to one of these, and will complete the project as a member of a team. The work is structured this way because a) in most professions, you do not (as in academia) get to follow your own curiosities, but rather must cultivate your curiosity about projects your institution has deemed desirable, and b) in most professions—much unlike academia—people work collaboratively (and for the most part do not self-select the projects they complete, also unlike academia). While this project will give you practical experience and tangible skills in a project that serves a local institution, it will also help you practice the specific skills necessary to work as one member of a well-functioning group. Early on, I will ask each of you to rank your preferences, but I will make the ultimate assignments. Your responsibility will be to complete the project to the best of your abilities, producing those products required by the respective initiative. You will also be required to turn in, at the project’s conclusion, a 8-10 page essay reflecting on the project itself, and how the insights and lessons you learned completing it relate to those issues that we’ve discussed in the classroom. Toward that end, I strongly encourage you to keep some sort of journal or log, reflecting on the readings as you tackle them. Though I won’t require these to be submitted at the semester’s conclusion, such a journal would also help prepare you for our weekly discussion.

**ALSO NOTE:** In order to present your work and polish your presentation skills, groups will present their findings in a conference-style event held on the last day of our class. The conference will be open to the department and invited guests on the afternoon of **Wednesday December 11th** from 2-5pm. (You **must** clear your schedule for this day: block it off NOW, and make arrangements for any competing responsibilities that afternoon). Each team will make a 30-minute presentation, with 10 minutes of discussion to follow.
**READINGS:**

**Books:** Please purchase the following books (available at the University Bookstore Textbook Annex)

We will be reading the following books, which are available for purchase at the University Bookstore, Textbook Annex. Alternatively, I have placed all of these texts on reserve at the DuBois Library.

- Jerome de Groot, *Consuming History: Historians and Heritage in Contemporary Pop Culture* (978-0415399456)
- Kirk Savage, *Monument Wars: Washington, D.C., the National Mall, and the Transformation of the Memorial Landscape* (978-0520271333)
- Richard White, *Remembering Ahanagran: Storytelling in a Family’s Past* (978-0295983554)
- Gary Nash, *History on Trial* (978-0679767503)
- Cathy Stanton, *The Lowell Experiment: Public History in a Postindustrial City* (978-1558495470)

**Recommended:**

**Articles:** Please print out copies of the additional readings and bring a copy with you to class.

I have placed a scanned copy of most of the additional readings listed in the syllabus in a password-protected folder on the course website (https://udrive.oit.umass.edu/xythoswfs/webui/_xy-4514307_1-t_9iJA8jcT). All other readings are available online and the URL is listed instead.

**CLASS SCHEDULE:**

This is the intended schedule for this course, though I reserve the right to make adjustments, if necessary, as the semester progresses. It is important on discussion days that you complete all of the reading in advance.

**Wednesday, September 4, 2013**

What is Public History?

- **Jerome de Groot**, *Consuming History: Historians and Heritage in Contemporary Pop Culture* (Part I only)
- James Green, *Taking History to Heart: The Power of the Past in Building Social Movements*, Introduction
Wednesday, September 11, 2013
History & Memory

- Optional: Jerome de Groot, Consuming History: Historians and Heritage in Contemporary Pop Culture (Part IV)

ASSIGNMENT: 800-word review of Monument Wars. Use as a model the reviews at the back of the AHR. Good reviews summarize the book’s main argument/contribution in a nutshell, comment on anything notable about sources or methods, indicate where it fits in larger scholarly literatures, and assess the degree of success with which the author’s goals were met

Wednesday, September 18, 2013
The Past in Everyday Life

Guest Speaker: Seth Kamil from Big Onion Tours

- Roy Rozenzweig and David Thelen, Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life
- Jerome de Groot, Consuming History: Historians and Heritage in Contemporary Pop Culture (Chapter 4)

Assignment: Teams should hand in a proposed work plan for their projects.

Wednesday, September 25, 2013
Shared Authority

Guest Speaker: Sam Redman, UMass History Department

- Richard White, Remembering Ahanagran: Storytelling in a Family's Past
- Jerome de Groot, Consuming History: Historians and Heritage in Contemporary Pop Culture (Part II only)

One of the following essays (to be assigned in class):

- Michael Frish, A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Public History (Introduction and Chapter 4)


You may also wish to examine the website for the New England Center for Oral History: [http://www.ucc.uconn.edu/~cohadm01/neaoh.html](http://www.ucc.uconn.edu/~cohadm01/neaoh.html)

And

Judith Moyer’s “Step-by-Step Guide to Oral History”
at: [http://www.dohistory.org/on_your_own/toolkit/oralHistory.html](http://www.dohistory.org/on_your_own/toolkit/oralHistory.html)

**ASSIGNMENT:** Write a 500-word synopsis of one of the five essays. These essays will be shared with the class.

**Wednesday, October 2, 2013**
Contested Authority

- **Gary Nash, et al, *History on Trial: Culture Wars and the Teaching of the Past* (chs 1, 5, 7-10) this book is available electronically on the UMass catalog)
- Berlin, Nash, Melish and Pitcaithley essays in Horton and Horton, *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory*

**ASSIGNMENT:** Create a table with a row dedicated to each of today’s SIX readings. Your columns will be: 1) key stakeholders, 2) turning points, 3) lessons learned, and 4) “In this text, the author’s main argument is:”

**Wednesday, October 9, 2013**
Public Policy

Guest Speaker: Jefferson Pinder, Artist

- Jerome de Groot, *Consuming History: Historians and Heritage in Contemporary Pop Culture* (Chapter 5)

One of the following essays (to be assigned in class):


Please browse these websites:

- The Historian for the U.S. Senate
- [http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/generic/Senate_Historical_Office.htm](http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/generic/Senate_Historical_Office.htm)

And the Society for History in the Federal Government ([http://shfg.org](http://shfg.org))

**ASSIGNMENT:** Write a 500-word synopsis of one of the five essays. These essays will be shared with the class. ALSO: Teams should make a brief, 5-minute presentation on the status of their project. Make sure that you have made some progress by this point.

**Wednesday, October 16, 2013**
Politics of Museum Interpretation

Field trip to Historic Deerfield - MEET AT THE FLYNT CENTER

- Jerome de Groot, *Consuming History: Historians and Heritage in Contemporary Pop Culture* (Parts III + VI)

Browse website:

“Great Places, Great Debates; Opening Historic Sites to Civic Engagement” [http://www.nps.gov/nero/greatplaces/indexgreatplaces.htm](http://www.nps.gov/nero/greatplaces/indexgreatplaces.htm)

And browse the websites for the Lower East Side Tenement Museum [http://www.tenement.org](http://www.tenement.org)

AND

**ASSIGNMENT:** Write a 1000-word review of a traditional museum exhibit or historic house museum tour. Use JAH or other exhibit review for your model.

**Wednesday, October 23, 2013**
Digital History and New Media

- Jerome de Groot, *Consuming History: Historians and Heritage in Contemporary Pop Culture* (Chapter 6)
  - Browse Cohen’s Digital Humanities blog at [http://www.dancohen.org](http://www.dancohen.org) and Tom Scheinfeldt’s Blog at [http://foundhistory.org](http://foundhistory.org)

Also look at:

- The Tools and Projects sections of the Center for History and New Media: [http://chnm.gmu.edu](http://chnm.gmu.edu)
- The American Association for History and Computing ([http://www.theaahc.org/cfp.htm](http://www.theaahc.org/cfp.htm))
- Many Stories of 1704 ([http://www.1704.deerfield.history.museum/](http://www.1704.deerfield.history.museum/))
- Do History ([www.dohistory.org](http://www.dohistory.org))

**ASSIGNMENT:** Find an example of an innovative Web-based project that deploys historical insight in new ways to new audiences and write a 1200-word review of it. Come to class ready to walk us through it.

**Wednesday, October 30, 2013**
Archives and Ethics

FIELD TRIP: UMass Archives and Special Collections, hosted by Rob Cox

- Karen Benedict, *Ethics and the Archival Profession* (excerpts)
- “Guidelines for Museums on Developing and Managing Individual Donor Support” (AAM) ([http://www.aam-us.org/museumresources/ethics/indiv_support.cfm](http://www.aam-us.org/museumresources/ethics/indiv_support.cfm))


**Wednesday, November 6, 2013**

Heritage Tourism

FIELD TRIP: Lowell National Historic Park

• **Cathy Stanton, The Lowell Experiment**
• Browse website: http://www.nationaltrust.org/heritage_tourism/ (especially “Getting Started,” “Benefits” and “Success Stories.”
• “Heritage Tourism and the Federal Government” (http://www.achp.gov/heritagetourismsummit.pdf)

**ASSIGNMENT:** Write an 800-word, AHA-style review of The Lowell Experiment.

**Wednesday, November 13, 2013**

NO CLASS - FOLLOW MONDAY'S SCHEDULE

**Wednesday, November 20, 2013**

History, Integrity, and Marketable Assets: Historical Preservation

FIELD TRIP: Springfield Armory, hosted by James Woolsey, Director

• Page and Mason, eds., Giving Preservation a History (essays by Page, Lowenthal, Greenfield, Wilson & Morley)

Also, please review the below:

• Donovan D. Rypkema, The Economics of Preservation: A Community Leader’s Guide (NTHP)
• “Know-How #3:What You Need to Know About Listing on the National Register (MHC)
• “Preservation Through By-Laws and Ordinances” (MHC, 1999)
• “Local Historical Commissions Summary” (MHC)
**Recommended:** Michael Wallace, “Preserving the Past: A History of Historic Preservation in the U.S.” and “Preservation Revisited,” in Mickey Mouse History.

**Wednesday, November 25, 2013** (this date might change)
Show me the money! Integrity, Interpretation, and Cold Hard Cash


**ASSIGNMENT:** Teams should make a brief, 5-minute presentation on the status of their project. Make sure that you have made significant progress by this point.

**Wednesday, December 4, 2013**
Wrap-Up

- Jerome de Groot, *Consuming History: Historians and Heritage in Contemporary Pop Culture* (Part V)

**Wednesday, December 11, 2013**
Class Conference

We will meet from 2-5 in Herter 601. Members of the community, especially our project partners, will be invited to attend. Each team will make a 20-30 minute presentation of their project and answer questions from the public.

**Final reflection papers are due.**