**History 659: Introduction to Public History**  
*Herter Hall rm 546 – Wednesdays 2:30 – 5:00 PM*

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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 key concept areas that inform the world of public history, including 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.

We will also devote considerable energy to our role in the Humanities Action Lab’s national collaboration Global Dialogues on Mass Incarceration. Teams of students will complete a number of “field service projects” as part of this partnership, including the drafting of exhibit text for a national traveling exhibition, the development of web content for the same project, as well as products in support of the interpretation of this subject at small museums.

**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 & Preparation:** I expect you to be here, and to be prepared to contribute (not just listen to) discussion. There are occasionally good reasons to miss class, like religious holidays, medical mishaps, family or emergencies, but if you miss must something, please contact me to make arrangements. Also, you do us all a disservice by coming to class (this class or any other) unprepared. The success of any seminar is directly proportionate to the effort made by its members to create a lively, provocative discussion that investigates the week’s topic with vigor. If anyone comes unprepared, the experience of everyone suffers as a result. Also, it signals to the rest of the room that you’re content to coast on their time and effort, which is something no public historians want to do.

**Social Media:** I (@MarlaatUMass) will be tweeting content relevant to the course at #Hist659 and strongly encourage you to do likewise. The Humanities Action Lab Global Dialogues on Incarceration project is @globaldialogues. You may also wish to follow the Prison Public Memory Project.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Formal requirements include: 1) completion of readings, and attendance at all seminar discussions and field trips, guided and self-guided; if you must miss something, make arrangements with me in advance; 2) short weekly writing assignments (typically 800 word reviews of the reading in the style of an AHR review), TO BE SHARED WITH THE CLASS; 3) participation in one major project, executed in teams; 4) a ca. 8-10 page final paper reflecting on the topic chosen; 5) participation in the class Twitter feed.

Readings:

Short readings are available on the Moodle site associated with the course; items easily accessible via J-STOR are found there.

Books to be read in their entirety include:

Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority* (SUNY, 1990) [Group B: SEE BELOW]

Note that some weeks feature “authors in conversation.” During these weeks, half the class (the 1st half, alphabetically) will read Author A and the remaining half Author B, so that we can cover more ground and better understand how conversations have unfolded over time (if for some reason you very much prefer to read the book in the other group, trades are permitted, but you MUST trade; that is, you must find someone from the other group who’ll agree to read your assigned work, and both report the arrangement to me). Read those works knowing that you will be responsible for sharing their content with your classmates, as they will with you.

Short weekly writings: Twice during the semester (on weeks of your choosing), you must turn in an 800-word, AHR-style review of the book that is the cornerstone of the week’s discussion. Please read some AHR reviews to get a feel for these: in essence, they convey the book’s main argument, methods and sources, and evaluate the books’ effectiveness and contribution to the literature. Note that they do not inquire as to whether you “liked” the
book; instead, they are descriptive and evaluative discussion of a book’s scholarly contribution.

**National Reflection posts:** Three times during the semester, everyone in the course must participate in the Global Dialogues on Mass Incarceration community conversation. The Humanities Action Lab has crafted a series of questions that will also be answered by your peers at the 19 other institutions involved in this collaboration; these reflections are a way for all of us to stay connected. The deadlines are within the syllabus.

National Exchange Post Guidelines

Style and formatting guidelines for all National Exchange posts Hub staff or researchers will review for accuracy and may ask students to edit any factual errors.

- Length: 300-500 words
- Citations: follow the Chicago Manual of Style
- Footnote all sources and hyperlink within the body of the post to any relevant weblinks
- Image specifications: Provide brief caption (8-15 words) that includes date or date range of image. E.g.: A painting completed by an unknown Haitian refugee during detainment at Guantánamo, 1991. Provide credit for image using following format “Photo courtesy of [repository or individual] and link to where you found it. Example: Photo courtesy of Holly Ackerman. Format: .tiff or jpg
- Byline: include this phrase (in italics) with your own information at the bottom of your post: Posted by [First name] [Last name] – [Degree Status] at [University]

**Semester-long projects:** This course 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 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, each of which contribute to UMass Amherst’s participation in the national collaboration Global Dialogues on Incarceration, led by the Humanities Action Lab at the New School. 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 get to follow your own scholarly interests, but rather must learn to cultivate your curiosity about projects your institution has deemed desirable, and b) in most professions—much unlike academia—people work collaboratively. While this project will give you practical experience and tangible skills in a project that serves an off-campus clientele, it will also help you practice the specific

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1 NOTE: instructions for how to post will be provided in September, prior to the first deadline. Some pieces may also be featured on the public HAL website (www.humanitiesactionlab.org). HAL hub staff will first reach out to faculty to discuss the possibility of posting any student’s work.
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 final 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.

The projects (as well as some recommended support reading to get your started) are:

* The crafting of content for the national traveling exhibit

* The creation of associated web content
  ➢➢ Cohen, *Digital History* (http://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/)

* Research toward the creation of a resource kit for museums interpreting incarceration
  ➢➢ Eastern State Penitentiary list of “Corrections and Prison Museums” http://www.easternstate.org/learn/research-library/prison-museums
  ➢➢ You might also wish to familiarize yourself with museums in the region that interpret incarceration, e.g. Old Newgate in CT (see Newgate Connecticut: Its Origin and Early History [Richard H Phelps] https://archive.org/details/newgateofconnect00phel
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* Exhibit plan on local incarceration, Historic Northampton
  ➢➢ Small Museum Toolkit: Interpretation: Education, Programs, and Exhibits (AASLH)

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 **Friday December 4th from 2-5pm.** (You MUST clear your schedule for this afternoon: block it off now, and make arrangements for any competing responsibilities that afternoon). Each team will make a 15-minute presentation, with 15 minutes of discussion to follow.
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.

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.

Part I: Defining the Field

Wednesday, September 9: What is Public History?
Guest: Liz Ševčenko, Director, Global Dialogues on Incarceration

Assignment: Go to the NCPH blog History@Work. Read several posts of your choosing. In class, I will ask you to share some comments on: 1) the idea/project that was most new to you; 2) something you read about that you wanted to know more about; 3) something you read that was unsettling or unsatisfying; and 4) something you read that connected with something you already knew.

In this class meeting we will also introduce the Global Dialogues on Incarceration national initiative (http://humanitiesactionlab.org/globaldialogues/incarceration/), led by the New School’s Humanities Action Lab, to which our program will contribute. IN ADVANCE OF THIS CLASS: Please thoroughly review that website, and please also thoroughly review the Guantanamo Public Memory Project (http://gitmomemory.org), the website produced by the first collaboration of this group.

Please also read
➔ “Kelsey Kauffman, “Academia in Prison: The Role of the University in an Era of Mass Incarceration” and
➔ Mary Rizzo and Martha Swan, “Public History and Mass Incarceration: Interview with Martha Swan” The Public Historian, Vol. 36, No. 1 (February 2014), pp. 61-70. (available through the library website)
Review: MassIncarceration Briefing Book (online)

Wednesday, September 16: How is Public History Practiced?  
Activity: Social Justice Facilitation Training (UACT)

READINGS:

Wednesday, September 23: Who are Public Historians?

Authors in Conversation:
READINGS:
- Group A will read: Denise Meringolo, *Museums, Monuments, and National Parks: Toward a New Genealogy of Public History*
- Group B will read: Cathy Stanton, *The Lowell Experiment: Public History in a Postindustrial City*

ALL WILL READ:

Wednesday, September 30: Where is public history?
GUEST: Julie Peterson, on Eastern States Penitentiary

Authors in Conversation
READINGS:
- Group B: Jacqueline Z. Wilson, *Prison: Cultural Memory and Dark Tourism* (book is available as an ebook at UMass Library)

ALL WILL READ:
DUE: National Exchange Blog Post #1:
What have you discovered about the history of incarceration/detention in your university's community, or nationally, that personally struck you most, and why? You could identify one fact, image, person, quote, moment in time. What new perspective could it offer on incarceration/detention issues most pressing for your university's community, or nationally, today? What are your concerns or ideas for interpreting your community's history as a catalyst for national dialogue on contemporary issues?

Part II: Public History in Practice

Wednesday, October 7: Historians as activists/social justice humanities
FIELD TRIP TO SMITH COLLEGE/Joyce Follet, Co-Director, Steinem Initiative

GUESTS: Solobia Hutchins and Holly Richardson from SHaRC (Springfield Harm Reduction Coalition) will join us to talk about their activism, their decision to deposit their records at Smith, and the future of activism around new prison construction. To prepare, please read:

- A case against jail expansion:
  http://www.massdecarcerate.org/download/SHaRCBooklet.pdf

READINGS:
- Stanton, “Hardball history: On the edge of politics, advocacy, and activism,” History@Work
- Shopes, “Responding to Baltimore: A role for public historians? History@Work
- James Green, *Taking History to Heart: The Power of the Past in Building Social Movements* (Introduction)
**Wednesday, October 14:** Sharing Authority

Authors in Conversation:

**READINGS:**

⇒ Group A: Filene *Letting Go? Historical Authority in a User-Generated World*
Group B: Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority*

**EACH TEAM WILL DELIVER PROGRESS REPORTS AT END OF CLASS TODAY**

**NOTE: BY OCTOBER 16: CURATORIAL STEP ONE DUE TO HAL**

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**Wednesday, October 21:** Museums and their Publics

Authors in Conversation:

**READINGS:**

⇒ Group A: Andrea Burns *From Storefront to Monument: Tracing the Public History of the Black Museum Movement*
Group B: Catherine Lewis, *The Changing Face of Public History*

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**Wednesday, October 28:** Agendas and Audiences

**Field trip** to Historic Deerfield - MEET AT THE FLYNT CENTER. IN ADVANCE OF THIS DATE, YOU SHOULD HAVE VISITED HISTORIC DEERFIELD AS A REGULAR TOURIST.

**READINGS:**


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**Wednesday, November 4:** WORKSHOP SESSION

Each team will have a portion of the class period today to workshop their field service projects in progress with the rest of the class.

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**Wednesday, November 11:** NO CLASS (Veterans Day)

**BUT:** Due sometime this week is NATIONAL EXCHANGE 2: Read and reflect on others’ content outlines Due 6 weeks before last day of class – NO LATER THAN November 20

**Post prompt:** Identify something by a student or team from another university that surprised you, represented a different perspective, or raised a question
for you. This could be:

- Something you learned from another university's content outline
- Another team's approach to interpreting their local story (such as their big question, use of narratives, images, choice of story to focus on), as shown in their content outline
- A statement in another student's reflection piece.

What comments do you have for your fellow student/team? How did their work challenge or influence your own thinking about what's most important to share with the public; challenges/strategies for developing the exhibit, or any other aspect of your work on the project?

NOTE: The hub will assign one content outline for you to review. All outlines will be accessible on TenLegs, however, so students may choose to post additional comments and reflections on other outlines.

ALSO: NOTE: BY NOVEMBER 13: CURATORIAL STEP TWO DUE TO HAL

Wednesday, November 18: History, Integrity, & Marketable Assets
Guest: Kathy Kottaridis, Historic Boston Inc., on the Liberty Hotel and other examples of preservation/adaptive reuse in Boston

⇒ REVIEW: http://www.historicboston.org/press/

READINGS:
⇒ Andrew Hurley, *Beyond Preservation: Using Public History to Revitalize Inner Cities*

Review Online:
⇒ Cambridge Seven website: http://www.c7a.com/work/the-liberty-hotel
⇒ Ann Beha's (“Preservation Architect for the adaptive reuse of Boston's historic Charles Street Jail into the award-winning Liberty Hotel”) website http://www.annbeha.com/the-liberty-hotel
⇒ “Boston’s Liberty Hotel Developer Richard L. Friedman Recognized for Adaptive Reuse of the Former Charles Street Jail” http://www.hotel-
**Wednesday, November 25:** The federal context (Thanksgiving Recess begins AFTER class on this date)

READINGS:
➔ Ari Kelman, *A Misplaced Massacre: Struggling over the Memory of Sand Creek*

DUE: National Exchange #3: Post prompt: Identify an aspect of another team's draft content that inspired or disturbed you. How did it influence your thinking about incarceration/detention today, what, if anything, should change, and what role you might play? How do you think this material might influence the thinking of people who see the exhibit? What individuals or groups do you think need to see this material, and how could you imagine engaging them -- within or outside of the exhibit?

NOTE: The hub will assign one content outline for you team to review. All outlines will be accessible on TenLegs, however, so students may choose to post additional comments and reflections on other outlines.

**Wednesday December 2:** The federal context (cont’d)
GUEST: Christine Arato, Chief Historian, NPS Northeast Region

➔ Browse the websites for these NPS sites (each of which deal in some way with the theme of incarceration):

Manzanar  Golden Gate
Andersonville  Fort Smith
Boston Harbor Islands  Ellis Island  Fort Monroe  Kalaupapa NHS

READINGS:

**NOTE: CURATORIAL STEP 3, EXHIBIT DRAFT & WEB CONTENT DUE TO DESIGNER**

**FRIDAY DEC 4: CLASS CONFERENCE**

**Wednesday December 9: LAST CLASS: ALL PROJECT MATERIALS DUE**

(Exams end Dec 19. CURATORIAL STEP 4, EXHIBIT DRAFT & WEB CONTENT DUE TO DESIGNER BY THIS DATE).