HISTORY 659: INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC HISTORY
HERTER HALL RM 208
THURSDAYS, 2:30-5:00

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 key concept areas that inform the world of public history, including History and Memory; Shared Authority and/or Inquiry; Agendas and Audiences; 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 & 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 writing assignments (800 word reviews of the reading in the style of an AHR review); 3) participation in one major project, executed in teams; 4) a ca. 8-10 page final paper reflecting on the topic chosen.

Readings:
Some of our 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 (or nearly so) include ([R] means it’s on Reserve in the library; [E] means its also an e-book via the library):


Thomas Cauvin, Public History: A Textbook of Practice (Routledge, 2016). [R]

Benjamin Filene, et al Letting Go? Historical Authority in a User-Generated World (Left Coast Press, 2011). [R] [E]

Tammy Gordon, Private History in Public: Exhibition and the Settings of Everyday Life (Lanham, Maryland: AltaMira Press, a division of Rowman Littlefield, 2010). [R] [E]


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. A third book review (also to be turned in on a weeks of your choosing,
though it must be completed before the Thanksgiving Break), must be completed of a book on the bibliography attached to this syllabus.

**Field Service Projects**

All students in the course will contribute to a team-based field service project. Working in teams to complete a project for an internal or external client is core to the UMass pedagogy; not only do these projects allow you to build real-world skills, but public history employers report that demonstrated ability to work collaboratively with others is one of the most important skills needed in the contemporary workplace. Students will be invited to express a preference in terms of which project you’d most like to work on, but – again, as in any workplace – I as the team leader will assign the teams. You will then meet with your community contacts, and begin planning your work for the semester. These projects are designed to assume roughly 2-3 hrs/week per student in teams of 3-4 students.

Note that you each project will receive a grade, while you will be graded individually on reflection papers in which you synthesize the learning you did in the field with the learning you did in the classroom. But also, you should approach these projects not as students, but as public historians in training and emerging professionals; the impression you make on your community partners can be important in terms of landing future internships, positions, and other opportunities. Please remember too, too, that you represent the program and the department as you conduct yourselves in the field; your performance reflects not only on yourselves, but on other current and future students.

In Fall 2017, the options will be as follows:

1) **Exhibit on the history of incarceration in Hampshire County, for Historic Northampton.**
   A team will review artifacts and archival materials in the collection of Historic Northampton as well as research conducted by students in the Fall 2016 Hist 659 and synthesize them to create a plan (including the drafting of interpretive text) for Historic Northampton, which will mount a satellite exhibit to accompany the national traveling exhibition States of Incarceration when it comes to the Forbes Library in March 2017. Students assigned to this project should obtain and read: Serrell, *Exhibit Labels*; Wallace, *Writing for Museums*; and Volume Five from the AASLH *Small Museum Toolkit*, “Interpretation: Education, Program and Exhibits.” [This set is available in the office of Mary Lashway].

2) **Museum Inventory, Wistariahurst, Holyoke, MA**
   A team will inventory entire contents of rooms, or collections that may include antique furniture, artifacts, documents, and ephemera. The inventory process includes donation provenance research; digital photography; description using controlled vocabulary; data entry of description, measurements and location
information. Data will be entered into PastPerfect Museum software. Students need the ability to handle and respect fragile items, be familiar with data entry, be familiar with Excel, be consistent and organized, use a digital camera and understand file transfers to networked folders. Students assigned to this project should obtain and read: Volume Six from the AASLH Small Museum Toolkit, “Stewardship: Collections and Historic Preservation” [This set is available in the office of Mary Lashway] and Cauvin, Public History, “Archives, Manuscripts and Museums,” 29-54.

3) Cultural Resource Survey, Holyoke Historical Commission
A team will assist the HHC in a survey of buildings in the downtown commercial district, and help the HHC update the city’s inventory of historic buildings as seen on MACRIS (http://mhc-macris.net/). Students will photograph buildings, draft/update (using records in the Holyoke Public Library’s local history collections) the required descriptions of their architectural features and historical narrative, and update other information as needed. Students assigned to this project should read Cauvin, Public History, “Historic Preservation,” 55-88; and obtain as a resource McAlester, A Field Guide to American Houses (Revised): The Definitive Guide to Identifying and Understanding America’s Domestic Architecture.

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.

Part I: Defining the Field

Sept 8: What is Public History?
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.
Sept 15: What is the Role of the Public in Public History?
READING:
* Filene, et al., *Letting Go? Historical Authority in a User-Generated World*

NOTE: Come to class with your list of ranked preferences for the field service component of the class, and a paragraph explaining your ranking.

Sept 22: How is Public History Practiced?
GUEST: Frank Vagnone

READING:
* Vagnone & Ryan, *Anarchists Guide to Historic House Museums*
* https://twistedpreservation.com/

NOTE: Sept 23 is the Keynote for the 17th Annual Mark Roskill Symposium, organized by the UMass Amherst Department of the History of Art and Architecture Graduate Class of 2017

Sept 29: Where is public history?
READINGS:
* Tammy Gordon, *Private History in Public: Exhibition and the Settings of Everyday Life*

**Part II: Public History in Practice**

Oct 6: Agendas and Audiences: How Museums Learn
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:
* Stephen E. Weil, “From Being about Something to being for Somebody: The Ongoing
Transformation of the American Museum,” *Daedalus* (Summer 1999), 229-258.

Oct 13: The federal context
GUEST: Christine Arato, Chief Historian, NPS Northeast Region

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

Browse the websites for these NPS sites (each of which deal in some way with the theme of incarceration:
Manzanar; Andersonville; Boston Harbor Islands; Ellis Island; Golden Gate; Fort Smith; Fort Monroe; Kalaupapa NHS

Oct 20: NO CLASS: Use this time to work on your field service project

Oct 27: Museums and Publics, Evolution and Growth:
READINGS:
GUEST: Richard Rabinowitz, American History Workshop

Authors in Conversation:
* Andrea Burns *From Storefront to Monument: Tracing the Public History of the Black Museum Movement*  [Group A]

Nov 3: Public History, Business and Cultural Entrepreneurship
READINGS
*Cauvin, “Copyrights, Protection and Fundraising,” 110-114; and “Historians and Consultants and Advisors,” 250-
* Morgen Young, “Finding a niche as a public history consultant: Advice from the Northwest History Network,” History@Work


REVIEW 1 from each set of the 2 sets below:

[corporate consulting]

• Guillermo Baralt, If It’s Goya, It Has To Be Good - 75 Years of History (Editorial Revés 2011) [Reserve]


[NPS consulting]


NOTE: We will spend part of this class period doing mid-point reports on your field service projects.

Part III: New Horizons

Nov 10: No class: if possible, all should try to attend the New England Museum Association meeting in Mystic, CT! (we will be arranging some group transportation).

Nov 17: Public History, Public Health and Aging

READINGS:

* From Hamish Robertson, eds., The Caring Museum: How Older People Contribute to Museums (Edinburgh and Boston: MuseumsEtc, 2015), please read:

• Marla Miller & Elizabeth Sharpe, “‘Artifact Stories:’ Making Memories Matter for Amherst Seniors;”

• Helen Fountain, “Museums, Memories and Well-Being: How Reminiscence Activities Benefit the Museum and the Community;”

• Fiona Kinsey & Liza Dale-Hallett, “Material Culture and Memories: Industrial Heritage Volunteer Projects,” and

• Kerry Wilson, “The Political Value of Museums in Dementia Care.”
Dec 1: Public History and economic development:
Guest: Kathy Kottaridis, Historic Boston Inc., on the Liberty Hotel and other examples of preservation/adaptive reuse in Boston

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

Dec 8: LAST CLASS: ALL PROJECT MATERIALS DUE

Each team will have one third of the class period. Plan to spend half of your time presenting on your work, and half fielding questions from your classmates.
Bibliography of options for 3rd book review:


