

# History 3110: Explorations in Public History

Instructor: Josh Howard

Meeting time and place: TR, 2:40—4:05pm, Stark Agribusiness and Agriscience 209

Office Hours: TR, 12-2pm, Jones Hall

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## Course Description

This course investigates and analyzes the strategies used by historians to publicly interpret the past. You will be introduced to the history, theory, and practice of public history as well as the many careers open to public history practitioners. We will also explore how the public uses the past and challenges faced by public historians. This course aims to build on your historical training and encourage you to look how you may use those skills in contemporary public life. This will be accomplished through readings and discussion, reflective writings to develop one's professional voice, and the development of a project design.

## Required Reading

Dorothy Spruill Redford, *Somerset Homecoming: Recovering a Lost Heritage* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000). [<http://www.amazon.com/Somerset-Homecoming-Recovering-Lost-Heritage/dp/0807848433>]

## Course Requirements

1. **Class participation** [10%] Students are expected to read all assigned material and participate in discussion extensively. This is a discussion based class, and it will only benefit you if you contribute your thoughts.
2. **Essays**
  - 2.1. **Define Public History (500 word limit)**. Due Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup>. [5%] Come up with a working definition for public history. Be prepared to share these with the rest of class so we can create our own definition. You must engage the readings from the first two weeks.
  - 2.2. **What is a Museum? What is an Archive? (500 word limit)** Due Feb. 24<sup>th</sup>. [5%] Explain the function and purpose of museums and archives in today's society. You must engage with the class readings.
  - 2.3. **Review *Somerset Homecoming* (1000 word limit)** Due Mar. 5<sup>th</sup>. [10%] Students will write a professional book review of the assigned text, *Somerset Homecoming* by Dorothy Spruill Redford. Specific instructions will be provided in class.
  - 2.4. **History Museum Exhibit Review (750 word limit)**. Due Mar. 19<sup>th</sup>. [5%] Students will select a physical exhibit of their choice to evaluate. The review will be graded based on its assessment of the exhibit's interpretation, presentation, and context. Students must include the following in their reviews:

- Include basic information: exhibit title, name and location of host institution, names of principle exhibit creators, sponsors or other funders, date of exhibit creation, date you viewed the exhibit
- What is the purpose and argument of the exhibit? What is its thesis?
- Who or what is the historical subject?
- How is the information conveyed? What types of media?
- How does the interpretation use sources?
- You must prove you actually visited the museum!

**2.5. Historical Media Review (1000 word limit).** Due Mar. 26<sup>th</sup>. [10%] Students will select a film, documentary, fictional book, or video game of their choice to evaluate. The only requirement is that the selection must be historical, and each is subject to approval by the instructor. The review will be graded based on engagement with the following questions:

- Include basic information: title, place of creation, names of principle creators, sponsors or other funders, date of creation, date you viewed the media
- Who or what is the historical subject?
- What is the purpose and argument of your selection? What is its thesis?
- What is the format of your selection? How did your selection's specific format help/hinder the delivery of its message?
- What types of sources are used? How does your selection incorporate these sources?

**2.6. Why do many Americans preserve structures and build monuments? (500 word limit)** Due Apr. 9<sup>th</sup>. [5%] Students will reflect upon class readings about preservation, cultural resource management, memory, and monuments. Answer the simple prompt question while engaging reading materials. Specific instructions will be provided in class.

**2.7. Political Public History (1000 word limit).** Due Apr. 16<sup>th</sup>. [10%] Students will select one state or national politician to follow throughout the semester. The goal is to ascertain how their politician evokes history in public speeches, presentations, or even legislation. This essay must cite at least three newspaper articles (or approved material) to provide evidence. Some questions to consider include:

- What event(s) or historic figure(s) does the politician primarily evoke?
- What is the politician's primary goal? Why are they using history to achieve this goal?
- What do you think their primary purpose for evoking history was? Did they make their point? Were they trying to stir emotions?
- Do you think their use of history was accurate, erroneous, or misleading?
- What do you think are the broader implications on society of such uses of history in politics? How do ethics factor into this politician's behavior?

### **3. Planning a Project**

**3.1. Group Project Design & Presentation [10%]**

- Students will work in groups of 2-4 people to design for an original public history project of their choosing. Students are NOT expected to actually complete a polished public history project for this class, only to design it. Detailed instructions will be provided in class.
- Some ideas: Web Exhibit, Design a Historical Game, Process a Small Archival Collection, Preservation Plan, Exhibit Concept, Interpretive Brochure, Walking Tour

**3.2. Individual Reflective Essay (2500 word limit) [25%]**

- Explain your project, why you chose it, how you approached it
- Explain how public history theory and methodology informed your work. To do this, reference at least six articles read throughout the semester
- Revisit and answer the question “What is Public History?” and how public history relates to your project
- Further instruction will be provided in class.

## Grades

Participation	Essay One	Essay Two	Essay Three	Essay Four	Essay Five	Essay Six	Essay Seven	Final Presentation	Final Paper
15%	5%	5%	10%	5%	10%	5%	10%	10%	25%

### Course & Classroom Policies

The instructor can be reached most quickly via email. Please do not contact the instructor via the D2L mail system. I promise to respond to all emails within 24 hours. Students may not bring guests or children to the class without prior approval from the faculty/instructor. Only service animals are allowed on campus. Students must register with Disabled Student Services before a service animal is allowed as an accommodation. See Policy No. I:01:13.

### Academic and Professional Integrity

Middle Tennessee State University takes a strong stance against academic misconduct. Academic Misconduct includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, and fabrication. Academic Misconduct: Plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, or facilitating any such act. For purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

- (1) Plagiarism: The adoption or reproduction of ideas, words, statements, images, or works of another person as one’s own without proper attribution. This includes self-plagiarism, which occurs when an author submits material or research from a previous academic exercise to satisfy the requirements of another exercise and uses it without proper citation of its reuse.
- (2) Cheating: Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. This includes unapproved collaboration, which occurs when a student works with others on an academic exercise without the express permission of the professor. The term academic exercise includes all forms of work submitted for credit or hours.

- (3) Fabrication: Unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

To be clear: going online and taking information without proper citations, copying parts of other student's work, creating information for the purposes of making your paper seem more official, or anything involving taking someone else's thoughts or ideas without proper attribution is academic misconduct. If you work together on an assignment when it is not allowed, it is academic misconduct. If you have a question about an assignment, please come see me to clarify. Any cases of academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Affairs for violating the academic honesty requirements in the student handbook. They will also result in failure for the course. Remember – ignorance is NOT a defense.

### **Tennessee Hope Scholarship Renewal Criteria**

To retain the Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship eligibility, you must earn a cumulative TELS GPA of 2.75 after 24 and 48 attempted hours and a cumulative TELS GPA of 3.0 thereafter. A grade of C, D, F, FA, or I in this class may negatively impact TELS eligibility. If you drop this class, withdraw, or if you stop attending this class you may lose eligibility for your lottery scholarship, and you will not be able to regain eligibility at a later time.

### **Americans with Disabilities Act Statement**

Reasonable Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Middle Tennessee State University is committed to campus access in accordance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Any student interested in reasonable accommodations can consult the Disability & Access Center (DAC) website and/or contact the DAC for assistance at 615-898-2783 or [dacemail@mtsu.edu](mailto:dacemail@mtsu.edu).

## **Course Schedule**

### **Week 1: The Public and History**

1. **Jan 20 -- Introduction**
2. **Jan 22 -- What is Public History?**
  - 2.1. Carl Becker, "Everyman His Own Historian", [http://www.historians.org/info/aha\\_history/clbecker.htm](http://www.historians.org/info/aha_history/clbecker.htm)
  - 2.2. Lucy Salmon, "History in a Back Yard" (1912), 3-20, <https://archive.org/details/historyinbackyar00salm>
  - 2.3. NCPH Website, "What is Public History?", <http://ncph.org/cms/what-is-public-history/>

### **Week 2: Public & Conventional History**

1. **Jan 27**
  - 1.1. Thelen and Rosenzweig, Introduction [also skim appendices and chapter 1] (available as ebook through MTSU Libraries)
2. **Jan 29**
  - 2.1. Ian Tyrell, "Going Public", chapter 9 of *Historians in Public* (University of Chicago Press, 2005): 153-169.

- 2.2. David Lowenthal, "Fabricating Heritage," *History & Memory* (2002): 5-24.

### **Week 3: Material Culture & Primary Sources**

#### **1. Feb 3 -- ESSAY ONE (WHAT IS PUBLIC HISTORY) DUE**

- 1.1. Laura Thatcher Ulrich, "Big Dig, Little Dig, Hidden Worlds: Boston," <http://www.common-place.org/vol-03/no-04/boston/>
- 1.2. Julia G. Costello, "'A Night with Venus, a Moon with Mercury': The Archeology of Prostitution in Historic Los Angeles," in Gail Dubrow and Jennifer Goodman, *Women's History through Historic Preservation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), Chapter 11, 177-196.
- 1.3. In-class overview of archives

#### **2. Feb 5**

- 2.1. Visit to the Center for Popular Music

### **Week 4: Museums, Archives, Historical Societies**

#### **1. Feb 10**

- 1.1. Edward Alexander, "What is a Museum?" from *Museums in Motion* (2008)
- 1.2. In-class workshop on primary sources

#### **2. Feb 12**

- 2.1. Michael Wallace, "Visiting the Past", in *Presenting the Past* by Benson, Brier, and Rosenzweig

### **Week 5: Museums, Archives, Historical Societies**

#### **1. Feb 17**

- 1.1. Visit to the Albert Gore Center

#### **2. Feb 19**

- 2.1. Ken Bubp and Dave Allison, "Opening Doors to Great Guest Experiences," *History News* (Spring 2007): 20-23. [Civic engagement at Connor Prairie]
- 2.2. Julie Des Jardins, "African American Women's Historical Consciousness," in *Women and the Historical Enterprise in America* (University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 118-142.

### **Week 6: Memory & Place**

#### **1. Feb 24 --ESSAY TWO DUE (WHAT IS A MUSEUM/ARCHIVE?)**

- 1.1. Somerset Homecoming, pt. 1

#### **2. Feb 26**

- 2.1. Somerset Homecoming, pt. 2

### **Week 7: Oral History**

#### **1. Mar 3**

- 1.1. Alessandro Portelli, "What Makes Oral History Different," Chapter 6 in *The Oral History Reader*, edited by Robert Peaks and Alistair Thomson (1998), p. 63-74.
- 1.2. Donald Ritchie, "Oral History, from sound to print and back again", *OAH Magazine of History* 11 (1997), 6-8.

- 1.3. Browse Traveling 219 website
2. **Mar 5 – ESSAY THREE DUE (SOMERSET HOMECOMING REVIEW)**
  - 2.1. In-class reading and/or listening to oral histories
  - 2.2. In-class listening exercise

#### **Week 8: SPRING BREAK**

1. **Mar 10 -- NO CLASS**
2. **Mar 12 -- NO CLASS**

#### **Week 9: Film, Fiction, Games, and Popular History**

1. **Mar 17**
  - 1.1. Niall Ferguson, "How to Win a War," *New York Magazine* (15 October 2006), <http://nymag.com/news/features/22787/>.
  - 1.2. *Game Informer*, "The Historical Accuracy of *Assassin's Creed III*," [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hRiiCJa1P\\_o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hRiiCJa1P_o).
  - 1.3. Molly Osberg, "The Assassin's Creed Curriculum," *The Verge* (18 September 2014), <http://www.theverge.com/2014/9/18/6132933/the-assassins-creed-curriculum-can-video-games-teach-us-history>.
2. **Mar 19 -- ESSAY FOUR (EXHIBIT REVIEW) DUE**
  - 2.1. Robert Rosenstone, "The Historian Meets Hollywood," in *Presenting History* by Peter Beck (2012), p. 167-199.
  - 2.2. Nina Gilden Seavey, "Film and Media Producers," in *Public History*, edited by Gardner and LaPaglia (2006).

#### **Week 10: Historic Preservation & Cultural Resource Management**

1. **Mar 24**
  - 1.1. Barbara Howe, "Women in Historic Preservation: The Legacy of Ann Pamela Cunningham," *The Public Historian* 12 (1990): 31-61
  - 1.2. National Register of Historic Places, <http://www.nps.gov/nr/index.htm>.
2. **Mar 26 -- ESSAY FIVE DUE (MEDIA REVIEW)**
  - 2.1. Arnold Alanen and Robert Melnick, "Why Cultural Landscape Preservation," from *Preserving Cultural Landscapes in America* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000)
  - 2.2. Fath Davis Ruffins, "Lifting as We Climb: Black Women and the Preservation of African American History and Culture," *Gender & History* 6 (1994): 376-396.
  - 2.3. James Lindgren, "A New Departure in Historic, Patriotic Work," *The Public Historian* 18 (1996): 41-60.

#### **Week 11: State, Corporations, Monuments, & Memorials**

1. **Mar 31**
  - 1.1. Joseph A. Pratt, "Warts and All?: An Elusive Balance in Contracted Corporate Histories about Energy and Environment," *The Public Historian* 26 (2004): 21-39.
  - 1.2. Sarah Bennett Farmer, "Oradour-sur-Glane: Memory in a Preserved Landscape," *French Historical Studies* 19 (1995): 27-47.

**2. Apr 2**

- 2.1. Gail Lee Dubrow, "Blazing Trails with Pink Triangles and Rainbow Flags: Improving the Preservation and Interpretation of Gay and Lesbian Heritage," in *Restoring Women's History through Historic Preservation*, Chapter 17, p. 281-299
- 2.2. Brown University, *Report of Commission on Memorials*, March 2009, [http://www.brown.edu/Research/Slavery\\_Justice/documents/memorials.pdf](http://www.brown.edu/Research/Slavery_Justice/documents/memorials.pdf).

**Week 12: Public History Controversy**

**1. Apr 7**

- 1.1. Robert Utley, "Whose Shrine is it?" *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* (1992): 70-76.
- 1.2. Stanley Hordes, "Introduction: Imposing the Past on the Present", *The Public Historian* 14 (1992): 9-12.
- 1.3. Lonnie Bunch, "Embracing Controversy", *The Public Historian* 14 (1992): 63-65.

**2. Apr 9 – ESSAY SIX DUE (WHY DO WE PRESEVE?)**

- 2.1. Set of newspaper articles about "The West As America" Smithsonian exhibit

**Week 13: Digital History**

**1. Apr 14**

- 1.1. Douglas Seefeldt and William G. Thomas III, "What is Digital History? A Look at Some Exemplar Projects," *Perspectives on History* (2009).
- 1.2. Digital History projects to browse
  - 1.2.1. Edward Ayers, Valley of the Shadow project, UVA Libraries (1993-2007)
  - 1.2.2. The September 11 Digital Archive, Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media and American Social History Project
  - 1.2.3. Virginia Tech April 16, 2007 Archive, Archive of the University Libraries

**2. Apr 16 -- ESSAY SEVEN DUE (POLITICAL PUBLIC HISTORY)– NO CLASS (NCPH Conference in Nashville, TN)**

**Week 14: Activism, What is Public History Good For?**

**1. Apr 21**

- 1.1. E. Arnold Modlin, Derek Alderman, and Glenn Gentry, "Tour Guides as Creators of Empathy," *Tourist Studies* 11 (2011): 3-19.

**2. Apr 23**

- 2.1. READINGS TBD

**Week 15:**

**1. Apr 28 -- PROJECT PRESENTATIONS**

**2. Apr 30 -- NO CLASS**

**Week 16:**

1. **Tuesday, May 5 @ 3:30pm-5:30pm -- PROJECT PRESENTATIONS, FINAL ESSAY DUE**