**HIST 296: History and the Public**

**Spring 2019, Section 1**

**Tu/Thurs 12:30pm-1:45pm**

**CCC 205**

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Department of History Office: CCC 461

Office Hours: Tues/Thurs 2pm-3pm and by appointment

**Course Summary**

This course provides an introduction to the theory and practice of public history. Public historians can be found working in museums, federal agencies, archives, historic sites, and a host of other settings. What defines public history? What challenges do public historians face when interpreting history for a general audience? Who determines what is remembered from our past (and what is forgotten)? Do public historians have an obligation to address controversial but historically significant topics? What varieties of sources do public historians have at their disposal? And what does the future of the profession look like for the next generation of public historians? Students will address these questions through course readings, interactive discussions, site visits, guest speakers, and hands-on workshops culminating in a final project intended for a general audience.

**Learning Outcomes**

Students taking “Introduction to Public History” develop skills for analyzing and interpreting history to a general audience.  Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

* Evaluate how interpretations of the past are developed and conveyed to the public
* Recognize major issues and challenges confronting public historians
* Identify the range of historical evidence, frameworks and methods used by public historians
* Develop interpretive historical arguments integrating both original historical source material (primary sources) and later interpretations of those sources (secondary sources)
* Locate, appraise, and synthesize source materials, including written texts, audio/visual material, and/or objects in a final project suitable for a public audience
* Adapt their writing styles based on their intended audience

**Required Texts**

Thomas Cauvin, *Public History: A Textbook of Practice* (rental)

Other assigned readings will be posted on Canvas.

**Assignments**

Participation: Class participation consists of more than just regular attendance. It also involves coming to class prepared and engaged, bringing assigned readings, listening to fellow classmates and guest speakers, and actively contributing to class discussions. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. Students may miss three classes before their grade begins to drop. It is not wise to use all of your absences early in the term in case you have legitimate reasons for missing class later. Arriving late or leaving early from class will be counted as one-half an absence. Students facing extenuating circumstances affecting their attendance (such as serious health issues, UWSP athletics, birth of a child, military service, etc.) are encouraged to contact me.

Class Quizzes/Responses: Students will be responsible for taking regular quizzes/responses based on the assigned readings. The quizzes will be graded for completion on a check plus/check/check minus system. A check-plus indicates exceptional work, a check represents basic competency, and a check-minus signals incomplete, inaccurate, or substandard work. Students who are absent will receive a zero for their quiz/response grade that day and will not have an opportunity to make up the missing work. Students can drop their lowest quiz score.

Project Proposal and Peer Review: Students will submit a preliminary proposal of their final project to jumpstart their research and seek out suggestions from fellow classmates. The proposal will consist of a 2-3 page overview of the topic as well as a bibliography of key sources. To reflect the collaborative process inherent in public history, students will also provide written peer reviews of each other’s proposals.

Final Project: Students will create a one-panel poster display of a person, place, event, or artifact related to UWSP history in anticipation of the upcoming 125th anniversary celebration. The posters are intended for an audience of the UWSP community using the methods and techniques discussed in class. The posters will debut at the COLS Undergraduate Research Symposium on Friday, May 3. Students are required to write a bibliography identifying their source materials and must incorporate primary sources (ie, sources originating from the historical period) as part of their research. Following the course, students may opt to submit their project to a larger conference, such as the Wisconsin Federation of Museums Annual Meeting or the UW System Symposium for Undergraduate Research. More information about the final project will be discussed throughout the semester through a series of workshops.

Midterm and Final Exams: The midterm and final exams consist of short answer and essay questions that emphasize the major themes of the course. Students will be asked to draw from discussions, readings, and class activities to support their answers. No makeups for the final will be available, so make sure that you can attend the day it is scheduled (Thursday, May 16 at 12:30pm).

**Assessment Breakdown\***

Participation: 20%

Quizzes/Responses: 15%

Midterm Exam: 10%

Project Proposal/Peer Review: 15% (10% for the proposal and 5% for peer reviews)

Final Project: 20%

Final Exam: 20%

**Grading Scale**

A: 93-100

A-: 90-92

B+: 87-89

B: 83-86

B-: 80-82

C+: 77-79

C: 73-76

C-: 70-72

D+: 67-69

D: 60-66

F: 59 and below

**Classroom Policies**

Students are expected to arrive on time and to be attentive and engaged during class. This means you are not sleeping, reading/working on other materials, using electronic devices (with the exception of laptops or tablets used exclusively for notetaking; cell phones must be turned off and put away), talking to your neighbor, or disrupting class in any way. Students will raise their hands for questions and be respectful of fellow students and the professor. You may disagree with another person’s comment or position, but do so with courtesy and respect.

All forms of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fraud, and unauthorized access to tests and assignments are strictly prohibited. Any words or ideas borrowed from another person or source, whether through a direct quotation or through paraphrasing, must be cited properly to avoid plagiarism. Please familiarize yourself with what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it. Violations of the university’s code of conduct are subject to sanctions ranging from a failing grade for an assignment to disciplinary hearings or potential failure of the course. For more information on academic dishonesty, see:

[https://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Pages/Student-Conduct.aspx](https://www3.uwsp.edu/dos/Pages/Student-Conduct.aspx)

If you have a learning or physical challenge that requires accommodation, please contact the Disability and Assistive Technology Center as early as possible. They will then notify me privately of the accommodations that will facilitate your success in the course. Their office is located on the 6th floor of Albertson (the library), Voice: 715-346-3365, TTY: 715-346-3362. You can also reach them via email at [datctr@uwsp.edu](mailto:datctr@uwsp.edu%22mailto:datctr@uwsp.ed).

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law requiring educational institutions to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information about UWSP’s policies, see: [https://www.uwsp.edu/datc/Pages/default.aspx](https://www3.uwsp.edu/datc/Pages/default.aspx)

I hold regular office hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2pm-3pm. During this time, my priority is to talk to students about concerns they may have. I truly enjoy meeting with you to hear about how things are going. If you are struggling, stop by and let’s chat. If you are unable to meet during office hours, email me and we will set up an alternative time.

*Please note that the syllabus is subject to change and supplemental reading assignments may be added.*

**Week 1- Introduction**

January 22: Course introduction

January 24: Debate: Is *Pawn Stars* public history?

**Week 2- Documentaries**

January 29: The History of Public History

Readings Due: Cauvin, Public History: A Textbook of Practice (hereafter PHTP): pp. 1-25

January 31: Documentaries Overview

Readings Due: PHTP pp. 163-173; excerpts from *Past Imperfect: History According to the Movies* (on Canvas)

**Week 3- Museums**

February 4: Museums Overview

Readings Due: PHTP pp. 140-162; “Ambassadors in Sealskins: Exhibiting Eskimos at the Smithsonian” (on Canvas)

February 6: Meet at UWSP Museum of Natural History (meet in 1st floor lobby of ALB)

**Week 4- Repositories**

February 12: Archives Overview and Project Workshop

Readings Due: PHTP pp. 29-54

February 14: Meet at UWSP Archives (5th Floor of ALB)

**Week 5- Oral History**

February 19: Oral History Overview

Readings Due: PHTP pp. 89-105; Other readings TBD on Canvas

February 21: Mock oral history interviews

Readings Due: Best practices for oral history (on Canvas)

**Week 6- Historic Preservation**

February 26: Historic Preservation Overview

Readings Due: PHTP pp.55-88; David Glassberg, “Place and Placelessness in American History” (on Canvas)

February 28: Project Workshop 1- Choosing a topic and finding potential sources

Class Preparation: Come to class ready to discuss your “big idea” for your exhibit project.

**Week 7- Historical Sources and Midterm**

March 5: *A Film Unfinished* Viewing and Discussion

March 7: Midterm Exam

**Week 8- National History Day**

March 12: Writing Public History

Readings Due: PHTP pp.115-126; Other readings TBD on Canvas

March 14: National History Day

**Week 9- Spring Break**

**No Class March 18-22**

**Week 10- Project Proposals**

March 26: Project Proposals Due

March 28: Peer Reviews Due

**Week 11- Monuments**

April 2: Monuments Overview

Readings Due: PHTP pp. 216-229; excerpts from *Lies Across America* (on Canvas)

April 4: Debate: Silent Sam Debate

Readings Due: Articles posted on CANVAS

**Week 12- Walking Tour**

April 9: Tour of Downtown (weather permitting)

Readings Due: TBD (on Canvas)

April 11: Projects Workshop

**Week 13- Living History**

April 16: Living History Overview

Readings Due: PHTP pp. 188-204

April 18: Posters Workshop

Due: Drafts of Posters (submit via Canvas)

**Week 14- Silenced Voices**

April 23: Museum Advocacy Overview

Readings Due: PHTP pp.230-249; “Representing Native American History” (on Canvas)

Due: Final Posters

April 25: Debate: Enola Gay Controversy

Readings Due: Linenthal, “Anatomy of a Controversy” (on Canvas)

Air Force Magazine, “Revisionism Gone Wrong” (on Canvas)

**Week 15- The Future of the Profession**

April 30: Public History Employment

Readings Due:

Katz, “Public History Employers- What Do They Want?” Available online at:

<http://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/september-2003/public-history-employers-what-do-they-want-a-report-on-the-survey>

Class Preparation: Review job openings posted for the past week on the National Council of Public History website: <https://ncph.org/jobs/> Pay particular attention to salaries, locations, types of institutions, and experience/education required.

May 2: Undergraduate Research Symposium (on Friday, May 3)

**Week 16: Final Projects**

May 7: Project Presentations

May 9: Project Presentations

FINAL EXAM: Thursday, May 16, 12:30-2:30 in CCC 205