History 5970/6970: Introduction to Public History
Auburn University
Department of History
Fall 2009, Lowder Hall 15, MWF 8-8:50

Instructor: Professor Aaron Shapiro, 320B Thach
Telephone: 844-6526
Email: ashapiro@auburn.edu. I will attempt to respond to your email within 24 hours.
Office Hours: M 9-10:30, F 11-12 and by appointment
I will do all I can to help you meet your goals in this class. Please e-mail me, use my office hours, or set up an appointment if you have any concerns or questions.

Credit Hours: 3 credits (2250 minutes)
There are no prerequisites for the course. Graduate students in the public history program must take this course.

Course Description
Overview of the public history field in its diverse venues and manifestations. Students will consider the ways in which historians engage various publics and will undertake projects to help understand and experience how public historians carry out their work and responsibilities.

Course Objectives
Upon completing the course, each undergraduate student will be able to:
1) Identify the different specialties of public history and the major themes and issues shaping public history practice;
2) Develop an understanding of the ways in which public historians shape public perceptions of the past and the ways in which public perceptions of the past shape public history;
3) Gain knowledge of the issues surrounding public history work such as museums, archives, historic site interpretation, oral history, historic preservation, cultural resource management, and multimedia and digital projects;
4) Recognize the diverse employment opportunities in the field of public history; and
5) In coordination with an external organizational partner, develop a public history proposal and project drawing on the knowledge gained in the course that will provide benefits to the public and assist the partner organization.

Upon completing the course, each graduate student will be able to:
1) Identify the different specialties of public history and the major themes and issues shaping public history practice;
2) Through formal written assignments and regular blog postings, develop and apply critical and analytical skills rooted in their an understanding of public history literature and historiography;
3) Identify and understand the intellectual, ethical, and professional issues public historians confront;
4) Develop an understanding of the ways in which public historians shape public perceptions of the past and the ways in which public perceptions of the past shape public history;
5) Gain knowledge of the issues surrounding public history work such as museums, archives, historic site interpretation, oral history, historic preservation, cultural resource management, and multimedia and digital projects while also considering how such knowledge will help them succeed in their professional area of interest;
6) Understand and reflect upon important historical developments in the field of public history;
7) Recognize the diverse employment opportunities in the field of public history; and
8) In coordination with an external organizational partner, develop a public history proposal and project drawing on the knowledge gained in the course that will provide benefits to the public and assist the partner organization. Graduate students are expected to submit their proposal for funding, assuming the partner organization still wants to pursue this course.

**Students with Disabilities**
Students who need accommodations should arrange a meeting with me during the first week of classes, or as soon as possible if accommodations are needed immediately. If you have a conflict with my office hours, an alternate time can be arranged. To set up a meeting, please contact me by email. Bring a copy of your Accommodation Memo and an Instructor Verification Form to the meeting. If you do not have an Accommodation Memo but need accommodations, make an appointment with The Program for Students with Disabilities, 1244 Haley Center, 844-2096.

**Required Books and Readings**
T.H. Breen, *Imagining the Past: East Hampton Histories* (Georgia, 1996)

Additional Readings marked with ER are available through [AU Library E-Reserve](#) logging in with the password: PublicHist.

Items from journals such as the *Journal of American History, The Public Historian, American Quarterly,* and *Technology and Culture* in the syllabus are accessible through JSTOR, History Cooperative, Project Muse and other databases available through the AU Library. You will need to login through the library to access these resources before the hyperlinks will work.

You are required to read the Auburn University Risk Management and Insurance “Domestic Travel Guidelines and Tips for Students” before traveling to meet an external partner or completing Assignment #2. The guidelines are available at: [http://www.auburn.edu/administration/rms/pdf/domestic-students.pdf](http://www.auburn.edu/administration/rms/pdf/domestic-students.pdf). You must confirm in writing that you have read and understand these guidelines and agree to abide by them. If you are unable to follow the guidelines, consult the instructor immediately to make alternative arrangements.

**Additional required books for graduate students enrolled in HIST 6970:**
Assignments and Grading

Rules for Written Assignments
All paper assignments must be double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman (or a comparable font), 1” margins. Spelling, mechanics and grammar do matter. Proofread all assignments carefully. Plagiarism will result in a recommendation to the Academic Honesty Committee that you fail the course. All written assignments are due by the beginning of class on the date listed. I prefer to receive your assignment electronically via Blackboard in the Assignment Dropbox, but if that is not possible, you may bring a hard copy with you to class and send me an electronic copy later. Late assignments will only be accepted if you have a documented excused absence for the day the assignment is due. See the Absences and Make-ups section below for additional information.

Grading Scale: A: 90-100%; B: 80-89%; C: 70-79%; D: 60-69%; F: 59% and below

Assignment #1: Blogging Public History and Discussion Questions (10% - Undergraduate; 15% - Graduate)
Starting in Week 2 and running through week 14, each Wednesday you will complete the Blogging Public History assignment listed in the syllabus (Weeks 2, 3, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14) or post two discussion questions based on the week’s reading to the course blog (Weeks 4, 5, 7, 13). Your questions should deal with the theoretical issues raised by the readings and consider practical applications of the reading to work in the field. You do not have to post or complete a blogging assignment in Weeks 9 and 11 and undergraduate students may opt out of ONE of the Blogging Public History assignments. These assignments ask you to reflect on various aspects of public history practice and projects, including your own work with an external partner. In all cases, I expect graduate student postings to critically analyze the relationship between the week’s readings and the assignment. These postings should be submitted to the Discussion Board on the course Blackboard Page.

Assignment #2: Public History Encounter (10%) DUE WEEK 5
During the first few weeks of the semester, each of you must visit the following three types of public history presentations: a history exhibit, a monument/memorial, and an historic site. All of this can easily done in and around Auburn but you are welcome to venture further afield. You must email me with the places you plan to visit. You will then write a minimum 1000-word paper comparing, contrasting, and critiquing the history presented at each location. What did you learn? Was the presentation historically accurate? Was there anything omitted that is important to understanding historical significance? How well does the presentation engage the public and foster dialogue? Did the presentation evoke an emotional response? If so, how? What would you do differently if you were the curator of the exhibit, monument/memorial, or historic site? Also, make sure to discuss which site presented the most compelling history and why. Graduate student papers should also consider how these public history presentations connect with the arguments made by the authors we have read in the first several weeks of the course and discussions in class.

Assignment #3: Exploring History and Tragedy (10%) DUE WEEK 9
Write a minimum 1000-word paper discussing the interplay of history and commemoration in documenting national tragedies. For this assignment, you will examine the 9/11, Hurricane
Katrina, and Living Memorials websites listed in the syllabus for Week 9. This paper must consider the role public historians play in this process, drawing on the theoretical points discussed by Linenthal and Foote in the reading and discussion for the week. **Graduate students** will write a more extensive paper of a minimum 1500 words that includes a discussion of Linenthal’s *Unfinished Bombing*.

**Assignment #4: Grant Proposal (25% --Undergraduate; 30%-Graduate)**

**PRESENTATIONS DUE WEEK 11; FINAL DUE WEEK 15**

Each student will develop and write a major grant proposal and research design in collaboration with an external partner organization for a public history project that could be submitted to the Alabama Humanities Foundation. Depending on the needs of your partner organization, you may also choose to write a grant to a similar state or national foundation. Remember, you must have an external organization that will serve as a sponsor and you will work directly with that organization to develop the grant proposal. This will likely entail a meeting and follow-up conversations during the proposal development process. Your proposal could be for a museum exhibit, a community-based public program, an archival project, a lecture series, a teaching with historic places unit (for examples, see: [http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/twhp/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/twhp/index.htm)), or some other project designed to both apply historical knowledge to the understanding or interpretation of a problem or issue and then to present the findings of that effort to the public. In other words, your project must have some way of both documenting a specific issue you and the partner organization feel needs documentation and then sharing the fruits of that research with the public. Guidelines, forms, and grant descriptions are available at: [http://www.ahf.net/programs/grantsProgram.html](http://www.ahf.net/programs/grantsProgram.html).

This project is an opportunity for you to think creatively about what kind of history project you would like to see take place and to experience how such projects can become reality as you work in collaboration with a community partner. Public history projects are rarely, if ever, the work of a single individual. They involve collaboration among professionals in a variety of disciplines, community members, and a public audience. They are, from their inception, public projects. Your proposal and project will be graded in part on your vision and creativity and in part on how well you can write the proposal. Did you include all of the necessary information? Did you write clearly and effectively? Your ability to work effectively with the partner organization to meet their needs will also be considered.

Potential Partner Organizations include a variety of non-profit community organizations, such as: Historical Societies, Museums, Libraries, Schools, Colleges, and Universities (including our own), State and Local Historic Sites, State and Local Government Agencies, civic associations, social service organizations, and religious groups. I encourage you to speak with me early in the semester about potential partner organizations. Several entities have expressed interest in having students assist them on such public history projects and I can put you in touch with specific people who can serve as liaisons. For some ideas, consider looking at the Draughon Center’s list of partner organizations, [http://media.cla.auburn.edu/cah/partners.htm](http://media.cla.auburn.edu/cah/partners.htm), and the CLA Community and Civic Engagement Initiative, [http://www.cla.auburn.edu/cla/civic_engagement/partners.cfm](http://www.cla.auburn.edu/cla/civic_engagement/partners.cfm).

During **Week 11**, you will be responsible for delivering a seven-minute oral presentation of your proposal as if you were presenting it to a grants review committee. Your goal is to convince the
review committee that your project is worth their support. You must bring in a one-page summary of your grant project to provide to all other students (who will serve as your review panel) as well as any visuals that you might need to help the review panel understand your project. You will have an evaluation form to use for this review process. All students will evaluate the proposals of other students anonymously. Each student will receive the evaluation forms for his/her project and s/he can use these in refining the final grant proposal.

In addition to the proposal, students will be expected to implement an element of the proposal and turn this material into the instructor as well. You will briefly present these materials to the class during Week 15. I would encourage you to use the resources and staff expertise of the Digital Media Lab in Draughon Library as needed. So in addition to the proposal, this might take the form of a short film, an exhibit design that includes a floor plan, photos of objects, and text labels, a website, a walking tour brochure that might include a map and photographs, a program for a lecture series, or a teaching unit, etc. The options are endless. You need not have any special technical skills to carry out this portion of the project although I would encourage you to engage resources that may be unfamiliar to you.

Assignment #5: Feature Film Review (10% Undergraduate; 5%-Graduate) DUE WEEK 12
For this assignment, you will write a 500-750 word critical review of a feature (non-documentary) film that deals with historical subject matter. Papers should analyze the ways in which filmmakers present and/or manipulate historical events for the purposes of entertainment. We will examine several film review essays in class. Graduate student reviews should conform to film review guidelines of professional journals, such as the Journal of American History.

Final Examination (25%-Undergraduate; 20%-Graduate)
The final examination will take place during the university-designated time specified in the semester exam schedule. The final examination will consist of short answer questions and essays covering the readings and discussions from the course. A critical component will be your command of the vocabulary and major themes and issues shaping public history practice. In addition, graduate students will also be asked to apply their critical and analytical skills in exploring the historiography of public history and reflect upon important historical developments in the field of public history. Make-up exams will be allowed only with a University-approved excuse. You will not receive the same exam as that given to the rest of the class, but the format will generally be similar. No make-ups will occur before a scheduled exam.

Class Participation (10%)
While there will be some lecture, this class revolves around meaningful discussion of the readings, thus your presence is extremely important as is your preparation for each class. You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss that day’s topic and readings and participate in discussion. I will ask everyone to choose a class session where they will be responsible for opening class discussion by asking questions of the group and making links between readings. Participation grades are based on the quality and frequency of your participation in class, including demonstrating proper preparation for class through familiarity with readings and other assigned material, answering questions with correct answers based on coursework, and contributing substantively to class discussions with remarks grounded in the coursework and assignments. For undergraduate students, if you attend class regularly and participate in discussions in a constructive and meaningful manner, you will receive at least a B for the
participation component of your final grade. If, in addition, your participation also demonstrates basic mastery of the material, you will receive an A for the participation component of your final grade. In order to receive an A for this component, graduate students are expected to demonstrate not only mastery of the readings but an ability to move beyond the readings by analyzing and connecting issues across time and place. The Auburn Classroom Behavior Policy is in effect; please refer to the Tiger Cub for the details of this policy.

There are no unannounced quizzes. I expect you to come to class having read the assigned material and prepared to discuss it. Student names and email addresses may be shared with the students in this class for the purpose of class projects.

**Justification for Graduate Credit**
Graduate student objectives, required readings, assignments, and grading/evaluation differ as described in the sections above and in the course schedule listed below. The content of this course develops critical and analytical skills of students including their application of the relevant literature; it has rigorous standards for student evaluation, and the course instructor is a member of the graduate faculty.

**Absences and Make-Ups**
You are all responsible adults and can make decisions about your priorities. If you choose not to attend class for whatever reason, that is your prerogative. You should consider the impact such decisions have on your learning, your engagement with your colleagues, and your commitment to your external partner. If your absence is due to your own illness or the serious illness of an immediate family member, the death of a member of your immediate family, trips for student organizations sponsored by an academic unit, trips for University classes, trips for participation in intercollegiate athletic events, subpoena for a court appearance, or a religious holiday AND your absence causes you to miss turning in an assignment on time, please submit an appropriate written excuse. Otherwise, please do not submit excuses for missed classes.

Students who wish to have an excused absence from this class for any other reason must contact the instructor in advance of the absence to request permission. The instructor will weigh the merits of the request and render a decision. When feasible, the student must notify the instructor prior to the occurrence of any excused absences, but in no case shall such notification occur more than one week after the absence. Appropriate documentation for all excused absences is required. Please see the Tiger Cub for more information on excused absences.

**Make-Up Policy:** Make-ups for all (in and out of class) missed and late work are allowed with proper University-approved excuses within one week of the original due date. Arrangement to make up a missed major examination due to properly authorized excused absences must be initiated by the student within one week from the end of the period of the excused absences. Except in unusual circumstances, such as continued absence of the student or the advent of University holidays, a make-up exam will take place within two weeks from the time that the student initiates arrangements for it. Except in extraordinary circumstances, no make-up exams will be arranged during the last three days before the final exam period begins.
**Academic Honesty Policy:** All portions of the Auburn University student academic honesty code (Title XII) found in the *Tiger Cub* will apply to this class. All academic honesty violations or alleged violations of the SGA Code of Laws will be reported to the Office of the Provost, which will then refer the case to the Academic Honesty Committee.

**Withdrawal**
Students may withdraw from the course (although with a W on their transcript) until midsemester.

**Public History Resources**
There are several public history resources with which you should all familiarize yourself. The [National Council on Public History](https://www.nationalcouncilonpublichistory.org) is the major professional association for public historians and its website contains information concerning job opportunities, professional conferences and workshops, publications and other resources. The [Public History Resource Center](https://www.pbrcenter.org) promotes networking, scholarship, information, and education in public history and developed from a student project at the University of Maryland.

Other specialized sites deal with particular aspects of public history. Historic preservation students at several universities banded together to establish [PreserveNet](https://www.preservenet.org) in 1994, which contains news, job postings, calls for advocacy and internship opportunities for preservationists. The [American Association for State and Local History](https://www.aaslh.org) is the organization of choice for many local historians, historic site managers, and history museum workers. The [Society of American Archivists](https://www.societyofamericanchronicists.org) serves as the principal North American organization for the archival profession. The [Oral History Association](https://www ora.org) generates scholarship concerning the relationship between human memory and history and publishes a journal, *Oral History Review*. The [Center for History and New Media](https://chnm.gmu.edu) at George Mason University is a wonderful source of information for historians interested in digital projects. The [National Coalition for History](https://www.nationalcoalitionforhistory.org) is a non-profit educational organization that provides leadership in history-related advocacy, acting as a clearinghouse for news and information concerning history legislation and political developments. All students should read its updates and subscribe to its RSS feed.

**Course Schedule**
All readings are to be completed before the class date on which they are listed.

**Week 1: Introduction: What is Public History?**
Carl Becker, “Everyman His Own Historian,” *American Historical Review* 37:2 (January 1932): 221-236. (Friday)

**CLASS WILL NOT MEET on FRIDAY, AUGUST 21 but you are responsible for the above reading**
Week 2: Understanding the “Public” in Public History
Rosenzweig and Thelen, Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life
Monday: pp. 1-88; Wednesday: pp. 89-146 plus peruse appendices; Friday: pp. 147-207

Blogging Public History (Wednesday): Administer the Rosenzweig/Thelen survey to someone who is not a professional historian or history student and see how the results compare with the data presented in the book. Come to class prepared to discuss the responses and consider what such responses suggest about how the public engages the past.

Week 3: Community History and Sense of Place
Archibald, The New Town Square: Museums and Communities in Transition
(Monday: pp. 1-75; Wednesday: pp. 77-156, Friday: pp. 157-217)

Blogging Public History (Wednesday): Post to the class blog concerning the history of some specific place or locality that you find meaningful.

Week 4 – History and Public History -Discussion Questions (Wednesday)
No Class- Labor Day Holiday (Monday)

Tyrrell, Historians in Public: The Practice of American History, 1890-1970
Graduates read entire book, pp. 1-129 (Wednesday), pp. 130-255 (Friday); Undergrads read pp. 1-107 (Wednesday) and pp.153-255 (Friday). Also Read Tyrrell Interview

Week 5: Monumental History --Discussion Questions (Wednesday)
ASSIGNMENT #2- Public History Encounter-DUE MONDAY
Levinson Written in Stone: Public Monuments in Changing Societies (Wednesday: pp. 1-74; Friday: pp. 75-139)

Additional Graduate Readings:
Loewen, Lies Across America, 15-50, 239-250, 443-454, 460-467 ER

Week 6: History Museums & U.S. Society

Blogging Public History (Wednesday): Review “The Lost Museum” website and post a brief assessment of the site to the class blog, considering the ways in which this virtual museum functions and how the experience of visiting it relates to issues raised by the readings. Make sure to watch the introductory video before exploring the full site.
Week 7: Culture Wars and History Wars: Controversy and Ethics in Public History
Discussion Questions (Wednesday)

Week 8: Public History and Memory
“Roundtable Responses to David Glassberg’s ‘Public History and the Study of Memory’,,” Public Historian 19 (Spring 1997): 31-72. (Wednesday) ER
“Sites of Conscience: Opening Historic Sites for Civic Dialogue,” Public Historian (February 2008), articles by Secenko and Russell-Ciardì; Madikida, Segal, and van den Berg; Baiesi, Gigli, Monicelli, and Pellizzoli; Russell-Ciardì; Layne; Guembe; and Munk, pp. 9-79. Also see: http://www.sitesofconscience.org/en/ (Friday)

Blogging Public History (February 25): Examine the City Lore website focusing on the “Place Matters” section, which includes several walking tours and a census of places. Post your response to the site on the class blog, considering how, through the census of places (top right on site) and walking tours (bottom left on site), these projects help foster a sense of place and memory on the urban landscape.

Week 9-Tragic Memories
ASSIGNMENT #3-- Exploring History and Tragedy-DUE FRIDAY

The September 11 Digital Archive
Hurricane Digital Memory Bank
Living Memorials Project
Week 10: Historic Preservation and CRM
Max Page and Randall Mason, *Giving Preservation a History*, Introduction (Monday) ER
Selection from Tom King, *Thinking about Cultural Resource Management: Essays from the Edge*. (Wednesday) ER
Gail Lee Dubrow and Jennifer B. Goodman, *Restoring Women’s History Through Historic Preservation*, Chapter 1. (Friday) ER

Blogging Public History (Wednesday): Review the Weekly List on the National Register of Historic Places. Choose a listed property and read the documentation. Post to the blog a brief discussion of the historical and historic preservation issues raised by the nominated property.

Additionally, write a cover letter geared toward employment in the field of public history. The letter should be tailored to a particular aspect of public history (museum educator, historic preservationist, archivist, etc.) and a particular posted employment opportunity.

Week 11: Public History, Film, & New Media
GRANT PROPOSAL PRESENTATIONS IN CLASS--Individual Presentations to class will take place all week—Schedule TBD

Carl Smith, “Can You Do Serious History on the Web?” (Wednesday)

The following two articles from *Public Historian* 25:3, “Historians Behind the Camera”:
Visit: http://www.backstoryradio.org/ (Friday)

Week 12: Historic Sites and Public History
Assignment #5 DUE Feature Film Review-WEDNESDAY
Cathy Stanton, *The Lowell Experiment: Public History in a Postindustrial City* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006) (Grads read entire book; undergrads read prologue and Chapter 1) ER (Monday)
Patricia West, “Uncovering and Interpreting Women’s History at Historic House Museums” in Dubrow and Goodman, *Restoring Women’s History Through Historic Preservation*. (Friday) ER

Blogging Public History (Wednesday): Your blog posting should reflect on your work with your community partner and explore how the proposed project fosters civic engagement, which may include developing civic sensitivity, participating in building civil society, and benefiting the common good. Might your project help empower people to make positive social change? In what ways has your experience with your external partner led you to a new understanding of what it means to be an engaged citizen of a community?
Week 13: Local History—Discussion Questions (Wednesday)
Breen, *Imagining the Past: East Hampton Histories*
Graduates read entire book, pp. 1-74 (Monday), pp. 75-140 (Wednesday) and pp. 141-297 (Friday); Undergrads read pp. 1-74 (Monday), pp. 75-140 (Wednesday), pp. 141-207 (Friday)

Week 14: Oral History
Donald A. Ritchie, *Doing Oral History*, Chapter 1. (Wednesday) ER
Steve Estes, “*Ask and Tell: Gay Veterans, Identity, and Oral History on a Civil Rights Frontier,*” *Oral History Review* (32:2) (Summer/Fall 2005): 21-47. (Friday)

Blogging Public History (Wednesday): Read an oral history of interest to you from one of collections listed below. You should review all of the websites, although you only need to choose one interview to read. In posting your response to the interview on the course blog, provide a brief summary of the oral history and consider how this particular story might be used in a public history setting.

UC-Berkeley Regional Oral History Office
Columbia Oral History Research Office
Rutgers Oral History Archives

Week 15: Preserving History: Heritage Tourism/Libraries and Archives
Assignment #4 DUE-Grant Proposal-WEDNESDAY
Presentation of Proposal Materials to Class-Schedule TBD

Mark Madison, “*Conserving Conservation: Field Notes from an Animal Archive,*” *Public Historian* 26:1 (February 2004): 145–156. (Monday)

Presidential Libraries and Museums

Additional Graduate Readings:
Jeanette Allis Bastian, “Whispers in the Archives: Finding the Voices of the Colonized in the Records of the Colonizer” in Proctor, Cook, and Williams eds., *Political Pressure and the Archival Record*. (Friday) ER

FINAL EXAM—MONDAY DECEMBER 14, 8-10:30