

Stephen F. Austin State University

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Nacogdoches, Texas 75962

Department of History
Dr. Jere Jackson

Syllabus for History 536: Topics in Public History Local History, Tuesday, 6-8:30 PM, Fall 2007

I. Course Description and Goals

Public History, by its very nature, has to respond to changing needs and interests in the public arena. Historic preservation might be the pressing need one semester and local history the next. The purpose of a topical approach is to allow the flexibility in the department's course offerings, while tying the curriculum to certain broad topics of perennial interest and importance to public history. There is a broad range of common interests in the topics grouped together under this course heading: they are all ways to put history to work in the real world. Professionals in public history need to be able also to utilize the work of preservationists, local historians, and cultural resource management within communities. **This course will help students read the needs of communities, identify problems, and suggest resources and solutions.**

Writing, verbal, and analytical skills are needed; readings, discussions, in-class participation and presentations, and the completion of a research presentation. In general the goals of this course are:

- to acquaint students with the options other than teaching that utilize the resources and skills of history;
- to provide a foundation for advanced courses in any one of the several fields of public history offered by this History Department or in other departments at other institutions;
- to instill an appreciation for working with various publics and to instill a desire to meet the public's needs for history in some capacity;
- to introduce the student to the way new digital media and technologies have begun to transform the ways we experience history; how we write, present, and teach the past—in particular, local history. We will examine historical work—by scholars, teachers, archivists, museum curators, and popular historians—on the web. Historical and critical readings will provide the basis for the hands-on section of the course in which students will develop pilot online history projects.

II. Texts

This course has no required textbook. Recommended texts (on reserve in the library), plus articles and book excerpts (hereafter referred to as "readings"), will be distributed by the instructor in the classroom or on the web. Combined, they represent a basic body of information upon which to rest your class assignments and from which to realize the goals of the course. There will be oral examinations over the text and assigned readings.

Beyond the text and readings, you will be expected to do original research in journals, books, and public and institutional documents, as well as on the web, and do such field exercises as interviews, site visitations, and institutional communication, focused on the assignments in the course. A bibliography will be distributed to provide a start for this research.

III. Course Requirements

A. There are four main requirements for this course:

1. Service learning and active participation in class discussions, both online and in class.

It is appropriate that this type of course involve a growing trend to integrate into an academic course some applications of its material in the community at large, or "service learning." In History 536, this will be merged in with class participation as part of your

- grade. Service learning will involve working with the archival collection of the East Texas Research Center in the Steen Library. This should involve about 20 hours of work during the semester. A written report of your activities is expected.
2. *Research and writing of a Texas State Historical Marker Application*
One important way to get historical information out to the public is to place Texas State Historical Markers at sites around the cities and the state. Every person in the class will be responsible for writing a Texas Historical Marker Application using the guidelines they provide. Part of this assignment will involve reading a rough draft of another student's marker proposal and making a critique both in written and oral forms. This will be separately graded exercise. Guidelines for the critique will be provided.
 3. *Oral and Digital History Workshops*
The class will discuss at length the methods and uses of oral history. Every student must conduct at least two oral interviews, follow established oral history practices. In addition, every student in the class will be expected to learn how to review and construct web sites for use in a local history project. This will mean becoming familiar with web site creation software, such as Adobe's *Dreamweaver* or Netscape's *Composer*. A digital history workshop will be part of the assignments in the course. A certain proficiency will be necessary in order to complete the major project.
 4. *A Digital Public History Project*
Each student must submit a major project for the semester. This project must be discussed and approved between the professor and each student before commencing work. The materials and research assembled on the project of your choice must be presented on the web. It will involve researching literature (electronic and paper) on similar projects, on historical skills to be used, and on activities and issues related to such a project. It will also entail communication with appropriate professional organizations, visits to relevant places associated with this project, perhaps interviews with individuals associated with the ideas involved, and the accumulation of manuals and similar guides to the various activities this field encompasses. The final presentation of the project will be on the CETS website.

B. Grading Policy

In addition to class participating and presentations, this course requires the satisfactory completion of the oral, written, and digital projects. The instructor will offer advice and must consent to the topics chosen by students for term projects. Student must be prepared to discuss their research with other graduate students and must follow professional standards. Written material must be typed, should include footnotes (or endnotes), and provide complete bibliographies. Citation style should conform to one of the following: Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers*, or *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Do not use *The MLA Handbook*. Because this course is intended to orient students to work in a professional career, it is essential that students observe the standard rules of communication clearly, concisely, and correctly. Points will be deducted for errors in grammar and mechanics.

The weight of these various assignments on the course grade is as follows:

Service Project (ETRC)	10%
Digital Workshops	10%
Historical Marker App.	25%
Short Assignments & Class Participation	20%
Semester Project	<u>35%</u>
	100%

Attendance will be noted and lack of attendance will affect your final grade. Late assignments will be penalized. Withdrawals from this course are the responsibility of the student. Incomplete grades will be given only if the student has passed the first half of the course and can not complete the course due to documented illness or family crisis. Academic misconduct in this course will cause the student to fail the course. Plagiarism will be rewarded by a grade of "F" for the semester. Plagiarism is the turning in

of assignments that you did not produce without acknowledging who really produced it. Students with disabilities are encouraged to identify their status by providing documentation to the Office of Disabled Students which will then provide recommendations to me.

IV. Contact Information

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Office Hours

Office: Liberal Arts North 419-420
Hours: Monday, Thursday, and Friday by appointment.
Tuesday 4-6 PM or by appointment.
Wednesday 2-4 PM or by appointment

V. Suggested Bibliography

The following books will be on reserve in the Steen Library:

Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990).
James B. Gardner and Peter S. Lapaglia, eds., *Public History: Essays from the Field* (Rev. Ed.; Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing, 2006).
David E. Kyvig and Myron A. Mar, *Nearby History* (Rowman & Littlefield) 2nd edition.
Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).
Michael E. Stevens and Steven B. Burg, *Editing Historical Documents: A Handbook of Practice* (Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 1997).

The following books should be in everyone's library and will be used in all writing assignments:

Kate Turbrian, *A Manual for Writers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).
William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White, *The Elements of Style* (New York: Allyn and Bacon).

The following books are useful in public history:

Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret Jacobs, *Telling the Truth About History* (New York: Norton, 1994).
Diane Barthel, *Historic Preservation: Collective Memory and Historical Identity* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1996).
Paul Boyer, *Fallout: A Historian Reflects on America's Half-century Encounter with Nuclear Weapons* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1998).
Kristin Ann Hass, *Carried to the Wall: American Memory and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).
Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes in Public History* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997).
Edward T. Linenthal, *Preserving Memory: The Struggle to Create America's Holocaust Museum* (New York: Penguin Books, 1995).
Edward T. Linenthal and Tom Engelhardt, editors, *History Wars: The Enola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past* (New York: Henry Holt, 1996).
George Lipsitz, *Time Passages: Collective Memory and American Popular Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990).
Meta Mendel-Reyes, *Reclaiming Democracy: The Sixties in Politics and Memory* (New York: Routledge, 1996).
David Thelen, editor, *Memory and American History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989).
Mike Wallace, *Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American Memory* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996).