

History in Everyday Life

HISU 393-05

Spring 2008

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Introduction

This course will study how we use history in everyday life. The novelist William Faulkner once said “The past is not dead. In fact, it's not even past.” We will examine this living past in the United States from our personal histories to the history of the nation.

Emphasis will be placed on developing a critical understanding of the presentation of history in museums, documentaries, popular books, the World Wide Web, and other media.

Readings

Readings for the course are online and listed below.

In addition to the online readings, for each class each student should identify one web site related to the topic of the evening's presentation. You should view the web site and be prepared to show the class the website using the internet connection on the class computer. You should be prepared to evaluate the web site for the class.

Review this online web page on evaluating public history web sites. Use this as a guide for thinking about the web sites you view and discuss. Debra DeRuyver, Jennifer Evans, James Melzer, and Emma Wilmer. “Rating System for Evaluating Public History Web Sites.” 2000. www.publichistory.org/reviews/rating_system.html.

This page provides a guide for the evaluation of history and public history web sites. Review the basic criteria and the public history specific criteria for ideas on evaluating web sites

Museum or historic site review

A paper of approximately 10 double-spaced typed pages is required. Illustrations (photos, etc.) will enhance the paper but are in addition to the 10 page written requirement. The paper should be based on your visit to a museum or historic site. The paper is due on April 21. You will make an oral presentation of your paper to the class on April 21 or April 28. The format and length of the presentation will depend on the number of students in the class and will be announced later.

The paper should integrate your site visit, reading about the site, and class notes into a well-written paper. Please remember that simply visiting a museum or historic site is not enough. You must show in the paper that you consulted such sources as books, articles, newspapers, or the World Wide Web.

Select a site for your visit and discuss it with me by February 11. Please discuss any major changes in your topic with me before making them.

Your paper should have two major components: a review of the site and placement of it into a broad historic context. A paper lacking one of these elements is not acceptable.

The site review component should describe the site and evaluate it. Your personal reaction could be a part of the evaluation but only a small part of your investigation of the site. Include your appraisal of the site's procedures to communicate with the public including interpreters, guides, and written material.

Second, you should place the site in a broad context. You should relate the site to some of the major themes we are developing in this course. That is, how does your museum or historic site compare to others you have read about or heard about in the course?

Course Policies and Procedures

This course will be conducted by lectures with discussion of the online readings at appropriate points in the semester. DVDs will be shown to enhance your visual experience of history. PowerPoint lectures will illustrate the course. Guest speakers will discuss some topics.

Attendance. I will take attendance occasionally. Your presence in class will be beneficial to your performance in this course. Material from lectures (both oral and visual) will be tested in the examinations.

Late assignments. My desire to give good grades will be reduced if papers are turned in late without good reason.

Academic honesty. Students will follow the requirements of academic honesty stated in the Tulane University catalog.

Examinations

A midterm exam and a final exam.

Grading

Course grade will be based on:

Museum or historic site review	30%
Midterm exam	35%
Final exam	35%

Course Outline

You should complete the reading assignments by the dates specified. The topics listed in the schedule will be covered in the course but not necessarily on the date shown if we move faster or slower than I anticipate.

Week 1: January 14. Introduction to the Course

Week 2: January 21. Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday

Week 3: January 28. History on the Internet. Information Resources

Reading:

- Debra DeRuyver, Jennifer Evans, James Melzer, and Emma Wilmer. "Rating System for Evaluating Public History Web Sites." 2000. http://www.publhistory.org/reviews/rating_system.html . This page provides a guide for the evaluation of history and public history web sites. Review the basic criteria and the public history specific criteria for ideas on evaluating web sites
- Carl Becker, "Everyman His Own Historian," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 37, Issue 2 (January 1932), 221-236. In JSTOR online at Tulane Library.
- Allan Kulikoff. "Early American History: It's free and on the Web!" <http://www.common-place.org/vol-08/no-01/kulikoff/>

Week 4: February 4. Carnival break

Week 5: February 11. Historic Preservation

Reading:

Common Ground. Summer 2007 issue. Read the articles by

- Joe Baker, "Landfall: Jamestown and the Beginnings of America" and
- Joe Flanagan, "Housing the Faith: Places of Worship through the Lens of the Historic American Buildings Survey." <http://commonground.cr.nps.gov/pdf/57258LowRes.pdf>

Week 6. February 18. Documenting Katrina and Historical Documentaries

Guest Presenter: Dr. Michael Mizell-Nelson (University of New Orleans)

Reading:

- Carol Berkin. "So You Want to be in Pictures: Tips from a Talking Head." *Organization of American Historians Newsletter*, Vol 33, No 1 (February 2005), (<http://www.oah.org/pubs/nl/2005feb/berkin.html>)
- Gerald Herman. "Creating the Twenty-First Century 'Historian for All Seasons'." *The Public Historian*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (Summer 2003), 93-102. In JSTOR online at Tulane Library.

Week 7: February 25. Midterm Exam

Week 8: March 3. Historical Memory

Reading:

- David Glassberg, "Public History and the Study of Memory." *The Public Historian*, Vol 18, No, 2 (Spring 1996), 7-23. In JSTOR online at Tulane Library.

Week 9: March 10. Museums and Historic Sites

Reading:

- Frances Delmar. "Shouldering Independence." *Common-Place*, Vol 2, No. 4 (July 2002). <http://www.common-place.org/pastimes/2002-07.shtml>
- Jacki Thompson Rand. "Why I Can't Visit the National Museum of the American Indian: Reflections of an accidental privileged insider, 1989-1994." *Common-Place*, Vol 7, No 4 (July 2007). <http://www.common-place.org/vol-07/no-04/rand/>

Week 10: March 17. Spring break**Week 11: March 24. Spring break**

Week 12: March 31. Popular History

Reading:

- Steven Biel. "Parson Weems Fights Fascists: G. W. and the cherry tree in 1939." *Common-Place*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (July 2006). <http://www.common-place.org/vol-06/no-04/biel/>
- Eric Stange. "Liten Up." *Common-Place*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (October 2003). <http://www.common-place.org/vox-pop/200310.shtml>

Week 13: April 7. Mississippi River. Travel and Heritage Tourism.

Reading:

- James A. Percoco. "A Lincoln Pilgrimage." *Organization of American Historians Newsletter*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (August 2006). <http://www.oah.org/pubs/nl/2006aug/percoco.html>
- James A. Percoco. "A March between the Past and the Future." *Organization of American Historians Newsletter*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (May 2005). <http://www.oah.org/pubs/nl/2005may/percoco.html>

Week 14: April 14. Careers in Public History

Reading:

- Shelley Bookspan, "Something Ventured, Many Things Gained: Reflections on Being a Historian-Entrepreneur," *The Public Historian*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (Winter 2006), 67-74. In JSTOR online at Tulane Library.

Week 15: April 21: Student Presentations

Week 16: April 28. Conclusion

Final examination. May 5.
