

History 5400
Introduction to Public History
University of West Georgia
Fall 2007

Instructor and class meetings:

Dr. Joe Anderson, Department of History, University of West Georgia, 678-839-6043,
jlanders@westga.edu. Office hours are Mondays and Wednesdays 1-4 PM at 207
Pafford or by appointment at 3221 TLC.

Class meets on Mondays from 5:30 until 8:00 in Pafford 107.

Course description and objectives:

There are five goals for this course:

- 1.) To identify and understand the intellectual, ethical, and professional issues that public historians confront.
- 2.) To 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 the field of public history.
- 3.) To understand important historical developments in the field of public history.
- 4.) To provide field experience in public history.
- 5.) To help students understand the many aspects of employment in the field of public history.

Academic Honesty

Academic honesty is expected of all students. Any student caught cheating will receive an F for the course.

Required Readings

Books

Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life*.

Edward T. Linenthal and Tom Engelhart, eds., *History Wars: The Enola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past*.

Mike Wallace, *Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American Memory*.

David Glassberg, *Sense of History: The Place of the Past in American Life*.

James B. Gardner and Peter S. LaPaglia, *Public History: Essays from the Field*.

Jennifer L. Eichstedt and Stephen Small, *Representations of Slavery: Race and Ideology in Southern Plantation Museums*.

Edward T. Linenthal, *Preserving Memory: The Struggle to Create America's Holocaust Museum*.

Articles and Book Chapters

Carl Becker, "Everyman His Own Historian," *American Historical Review* 37(1932): 221-236. [available on JSTOR]

Catherine M. Cameron and John B. Gatewood, "Excursions in the Un-Remembered Past:

- What People Want from Visits to Historical Sites,” *The Public Historian* 22(3) (Summer 2000): 107-127. [JSTOR]
- William J. Murtagh, *Keeping Time: The History and Theory of Preservation in America*, chapters 1 and 5 [ereserve].
- Gary Kulik, “Designing the Past: History-Museum Exhibitions from Peale to the Present,” in Warren Leon and Roy Rosenzweig, editors, *History Museums in the United States, A Critical Assessment* [ereserve].
- John S. Patterson, “From Battleground to Pleasure Ground: Gettysburg as a Historic Site,” in Warren Leon and Roy Rosenzweig, editors, *History Museums in the United States, A Critical Assessment* [ereserve].
- David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*, chapter 1 [ereserve].
- Catherine M. Lewis, *The Changing Face of Public History: The Chicago Historical Society and the Transformation of an American Museum*, chapter 5. [ereserve].
- Timothy B. Smith, “Civil War Battlefield Preservation in Tennessee: A Nashville Military Park Case Study,” *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 2005 64(3): 236-247 [reserve].
- Eric Gable and Richard Handler, “The Authority of Documents at Some American History Museums,” *Journal of American History* 1994 81(1): 119-136 [JSTOR].
- Cary Carson, “Lost in the Fun House: A Commentary on Anthropologists’ First Contact with History Museums,” *Journal of American History* 1994 81(1):137-150 [JSTOR]

*Assigned websites listed on the designated date with addresses.

Course Assignments and Grades

Participation (20 points): As a graduate course, much of your grade depends on participation in class discussion. Aside from occasional presentations by visiting public historians, the class is discussion based. Students should come to class prepared to discuss assigned readings, pay close attention to guest speakers, and ask questions of those speakers. Students will be asked to extend the professional courtesy of sending one or more thank you notes to speakers.

Book Reviews (60 points): Students will write six book reviews of 1,000 to 1,250 words in length over assigned course books. Reviews will be double spaced, 12 point font, standard margins, including page numbers, and staple bound. Five of those reviews will be over books listed in the required reading section of the syllabus. Students will also select one book to review from the list that accompanies the syllabus, most of which are available at UWG or through GIL. Students may write a review of a book that is not on the list with prior approval of the instructor. No electronic copies, please.

Interpreting Slavery Paper (20 points): Graduate Students will write a 2,000-2,500 word paper focusing on the interpretation of slavery at plantation/agriculture museums. The paper will be based on Eichstedt and Small *Representations of Slavery: Race and Ideology in Southern Plantation Museums* and a visit to a museum that interprets plantation life or slavery. Students may visit any of the following sites for to fulfill the assignment. Students may visit another site with prior approval of the instructor.

- Bulloch Hall, Roswell, Georgia

- Archibald Smith Plantation Home, Roswell, Georgia
- Historic Barrington Hall, Roswell, Georgia
- Antebellum Plantation and Farmyard, Stone Mountain Park, Atlanta, Georgia
- Westville, Lumpkin, Georgia
- Tullie Smith Farm, Atlanta History Center
- Tannehill Ironworks State Historical Park, Birmingham, Alabama

Exhibit Review (10 points): Students will visit a museum on their own or as part of the optional field trip and write a review of an exhibit within that museum (different than the one used for the interpreting slavery paper).

Examples of sites/exhibits to review include, but not limited to:

- “Courage to Lead,” Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site (**free**)
- “Turning Point: The American Civil War,” Atlanta History Center
- “And Still I Rise...”, Apex Museum, Atlanta
- Roosevelt’s Little White House State Historic Site

For examples of reviews students may look at the journal *Public History*. An interesting model is available on line through Project Muse at the UWG Library website. See: Stefan Schmitt, “Half a Century of Digital Gaming: Game On, at the Science Museum, London, 21 October 2006-February 2007, *Technology and Culture* (July 2007): 582-588.

Battlefield Issues Summary Statement (5 points): Students will write a 250-500 word essay based on a review of one year’s worth of Georgia Battlefield Association newsletters identifying major issues in Georgia battlefield preservation.

Resume (5 points): Students will write a resume geared toward employment in the field of public history. Each student will create a resume that is tailored to a particular aspect of public history (museum educator, archivist, etc.). On the designated class day, students will bring two copies of their completed, copyedited resumes for a collaborative workshop to strengthen those resumes.

Project (10 points): Graduate students will work in a team to develop conceptual plans for public history projects on the history of the Little Tallapoosa Watershed. Students will study a set of documents provided by the instructor and develop a work plan to direct future exploration of the ways in which groups and individuals have utilized the river from the beginning of human habitation to the present. Prepare a report as if you were going to undertake these future projects or assist another person in this work. Each student will be responsible for submitting a brief statement on their individual contributions to the project. Project and personal statements are due Dec. 10.

Elements of the project will include;

- Potential resources (people, government records, manuscripts, etc.)
- Potential interpretive themes
- Potential audiences/constituents/stakeholders
- Potential funding sources-private/public
- Future public history projects (film, exhibits, programs, etc.)

Field Trip (5 points): Students will participate in an all day field trip on October 27 to three historic sites. Mark your calendars today.

Course Grade: >90%=A; 80-89%=B; 70-79%=C; 60-69%=D; 59% and less=F.

Class Schedule

Note: Readings listed for each class meeting are due in advance. Writing assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date listed. **Schedule is subject to change!**

August 20 Introductions and Orientation

August 27 Understanding the “Public” in Public History, I
Reading Due: *Presence of the Past*, introduction-chapter 4, Becker,
“Everyman his own historian” [available on JSTOR].

September 3 No Class—Labor Day

September 10 Understanding the “Public” in Public History, II
Reading Due: *Presence of the Past*, chapter 4-afterthoughts, Cameron and
Gatewood, “Excursions into the Un-Remembered Past” [JSTOR].
Paper Due: Review of *Presence of the Past*

September 17 Defining the Field, I
Reading Due: *Public History: Essays from the Field*, ix-228

September 24 Defining the Field, II
Guest speaker: Arden Williams, Georgia Humanities Council
Reading Due: *Public History: Essays from the Field*, 231-395

October 1 Historic Preservation
Guest Speaker, Terri Lotti, Georgia DOT Archaeologist
Reading Due: Murtagh, *Keeping Time: The History and Theory of Preservation in America*, chapters 1, 5; Wallace, *Mickey Mouse History*, Section III; “How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation,” National Register Bulletin #15, available online at:
www.nps.gov/nps/nr/publications/bulletins.htm
Paper Due: Student choice book review

October 8 The History of History Museums
Reading Due: Kulik, “Designing the Past: History-Museum Exhibitions from Peale to the Present”; Wallace, *Mickey Mouse History*, iv-114.

October 15 Controversy and Ethics in Public History, I
Reading Due: Linenthal and Engelhardt, *History Wars*; Wallace, *Mickey Mouse History*, 115-129, 170-318.
Paper Due: Review of *History Wars*

- October 22 History, Heritage Tourism, and Economic Development
Guest speaker: Janet Cochran, Georgia Tourism Division Regional Representative
Reading Due: Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*,
chapter 1; “2005 Travel Profile---Georgia State Travelers’ Statistics and
Travel Economic Impact Analysis at:
<http://ftp.itt.state.ga.us/georgia/GACounty2005.pdf>
- October 27 Class Trip
Visit to Westville, Columbus Museum, and Port Columbus
- October 29 Museums and Communities
Guest speaker: Dr. Tim Schroer
Reading Due: Lewis, *The Changing Face of Public History*,
chapter 5.
Paper Due: Review of *Preserving Memory*
- November 5 Battlefield Preservation: Politics, Policies, and the Public
Guest speaker: Barry Brown, Georgia Battlefield Commission
Reading Due: Patterson, “From Battle Ground to Pleasure Ground:
Gettysburg as a Historic Site”; Smith, “Civil War Battlefield Preservation
in Tennessee: A Nashville Military Park Case Study”; *Mickey Mouse
History*, 160-174; Georgia Battlefield Association at
www.georgiabattlefields.org; and “History Under Siege” at Civil War
Preservation Trust, www.civilwar.org/news/topten2007/
Paper Due: Battlefield Issues Summary Statement
- November 12 Controversy and Ethics in Public History, II
Reading Due: Gable and Handler, “The Authority of Documents at Some
American History Museums” [JSTOR]; Cary Carson, “Lost in the Fun
House: A Commentary on Anthropologists’ First Contact with History
Museums” [JSTOR]; *Mickey Mouse History*, 134-157.
- November 19 No Class—Field Trip Credit
Due: Exhibit Review---Put in Dr. Anderson’s mailbox in the History Dept. No
electronic copies, please.
- November 26 Resume Workshop
Due: Two copies of your resume
Paper Due: Review of *Mickey Mouse History*
- December 3 Memory and History
Reading Due: *Sense of History*; *Mickey Mouse History*, 250-268.
Paper Due: Review of *Sense of History*
- December 10 **Due: Project and Interpreting Slavery Paper**