

History 6303
Museum Education and Interpretation
University of West Georgia/Atlanta History Center
Spring 2007

Instructor

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Class Meeting

Class meets from 10:00 AM to 12:30 PM Wednesdays at small classroom at the AHC. Students are also required to spend fifteen (15) hours in a practicum, as detailed below. The AHC is located at 130 West Paces Ferry Road NW, Atlanta, Georgia.

Course Description

“This course is an examination of the educational functions of a museum including interpretive principles and techniques, school programs, adult and community programs, staffing, marketing, and other programming logistics. This class is taught in association with the Atlanta History Center.”—UWG Course Catalog

The goal of this class is to prepare public history students to plan, implement, and evaluate public programs in a museum setting. Students will gain theoretical knowledge about the field of interpretation and education as well as gain historical perspective about trends in the field. The instructor, Atlanta History Center (AHC) staff members, and guest speakers will facilitate learning through discussion, presentations, and fieldwork.

Students will 1.) come to class prepared to participate in discussions, 2.) observe and assist in conducting and evaluating programs at the AHC, and 3.) develop/revise programs or program plans at the AHC and 4.) write a grant proposal to support Students will use these “hands-on” experiences to develop a portfolio due late in the semester. The portfolios are used to demonstrate student learning and to assist students in future job searches.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to demonstrate:

1. Familiarity with literature in the field of museum education and interpretation;
2. Knowledge of theory and ethics of museum education and interpretation;
3. An understanding of learning theory as it relates to museum education;
4. Knowledge of different kinds of museum programming, including school tours, adult groups, as well as family and community programs;

5. Knowledge of educational and interpretive techniques, from guided tours, to object-based learning and living history interpretation;
6. Practical skills in museum education, including the development of interpretive plans and budgets, educational materials for museum programs, demonstration of how objects can be used for history education, and program evaluation;
7. Knowledge of the Quality Core Curriculum in Georgia and the ways in which school programs should incorporate and reflect those standards.

Required Readings

Available at bookstore

John H. Falk and Lynn D. Dierkling, *Learning from Museums: Visitor Experiences and the Making of Meaning*.

George E. Hein, *Learning in the Museum*.

Barbara Abramoff Levy, Sandra Mackenzie Lloyd, and Susan Porter Schreiber, *Great Tours!: Thematic Tours and Guide Training for Historic Sites*.

Bonnie Pitman, ed., *Presence of Mind: Museums and the Spirit of Learning*.

On Reserve

- Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage*.
- William T. Alderson and Shirley Payne Low, *The Interpretation of Historic Sites*.
- Selected articles and chapters are also on reserve, listed on the syllabus by week.
- Other readings may be assigned throughout the semester.

Reading assignments are heavier in the first third of the semester, while project work is heavier in the remainder of the semester. Plan your schedules accordingly.

Course Requirements and Assignments

All assignments are due on the date listed on the syllabus. Students may turn assignments in early. Late assignments will be reduced by 10 points for each late day.

Portfolio (75% of course grade)

All students will complete several assignments according to the guidelines listed below. Students will compile these assignments into a portfolio to be submitted on the final exam date. The portfolio should include each assignment and a narrative to demonstrate the connections between assignments and the field of museum education and interpretation. The portfolio should be professional quality and include any supporting illustrative material. Students may revise assignments before turning in the portfolio.

The portfolio should include the following assignments:

1.) An interpretive plan for an assigned project at the AHC. Students will work in groups to utilize AHC historical research and/or exhibit documentation to develop an interpretive plan for a specified project. The plan will serve as a resource to AHC staff in reinterpreting existing exhibits/resources or interpreting other exhibits/resources. (20% of course grade)

2.) An educational program plan. Students will work on their own to complete an AHC program planning form, a budget, and final draft of the plan or program that is consistent with QCCs, if relevant to the intended audience. Half of students will work on a school program proposal, while the other half will develop a non-school tour program. (15% of course grade)

3.) Grant proposal to fund the program plan. Students will work on their interpretive planning teams to draft a grant to the Georgia Humanities Council to support the implementation of the educational program (see 2.). (15% of course grade)

4.) Object-based interpretive assignment. Students will work on their own to create an object-based interpretive tour of one of the AHC exhibits for a selected K-12 audience, incorporating at least five objects and organized around a theme or topic of the student's choice. (5% of course grade)

5.) Program evaluation of one AHC program. Students will utilize their observation component to prepare and conduct an evaluation of the program, focusing on a selected audience (program guests, teachers, school children). Students will work on their own to collect feedback, collate data, and provide an analysis. (5% of course grade)

6.) Documentation of participation in or observation of fifteen hours of educational programs. Each student is expected to observe or participate in at least eight hours of various programs at the AHC with additional hours at the AHC or any other museum other than the one at which student may work (if you are currently employed as a paid or volunteer staff member). AHC staff will provide a sign up sheet for students to select times and programs. For each program students will write a 250-500 word summary of the program and their role in the program. Before observing or participating in the program students should study a copy of the program goals and objectives to assess the extent to which the program met stated expectations. Please use this opportunity to see programs other than those you may be most familiar with as well as those that interest you the most.

school program	adult program	family program
outreach program	fine arts tour	living history program
garden tour	science tour	special event
tour at historic home (Tullie Smith, Swan House)		

Students should sample at least six different types of programs from the following list. (15% of course grade)

Presentations (5% of course grade)

Student teams will present their proposed program/interpretive plans to their peers, AHC staff members, and instructor on the last day of class. Each team member will be responsible for making a portion of the ten minute presentation, which will be followed by a ten minute question and answer period.

Class Participation (20% of final grade)

Discussion and participation are critical to the success of the seminar. Students are expected to complete the readings and come to class prepared to discuss them, as well as their experiences in course projects and assigned activities. Students are expected to treat guest speakers with respect and attention. Attendance is critical. Students are allowed one excused absence. Each subsequent absence will result in a reduction of the final grade by one half a letter grade (5% reduction).

Academic Honesty/Professionalism

Students are expected to do their own work when required. Collaborations are judged not only by the final product but the manner in which students shared the work load. Cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned off during class meetings and program observation/participation experiences.

Course Calendar (subject to change)

- January 10 Introduction and Orientation to Atlanta History Center
Read: Tilden, xi-54; Hein, ix-13
Arrive ten minutes early at the admission desk.
- January 17 Educational Theory and Learning Styles
Read: Tilden, 57-115; Falk and Dierkling, vii-89; Hein, 14-40; Bruno Bettelheim, "Children, Curiosity and Museums."
- January 24 Interpretive Techniques and Object Interpretation
Read: Pitman, 90-95; Levy, Lloyd, and Schreiber, 59-80; Thomas A. Woods, "Getting Beyond the Criticism of History Museums: A Model for Interpretation."
- January 31 Interpretive Planning
Guest speaker: Don Wollenhaupt, NPS
Read: Falk and Dierkling, 113-148; Pitman, 141-149.
Due: Object based interpretive tour.
- February 7 Museum Education, Schools, and the QCCs
Read: Falk and Dierkling, 149-218, Pitman, 151-166.
- February 14 Education Partnerships Within and Beyond the Museum
Read: Pitman, 21-35; Scheele, et al, "Interpretation from the Non-Educator's Point of View."
Due: Two program observation/participation summaries.
- February 21 Guided Tours and Historic Houses
Read: John A. Herbst, "Historic Houses"; Alderson and Low, chapters 4 and 9; Levy, Lloyd, and Schreiber, xi-56, 81-123.

- February 28 Adult Programs, Public Programs, and Special Events
 Guest: Michelle Evans, Conner Prairie
 Read: Falk and Dierkling, 91-112; Pitman, 37-51, 71-78, 133-139.
Due: Two program participation/observation summaries.
- March 7 Program Evaluation and Outcome-based Education
 Read: Hein, 41-154.
- March 14 Logistics: Program Plans, Management, Training, and Evaluation
 Read: Levy, Lloyd, and Schreiber, 127-148.
Due: Interpretive plan
- March 21 No Class—Spring Break
- March 28 Living History
 Guest: Ann McCleary
 Read: John Fortier, “Thoughts on the Recreation and Interpretation of Historical Environments”; David Peterson, “There is no Living History, There are no Time Machines”; Thomas J. Schelerth, “It Wasn’t That Simple”; Thomas A. Woods, “Living Historical Farming: A Critical Method For Historical Research and Teaching about Rural Life”; Tom Kelleher, “Old Sturbridge Village: From Recreated Historic Village to History Learning Center.”
- April 4 Museum Outreach Programs
 Guest Speaker to be announced.
Due: Education program plan
- April 11 Programs at Art, Science, and Children’s Museums
*****Meet at High Museum*****
 Guest: Julia Forbes, High Museum
 Karen Kelly, Children’s Museum of Atlanta
 Read: Pitman, 53-69, 97-108, 121-131.
Due: Grant proposal
- April 18 Education-related Materials and Curriculum Guides
Due: Program Evaluation
- April 25 Technology and Web-based Education
 Read: Falk and Dierkling, 219-235; Pitman, 81-91, 111-119; Maria Velez, “Distance Learning at the Lower East Side Tenement Museum.”
Due: All remaining program participation/observation summaries
- May 2 Final presentations
Due: Portfolios due at the beginning of class