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# HIS 6087

## Exhibiting History

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### Course Description

Exhibiting History is an overview of the history and current state of the public history profession, which includes the state of the field of history museums; historic cultural resource management in domestic and global settings; issues of historic administration (including grant writing), and oral history. Students will learn through reading and analyzing scholarly and professional literature, interaction with professional practitioners who collect, preserve and interpret historic resources, on-site observation and analysis at history museums, historic sites and archives, discussion, and research. Students will work individually, collectively, and in small group settings in preparation for future pursuits as public history professionals.

### Course Objectives

By the end of this class, students will be able to

- identify, comprehend, and evaluate the major developments in the history of Public History;
- distinguish and evaluate the major trends in how public history professionals cope with questions of relevancy and audience
- articulate and appraise views on the major debates over questions of accountability related to the collection, preservation, and interpretation of history for and with public audiences
- select, critically evaluate, and apply relevant areas of scholarship to generate an original exhibit of history
- appraise the utility of social media to collect, preserve, and interpret history and apply that knowledge in generating an original exhibit of history

### Required Texts

- Lonnie Bunch, [A Fool's Errand](#)
- Edward Linenthal, [History Wars](#)
- Beverly Serrell, [Exhibit Labels](#)
- Nina Simon, [The Participatory Museum](#)
- Stephen Weil, [Making Museums Matter](#)
- Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, [Tangible Things](#)
- Tara Young, [So You Want to Work in a Museum?](#)

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Spring 2020  
Mondays 12:00pm-2:45pm

Instructor: Dr. Jennifer Koslow  
E-Mail: [jkoslow@fsu.edu](mailto:jkoslow@fsu.edu)  
Phone: 644-5888 (dept.)  
Office: Bellamy 407  
Office Hours: Thursdays 2:00-3:00 & By Appt.

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### Student Responsibilities:

- Attend class sessions
- Read assigned material on time
- Actively participate in class discussions
- Complete tweets, reviews, and an exhibit

### Schedule

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#### Week 1: January 6

- 1<sup>st</sup> half: Introduction to the course
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> half: Trip to FSU Special Collections
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#### Week 2: January 13

- Reading: Young
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#### Week 3: January 20

- *No class: MLK, Jr. Day*
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#### Week 4: January 27

- Reading: Ulrich
  - Due: Exhibit Review #1
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#### Week 5: February 3

- Reading: Bunch
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#### Week 6: February 10

- Reading: Weil
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#### Week 7: February 17

- Trip to The Grove
  - Reading: Simon
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#### Week 8: February 24

- Reading: Linenthal
- Due: Exhibit Review #2

## Required Assignments

(1) **Book Reviews** (5 – each worth 8%; total 40%)

**Books:** Bunch, Linenthal, Simon, Weil, and Ulrich

**Due Dates:** See Schedule

**Length:** between 400 to 500 words

**Examples:** *Journal of American History*; *American Historical Review*; *The Public Historian*

**Content:** Argument and relationship to historical literature, sources used to make that argument, brief summary of structure of work, critique of effectiveness, and audience (written for scholars? undergraduates? Public Historians?) (One sentence identifying the intended audience will suffice.)

**Format:** First and foremost, what is the author's argument. After that, it is up to you how you want to develop your review. However, each sentence and paragraph should build on the previous.

(2) **Class Exhibit** (25%)

Each student will take on a role (curator, assistant curator, registrar, exhibits manager, copy editor, etc.). In addition, each student will be responsible for writing at least one object label. We will be working with FSU Libraries Special Collections on this project. Students will select a topic, objects to fit that topic, write the text, mount the exhibit, and create a virtual exhibit as well. More information will be provided in class.

(3) **Exhibit Reviews** (2 – each worth 10%; total 20%)

**Due Dates:** #1-1/27; #2-2/24

**Length:** between 400-500 words

**Examples:** *The Public Historian and Journal of American History*

**Content:** Just like a book review, what is the argument being presented and what are the artifacts being used to make that argument? What is the relationship between the medium and the message? Think about the physical structure of the exhibit as well as the text. How do they interact?

**Format:** First and foremost, what is the argument of the exhibit. After that it is up to you how you want to develop your review. However, each sentence and paragraph should build on the previous.

(4) **Participation and Tweets** (15%)

Discussion is at the heart of this class. Consequently, it is vital that you attend class and participate in a dialogue with your fellow students and the instructor. Participation will be judged on the quality of comments each student makes. Students' comments should indicate that they have read the material and given it a great deal of thought prior to coming to class. Students who want to excel should not only read the assigned material but be looking at the footnotes of the assigned texts and

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### Week 9: March 2

- Reading: Serrell
- In Class Revise Exhibit

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### Week 10: March 9

- In Class Revise Exhibit

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### Week 11: March 16

- *No Class: Spring Break*

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### Week 12: March 23

- In Class Revise Exhibit

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### Week 13: March 30

- In Class Finalize Exhibit

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### Week 14: April 6

- Installation Process - Throughout Week

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### Week 15: April 13

- Final Installation – meet at library

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### Week 16: April 20

- Conclusions

analyzing some of those related texts.

**Due Each Week: Before class each week you need to make a tweet.**

*Based on the week's reading(s), write a tweet (140 characters and yes, you will need to sign up for an account and we will all follow each other's tweets) that sparks conversation about one unique issue (historical or conceptual) that is illuminative about the week's readings.*

Participation is assessed based on your demonstration of analytical engagement with the assigned materials for the week. Tell the class what you think about the readings, not how you feel about them.

## Overall Grading Scale

A= excellent (writing & analysis)

A- = very good (minor inconsistencies on writing and/or analysis)

B+= good (inconsistencies on writing and/or analysis)

B = passing (major inconsistencies on writing and/or analysis)

B- = borderline graduate level work (writing and/or analysis has significant flaws)

C+= not graduate level work (courses in which a student receives less than a B- will not count toward a graduate degree)

## Class & University Policies

**Class Attendance Policy:** Missing three or more classes without providing documentation that meets the University Attendance Policy for an excused absence will result in a reduction of the final grade in this class by an entire letter grade. Documentation to count a missed class as excused must be submitted the session following the absence.

**University Attendance Policy:** Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the immediate family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. Accommodations for these excused absences will be made and will do so in a way that does not penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.

**Academic Honor Policy:** The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to "... be honest and truthful and ... [to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University." (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at <http://fda.fsu.edu/Academics/Academic-Honor-Policy>.)

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; and (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodation to a student

until appropriate verification from the Student Disability Resource Center has been provided. This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request. For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the Student Disability Resource Center, 874 Traditions Way, 108 Student Services Building, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167, (850) 644-9566 (voice), (850) 644-8504 (TDD) [sdrc@admin.fsu.edu](mailto:sdrc@admin.fsu.edu)

<http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/>

**Syllabus Change Policy:** Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.