

HIS 440: Public History Practicum—Faith & Activism

Course Credits: 3

Semester: Spring 2017

Prerequisites: None; Special Approval from Instructor Required

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Course Description:

From the University Catalog:

This course aims to immerse students in the practice of public history and to develop related professional skills by enabling them to contribute to a finished piece of public history scholarship, such as an exhibit or other public presentation. Through guided professional training, students will hone their research and critical thinking skills in written assignments, research projects, and / or presentations.

Introduction

This course aims to develop students' understanding of the practice of public history through an immersive professional experience, working towards a dedicated presentation of history to the public. Students will interact with local curators and collections managers, and will develop an appreciation for the purpose of local history. Through an interdisciplinary approach, students will study the methodological models for interpreting a range of historical sources and will develop their own skills through a dedicated research project. By the end of the term, students will have had training in some of the skills relevant to public history practice, such as cataloging, object interpretation, collection management, and / or exhibition preparation.

Course Objectives

University Goals: This course addresses the following University goals:

2. Contribute to their communities through service and leadership.
4. Think independently and creatively, analyze information critically, and solve problems.
5. Respect and understand cultural differences.
7. Communicate and interact effectively.

Program Goals: This course addresses the following Program Goals:

1. Broaden perspectives on local, national, and international issues.
3. Provide a critical approach to looking at historical and current events.
4. Cultivate writing and oral communication skills.
5. Foster cultural understanding.

Course Objectives: Upon successful completion of this course, a student will:

- Have a disciplined understanding of various components of public history practice

- Be able to identify and implement primary modes of conveying information to and educating the public
- Be able to implement professional skill sets, such as cataloguing, object interpretation, and / or exhibit preparation
- Understand the challenges of interpreting objects and have practiced relevant analyses on local sources
- Understand the challenges of exhibit preparation and have a working knowledge of exhibit presentation styles

*These goals will be assessed through written assignments, group discussions, and successful completion of a final group project.

Required Texts

Storey, William. *Writing History* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2015). ISBN: 978-0-19-023894-0

Kyvig, David, & Myron Marty. *Nearby History* (NY: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010). ISBN: 978-0-7591-1300-8

Course Assignments & Evaluations

This service-learning course requires 10-12 service hours. Participation in the service project is required, as is your attendance at scheduled service days (see calendar below). In addition to this service work, students will also be assessed through a major research project and incremental assignments designed to guide you through the research process. Thus the final course grade will be comprised of the following:

Annotated Bibliography & Lit Review	20%
Object Analyses (3)	30%
Final Project (Poster & digital)	35%
Project Presentation (at AFSC)	10%
Reflection Paper	5%

The bulk of the work in this course will contribute to a public history service project related to the American Society of Friends' Service Committee (AFSC)'s history and activism in the twentieth century. Students will be assigned topic areas and will research distinct themes within the AFSC's history, and will work together to complete an original exhibit to that end. Incremental assignments, classroom discussion, and meetings with the professors will shepherd the student through the process of planning and implementing an online exhibit. Detailed guidelines for all of these incremental assignments are appended to this syllabus. Finally, as part of the service experience, students are required to write a one-page reflection of the service-learning component of the course.

Assignment Policies:

Formatting: please be sure that your essays are typed, on plain white paper, with all the margins set to one-inch. You should double space the body of the paper only (not the headings and title). Please use Times New-Roman 12-point font size. You will be graded on both the style and

content of your papers; thus, please be sure to proofread for correct grammar and spelling. Make sure your paper is clearly organized with an introduction, argument (thesis statement), topic sentences, evidence, and conclusion. Papers must meet the minimum word-count requirement to receive full credit; however no penalty will be given for papers exceeding the suggested limit. You are required to submit a hard copy in class AND upload a copy to the Blackboard (assignments listed under “Content”) by the due date and time.

Late Policy: Papers are due at the beginning of class on the date due. Late penalties begin at the end of class, and papers will incur a grade deduction of five points for each day late with a maximum penalty of 25 points (i.e. if the original grade is 85/100 and the paper was submitted one day late, it drops to an 80/100).

Grading Scale for Course Grades:

A = 93-100%	B = 83-86%	C = 73-76%	F = 64% and below
A- = 90-92%	B- = 80-82%	C- = 70-72%	
B+ = 87-89%	C+ = 77-79%	D = 65-69%	

Course Policies

Any digital materials we handle through the course of this project remain the property of the AFSC Archives. AFSC materials are on loan solely for the purposes of this project and may not be copied and / or distributed without prior authorization from Drs. Austin or Black. Students are responsible for handling AFSC materials in a professional and respectful manner. Misuse of these will not be tolerated.

Final course projects will be shared with the wider community through an online, digital medium subject to a [Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial-Share Alike 4.0 International License](#). **By remaining in this course, you hereby agree to produce and share your final project under the terms of this license.** If you have any questions or concerns, it is your responsibility to address these to the instructors before the end of the drop / add period.

In this course we may discuss potentially controversial issues having to do with race, gender, sexuality, class, religion, and politics. Our investigation of primary sources and images in this course may lead to such controversy. We each need to strive to maintain a tolerant and respectful environment in class. Open disrespect of another classmate will not be tolerated. The instructors reserve the right to ask any student who is disruptive or disrespectful to leave the classroom.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1 (Jan 16-18): Introductions to the Project & AFSC

January 16: Discuss nuts & bolts, set dates for AFSC visits in Feb & April

January 18: Discuss, J. William Frost, “‘Our Deeds Carry Our Message’: The Early History of the American Friends Service Committee,” *Quaker History* (1992, 81:1): 1-51.

Week 2 (Jan 23-25): Background: Civil Rights & Anti-War Activism

January 23: Discuss, William Chafe, “The Civil Rights Movement: ‘The Gods Bring Threads to Webs Begun’” (on reserve in library)

- In addition, go to “Films on Demand” in the MU library database and find one brief film dealing with protest of the Civil Rights Movement; watch the film and prepare a brief presentation of it for the class. The presentation should include 1-2 minutes of the film and should connect the film in some way to today’s assigned reading.

January 25: Discuss, Donald F. Durnbaugh, “The Fight Against War of the Historic Peace Churches,” pp. 218-239, in Challenge to Mars: Essays on Pacifism from 1918 to 1945 (available on EBSCOhost)

Discuss, Charles DeBenedetti, “On the Significance of Citizen Peace Activism: America, 1961-1975” *Peace & Change* (1983, 9:2/3): 6-20. (available on EBSCOhost)

- In addition, go to “Films on Demand” in the MU library database and find one brief film dealing with protest of the Vietnam War; watch the film and prepare a brief presentation of it for the class. The presentation should include 1-2 minutes of the film and should connect the film in some way to today’s assigned reading.

Week 3 (Jan 30-Feb 1): Public History Methods & Exhibit Planning

Reading: SKIM: Storey chapter 1, Kyvig chapters 2, 4-8
 READ: Storey chapters 2-3, Kyvig chapters 3, 11

Week 4 (Feb 6-8): Research in the Archive

Reading: Storey, chapters 4-6

*Monday workshop; Site visit to AFSC later in the week

Week 5 (Feb 13-15): Research week / Individual Appointments

Reading: Storey, chapters 7-9

*Annotated bibliography and prelim Lit review due 2/13 (feedback to students by 2/20)

Week 6 (Feb 20-22): Research Week / Individual Appointments

Week 7 (Feb 27): Writing Workshop: Object Analysis
(Mar 1): Research Day

(Mar 6-10): NO CLASS, SPRING BREAK

Week 9 (Mar 13-15): Research Week / Individual Appointments
 *Exhibit Plan due, 3/15 (feedback to students by 3/20)

Week 10 (Mar 20-22): Research Week / Individual Appointments

Week 11 (Mar 27-29): Research week / Individual Appointments
 *Object Analyses due 3/22 (feedback to students by 3/27)

*WITHDRAWAL DEADLINE: Monday March 27th —Last day to withdraw without academic penalty

Week 12 (Apr 3-5): Workshop Projects
 *Rough drafts of theme intros & object labels due 4/2; Feedback to students by 4/5
 *In-class meeting 4/5 to workshop projects (no class 4/3)

Week 13 (Apr 10-12): Workshop Projects
 *Final drafts in visual format due 4/10; meet with instructors to “tweak”
 *Send posters to the print shop 4/12

Week 14 (Apr 17-19): Presentations at the AFSC
 **No class April 17, Easter Recess

Week 15 (Apr 24-26) Wordpress Workshops
 *In-class meetings Mon & Wed

Week 16 (May 1-3): Wrap Up
 *In-class meetings Mon & Wed

*Final projects due online, by 5/5/17, 5pm.

FINAL PROJECT INSTRUCTIONS

The highlight of this course is the original exhibit that we will prepare, together, on the history of the AFSC. We have organized the exhibit around the theme “Ambassadors of Goodwill” and have selected the following sub-themes as organizing areas for our exhibit:

- Emergency Peace Campaign: Anti-war activism in 1930s
- “Operation Understanding”: Shipboard Orientation programs in the late 1940s for students traveling to Europe
- Citizenship Education camps in the South in the 1950s and early 1960s
- Peace movement organizing: In response to Vietnam War

Each student will be assigned one of these themes to research and write about for the final project. Early in the semester, students will visit the AFSC archives in Philadelphia (on an organized group trip) to determine the objects they would like to feature in their presentation. Students will research their assigned exhibit themes, and will work toward careful analysis of the objects selected for the exhibit. An annotated bibliography and exhibit plan, which provides details on the selected objects and their relation to the theme(s) of the exhibit, is required. Next, each student will work to systematically analyze three primary sources in a formal object analysis which situates the item historically within the appropriate context, analyzes relevant details, and explains significance (one analysis due for each object). The highlight of the course is the group project and presentation at the AFSC Centennial Conference in April. Students will organize their object analyses into themes and will compile a visual presentation of the research with short text blurbs, images, and a section introduction. Following the conference, students will “beef up” their section introductions with proper literature reviews, in preparation for the transferal of their research to the digital medium in the last four weeks of the course.

Meetings

This course is intentionally project-based, and thus will require students to do a substantial amount of research outside of the classroom. Given the unique nature of this course, we will forego many in-class meetings to allow for more research time, meeting weekly with students individually instead. You will be required to **make an appointment** to meet individually with the professors during the weeks 5, 6, 9, 10, 11. These meetings will be scheduled during our normal class meeting time. **We will ask students to sign up for a time at our first meeting.**

The following instructions should guide you in preparing your projects. Standard formatting requirements for all assignments follow at the end of this document.

Annotated Bibliography and Lit Review, due 2/13/16 (20% of final grade)

Find **at least six** secondary sources related to your assigned theme, and write an annotation for each. These sources will provide the necessary context related to the Twentieth Century US, Civil Rights or Anti-War Activism, and Quakers, broadly defined. Choose your sources carefully to construct the best possible context for your assigned theme; keep in mind that you may need to seek out more than six sources in order to find relevant ones.

For each source, you will list its full citation (in Chicago style), and then give a brief (approx. 150-200 words) summary and evaluation of the argument. Paraphrase and summarize

the author's main points using parenthetical page references only—no direct quotes. Pay specific attention to the significance of the author's argument and the usefulness of the work for your research paper. You will be graded on the quality of your annotations and the relevance of the sources for your research. If you have questions about how to write an effective annotation, please refer to topic #1Q in Storey (p.29). Keep in mind that if your sources are only marginally relevant, you may be asked to find additional sources to round out your contextual research.

Finally, you will write a one-page literature review of these sources. Summarize your sources as a group and comment on their contribution to our knowledge on this topic. For example, you might begin by grouping the authors together by approach (“While Jones and Smith examine this topic from a political perspective, Pearlman is interested in economics”), or by argument (“Jones argues that X was true for this period, while Smith believes Y”). Think about putting these authors in conversation with each other—what would they say to one another, or how would they argue about this topic if placed face-to-face?

Exhibit Plan, due 3/15/16 (part of Final Project grade)

This assignment provides a basic outline of the objects you've chosen to highlight within your theme, the key ideas your theme brings together, and how the objects relate to those ideas / theme. For example, if you were creating an exhibit on Abraham Lincoln, you might divide the exhibit into themes such as Early Life, the Civil War, and his Legacy. Within those themes you'll want to highlight certain objects (such as newspapers, photographs, diaries or letters, clothing, maps, etc.) that illustrate the narrative you want to tell about his Early Life, for example. Perhaps education was a key element in shaping Lincoln's life—thus you'll want to choose an object that references his education somehow. Think of the objects as windows that lead you to different landscapes, each of which is important for understanding a region as a whole. So, we might have a pen and letter, which points to education, which allows us to talk about how education was an important factor in shaping Lincoln's early life.

Each of you will choose three objects that fit within your assigned theme, and that will illustrate key points in your narrative. We will visit the AFSC archives early in February to do some initial research on various historical materials that might be useful in preparing our exhibit. During this trip, you should select 5-6 objects that you would like to research in preparation for the exhibit. It will be important to have a cache of “alternates” in case you need to switch objects during the course of the research process. Think of these objects as illustrative primary sources that will help to tell your story within your assigned theme. You are welcome to use additional sources as supplements that might further support your story.

Your exhibit plan should outline, in **1-2 pages**, the key ideas that you want to bring out within your assigned theme, and the three objects (and supplementary sources, if relevant) you will use to illustrate these ideas. You needn't provide extensive analysis of the objects yet, but you should sketch out how the objects fit together and fit with the ideas pertinent to your theme. If possible, try to also sketch out the story you will hope to tell within your theme.

Object Analyses (3), due 3/22/16 (30% of final grade)

This assignment asks you to systematically describe and analyze three historical “objects” (i.e. primary source document, image, or object), each in a discreet paper that provides a thorough description; proper contextualization of production, use / reception, and effects; and relation of the item to the key ideas within your theme. Using the tips and methodologies

discussed in *Nearby History*, write a 1-2 page paper that analyzes the item, its relation to the context of the period, and its significance. A key question to answer is, “what do we learn about [my theme] by looking at this item?” Place the item in its historical context: Who produced it and when? What was going on in the US at the time? Giving relevant context will help frame what we will learn from this item. The next several paragraphs should work systematically to analyze the item. Point out specific details, and explain their meaning. What elements of the item help you determine its overall significance? What does it tell us about the time period in which it was produced? How might audiences have responded to this item? What impact did it have, or legacy left behind? **You should write one 1-2 page paper for each “object” you choose (for a total of 3-6 pages).**

Final Project (35% of final grade)

This include the exhibit plan, theme introduction, object “labels,” and visual presentation of the assigned theme as a whole (poster and digital). Your final project will be a completed mini-exhibit on your assigned theme, complete with theme introduction, object labels, proper attribution, supplemental bibliography, and visual presentation.

Your **theme introduction** should be a 2-3 page narrative of the pertinent ideas / issues highlighted in the objects selected for your theme exhibit. It should situate the items within the appropriate historical context, situate the theme’s ideas / issues within relevant context, and gesture to the significance of these materials. Key questions to guide this introduction include: how do these items illustrate the history of the theme? How does this theme relate to the broader history of the AFSC, and / or of Quaker activism in general? How do these materials (and the theme) relate to the history of Civil Rights activism in the US? What other non-Quaker activities do they fit with? What was the impact of this AFSC initiative locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally?

Your **object labels** should be a concise summary of the information you presented in your earlier object analyses. These labels should analyze the item and point to its contribution / significance for the theme as a whole, in approximately 150 words.

Your **visual presentation** will take two forms: a poster presentation for the AFSC conference, and a digital version compiled in wordpress at the end of the semester. The poster presentations will have the abbreviated versions of your research (labels, theme intro, etc.). The digital version will have the longer versions available (longer object analyses, etc.) and a **supplemental bibliography** which we will compile as a team. This bibliography will be composed by the team as a whole directly into the wordpress site. Training will be provided during the last few weeks on this technology. Your digital pages should be proofed, clean, and professional—i.e. free from all grammatical errors, historically accurate, rhetorically sound, and engaging for the audience. Since the site will be open to the public you need to present a professional, finished product.

Project Presentations (10% of final grade)

During week 14 we will travel to the AFSC to make a presentation of our research to their community, during a Centennial celebration. This is the primary component of the service-learning aspect of this course, and thus attendance is mandatory. Our posters will be on-display in the AFSC conference venue and students should be prepared to make presentations of their

findings to spectators. Finally, at the end of the semester, the students will make a presentation to the campus community to unveil their digital exhibit and showcase their research.

Reflection Paper, due 5/3/16 (5% of final grade)

Compose a 1-2 page (min. 300 words) paper reflecting on your experience with the service-learning component of the course. In your paper, comment on the relative success of each step in the process: the planning / preparation for the exhibit, the experience of conducting research and preparing the exhibit, and the presentation at AFSC. Offer some feedback on what you felt went well, and what may have been improved. Would you recommend this service project to a friend? Why or why not?

Some additional questions for you to consider:

- Why is there a need for your service?
- What personal skills or qualities (i.e. leadership, communication skills, empathy, etc.) have you developed through service-learning?
- What contribution can you make to public understanding of this topic based on your service learning experience?
- What can you do with the knowledge you gained from this experience to promote change?
- How did the service-learning experience relate to the course material?
- How did the service-learning experience contribute to your understanding of the course material?
- What aspects of the service project went well? What didn't go well? How might these challenges be better addressed in the future?
- What experiences will you take away from this service-learning course? How might these assist you in your future endeavors?