

HIS 492: History in the Professions Thesis

Course Information

Course Credits: 1

Semester: Spring 2021

Prerequisites: HIS 491, or concurrent enrollment

Class Meeting Times: TBD

Faculty Information:

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Course Description

This course provides the capstone experience for the History in the Professions specializations, culminating in the production of a major research project that applies historical perspective to the chosen professional cognate area. Students work with a dedicated faculty member who will shepherd the project through all the stages of the writing project.

Course Goals & Objectives

This course addresses the following programmatic and university goals / objectives:

Course Objectives:	Program Learning Outcome	University Learning Outcome
1. Research and evaluate different exhibit presentation styles and prepare an appropriate exhibit plan	Goal: 3. Recognize the provisional nature of historical knowledge	UG #s 3, 4, 7, 8
2. Research and interpret objects and prepare relevant analyses for a public audience	Goal 2: Evaluate and employ historical methods	UG#3, 4, 8
3. Synthesize primary and secondary sources	Goal 4. Create historical arguments and narratives.	UG# 3, 4, 7, 8
4. Effectively communicate historical research and narratives to a broad public audience	Goal 5: Use historical perspective to inform active citizenship	UG #s 1, 2, 5;

Assessment of these objectives will be based upon student performance on the capstone exhibit project, which comprises 100% of the final grade.

Assignment Policies:

Formatting: All written work you submit should be 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

<u>Superior:</u>	<u>Very Good:</u>	<u>Satisfactory:</u>	<u>Poor:</u>
A = 93-100%	B+= 87-89%	C+ = 77-79%	D = 65-69%
A- = 90-92%	B = 83-86%	C = 73-76%	F = 64% & below
	B- = 80-82%	C- = 70-72%	

Course & Academic Policies

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

The student's capstone digital exhibit 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.

HIP Thesis: Exhibit

For your thesis, you will prepare a public history exhibit / presentation to complement your HIS 491 capstone thesis. Building from the research and writing created in HIS 491, you will create an original public history presentation or exhibit. A key distinction between this project and your HIS 491 thesis is audience: whereas your language for the thesis should be formal and academic, the audience for this project will be the general public. Thus, you will practice writing the same material in an accessible style. We will have weekly meetings to check-in on your progress.

Exhibit Plan

Due 4/1/21 by 5pm

Begin by reviewing the guidelines for exhibit planning in the relevant folder on the Blackboard. Next, you'll need to identify a preliminary object list. Choose at least 10 but no more than 15 primary source documents, photographs, objects, or other historical materials from digitized online collections. Ideally, these materials will come from publicly accessible (open access) collections, such as DPLA or LOC. Create a list that includes full object citation, thumbnail image (if possible), and source / collection information, and URL. If you find a source that is behind a paywall, include it in your preliminary list and we will discuss it together.

Next, consider the story you want to tell, using these sources. From your preliminary list, select at least 5 but no more than 8 objects that will form your final exhibit. Consider organizing the objects into sub-themes, if it makes sense to do so. Create an exhibit plan that identifies your audience, potential interpretive schemes, organization, and evaluation. You might want to use the [Planning Tool](#) developed by the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art to get started. Finally, you will write up your plan. In 2-3 pages, please address the following, using headings to organize your plan:

- Title
- Abstract / message in 150wds or less
- Audience
- Purpose / goals
- Outline / organization of the materials, including:
 - subthemes / section titles and brief (i.e. one sentence) description
 - potential interpretive schemes (such as interactive displays, audio / visuals, etc.)
- List of potential supplementary programs (speakers, events, etc.)
- Potential evaluation measures (you should enlist the help of one additional historian to peer review your exhibit before submission)
- Bibliography of at least 8 relevant scholarly sources on the topic

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. You may omit any marketing plan, and

assume an unlimited budget / resources for planning this sample exhibit (yay!). You may also attach your completed Planning Tool worksheet as an appendix and refer to it in the plan.

Draft labels & texts

Your texts for this project should be writing in a clear, accessible style that would appeal to members of the general public. Thus, you will need to rewrite and translate your thesis material into a more accessible (and condensed) format for this project. I am happy to look at draft labels, texts, etc. along the way. We can discuss these and potential due dates in our weekly check-ins.

Final Project

Due 5/6/21 by 5pm

Your final project will be a completed exhibit, including a narrative introduction, object labels, proper attribution, supplemental bibliography, and visual presentation. Like any good historical presentation, your exhibit needs to be grounded in solid historical research, it should draw upon relevant and engaging primary sources, and it should present a narrative argument using those sources to illustrate its points. Think of your exhibit like an argumentative paper, broken up into discreet units that, when put together, formulate the discussion. Remember though, that public history exhibits are typically free from academic jargon because they are written for a public (i.e. lay-person) audience.

Your **introduction** should be a 2-3 page narrative of the pertinent ideas / issues highlighted in the objects selected for your exhibit. This is where you'll give any important background information that leads into your narrative, and place the story within relevant broader contexts such as trends in US or global history, social movements, etc. It should situate the items within the appropriate historical context, situate the key ideas / issues within relevant context. Your introduction will also help make the argument of your exhibit clear, by gesturing to the significance of these materials within the broader story, and the importance of that story within broader US or global history.

Each item in your exhibit will have an **object label**. The label includes a citation, and a caption. The citation can be drawn from your preliminary object list, and should include producer, title, date, medium (if appropriate), collection name / repository, and URL. The caption should analyze the item and point to its contribution / significance for the theme as a whole, in approximately 100-150 words. You can think of these labels as a concise summary of the information you presented in your earlier object analyses (to that point, it might be helpful to write longer object analyses of each item in your exhibit before you trim the captions down to label size).

Your **visual presentation** of the exhibit may use the medium of your choice. You may use digital tools to organize your materials—such as mapping or GIS software, or you might create a more traditional representation of images and texts. You may use wordpress, Google Arts & Culture, or another platform of your choice for the exhibit. Your digital work 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. You will be graded on both the form and content of this exhibit.

Final Summary

Due 5/10/21 by 5pm

Your last task for this thesis is to reflect upon what you've learned and accomplished. In a 3p paper, you should first outline your process in planning and implementing the project, and summarize your findings. Point to any resources you relied upon in the planning and implementation stages, sources you drew inspiration from, etc., and discuss your chosen medium of delivery for the project. Why was this the best medium? What other media or tools did you consider? When summarizing your findings, point to any interesting insights you found, or surprising finds in the research. Finally, provide a critical evaluation of the final project, indicating areas for improvement / revision and possible avenues for expansion / future research.