Making History Public

HSTA 275 | Spring 2021 | 3 credits
Class meets Tuesday and Thursday 12:30-1:50pm | Remote, via Zoom.

Professor Claire Arcenas | claire.arcenas@umontana.edu | office: LA 261
Office hours: via Zoom; e-mail for an appointment.

Course Overview and Goals:
What is public history? What does #makinghistorypublic mean today? In this class, we will explore how public historians do their work: how we exhibit history in museums, engage the public with digital projects, provide historical context in public places, work with local communities, and use historical expertise in government and the courts. We will discuss current and past controversies in public history (such as debates over historical commemoration) and examine how the digital age has transformed aspects of public history.

You will gain practical, hands-on experience doing public history and make a meaningful impact in your community by participating in an Oral History project documenting the impact and effects of Covid-19 in the Missoula community.

This is the core course in the History Department’s new Public History Certificate, a credential that could do many things for you, including setting you up to work in public history settings such as museums, archives, libraries, commemorative sites, historical preservation, and more! You can find further details about the certificate here: http://hs.umt.edu/history/publichistory/default.php.

Learning Outcomes:
By successfully completing this class, you will:
• acquire specific knowledge about the blossoming field of public history;
• understand key themes and topics within public history, including the history of museums and their publics; debates about monuments, commemoration, and the politics of memory; historians as experts in areas of journalism and law; local history and historic preservation; and oral history;
• gain an appreciation for the theory, politics, and practice of public history;
• become familiar with various methods and approaches of public history, including oral history and historic preservation;
• hone your critical thinking, careful reading, and public-facing communication skills.

Civic, Academic, and Career Competencies Statement:
This course and the Public History Certificate of which it is a part will prepare you for a range of civic, academic, and employment opportunities. On a fundamental level, this course will prepare you for what the political theorist Danielle Allen calls “participatory readiness”—that is, your role as a member of our twenty-first-century democratic society.
This course will also prepare you for a range of specific academic and career opportunities, such as a graduate degree in public history (or a related field) or work in museums, schools, archives, non-profits, law firms, and governmental agencies.

I encourage all of you to review the following National Association of Colleges and Employers Career Readiness Statement, which includes attention to eight essential competencies of critical thinking, communication, collaboration, digital technology, leadership, work ethic, career management, and intercultural fluency: [https://www.naceweb.org/career-readiness/competencies/career-readiness-defined/](https://www.naceweb.org/career-readiness/competencies/career-readiness-defined/). Over the course of the semester, we will reflect on the ways in which this course and its specific assignments and experiential learning opportunities align with these competencies. Finally, I encourage you to learn more about public history through the National Council on Public History, which you can explore here: [https://ncph.org/](https://ncph.org/).

**Course Structure, Expectations, and Policies:**
Our class meetings will generally take one of three forms: a discussion based on shared readings for the day; a guest speaker presentation followed by a class conversation; or an experiential learning activity and hands-on experience.

You are expected to attend all class meetings and participate actively and respectfully; complete all assignments by the deadlines listed on this syllabus and on Moodle; and engage thoroughly and thoughtfully with all the readings, materials, and class activities.

Policies for late work will vary depending on the assignment. Details will be provided on the assignment or on Moodle. Generally speaking, you will lose points for all unexcused absences and late work. Please speak with me as soon as you think you might miss a class or be late with an assignment! In some cases—illness or a personal or family emergency, for example—I will be able to excuse your absence or provide you with an extension after the fact, with proper documentation. Some examples of personal, medical, or family emergencies include the following: a Covid-19 diagnosis; mental health crises; time-sensitive medical procedures; or assuming responsibility for the urgent health care needs of a family member or roommate. Please speak with me as soon as you confront a challenge that might impact your attendance, participation, or performance in class so I can help you stay on track and come up with a plan of action.

**Remote, Online Learning:**
For this class, you will need the following:

- a computer (or tablet);
- a reliable internet connection (if you are on campus, please connect via eduroam, not grizzly guest);
- a quiet workspace with enough room to accommodate not only your computer, but also a notebook (even in a remote class, handwritten notes are the best!) and any papers you may have printed;
- a microphone, and, most likely, a set of headphones;
- a webcam (or built-in camera), if possible;
- and an up-to-date version of ZOOM.
You are expected to have your video on during our class meetings and have ready access to your microphone. Accordingly, please don’t join class from the silent section of the library or from your dorm room while your roommate is sleeping!

Synchronous online learning presents unique challenges as well as opportunities. To ensure you get the most out of the class, please put away your cellphone, silence all notifications, and close out of any applications or windows not related to our class. YouTube and e-mail can wait!

Finally, during our first few class sessions, we will go over the nuts and bolts of Zoom, so don’t worry if you’re not familiar with the platform. Please do, however, begin to familiarize yourself with the online platforms we will use, including Zoom, Moodle, and Cyberbear: https://www.umt.edu/umonline/keep_on_learning/tools_keep_on_learning.php.

**Recording:** Please note, at this point, I am not planning to record any classes. Please do not record our Zoom meetings. Doing so without notice and permission is a violation of University policy.

**Communications:** All communications for this class will be conducted via UM e-mail accounts and Moodle. Please e-mail the instructor using only your UM e-mail account.

**Flexibility and Adaptability:** This semester, we will all need to be flexible as we navigate the uncertainties wrought by COVID-19. I will do my best to communicate any changes related to our class as quickly and clearly as I can. And I will also do my best to accommodate any special circumstances that may arise and ask that you do the same.

**Academic Honesty:** Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with UM’s Student Conduct Code and conducting themselves accordingly. Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism and cheating, will result in appropriate disciplinary action and possibly a failing grade. An easy rule to follow is that all work you produce for this class should be your own. Please ask if you have any questions!

**Students with Disabilities:** As per university policies, reasonable accommodations will be made. To ensure that the proper steps can be taken, please speak with the professor as early in the semester as possible. It is your responsibility to speak with the professor and to provide the proper documentation from Disability Services for Students (DSS). You can visit www.umt.edu/dss for additional details and information.

**Required Readings:** All readings will be available via Moodle. Please make sure you have downloaded—and, if possible, printed—copies of your readings and notes ahead of our class meetings. Particularly on Zoom, it is useful to have your readings and notes available on a separate medium or screen from the one you use for your Zoom video.

**Assignment & Grading Overview:**

1. **Class Attendance, Participation, Reading Responses, and In-Class Assignments (20%)**
   Your attendance in class is required. Simply attending class, however, is not sufficient. Rather,
active, thoughtful, and engaged participation is the key to your success in this class. When thinking about your participation in class, it might be helpful to imagine yourself as a co-diskussion-facilitator; participation means both constructively contributing to discussion and actively engaging with your peers. Your contributions to our class should be based closely on the readings, films, presentations, and other class materials.

You will usually complete a short reading response, film response, or other brief assignment in preparation for our class meetings. Instructions for these “To complete for today” assignments will be given either in class or via Moodle. Please check Moodle regularly for the most up-to-date course information.

2. Guest Speaker Presentation Journal Entries (15%)
Over the course of the semester, you will hear from a number of guest speakers who work in the field of public history. For each presentation, you should write a roughly 300- to 500-word journal entry on the presentation and what you learned from it. You will keep track of your journal entries and submit them all together on the final day of the semester, Thursday 4/22.

3. Assignments (65%)
Further details on all your assignments will be provided on Moodle. Here’s a general overview:
Assignment 1: Virtual Museum Oral Presentation & Worksheet (10% of course grade)
Assignment 2: Reflection on Monuments and the Politics of Memory (10% of course grade)
Assignment 3: Local Site Visit Report (10% of course grade)
Assignment 4 (a-c): Oral History Interview Questions (10% of course grade)
Assignment 5: Oral History Interview Completion & Upload (15% of course grade)
Assignment 6: Final Reflection Assignment (10% of course grade)

Formatting Specifications:
Unless otherwise noted, here are the formatting guidelines you should follow for all written work in this class:

- 12-point, Times New Roman font; Double-spaced; 1-inch margins; Chicago Manual of Style citations

Grading Rubric:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
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Provisional Schedule of Classes:

Unit 1: Introduction to Making History Public

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, January 12th</td>
<td>Welcome, Introductions, and Major Course Themes and Topics</td>
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Thursday, January 14th: What is Public History?

To read for today:
- selections from *Introduction to Public History* and *Mickey Mouse History*.

Tuesday, January 19th: Memory, Myth, and History: Reexamining Tradition(s)

To read for today:
- Kathryn Schulz, “The Perilous Lure of the Underground Railroad,” from the *New Yorker*.

To complete for today:
- Reading Response

Unit 2: Museums and Their Publics

Thursday, January 21st: A Brief History of Museums

To read for today:
- selections from *Nature’s Museum’s: Victorian Science and the Architecture of Display* and *Mickey Mouse History*.

Tuesday, January 26th: Controversies & Public Display I

Class-time film screening:
- *Dinosaur Wars* film.

To complete today:
- Film response

Thursday, January 28th: Controversies & Public Display II

To read for today:

To complete for today:
- Reading response

Tuesday, February 2nd: Museums and the Twenty-First Century

Guest Speaker Presentation

To read for today:
-selections from Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums.
-selections from Contesting Knowledge.

**Thursday, February 4th: Virtual Museum Presentations Day 1**

**Assignment #1 (In-Class Presentations)**

**Tuesday, February 9th: Virtual Museum Presentations Day 2 & Guest Speaker**

**Assignment #1 (In-Class Presentations)**

Unit 3: Monuments & the Politics of Memory

**Thursday, February 11th: Monuments and the Politics of Memory I**

To read for today:
-Selections from Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument

To complete for today:
-Reading Response

**Tuesday, February 16th: Monuments and the Politics of Memory II**

Class-time screening: Monumental Crossroads film &
CNN interview with Ken Burns: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sOwrd2kRQcA

To complete today:
-Film Response

**Thursday, February 18th: Historic Commemoration and Black Lives Matter**

To read for today:
-Selection of contemporary news articles & coverage

**Tuesday, February 23rd: The Politics of Commemoration on College Campuses**

To read for today:
-Selection campus reports

To complete for today:
-Reading Response
Thursday, February 25th: Historians as Experts; Experts as Historians
Guest Speaker Presentations

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<tr>
<th>Unit 4: Local History, Global Impact</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tuesday, March 2nd: Making Public History Local; Making Local History Public</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Guest Speaker Presentation</td>
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| To read for today:  
  - Christine Baron, “One if by Land! Two if by River! Or, What if Everything You Thought You Knew were Wrong?” *The History Teacher* 43 (August 2010): 607-15. |

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<tr>
<th>Thursday, March 4th: No Class</th>
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<td>Student Break!</td>
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<tr>
<th>Tuesday, March 9th: Public History and Historic Preservation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Guest Speaker Presentation</td>
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| To read for today:  
| To examine for today:  
  - [https://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/1657/Historic-Preservation](https://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/1657/Historic-Preservation) |

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<tr>
<th>Thursday, March 11th: Local Site Visits</th>
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<tr>
<td>Today, you will be conducting local historic site visits either in and around Missoula or in your local community. There will be no formal class meeting today. More details will be provided.</td>
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<th>Tuesday, March 16th: No Class</th>
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<td>Student Break!</td>
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<tr>
<th>Thursday, March 18th: Missoula Then &amp; Now</th>
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| To read for today:  
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**Assignment 3 due to Moodle by 5pm Friday, March 19th**

Unit 5: Oral History and Recording Covid-19 Oral Histories

Tuesday, March 23rd: Introduction to Oral History

To read for today:
- a selection of oral histories of the 1918 flu epidemic

Thursday, March 25th: Oral History Best Practices and Presentation by & Discussion with UM Summer Covid-19 Project Participants

Graduate Student Presentations

To read for today:

To complete for today:
- Reading Response

Tuesday, March 30th: Getting Ready to Interview

Today’s class will be devoted to drafting questions and getting ready to conduct and record your interviews.

To complete for today:

**Assignment 4a due in class**

Thursday, April 1st: Pre-Interview Conversations Co-Session with MOLLI

During today’s class, you will meet with your interview partners from the MOLLI Oral History course. You will take careful notes to revise assignment 5 and you will work on sorting out any technology issues.

**Assignment 4b due to Moodle by 5pm Friday**

Tuesday, April 6th: Covid-19 Oral History Class Discussion
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, April 8th</td>
<td>Interview Day 1, Co-Session with MOLLI</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, April 13th</td>
<td>Check-In &amp; First-Round Reflections and Take-Aways</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, April 15th</td>
<td>Interview Day 2, Co-Session with MOLLI</td>
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**Assignment 4c due in class**

**Assignment 5 due by 5pm Friday, April 16th**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, April 20th</td>
<td>Covid-19 Oral History Class Reflection &amp; Celebrations</td>
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<tr>
<td>To read for today</td>
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**Guest Speaker Journal Due**

**Assignment 6 due during finals week TBD**