HIST 4343 Topics in Canadian History  
PUBLIC HISTORY  
FALL 2010

Dr. Gillian Poulter  
Office: Room BAC 403  
Phone: 585 1289  
Email: Gillian.Poulter@acadiau.ca

Class Times: Wednesday  1.30 – 4.30 pm

Office Hours: Wednesday  10.30 - 12.30 pm  
Tuesday & Thursday  12.00 – 1.00 pm & 3.15 – 4.15 pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION
How can historians best (re)present historical research for public consumption? What is or isn’t ‘public history’? How do certain locations and events get chosen? Whose histories get included? What communities do museums and archives serve? What would it be like to work in the museum sector? This course will explore the issues, problems, and challenges of public history through readings, talks and trips to local historical museums and archives. Students will be asked to design a public history display of their own primary research undertaken in the Acadia Archives, the Acadia Art Gallery Collection, or local historical sources.

REQUIRED TEXTS:
There is no required text for this course; readings will be available on reserve at the library or on ACORN. If you need help accessing these, please see the Instructor.

It is recommended that you use a style guide for written submissions. I suggest: Mary Ann Armstrong et al, eds. Notes on the Preparation of Essays in the Arts and Sciences (Peterborough: Academic Skills Centre at Trent University, 2001). It is inexpensive and available in the bookstore.

EVALUATION
This is a seminar course, consisting primarily of class discussion of the assigned readings and your ongoing research and display planning.

Weekly reading response  [best 8 @ 2.5%]  20
Participation in class discussions  15
Final Presentation:
  Preliminary Research Plan  5
  Planning Report  5
  Final Project  30
  Public Presentation  10  50
Final Take-Home Exam  15
ASSIGNMENTS

Weekly Reading Response  [20%]
At each class, students are required to hand in a short response to the question posed (1-2 pages, double spaced). Late submissions will not be accepted.

Participation in class discussions [15%]
It is expected that students will come to class well prepared to discuss their reading. This means you should read the assigned texts carefully, making brief notes of key points, questions you may have about the content, and ideas which arise from it. It is not sufficient to just attend class, you must also speak.

Final Presentation [50%]
Students will be required to engage in primary research on an aspect of the class project and plan how to present their findings to the public in an exhibit, web site, educational kit, self-directed walking tour, brochure, or any other suitable means. Students may work individually or with a partner. Two short planning reports will be submitted during the course (worth 5% each). The final outcome is a public display of the research done by the whole class (worth 30%). If it is feasible, this may be an actual display in a suitable location. If that is not practical, then a detailed design plan for the display will be presented instead. In addition, each group will give a short academic presentation which will briefly describe the project and discuss the decisions made in planning the display and the challenges faced in presenting academic research to a general audience (worth 10%).

Final Exam [15%]
The final exam will be take-home exam for which you may be asked to individually provide a written summary of your research findings, situate your work in the secondary literature, provide a rationale and critique of your display, and/or reflect on class field trips and readings. It is important, therefore, that you keep adequate notes of your work throughout the semester.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Presentation of Written Assignments
Your presentations should be double spaced, with pages numbered and stapled together. Please do not use any type of cover, binding, or folder. The first page should give your name, the course code, assignment, and date of submission.

Writing Assistance
The recommended style guide gives many useful hints to help in preparing and writing essays, and there are many others available in the library. For free extra help, you may register and make appointments at the Writing Centre and/or with the instructor. [http://writingcentre.acadiau.ca/](http://writingcentre.acadiau.ca/)

Backup
Because materials can be lost or questions of authorship arise, be sure to keep your research notes and rough drafts until after the course has been completed. Be sure also to back-up material on your computer regularly. Computer or printer failure is not an acceptable excuse for lateness or loss of material. It is the responsibility of the student to keep a copy of all work submitted.

Deadlines
Due dates are indicated on the course schedule. Extensions will only be granted for severe illness or family emergencies, or if applied for in advance. In all cases, a doctor’s certificate or other documentation will be required. The penalty for late submissions will be 5% per day.

Disability/Access
If you are a student with a documented learning disability or anticipate needing special accommodation in this course, please inform me after you register at the Student Resource Centre, http://counsel.acadiau.ca

Plagiarism
Copying someone’s ideas or words without acknowledging their source constitutes academic dishonesty and can result in severe penalties, including failure of the course. Severe penalties will also be incurred in cases where work is purchased, “shared,” or submitted to more than one instructor. To learn more about plagiarism, please take the “You Quote It, You Note It” tutorial on the library website. You may also consult the instructor and the Acadia Calendar for more details.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Note: Topics and readings are subject to change. You will be informed of any changes ahead of time in class and/or by email and ACORN. Make sure you give the instructor an email address you will be checking regularly. The required reading list and reading response questions for each topic are given in the weekly reading list that follows this schedule.

September
8  INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE AND COURSE PROJECT, including visit to Wolfville Cemetery. Do not miss this class.

ASSIGMENTS:
1. Reading Response #1 (hand in Sept 15)
2. Decide on a topic for research; pair up with another student if you wish. Research suitable primary and secondary sources.

15  FIELD TRIP: RANDALL HOUSE, Main Street, Wolfville (next to Willow Park). Arrive at or before 1:30. You will have until 2pm to take a look around and make a written note of what you would say is the interpretive theme of the museum. We will then meet with Bonnie Elliot, the Director.

HAND IN:
Reading responses #1

22  IN CLASS: BURIAL GROUNDS, CEMETERIES AND FUNERAL CUSTOMS
- discussion of site visit to Randall House
- discussion of readings on “The public’s role in Public History” and “Burial Grounds, Cemeteries and Funeral Customs”
- presentation of Preliminary Project Plan. Design Consultant Pamela Maher will attend.

HAND IN:
Reading responses #2 and #3

29 IN CLASS: MUSEUMS, COMMEMORATION & IDENTITIES
  • discussion of readings
HAND IN:
  Reading Response #4

October
6 VISIT TO GRAND PRÉ NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE
  • we will travel by car, leaving at 1.30pm
HAND IN:
  Reading Response #5
ASSIGNMENT:
  Site response for discussion Oct 13

13 IN CLASS: RE-ENACTMENTS AND RECONSTRUCTIONS
  • discussion of Grand Pré site responses
  • discussion of readings
HAND IN:
  Reading response #6

20 VISIT TO ESTHER CLARK WRIGHT ARCHIVES
  • meet in the Kirkconnell Room at 1.30pm
HAND IN:
  Reading response #7

27 IN CLASS: PRESENTATION OF PROJECT PLANNING REPORT
  • Presentation of projects to class
  • discussion of display options with Pamela Maher
HAND IN:
  Project Planning Report

November
3 FIELD TRIP TO KINGS COUNTY MUSEUM, Kentville. Cost: free.
  • Travel by car, leaving at 1.30pm
HAND IN:
  Reading response #8

10 NO CLASS – use time to work on projects

17 IN CLASS - PRODUCTION MEETING (Pamela Maher will attend)
  • discussion of “Other” Issues part 1 readings
HAND IN:
Project Report
WEEKEND OF NOV 20 & 21 - SET UP PROJECTS IN LIBRARY FOYER

24 IN CLASS: “OTHER” ISSUES – PART 2
- discuss readings
- prepare for public presentations

HAND IN:
Reading response #9

December
1 LAST CLASS - PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

3-5 Take down display

18 Take-home exam due
WEEKLY READING LIST

Sept 8: WHAT IS PUBLIC HISTORY?
Reading response #1 - to hand in Sept 15:
1. What is public history? Write your own short definition.
2. Why is identifying an interpretive theme advantageous?

Alan MacEachern, “What Is Public History”, University of Western Ontario, updated July 12, 2009. From here you can link to the Hein article below.
http://www.history.uwo.ca/gradstudies/publichistory/whatisph.html


John A. Veverka online articles:
- “Why Heritage Sites Need Interpretation for their Long Term Survival”
- “Creating Interpretive Themes for Heritage Tourism Sites and Attractions”
http://www.heritageinterp.com/library.htm

SEPT 15: THE PUBLIC’S ROLE IN PUBLIC HISTORY
Reading response #2 - to hand in Sept 22:
1. Based on your experience as a visitor to Randall House, what would you say is the interpretive theme of Randall House? Discuss how effective it is.

Prepare for discussion in class on Sept 22:
- From your reading this week, make a list of the types of challenges museums and heritage organizations face from the public when representing history. How have these been resolved in the cases below?

ALL READ:

Public Participation in general:

A recent debate over commercialization at Upper Canada Village:
- Ottawa Sun, “Controversy rages over the push to cash in at Upper Canada Village” June 14, 2009:
- Ottawa Sun, “Pioneer Spirit Revived”, Jan 23, 2010
Ontario Public Service, browse through items under “Respect Our Past Index”
http://www.opseu.org/ops/ministry/tourism/index.htm

Part of the debate over interpretation at the Canadian War Museum:

**A more local debate about the appropriateness of honouring Edward Cornwallis:**

**SEPT 22: BURIAL GROUNDS, CEMETERIES AND FUNERAL CUSTOMS**

**Reading Response #3:** Identify and discuss the key argument in a reading of your choice.

**ALL READ:**

Doug Smith, *Big Death; Funeral Planning in the Age of Corporate Deathcare* (Halifax: Fernwood, 2007): pages 14-35 (Ch.1 and part of Ch. 2) and 47-54 (Ch. 3)
- a brief overview of the Canadian history of funerals, cremations and cemeteries
  HD9999 U53 C35 2007 – on reserve

- the social and intellectual changes that affected ideas about death in the USA
  GT3202 F37 1980 – on reserve

  NB1880 C2 T72 – on reserve

  FC2349 W64 Z63 1990 – on reserve

**CHOOSE FROM THE FOLLOWING:**

[Since this is the theme of our class project, I have given a particularly long list here in order to help you develop the bibliography for your own particular topic.]

**(A) Development Of The Modern Cemetery**

(B) Funeral Customs & Mourning Etiquette
• Bertram S. Puckle, *Funeral Customs: Their Origin and Development* [1926] (London: Werner Laurie, 1990)  GT3150 P8 1990 – on reserve

(c) Gravestones & Monuments
• Maynard G. Stevens, *Where they Rest in Peace: A Guided tour of seven historic cemeteries in Kings County, Nova Scotia* (Gaspereau Press, 2001)  FC2320 C44 S73
• Deborah Trask, “‘Remember Me As You Pass By’**: Material Evidence of the Planters in the Graveyards of the Maritime Provinces,” in *They Planted Well* eds. Margaret Conrad (Acadiensis, 1988): 298-306  FC2032 .P54 no.1
• James Doyle Davis, *What Mean These Stones?* (Wolfville Heritage Advisory Committee, 1990): 26-37, 63-64, 78-81. FC2349 W64 Z63 1990
• John A. Veverka, “An Introduction to Interpreting Cemeteries and Gravestones”,  
  [www.heritageinterp.com](http://www.heritageinterp.com)

(d) **Other Books Of Interest**
• Penny Colman, *Corpses, Coffins and Crypts* (Henry Holt, 1997) GT3150 C58 1997
• Mary Bradbury, *Representations of Death; A social psychological perspective* (Routledge, 1999) HQ1073 B73 1999

**Sept 29: MUSEUMS, COMMEMORATION & IDENTIT[IES]**

**Reading response #4:** Comment on the connection between public history and identit[ies].

**ALL READ:**


“Marie Marguerite Rose designated a person of National Historic Significance”

Look at the following web sites – who/what gets in? who/what gets left out?
• “Criteria and General Guidelines” for designating historic sites  
• List of designated sites:  
• Community Historical Recognition Program:  

**CHOOSE FROM THE FOLLOWING:**


**Oct 6: ACADIAN EXPULSION**

**Reading response #5:** Compare the interpretations of the expulsion given below.

**Site visit response for discussion Oct 13th:**
- Where do you see attempts to reconcile competing interpretations in the site?
- How well does the site function in Veverka’s terms?

**THE HISTORIC SITE:**

Explore the Grand Pré website at: [http://www.grand-pre.com/](http://www.grand-pre.com/)

Make sure you read the “History” and “Themes” pages. The school programs also indicate the objectives of the site.


John A. Veverka, *Interpretive Master Planning*, Ch 5 “Planning for Interpretive Exhibits” 123-132, Ch 6 “Planning Conducted Interpretive Programs” 147-159.

**INTERPRETATIONS OF THE EXPULSION:**

John Mack Faragher, “‘A Great and Noble Scheme’: Thoughts on the Expulsion of the Acadians,” *Acadiensis* 36, 1 (Fall 2006): 82-92


**IF YOU READ FRENCH:**


**Oct 13: RE-ENACTMENTS AND RECONSTRUCTIONS**
Reading response #6: What are the problems faced in re-enactment and reconstruction?

ALL READ:


CHOOSE FROM THE FOLLOWING:
- What is ‘authentic’ about Kings Landing?  
  [http://www.kingslanding.nb.ca/english/history.htm](http://www.kingslanding.nb.ca/english/history.htm)
- How is academic and public history combined at Fortress Louisbourg?  
  [http://fortress.ucbc.ns.ca/homeeng/](http://fortress.ucbc.ns.ca/homeeng/)  
  look in particular at the “Research/Genealogy” section

Oct 20: ARCHIVAL METHODS AND PRACTICES

Reading response #7:
- What are the main issues and challenges facing archivists?
- What role do archives play in public history?

Library & Archives Canada site:  

Association of Canadian Archivists - read some of the information sheets in the “outreach” section  
[www.archivists.ca](http://www.archivists.ca)


Terry Cook, “The Archive(s) is a Foreign Country: Historians, Archivists, and the Changing Archival Landscape,” *Canadian Historical Review* 90, 3 (2009): 497-534

Jennifer Bunting, “Heritage is a High Stress Vocation”, May 7, 2009  
[http://newzeum.wordpress.com/2009/05/07](http://newzeum.wordpress.com/2009/05/07) - once on the Newzeum site, click on the title to read article.

OCT 27: PLANNING PRESENTATIONS
For discussion in class:
- What pitfalls troubled the painted furniture and Hamilton Harbour exhibits?
- What are the key points made by Veverka that apply to your own project?


TO AID YOUR PLANNING:
John A Veverka, “Where is the Interpretation in Interpretive Exhibits?” – how to design effective exhibits.


See also Veverka’s other articles on his website and Interpretive Master Planning.

NOV 3: ORAL HISTORY
Reading response #8:
- What are the methodological problems associated with oral history?
- How can it be incorporated in public history displays?


For discussion in class:

- What are the particular challenges of representing the histories of Aboriginal peoples and their cultural artifacts?

ALL READ:


Nov 24: “OTHER” ISSUES – PART 2
Reading response #9: Comment on your reading for this week and last.

ALL READ:


Alisa Y. Harrison, “‘We are not here to talk about slavery’: Heritage, Identity and Narrative at Somersett Place State Historic Site”, Paper presented to annual meeting of the Canadian Historical Association, June 4 2008, Vancouver.

CHOOSE FROM THE FOLLOWING:

