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## HIS 520 - Southern History: "Interpreting and Presenting Southern History to the Public"

### **Overview:**

How should historians and teachers convey the complexities of Southern history in an engaging manner without sacrificing scholarly rigor? Students will pursue this important line of inquiry while exploring a range of historical events and issues from the Early American period to the Civil Rights Era. What was the nature of the master-slave relationship? What were the racial and class dynamics on the plantation? Why did poor whites fight in the Confederate army? Was Reconstruction a Revolution? And in what ways did African-Americans engage in political action during the Age of Jim Crow? Students will engage scholarship that addresses these important questions while engaging literature on historical memory and museum studies. In this way, we will explore the challenges of conveying the contentious nature of Southern history to a variety of audiences. The course format will consist of discussions of assigned readings, guest lectures, and field work to local historical sites. The capstone of the course for undergraduates is an oral history research project. Graduate students will work as research teams to create walking tours of local historical sites.

### Learning Outcomes:

- Learn how to conceptualize, research, and implement an interpretive project
- Apply a variety of public history methodologies to interpretive walking tours and Oral history projects.
- Explain the various approaches to the practice of local history within the context of Southern history
- Assess how issues of historical memory have shaped visitor expectations and learning needs at public history sites
- Evaluate how museum professionals make Southern history accessible to the public.

### Attendance Policy:

Faithful attendance is essential. You are allowed one excused absence. **If you miss more than one class, there will be a 5% reduction of your final grade for each**

**absence. Beyond even this penalty, a student who neglects attendance and preparation risks failing the course.**

### ***Participation (30%)***

**This assessment will be based on three criteria:**

- 1) This is a seminar, not a lecture course. Thorough preparation for this class is essential. All readings should be done before class. It is imperative that you have either handwritten or typed notes that outline the central questions and arguments of the assigned readings.
- 2) It is essential that you contribute to class on a consistent basis (**This includes Blackboard posts**), that you engage with your peers, and that you are an active listener. **Graduate students will be assigned as the weekly monitors of the discussion boards. They will raise questions for the entire class to consider.** In order to create an inviting environment for everyone to participate, please follow the guidelines:
  - Be ready to explain the broader argument and sub-themes of the assigned material and how the various readings fit together or diverge.
  - Instead of just criticizing a book or an article, focus on understanding the contributions of the assigned readings and why they have had a lasting influence on scholarship and its application to the field of public history.
  - You should feel free to disagree with others, but be specific in your own assertions and support them with evidence. You should also be willing to change your mind and concede to others when they make persuasive, well-reasoned arguments. Please challenge each other in a polite and courteous manner.
  - The success of a discussion depends on group interaction. Listen and read carefully and respond to your peers. There should be a dynamic give-and-take between the discussion leaders and the rest of the class. This can only happen if you elaborate upon the assertions of classmates or ask for clarification if you don't understand. Simply answering the questions will not lead to vigorous debate, and the discussion leaders will end up giving a monologue.
  - Make your point succinctly, avoid repetition, and stick to the subject.

### ***Interpretive Project/Walking Tour Podcast (Graduate Students) (40%)***

I will organize three teams of four to five graduate students who will work on one of the following projects: Civil War Greensboro; Southside Neighborhood, Greensboro Massacre. You will develop digitally recorded podcast walking tour (25 to 35 minutes long) for these sites/stories as part of a broader web exhibit that will highlight the local history of Greensboro. The Greensboro Historical Museum has expressed interest in

creating a web link to these podcasts, and there is a possibility that we will also partner with the Greensboro Chamber of Commerce. This project is a professional contribution that should be seen as a valuable service contribution on UNCG's behalf for the Greensboro community.

Below is the work schedule for all groups.

**September 6:** Concept Development (The group will produce a three-to-four page overview that should include the following: a developed big idea that gives coherence and significance to your project, a title of your walking tour, a research strategy which includes source materials, an outline of the sites that will be visited on your walking tour, and please sketch the route of your tour and digital photographs of the sites that will be visited. You should also have specific assignments for each member of your team. Please send this to me as a Word attachment)

**September 6 to October 11:** During this period your research team will execute its research agenda and you will begin to think in more concrete terms about the specifics of your tour and how they connect to the interpretive program's broader themes.

**October 25:** Complete final script (Before sending me the script as a Word attachment, be sure to do a number of dry-runs of the tour)

**October 26 to November 15:** Please make an appointment to record your walking tour at the Teaching and Learning Center studio. If you have access to a digital recorder, feel free to do this in the field. These digital recordings must be accessible from the web. See the following for an example of a podcast at Richmond National Park: <http://www.civilwartraveler.com/audio/index.html>. I will also have a contact person from the Teaching and Learning Center who will facilitate our digital recording efforts. We will also work with a contact person at the Teaching and Learning Center about developing a web presence for these podcasts.

**November 29:** Class Presentation

### ***Oral History Project (Undergraduates) (40%)***

Each oral history interview will relate to UNCG during the 1960s. Students can interview student, faculty, or staff who was associated with institution during that tumultuous decade. Asking for general observations about 1960s life at UNCG is **not** the best approach. You want to pursue a specific issue/event about the school's history that intersects with the interviewees own story and observations. This story needs to be contextualized within broader regional and national trends. One could look at student activism, race relations at UNCG, life on Tate Street, the experience of the first male students, etc. You must familiarize yourself with Allen Trelease's [Making North Carolina Literate](#) and his pictorial history of UNCG entitled [Changing Assignments](#) (Both books can be found in the reference room, but you cannot check them out). Having a handle on the institutional history will enable you to decide on a specific line of inquiry. The transcript of your interview and tapes will be added to the Special Collections at the Jackson Library.

We will discuss the oral history methodologies, procedures, and possible interviewees in class.

Schedule for Oral History Projects:

**September 6:** Select topic; outline tentative bibliography of secondary and primary sources; and suggest possible interviewees and why they are attractive candidates for your subject. You should summarize your initial assessment of the project in one-to-two pages in a Word attachment. The University Archives has a wealth of material, and you **must** consult their holdings. **See Oral History Guideline for the Women Veterans Historical Collection located on Blackboard**

**September 13:** Schedule interview and compose questions (I would like to see your questions before as a Word attachment) Be sure to schedule a check-out date for a Marantz recorder from the Teaching and Learning Center. I will provide the tapes and the release forms.

**October 11:** Complete interview before October 11, and turn in a three-page evaluation as a Word attachment. You should consider the following questions: What were the strengths and weaknesses of the interview? What new areas of research should you pursue and what questions will you ask in a follow-up? What was the historical significance of this interview and how will it shape the direction of your historical essay?

**October 18:** Transcription of interview due. (Please send transcription as a Word attachment).

**November 15:** Complete five page biographical/ historical essay about their interviewee. This essay must be contextualized within the history of UNCG and broader national trends. You must also incorporate outside secondary and primary sources from your tentative bibliography.

**November 29:** Ten-minute presentation

### ***Analytical Reviews (20%)***

**Undergraduates:** You will write three analytical reviews during the course of the semester. Each review should be 600 to 750 words each. Specific directions for each assignment will be posted on Blackboard.

**Graduate Students:** You will write three analytical reviews during the course of the semester. Each review should be 600 to 750 words each. Specific directions for each assignment will be posted on Blackboard. **Graduate students are also required to write a 850 to 1,000 word exhibit review of the Levine Museum of New South in Charlotte (<http://www.museumofthenewsouth.org/>)** You can review the permanent exhibit “Cotton Fields to Skyscrapers” or the temporary exhibit “From Cambodia to Carolina” I would like for us to visit the Levine Museum as a class on October 7. **Examples of exhibit reviews can be found in The Public Historian and the Journal of American History. Your assignment is due on October 25**

## Grading

A= 93-100, A-=90-92; B+=87-89; B=83-86; B-80-82; C+=77-79; C=73-76; C-=70-72; D+=67-69; D=63-66; D-=60-62; F= 50 or below

## Texts

Horwitz, Confederates in the Attic  
Brundage, The Southern Past  
Kammen, On Doing Local History  
Vlach, Back of the Big House

All texts are available at the bookstore.

\*On Blackboard

+J-Store

# E-Reserve

## Class Schedule

**August 16** Introduction

**August 23** Understanding Historical Landscapes

**Discuss :** #Grady Clay, "Epitome Districts" In Close-Up: How to Read the American City, 1980 [1973]: 38-65; #Dolores Hayden, "Urban Landscape History: The Sense of Place and the Politics of Space." #McGinnis, "The Public Landscape of Racial Control" in The Politics of Taste in Antebellum Charleston;

Guest Speaker: Russ Smith, PhD Candidate, Department of Geography

**Assignment: Blackboard Discussion (Groups A and B)  
Analytical Review (Group C)**

**August 30** Field trip to Old Salem

**Discuss: We will meet with John Larson, Vice-President of Restoration for a tour of the village.**

**September 6** On Doing Local History

**Discuss:** Carol Kammen, On Doing Local History and #Kyvig and Marty, "Oral Documents," in Nearby History.

Guest Speaker: Chuck Bolton on the methodologies of Oral History

**Assignment: Analytical Review (All Groups)**

**September 13** The South in American Imagination

\*Ayers, "What We Talk about When We Talk about the South;" \*Corbett and Miller, "A Shared Inquiry into a Shared Inquiry" in The Public Historian;

**Assignment: Blackboard Discussion Board (All Groups)**

**September 20** Tour Greensboro Historical Museum

**September 27** Understanding the Old South

**Discuss:** John Michael Vlach, Back of The Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery and Drew Gilpin Faust, Drew Gilpin Faust, "Culture Conflict and Community" in Journal of Social History (1980) You can find the Faust article on EBSO Research Data base

**Assignment: Blackboard Discussion (Groups A and C)  
Analytical Review (Group B)**

**October 4** Interpreting the Old South

**Discuss:** #Ellis, "Interpreting the Whole House," in Interpreting Historic House Museums, and \*Eichstedt and Small, "Conclusion," in Representations of Slavery: Race and Ideology in Southern Plantation Museums

**Assignment: Blackboard Discussion (Group C and B)  
Analytical Review (Groups A)**

**October 11** Tour Blandwood

**Guest Speaker: Paige Meszaros, PhD candidate, UNC Greensboro**

**October 18** The Challenges of Interpreting Confederate History

**Discuss:** #Blight, "Healing and History: Battlefields and the Problem of Civil War Memory," in Rally on the High Ground; #Linenthal, "Heritage and History: The Dilemmas of Interpretation," in Rally on the High Ground; and Horwitz, Chapters 1-6, and 15 in Confederates in the Attic

**Assignment: Blackboard Discussion (Groups B and C)  
Analytical Review (Groups A)**

**October 25** Contextualizing Civil War History

**Discuss:** #Jackson, "A More Perfect Union," in Rally on the High Ground; \*"Holding the High Ground Document" and \*Elizabeth Getz, selections from "Looking to the High Ground: Historians at the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park Respond to FY-2000"

**Assignment: Blackboard (All Groups)  
Exhibit Review (Graduate Students only)**

Guest Speaker: John Hennessy, Chief Historian, Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park.

**November 1** Remembering and Forgetting during the Age of Jim Crow

**Discuss:** Brundage, The Southern Past (Introduction and Chapters 1-5)

**Assignment: Discussion Board (Groups A and B)  
Analytical Review (Groups C)**

**November 8** The Politics of Historic Preservations

**Discuss:** Brundage, A Southern Past (Chapters 6-7 and Conclusion)

**Assignment: Blackboard Discussion (A and C)  
Analytical Review (Group B)**

**November 15** Week Off

**November 22** Thanksgiving Break

**November 29** Final Project Review

**Assignment: Power Point Presentations**