

**AP/HISTORY 4840: PUBLIC HISTORY**  
Department of History, York University  
Fall/Winter 2022-23

**Time:** Wednesdays 11:30am-2:20pm

**Place:** Ross Building South 501

**EClass site:** <https://eclass.yorku.ca/course/view.php?id=71811>

**Instructor:** Dr. Jennifer Bonnell

**Office hour:** Wednesdays 10-11am or virtually by appointment

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## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Public history investigates the ways that history is understood by and interpreted for the public. This course examines the history, theory, and practice of public history in a wide variety of venues, including museums, archives, historic sites, the internet, and film. In addition to class readings and discussions, skills workshops throughout the course will introduce students to the practical skills for the public presentation of historical knowledge, including oral history interview techniques, communication and presentation skills, and digital tools for public history. Students will meet practitioners in the field and visit several public history-related sites. The course combines analytical study with a part-time placement with a public-history site.

## **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Students who successfully complete requirements for History 4840 will be able to:

- identify key debates within the scholarly literature on public history and describe how those debates have changed over time
- identify, describe, and evaluate distinct scholarly approaches to historical questions about public history
- analyse and critique concrete experiences of public history practice, from monuments to films, websites, and heritage site visits
- conduct independent research on a specific topic using primary sources in archives, libraries, and heritage sites
- read original evidence, scholarly arguments, and relevant popular depictions closely and critically
- devise a public history project, exploring and synthesizing a wide range of sources, crafting a narrative about the past, and presenting it in an accessible and creative manner (podcast, journalistic news article, walking tour, short film, etc.)

- collaborate and communicate in a professional manner with institutions and/or community organizations
- explain and evaluate themes, concepts, and approaches relevant to public history

## FORMAT

### *Course meetings*

Course meetings will include discussions of readings, skills workshops, guest speakers, and several field trips. Please adhere to the **Health & Safety guidelines** below when attending class.

### *Public history placements*

Students will be placed with a museum, archives, heritage institution, or digital history initiative for the placement portion of the course. Placements will begin in January 2023. Students will provide 120 hours of service (10 hours/week) to their public history placements over the winter term. They will negotiate their schedules directly with their on-site supervisor and keep track of their weekly activities in a logbook. At the end of the winter term, students will present their projects to the history department and their placement supervisors.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

Links to all course readings will be available through the course EClass site at:

<https://eclass.yorku.ca/course/view.php?id=71811>

## EVALUATION

Participation	20%
Letter of Introduction (28 September)	5%
Public History Podcast Project	20%
Proposal (7 October, 5%)	
Podcast Outline (2 November)	
Final Podcast (23 November, 15%)	
Research Paper (7 April)	25%
Research Project Proposal (25 January, 5%)	
Final Project Presentation (5 April)	10%
Final Public History Project (7 April)	20%

### **Grading:**

The grading scheme for the course conforms to the 9-point grading system used in undergraduate programs at York (e.g. A+ =9, A=8, B+=7, C+=5, etc.). Assignments and tests will bear either a letter grade designation or a corresponding number grade (e.g. A+ = 90 to 100; A = 80-89, B+=75-79, B=70-74; C+=65-69, C+60-64, etc.).

For a full description of York's grading system, see <https://www.yorku.ca/laps/hist/academic-resources/academic-advising/grading-system/>

### **Academic Honesty Statement:**

Plagiarism is a serious offence. If I suspect that your assignment is not your own intellectual work I will ask to see your notes and rough drafts. I will not hesitate to report academic dishonesty. Violations of the York Senate Policy on Academic Honesty will be treated severely. Recent penalties have included failure in the course, suspension from the University, and withholding or rescinding a York degree, diploma or certificate. Cheating during in-class or take-home examinations, collaborating on written assignments, failing to use quotations marks and citations when using or paraphrasing the printed or electronically disseminated work of others, aiding or abetting academic misconduct, and violating any other part of the Policy on Academic Honesty will result in penalties. For further details, see the relevant part of the York Website: <https://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/policies/academic-honesty-senate-policy-on/>

**Academic Integrity Tutorial:** [http://www.yorku.ca/tutorial/academic\\_integrity/index.html](http://www.yorku.ca/tutorial/academic_integrity/index.html)

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

#### *Participation (20%)*

In term 1, your participation grade will be based on: 1) your participation in in-class discussions and workshops; 2) your shared leadership of discussion in one seminar (2 discussion leaders/seminar); and 3) completion of weekly reading notes in the fall term. Students are expected to read all the assigned material and come to class prepared to participate actively and to engage critically with the readings and the responses of fellow students.

#### Reading notes

In term 1, students will be expected to complete reading notes for each of the assigned readings each week. Use the one-page reading note template provided on the course EClass page to briefly identify the argument, evidence, and research questions of the article, and provide an assessment of its significance. Students should prepare for each class by completing a reading note for *each* of the assigned readings that week. Please submit reading notes to the assignment folder on EClass *before class begins*. Reading notes will not be accepted by email. I will grade reading notes for *one* of the assigned readings. Reading notes are graded out of 10. Your best 7 of 9 graded reading notes will count towards your term 1 participation grade.

In term 2, your participation grade will be based on: 1) a self-evaluation of your progress in your public history placement/project (in the form of a logbook); 2) the evaluation of your on-site supervisor; and 3) participation in occasional term 2 class meetings (virtual and in-person).

#### Logbooks

Each student will keep a record of the time they spend working toward their final project, both independently and at their placement sites. A logbook template will be provided for your use. Keep it up to date and you will find that it keeps you organized and focused on your project. It will also help you to reflect on the overall experience when you go to write your final paper. Students will submit an up-to-date digital copy of their logbooks three

times over the duration of their placements. Logbooks should be cumulative, each monthly submission incorporating and building upon the previous month's log. The logbooks will be used to assess your progress and to identify and address any challenges you are experiencing. Failing to keep the logbook will adversely affect your participation grade.

#### Placement Supervisor Evaluation

Your placement supervisor will provide the course instructor with an evaluation of your work at the half-way point and again at the end of your placement. The on-site supervisors will not assign a specific grade but will inform the course instructor about the student's diligence, contribution to the project, skills developed, and whether the student fulfilled the terms of his/her contract by showing up on time and working the required number of hours. The supervisor's evaluation of the performance of the student will be factored into term 2 participation marks.

#### *Letter of Introduction (5%)*

Due: 28 September

The aim of this assignment is to help you develop your professional communication skills. In September you will be placed with a heritage site and assigned a specific public history project to do for this institution. This letter of introduction will be your first contact with your assigned placement and will provide an opportunity for you to communicate any relevant skills and training to your supervisor, as well as your interest in the proposed project. Further instructions will be provided in class. Once you have submitted your letter of introduction, you should plan to meet with your placement supervisor at least once in October or November to discuss your placement and begin developing your project proposal and workplan.

#### *Public History Podcast Project (pair or group project, 20%)*

Project proposal, 5%, due 7 October

Podcast outline, due 2 November

Final podcast, 15%, due 23 November

This term-long assignment will see students work in pairs or groups to research and produce a brief (8-10 minute) podcast on the interpretation, uses, and (re)presentation of the past in a heritage or memorial site, museum or other public history organization, digital humanities project, video game or film. The project involves three elements: 1) primary and secondary source research; 2) one oral history interview; and 3) the production of an audio podcast.

This is a scaffolded assignment with four deadlines:

- 1) a project proposal that outlines the chosen site, identifies the interviewee and confirms their consent to be interviewed, and identifies relevant reference materials, due October 7 (5%);

Remaining components will be assessed cumulatively, for a total of 15%:

- 2) a list of interview questions and letter of informed consent, due 7-10 days before your interview is scheduled
- 3) a written podcast outline, outlining narrative elements and interview excerpts, with rough duration in minutes, due November 2nd.
- 4) the final podcast, due November 23. We will be learning the necessary skills in class (developing interview questions, conducting interviews, working with audio editing software, producing a podcast) in advance of each assignment component deadline.

We will listen to these podcasts in the last two classes of term 1 (November 23<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>).

#### *Research Project Proposal (5%)*

Due: 25 January

Students will write this short 2-page proposal after they have met with their placement supervisors in early January. It is designed to encourage you to communicate with your supervisor about your project and work out a way to turn it into both a public history product and an academic research essay. In this assignment you will outline your topic and your approach to the research component of the project (ie. how you will engage with the primary source materials at your placement). This is also the place where you can express any questions or concerns that you anticipate arising over the course of your research so we can address them early on. Further details will be distributed in class.

#### *Research Paper (20%)*

Due: 7 April

This 10-12 page (2500-3000 word) essay will accompany the final public history project you complete at your placement. Depending on the nature of your project, you may choose to write a paper reflecting upon the practice of communicating history to the public and working with a heritage institution, or a more traditional research paper that draws upon primary source materials that you encountered in your placement. In either case, your paper should incorporate primary sources from your placement, and draw upon the scholarly literature on public history practice (and, if appropriate, scholarly work by historians on your historical topic). Essays must include a comprehensive bibliography divided into primary and secondary materials.

#### *Final Project Presentation (10%)*

Date: 5 April

At the end of the course, students will present a brief (8-10 minute) distillation of their final projects at a student “public history conference” to be held at the Archives of Ontario April 5. This will be an opportunity to share with your peers what you learned, what you found interesting about your placement and research, and the challenges you may have encountered in completing your public history project. We will dedicate two sessions prior to the conference for practice presentations. Your presentation will be evaluated based on your ability to discuss your project

– both process and product – in an engaging and thoughtful way to an audience that will include your fellow students, history faculty members, and placement supervisors.

*Final Project (20%)*

**Due:** 7 April

This is the placement project that is undertaken in the second half of the course. The projects will take various forms, but each will involve academic research and public communication techniques. All project files, and/or images of exhibitions or final products, should be submitted both to your supervisor and the course instructor (via EClass). Projects will be assessed in consultation with your supervisor.

**Assignment Submission Procedures and Late Assignment Policies:**

Unless otherwise indicated, all assignments should be submitted to the appropriate EClass assignment submission folder by 11:59pm on the day they are due. Save all of your rough notes or rough drafts of your assignments; you may be asked to submit these as well.

If you are handing in an assignment late, submit it to the appropriate EClass assignment folder, as above; it will be time-stamped automatically. A penalty of 2% per day (including weekends) will be deducted for late assignments. If you have accommodations from the Accessibility Office or need to request an extension, speak with me in person or via email before the assignment is due to make arrangements.

The **deadline for dropping this course** without receiving a grade is February 10, 2023. See the **Refund Table** (Student Financial Services) at: <https://sfs.yorku.ca/refunds/tables/>

**FW 22-23 Important Add/Drop Deadlines:**

	FALL (TERM F)	YEAR (TERM Y)	WINTER (TERM W)
Last date to add a course <b>without permission</b> of instructor (also see Financial Deadlines)	Sept. 20	Sept. 20	Jan. 22
Last date to add a course <b>with permission</b> of instructor (also see Financial Deadlines)	Oct. 4	Oct. 25	Feb. 6
Drop deadline: Last date to drop a course without receiving a grade (also see Financial Deadlines)	Nov. 11	Feb. 10	March 17
Course Withdrawal Period (withdraw from a course and receive a grade of “W” on transcript – see note below)	Nov. 12 – Dec. 7	Feb. 11 - April 11	March 18 - April 11

**COURSE WEB SITE AND COMMUNICATION WITH INSTRUCTOR**

All electronic materials for this course, including a copy of this syllabus and links to library e-resources, will be posted on the course EClass website.

You are welcome to communicate with me by email and I aim to respond within 24 hours, except on weekends. However, I also encourage you to come to my office hours or make an appointment to see me in person or virtually. Please send emails from your York email account and treat email as if you are writing a letter, and include the following:

- 1) Provide an appropriate salutation to the person you are addressing (title/full name)
- 2) Include HIST 4840 in the subject line of your email;
- 3) Write in full sentences;
- 4) Always sign the message using your full name and student number.

Make sure you consult the course syllabus, other handouts, and course website BEFORE submitting inquiries by email.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

The university has paused its COVID protocols, meaning that screening, masking, and vaccination requirements are encouraged but not required. Please continue to check [YUBetter Together](#) for the latest information on health and safety.

*If you feel unwell, please stay home.* Contact me by email to let me know, ideally before class begins. We can discuss options for making up the absence.

## IMPORTANT LINKS FOR STUDENTS IN HISTORY COURSES

**The History Department:** The department's email for general inquiries is [lapshist@yorku.ca](mailto:lapshist@yorku.ca) and main phone number is 416-736-5123.

**The History Department website:** Upcoming events, resources for undergraduate history students, faculty and staff information, and much more: <https://www.yorku.ca/laps/hist/>

**Undergraduate Program in History:** links to information on history major career paths, degree programs (what is required for majors, minors, etc.), and degree checklists: <https://www.yorku.ca/laps/hist/undergrad/>

**History Advising Hours:** The Undergraduate Program Director is Prof. Kathryn McPherson and she can be contacted at [dushist@yorku.ca](mailto:dushist@yorku.ca). As well as answering questions by email, you can book a remote advising appointment: <https://www.yorku.ca/laps/hist/academic-resources/academic-advising/>. Please note that no grade information will be discussed via email.

**The Writing Centre:** One-to-one help with a writing instructor on any writing assignment. You will need to enroll to set up your appointment, though they also offer some drop-in sessions. The enrollment link and further information is found at <https://www.yorku.ca/laps/writing-centre/>. Bring a copy of your assignment to your appointment.

**York University Libraries:** Links to the main catalogue, e-resources, on-line help chat line with librarian, and many other research aids: <https://www.library.yorku.ca/web/>

**SPARK** [Student Papers and Academic Research Kit]: This is an on-line tutorial that provides handy tips and tools for understanding and successfully completing university-level assignments. Go to <https://spark.library.yorku.ca>

**Student Accessibility Services:** <https://accessibility.students.yorku.ca/>

Student Accessibility Services provides academic accommodation and support to students with disabilities in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Commission's [Policy on accessible education for students with disabilities](#) and York University Senate Policy on [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

**York Student Code of Conduct:** <http://oscr.students.yorku.ca/student-conduct>

**Religious Observance Accommodation:**

<https://w2prod.sis.yorku.ca/Apps/WebObjects/cdm.woa/wa/regobs>

**History department policy on grade reappraisals**, including link to the grade reappraisal form: <https://www.yorku.ca/laps/hist/academic-resources/academic-advising/grading-system/>

**Fall/Winter 2022-2023 Sessional & Important Dates:**

<https://registrar.yorku.ca/enrol/dates/2022-2023/fall-winter>

## SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND READINGS

### September 7: Introduction to the course

What to expect and how to excel  
Introduction to public history placements

#### *Readings*

National Council on Public History (US), "What is Public History?"  
<https://ncph.org/what-is-public-history/about-the-field/>

### September 14: History and Heritage

*\*Submission of placement rankings and rationale via EClass, by end of day*



\*Reading note due via EClass before class begins

Review of placement opportunities

*Readings*

Rodney Harrison. Excerpt from "What is Heritage?" in *Understanding the Politics of Heritage*. (Manchester University Press, 2009): 5-13.

David Lowenthal, "Fabricating Heritage," *History & Memory* 10, 1 (Spring 1998): 5-24.

Public History skills: letter of introduction assignment guidelines

**September 21: Collective Memory and Nation-Building: Remembering Vimy**

*Readings*

Jacqueline Hucker, "Battle and Burial": Recapturing the Cultural Meaning of Canada's National Memorial on Vimy Ridge," *The Public Historian*, vol. 31, no. 1 (Winter 2009): 89-109.

Ian McKay and Jamie Swift, Prologue and Chapter 1, "Myths, Memories, and a Creation Story," 1-3, 5-30, in *The Vimy Trap, or, How we Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Great War* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2016).

Public History skills: Introduction to Podcast Assignment; locating primary sources

**September 28: Creating Sites of Memory**

\*Letters of Introduction due

*Readings*

David Charles Sloane, "Roadside Shrines and Granite Sketches: Diversifying the Vernacular Landscape of Memory." *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* 12 (January 2005): 64-81.

Daphne Berdahl, "Voices at the Wall: Discourses of Self, History and National Identity at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial." *History & Memory* 6, no. 2 (Fall 1994): 88-124.

James E. Young, "The Counter-Monument: Memory Against Itself in Germany Today," *Critical Inquiry* 18, no.2 (Winter 1992); 267-296.

Public History skills: Oral History Research I: Pre-interview Preparation

## **Oct 5: Oral History and Shared Authority**

*\*Podcast proposals due Friday October 7<sup>th</sup> via EClass*

### *Readings*

Alessandro Portelli, "What Makes Oral History Different." Chapter 4, in Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, eds. *The Oral History Reader*, 3rd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2015): 48-58.

Stacey Zembrzycki. "[Sharing Authority with Baba](#)," Chapter 2 (53-72), in Kristina Llewellyn, Alexander Freund, Nolan Reilly eds. *The Canadian Oral History Reader* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015).

Pamela Sugiman, "I Can Hear Lois Now: Corrections to My Story of the Internment of Japanese Canadians—'For the Record'" in A. Sheftel and S. Zembrzycki, eds. *Oral History Off the Record: Toward an Ethnography of Practice* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013): 149-67.

History skills: Oral History Research II: Interview Techniques

## **October 12: NO CLASS. Fall Reading Week**

## **October 19: Representation and Race**

*\*Interview questions due via EClass*

### *Readings*

Timothy J. Stanley, "Playing with 'Nitro': The Racialization of Chinese Canadians in Public Memory." In Nicole Neatby and Peter Hodgins. *Settling and Unsettling Memories: Essays in Canadian Public History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012): 215-234.

James Oliver Horton, "Presenting Slavery: The Perils of Telling America's Racial Story," *The Public Historian* 21, no.4 (Autumn 1999): 19-38.

Brian Graves, "'Return and Get It': Developing McLeod Plantation as a Shared Space of Historical Memory," *Southern Cultures* 23, no.2 (Summer 2017): 75-96.

History skills: Introduction to Podcasting

## **October 26: Monument Debates and Legacies of Violence**

### *Readings*

Listen: "Notes on an Imagined Plaque," 99% Invisible podcast, 29 August 2017 (17'33"),

<https://99percentinvisible.org/episode/notes-imagined-plaque/>

Louis P. Nelson, "Object Lesson: Monuments and Memory in Charlottesville," *Buildings & Landscapes* 25, no.2 (Fall 2018): 17-35.

Tyler Stiem, "Statue wars: what should we do with troublesome monuments," *The Guardian*, 26 September 2018,

History skills: Sound Editing and Podcast Production I

## **November 2: Archives and Public History**

*\*Podcast outlines due*

Class meeting 11:30-12:30pm

Field trip to Archives of Ontario (12:45-2:20pm). Presentation on Archives and Public History by AO Outreach Officer Danielle Manning

### *Readings*

James B. Gardner and Sarah M. Henry, "September 11 and the Mourning After: Reflections on Collecting and Interpreting the History of Tragedy," *The Public Historian*, vol. 24, no. 3 (Summer 2002): 37-52.

Caswell, Michelle. "Toward a Survivor-Centered Approach to Human Rights Archives: Lessons from Community-Based Archives." *Archival Science* 14, no. 3-4 (2014): 307-322. doi: 10.1007/s10502-014-9220-6.

And two short blog articles:

- Krista McCracken, "[The Role of Canada's Museums and Archives in Reconciliation](#)," *ActiveHistory.ca* blog, 15 June 2015.
- Samantha Thompson. "[What do Archivists Do All Day?](#)" Archives @ PAMA (blog) 16 July 2015.

## **November 9: Heritage and Authenticity: Living History Museums**

### *Readings*

Alan Gordon, "Heritage and Authenticity: The Case of Ontario's Sainte-Marie-Among-the-Hurons," *Canadian Historical Review* 85, no. 3 (September 2004): 507-32.

Laura Peers, "'Playing Ourselves': First Nations and Native American Interpreters at Living History Sites," *The Public Historian*, vol. 21, no. 4 (Autumn, 1999): 39-59.

History skills: Sound Editing and Podcast Production II

**November 16: Field Trip to Black Creek Pioneer Village**

Tour and Q&A with BCPV senior staff on material history and site interpretation at Black Creek Pioneer Village

**November 23: Museum Controversies**

*\*Final podcasts due*

*Readings*

Robyn A. Gillam, Chapter 7, "Fear and Loathing at Bloor and Avenue Road: Into the Heart of the Royal Ontario Museum," 155-201, in *Hall of Mirrors: Museums and the Canadian Public* (Banff: Banff Centre Press, 2001).

Richard H. Kohn, "History and the Culture Wars: The Case of the Smithsonian Institution's Enola Gay Exhibition." *The Journal of American History* 82, no. 3 (1995): 1036-63.

Podcast presentations

**November 30: Careers in Public History**

Podcast presentations (11:30-12:30pm)

Roundtable on public history careers: Guest speakers TBA (1:00-2:20pm)

*Readings (optional):*

Gerald Herman, "Creating the Twenty-first Century 'Historian for all Seasons'," *The Public Historian* 25, no.3 (Summer 2003), pp.93-102.

Shelley Bookspan, "Something Ventured, Many Things Gained: Reflections on Being a Historian-Entrepreneur," *The Public Historian* 28, no.1 (February 2006): 67-74.

## TERM 2

*In the second semester students will spend 10 hours per week at their placements. This will limit our time in the classroom, but we will get together periodically (virtually or in person) to review and discuss the progress of the placements, prepare for term 2 assignments, and present final projects.*

**January 11: Class meeting 11:30-1pm to discuss placements**

**January 18: No class**

**January 25: no class**

*\*Proposals due via EClass.*

**February 1: no class**

**February 8: by appointment. Required virtual one-on-one meeting with course instructor (10-15 minutes)**

**February 15: no class**

**February 22: Winter reading week; no class**

**March 1: Workshop to discuss research papers and final project presentations; presentation skills**

**March 8: no class**

**March 15: no class**

**March 22: no class**

**March 29: Practice Presentations (in person, History department common room)**

**April 5: Student Public History Conference, 12-4pm, Archives of Ontario (schedule and virtual or in-person format TBA)**

*\*Final Project Presentations scheduled*

**Friday April 7: Research Papers and Final Project Documents due via EClass (no class meeting)**