Hist 4314: Historical Preservation, Research, and Writing.

“History offers the best training for those who are to take part in public affairs,” Polybius, Histories, c. 125 B.C.

“We may live without architecture, and worship without her, but we cannot remember without her,” John Ruskin, The Seven Lamps of Architecture, 1849

History 4310, Sec. 010
Room: A221
MWF: 2:00-2:50
Dr. Jason Pierce
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Office Hours: 3:00-4:00 MW & T/Th: 9:30-11:00

What is Public History?
According to James Loewen’s Lies Across America, eighty percent of Americans never take a history class after high school. Undoubtedly this is one cause of our collective historical amnesia, but perhaps all is not lost. While the average American may not formally study history and keep up on the latest historiographic trends in the field, Americans nevertheless encounter history everywhere: television, motion pictures, roadside markers, museums, and so on. The omnipresence of history, or of various interpretations of it, presents opportunities and challenges to the historian. It is here, in the rough and tumble world of everyday life, that public history exists. The public historian, therefore, can get out in the “real” world and influence “actual” people. This is not an easy task, but it can be rewarding.

The goal of “Introduction to Public History” is to introduce the various manifestations of public history, encourage history majors to see public history as a venue by which their work can reach a larger audience, and, perhaps, answer the age-old question posed by history majors: “What can I do with a history degree besides teach?” Even conventional academic historians, those who supposedly hide in their “ivory towers” and teach, can benefit from the experience of doing public history. Indeed, in recent years the separation between academic historians and public historians has been closing. In short, taking a public history course is beneficial to any history major, and it may even be fun.

Format of this Class
This class is broken up into two discrete, but related, parts. The first half is a survey of the various fields of public history, with readings designed to encourage students to think critically about the theories behind each of the disciplines. We will discuss the techniques and challenges posed by doing archival work, conducting oral history, conserving and preserving historical artifacts, and many other topics. Since public
history is very much history in action, we will also get involved in the world of public
history, encountering and critiquing public history sites, coming into contact with the
issues involved in doing public history, meeting and talking with public history
professionals, and creating public history of our own.

Assignments
Students will be required to read all readings and complete the assignments of the class.
These are:

1. Review of Jo Guldi and David Armitage, *The History Manifesto*. Due
   February 1st. 100 points
2. Virtual Exhibit Review. Due February, 15th. 100 points
3. James Loewen, *Lies Across America*, Due March 1st. 100 points
4. Research project. 200 points
5. Individual Research Paper based on Research Project. 200 points

Grading Scale
A = 700-630
B = 629-560
C = 559-490
D = 489-420
F = 419 and below

Required Books
Press, 2014.

List of Virtual Museums and Exhibits for Exhibit Review Assignment
Take the Virtual Tour: [http://www.tenement.org/Virtual-Tour/index_virtual.html](http://www.tenement.org/Virtual-Tour/index_virtual.html)


Smithsonian Institution, Online Exhibits. Online Homepage:
[http://americanhistory.si.edu/exhibitions/category.cfm?category=online](http://americanhistory.si.edu/exhibitions/category.cfm?category=online)
Do this exhibit: “Bittersweet Harvest: The Bracero Program, 1942-64”: [http://americanhistory.si.edu/exhibitions/exhibition.cfm?key=38&exkey=1357](http://americanhistory.si.edu/exhibitions/exhibition.cfm?key=38&exkey=1357)

Part I: Weeks 1-8: Introduction and Theory

   Week One: What is Public History? What is the role of the Historian? Historical
   Interpretations and the “New” History.
Read Guldi and Armitage, *The History Manifesto* (all)

Week Two: History and Memory: Uses of History  
**Assignment:** Paper on *The History Manifesto* due Feb. 1st.

Week Three: Grappling with Controversial Issues  
Read: Loewen, *Lies Across America*.

Week Four: The Museum  
**Assignment:** Paper on Loewen, *Lies Across America* due February 15th.

Week Five: The Internet and Virtual Archives and Museums.  
**Assignment:** Review of on-line archive or Museum due March 1st.

Week Six: Archives and Preservation of Historical Artifacts.  
Tour: The West Texas Collection: TBD

Week Seven: Historic Preservation and Landscapes as Public History.  
Tour: Fort Concho: TBD.

**Part II: Group Research Project**  
Week Nine-Fifteen: Begin Group Project Work. Topic: TBD.

Week Fifteen: Final Thoughts? Project Presentations  
**Assignment:** Final Paper.