

## **HIST 397 Public History in Action Syllabus Spring 2024**

Acknowledging our presence in the ancestral Doeg, traditional Piscataway and Patawomeck homelands.

### **Contact**

**Professor:** Dr. Gabrielle Tayac (she/her/hers)

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**Text/Phone:** 703-963-0331 (urgent only)

**Office Hours:** 3210 Horizon, Tuesdays 11-12 and by appointment

### **Logistics**

**Time/Days:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:00-1:15pm EST

#### **Two Main Locations:**

January 16 and 18 – Horizon 2010

Remainder of Course – Horizon 3225 This room is the CoCreative History Space (formerly the Public History Lab), in the History Department Suite 3200, next to the faculty/staff kitchen.

### **Overview**

Public history activates the past into our present, illuminating memories that may not be our own yet still seek to make sense of our identities. Creating stages for this dynamic, collaborative practice in such venues as museums, historic sites, monuments, and podcasts takes concerted action. Indeed, opening space to uplift diverse or submerged histories takes more than a moment – it takes a movement. And that movement must matter with meaningful connections and relevance across boundaries. In other words, the call is to invite attention, spark interest, and encourage investment in a multi-sensory educational setting. Public history incorporates critical scholarly research with community engagement. The field develops a dialogue, a relationship, and an innovative enterprise.

### **Exhibits with a Mutually Accountable Class Ethic**

This is a hands-on course that requires your in-person presence and collective accountability. Consider it to be a lab or studio experience, much like an internship. You are responsible to your team, to the material, and to me as your professor – and the responsibility is mutual. I carefully designed the sequence so that you can have a cumulative set of skills leading to a product outcome. This semester, we are curating a real exhibit, *Offerings for Tauxenent: Acknowledging Indigenous Place*. The exhibit will be produced in partnership with Woodlawn, a National Historic Trust Site, and open in April. The National Historic Trust will include our exhibit with

their campaign *The Full Story* telling inclusive history. The exhibit builds on coursework, fieldwork, and community service experiences ongoing since June 2023 with Indigenous NoVa as well as prior work on campus since August 2020 to realize land acknowledgment. After its show at Woodlawn, it will travel back to Mason galleries for another version in October 2024.

Together, we will create a supportive intellectual community in a safe, compassionate, and brave space. I hope you will be inspired by the movements, histories, and communities who accompany us this semester. Meanwhile:

- Please reach out to me as soon as you are feeling overwhelmed. We will work together to optimize your learning and wellbeing.
- Mason Counseling is also an important resource, don't hesitate to contact them <https://caps.gmu.edu/>
- Exchanging emails/contacts with 2-3 classmates can ensure that you can keep up with work.
- Inform your group about any absences and arrange for make-up work as well – please don't be a no call, no show.

You are true history makers and activators. Welcome to the journey!

### **Course Guidelines (Adapted from Dr. Suzanne Smith)**

#### Readings/Assignments

- All weekly assigned readings (including texts, videos, websites) should be done before Tuesday's class session, except for our first week. When we have guests, you must be prepared to engage with them in an informed way for a productive, respectful session.
- When the project launches, there will be more specified reading assignments per team plus your own research readings.

#### Course Changes

- Any changes in the course material or schedule will be announced as soon as possible for your planning purposes. I will notify you via BlackBoard email announcements at least a week ahead of the change. I also am aware that class projects might need more or less time in the CoCreative.

#### Course Technology:

- Activities and assignments in this course will use the Blackboard learning system, available at <https://mymason.gmu.edu>. Students are required to have regular, reliable access to a computer with an updated operating system (recommended: Windows 10 or Mac OSX 10.13 or higher) and a stable broadband Internet connection (cable modem, DSL, satellite broadband, etc., with a consistent 1.5 Mbps [megabits per second] download speed or higher. You can check your speed settings using the speed test on this website.

#### Course Materials and Privacy:

All course materials posted to Blackboard or other course site are private to this class; by federal law, **any materials that identify specific students** (via their name, voice, or image) *must not be shared with anyone not enrolled in this class*. **Any violation of this policy will be directed to the appropriate GMU university administrators.**

Mason E-mail and Communication policies:

- **Mason requires that Mason email be used for all courses.** I will be sending messages to your Mason email and you are responsible for making sure you have access to these messages.
- You may forward your Mason email to other accounts but **always use your Mason e-mail when communicating with me to allow verification of your identity.**
- You are required to check your Mason email account regularly and to keep your mailbox maintained so that messages are not rejected for being over quota.
- When you email me, you can expect a response within 24 hours except on weekends when my response may be delayed for up to 48 hours.
- When you email me, please remember to include **HIST 397** at the beginning of the subject heading to alert me that I have received a message from one of my students.

General Class Policies:

- 1) **Attendance and Punctuality:** Please make every effort to be in class, especially with group project sessions, and arrive in class **on time**. That said, I'd rather you come to class late than not at all. But come on time!
- 2) **Alternative Assignments:** I will not be giving alternative assignments due to absence this semester. You must contribute to your group assignment and complete in class exercises. If you have a serious personal or health emergency, please let me know and we will meet to plan your work sequence.
- 3) **Honor Code:** *All of George Mason University's academic policies and honor code apply to this course.* Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving proper credit. Self-plagiarism involves recycling papers from previous coursework. If you have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me. Violators will be brought before the University's Honor Committee for disciplinary action. For details, see: <https://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code/>.
- 4) **Disability Accommodations:** If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Resources at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations are arranged through that office. All documentation for disability accommodations needs to be shared with the instructor by the second week of class.

**Grading Policy and Scale**

Late assignments will lose a full 10 points every day overdue and will not be accepted a week after the due date except for excused purposes. Please be in communication with me if you need support so that we can work together to optimize your success in this class. Most assignments should be submitted on BlackBoard (BB). Be prepared that there are tactile pieces that you might have to carry, store, and document. The Dossier and Final will only be graded if the previous assignments building it are submitted on schedule.

500-470 = A  
469-450 = A-  
449-435 = B+  
434-415 = B  
414-400 = B-  
399-385 = C+  
384-365 = C  
364-350 = C-  
349-335 = D+  
334-315 = D  
314-300 = D-  
299-000 = F

### **Graded Work**

Individual Class Participation (Attendance)	80
Individual Project Team Participation	100
Individual Blog Post	5
Individual Thought Paper	10
Individual Inquiry Papers (2 x 10)	20
Team Logs (5 x 5)	25
Individual Milestones (5 x 15)	75
Team Prototype Testing/Evaluation	15
Team Complete Script/Layout	40
Team Installation Activity	40
Team Dossier	25
Individual Final Reflection	65
<b>500 Points Total</b>	

### **Required Texts**

McKenna-Cress, Polly, and Janet A Kamien. *Creating Exhibitions: Collaboration in the Planning, Development, and Design of Innovative Experiences*. 1st ed. Somerset: WILEY, 2013. Available online at Ebook Central, GMU Libraries.

All other materials are listed in the syllabus. These can be accessed online through Mason libraries or the provided links. You will also be receiving specified readings based on your group assignment that will be shared in the project package and on BB Lessons.

## **Schedule**

### **Week 1 Activating History**

1/16 Public History and Meaningful Connections

1/18 Museums before Movements

Note: Please complete readings/videos before Thursday class this week, BUT for subsequent weeks complete readings before Tuesday classes.

Assignment Due 11:59 pm on 1/21: Blog Post This week, you read about early colonial impacts on local Native peoples, the Piscataway and the Doeg. How would public history be helpful in making this narrative more accessible and relatable to a wide audience? Reflect on this question in a brief, 100 word impression.

Reading (By Thursday 1/18 for the first week):

All Sections <https://www.masonslegacies.org/exhibits/show/forgotten-people>

In Class Watch: Nina Simon's Ted Talk The Art of Relevance

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NTih-l739w4>

Opening NMAI [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u2bKv6\\_i3mI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u2bKv6_i3mI)

### **Week 2 Practicing History for Everyone**

1/23 Visitors

1/25 Interpretation; Submit preferences for community partners.(Maya, Quechua/Aymara, InterTribal)

Reading:

Chapter 1 Lonetree, Amy. *Decolonizing Museums : Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012. Ebook Central

Main Page Telling the Full American Story <https://savingplaces.org/telling-the-full-american-story>

Choose a Native American Heritage Story of your choice <https://savingplaces.org/story-categories/native-american-heritage-stories>

Assignment: Thought Paper (250 words) by 11:55pm on 1/28. Select one quote from Lonetree and one example from the National Trust's Native American Heritage Stories. In 250 words, consider how public history had to change to fully represent marginalized communities in society.

### **Week 3 Exhibits**

1/30 Special Guest: James Wells, Woodlawn/National Trust Program Assistant; community teams assigned.

2/1 In Class Exercise: Tiny Desk Exhibit; Exhibit Project Package posted on BB.

Mandatory Option #1 Group 2/3 Field Trip to NMAI! You can also go to NMAI to view exhibits Americans and Nation to Nation on your own before Week 6. There is a virtual option posted on BlackBoard. This visit will be part of your Week 6 essay assignment.

Reading:

Read definitions and sections about curators, skim remaining text in SI Exhibits  
<http://exhibits.si.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Guide-to-Exhibit-Development.pdf>

Peruse material about Woodlawn <https://savingplaces.org/places/woodlawn>

Foward, Intro, and Chapter 1 in McKenna-Cress, Polly., and Janet. Kamien. *Creating Exhibitions : Collaboration in the Planning, Development, and Design of Innovative Experiences*. Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley, 2013. Ebook Central

Assignment: Inquiry Paper #1 Due 12pm, Tuesday. Write three questions based on this week's readings for James to help you learn more about a curator's role in creating social change through public history. For each question, write two or three sentences that link your inquiry to the readings. All readings should be included in your inquiry, although each question can be based on one reading.

### **Week 4 Community Partners and Ethics**

2/6 Guidelines for Community Collaboration

2/8 NAGPRA

Assignment: Inquiry Paper #2 Due 12pm, 2/6. Come to class with one question about community collaboration guidelines and one about NAGPRA legislation. For each question, write a 50-75 word reflection on how the guidelines and legislation impact your upcoming work with your assigned community.

Reading:

Guidelines for Community Collaboration (all sections)

<https://guidelinesforcollaboration.info/>

NAGPRA Compliance <https://www.indian-affairs.org/nagpra-compliance.html>

## **Week 5** Full Project Launch

2/13 Land Ancestors: The Doeg

2/15 Exhibit Overview Work/Team Roles

Reading:

Chapter 2 and 4 in *Creating Exhibitions*

Assignments Due 11:55pm Sunday, 2/18

Milestone #1 Team Organization Roles and NMAI Analysis

Exhibit Team Log #1

## **Week 6** The Big Idea

2/20 The Big Idea

2/22 Identification and Interpretive Labels

Reading

Serrell The Big Idea pdf on BlackBoard

Chapter 5 and 8 in *Creating Exhibitions*

Assignments Due Sunday 11:55 2/25

Milestone #2 Big Idea (Include 3 Sources)

Exhibit Log #2

## **Week 7** Images

2/27 Visuals

2/29 Selections

Reading:

Chapter 6 in *Creating Exhibitions*

Assignments:

Due 12pm, 2/29 Milestone #3 Image Proposals with ID and Interpretive Labels Due 3/1  
Exhibit Team Log #3

Week 8 NO CLASS Spring Break

**Week 9 Objects**

3/12 Objects Material Culture

3/14 Selections

Reading:

Chapter 8 in *Creating Exhibitions*

What is Material Culture <https://sites.udel.edu/materialculture/about/what-is-material-culture/>

Assignments:

Due 12pm, 3/14 Milestone #4 Object Proposals with ID and Interpretive Labels  
Due 11:55pm 3/17 Exhibit Team Log #4

**Week 10 Scripts**

3/19 Scripts as Tools

3/21 Exhibit Writing

Reading: Model Exhibit Script on BlackBoard

Assignments Due 11:55pm Sunday:

Milestone #5 Team Script Outlines with Bibliography (based on sources)  
Exhibit Team Log #5

**Week 11 Prototypes**

3/26 Prototype Work

3/28 Testing

Assignment Due 11:55pm, 3/31:



## Prototype Testing and Evaluation Report

### **Week 12** Exhibit Production

4/2 Group Work

4/4 Group Work

Assignment Due 12pm, 4/4:  
Complete Revised Script and Layout for Wooldlawn

### **Week 13** Installation

4/9 Finalization

4/11 Installation

Assignment:  
Installation Activity TBD Class and Woodlawn

### **Week 14** Opening and Programs

4/15 EXHIBIT OPENING!! (Optional)

4/16 Education

4/18 Programs

Assignment Due 11:55pm, 4/21:  
All Group Dossiers Due

#### Recommended Reading:

JSTOR Online Jeffrey-Clay, Kodi R. Museums Create Meaningful Learning Environments, in The Journal of Museum Education, Vol. 23, No. 1 (1998), pp 3-7.

Peruse: Native Knowledge 360 <https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/about/native-knowledge-360>

### **Week 15** Evaluation

4/23 Exhibit Evaluations

4/25 Closing the Circle

**SPECIAL EVENT** TBD Community Celebration at Woodlawn (Optional)

**Week 16 FINAL DUE 5/5 by 11:55pm**

Individual Papers Reflections, Prompt Posted Week 10, 1500 words