History in Service of the Present;
Community-Engaged History (HIST 4990-002)
Professor Susie S. Porter

Thursdays 4:35 PM - 7:35 PM
CTHIB 211

Course Description

This course asks: what matters to you and how has history shaped those things? How can the process of researching and writing history enrich the communities that matter to you? Where and who is your community, or communities? You may define your community by geography, religious affinity, ethnic group, sexual identity, work place, school, political community, or other criteria.

To answer these questions in ways that lead to writing history in service of community building, the course will begin with self-examination. How do you identify your communities and commitments. From personal reflection you will spend time defining and exploring the history of where you are positioned and why. How has history shaped our understanding of what matters to you? We will then think about how the process of gathering data and conducting research can influence community, perhaps build community. At the culmination of the course you will have produced reflections on these questions and produced a history in service of the present. The history may be in written, aural, or visual form and delivered in a manner that contributes to engaging community.

Weekly meetings

1. **August 25**    Self-reflection and reflection on community and purpose
   a. What is your relationship to the study and telling of history?
   b. How do you understand the usefulness, or lack thereof, of history?
   c. What are your communities? Where and who make up those communities?
   d. How is the history of those communities told?
   e. How does the telling of history shape those communities and the people in them?


2. **September 1**  Why write history?
   a. Models, *Making Change*

3. September 8  Why write history?  
a. Models, *Recreating Identity and Community*

Read: Paula Hamilton and Linda Shopes, eds., *Oral History and Public Memories*, Part II

4. September 15  Partners, spaces, and places  
a. Models, *Creating Heritage*
b. Identifying partners  
   a. What are your interests?  
   b. What are the interests of the community? Community need?  
   c. Coincidence of interests?

Read: Paula Hamilton and Linda Shopes, eds., *Oral History and Public Memories*, Part I

Due: Identification of general project and community with which you will work

5. September 22  State of the question  
a. What histories have been told?  
b. Who has told these histories and where have they been told?  
c. How has this history been told?  
d. What are the assumptions that shaped this history?

Due: Proposal and bibliography of 10 publications (articles, books) or artifacts (public history display)

6. September 29  Action plan; oral history methodology  
a. Analysis of objectives  
   i. Key words  
b. Work schedule  
c. Ethics  
d. Oral history methodology

Read: Barbara W. Sommer and Mary Kay Quinlan, *The Oral History Manual*

7. October 6  Oral history methods
8. October 9-16  *No class meeting* (Fall Break)
9. October 20  *No class meeting*

10. October 27  Partnership relations and assessment

Read: TBD on ethics of CBR; communication

11. November 3  Where and how to tell the story?  
a. Space, place, accessibility  
b. Modes of interaction  
c. Senses and temporalities

12. November 10  Writing
a. The ups and downs of academic writing

13. November 17   Evaluation and reflection
    a. How to measure impact

14. November 24-25  No class meeting Thanksgiving Break

15. December 1   Presentations
16. December 8   Presentations

Due: December 12   Final project