

ACADEMIC SESSION 2018-2019

HI4518: HISTORY IN PRACTICE

30 CREDITS: 11 WEEKS

**PLEASE NOTE CAREFULLY:**

The full set of school regulations and procedures is contained in the Undergraduate Student Handbook which is available online at your MyAberdeen Organisation page. Students are expected to familiarise themselves not only with the contents of this leaflet but also with the contents of the Handbook. Therefore, ignorance of the contents of the Handbook will not excuse the breach of any School regulation or procedure.

**You must familiarise yourself with this important information at the earliest opportunity.**

**COURSE CO-ORDINATOR**

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**COURSE TEAM**

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## TIMETABLE

For time and place of classes, please see [MyAberdeen](#)

Students can view their university timetable at

<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/study/timetables-550.php>

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

History has never been more popular with the general public. In reflecting upon the phenomenon of 'public history', this course explores how History operates beyond the university and the tenets of 'academic history'. The key concept in this class is the idea and practices underpinning 'Public History'. These are many and varied. Documentaries on historical personages or events are a staple of television, while entire series running over a number of weeks on historical topics (Britain, Ireland, American Civil War, Ancient Rome) are frequently broadcast, with their presenters (Starkey, Ferguson, Keane, Schama, Beard) becoming celebrities. The *History Channel*, as its name suggests, is entirely devoted to historical topics, especially those relating to 'Henry and Hitler': and note that there is no comparable dedicated Literature Channel or Sociology Channel.

As historians what is our 'take' on these programmes (and their presenters)? How do we explain their popularity, and do we dismiss them as mere heritage, and not history at all? What role, if any, do historians have in the very public, and acrimonious, debate on the place of history, and the content of that history, in the school curriculum? Who owns the past – and how might the answer differ for the idea of a 'public past'? Look at the struggle to command the historical narrative in places like South Africa, Israel/Palestine, Ireland or the Ukraine. Again, as we move through the era of commemoration, 2014-18, there is a proliferation of programmes dealing with just about every aspect of the Great War, its battles, its impact. Allied to this are the commemorations in almost all European countries, as well as Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand and Russia, to remember the war dead.

As historians, how can we explain the differences in commemoration? And not just the historiography of the Great War: how can we understand, say, the Tea Party movement in the United States without reference to the historiography of the American Revolution, how can we understand contemporary racial issues in the United States without reference to the historiography of slavery? And the same is true for British, French, German

and Russian historiography: each country has its issues with its past – the Empire, the French Revolution, Hitler and Stalin.

Lastly, public history exists in any number of forms, often presenting itself in familiar, almost banal ways. Statues are to be found throughout our towns and cities, and further afield: who is being honoured, commemorated (and who is not)? What is the function of these public memorials? What function do museums play and what is the purpose of their exhibitions? What role can rapidly developing digital technologies, from genealogy sites to phone apps play in ‘democratizing’ history, and what problems and issues arise from these new forms of accessing the past?

By addressing the concept of Public History this course aims to give a greater sense of history as an applied, practical subject with considerable public relevance and socio-economic significance beyond its academic forms. In this way students will be able to evaluate how public, heritage or civic institutions (libraries, archives, museums, art galleries, community groups) select, construct and present different – equally valid – forms of history.

## **INTENDED AIMS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**

### **Aims**

This course aims to give a rounded appreciation of the practical and applied uses of historical knowledge and understanding as well as the generic cognitive skills inherent in the study of history in all its forms.

### **Learning outcomes**

At the end of the course students should have:

- enhanced their ability to evaluate, understand and critically review the various practices of history;
- developed a critical understanding of theoretical and practical links (as well as clear distinctions) between the practice of ‘academic’ and ‘public’ history;
- practiced skills which reflect critically on how history is presented to, received and interpreted by different audiences in different ways;
- implemented such skills by devising a public history project;
- broadened their general understanding of the ethical issues and responsibilities central to the practice of all forms of history

## LECTURE/SEMINAR PROGRAMME

### Week 1

Lecture Introduction: aims, objectives, assessments: 'What is Public History' (Dr Heidi Mehrkens)

### Week 2

Lecture The Historian and Current Affairs (Prof William Naphy)  
Seminar 1 Public History

### Week 3

Lecture History & Public Policy (Dr Alessandra Cecolin)  
Seminar 2 History & Public Policy

### Week 4

Lecture Presenting History through TV and film (Prof Thomas Weber)  
Seminar 3 History in TV & Films

### Week 5

Lecture History and Heritage (Dr Heidi Mehrkens)  
Seminar 4 Museums and Heritage

### Week 6

Lecture History and Digital Humanities: Law in the Aberdeen Council Registers (Dr Jackson Armstrong)  
Seminar 5 Democratizing History: The Internet & Community History

### Week 7

Lecture History, Memory and Commemoration (Dr Elizabeth Macknight)  
Seminar 6 History, Memory and Commemoration

### Week 8

Lecture Practising Public History, work placements & conclusions (Dr Heidi Mehrkens)  
Seminar 7 Assessments and Conclusions

## SEMINARS & BIBLIOGRAPHY

### 1 Public History

- Grele, R., 'Whose public? Whose history? What is the goal of a public historian?', *The Public Historian* 3 (1989), 40-48.
- Krim, R., 'At the Corner of History and Innovation: Using Public History to Influence Public Policy', *The Public Historian* 32/2 (2010), 62-81.

- Stevens, M., 'Public Policy and the Public Historian: The Changing Place of Historians in Public Life in France and the UK', *The Public Historian* 32/3 (2010), 120-138.
- Wilmer, E., 'What is Public History?', [http://www.publichistory.org/what\\_is/definition.html](http://www.publichistory.org/what_is/definition.html)

## 2 History and Public Policy

- Grayson, R., 'The value of history to public policy', <http://www.socialsciencespace.com/2011/01/the-value-of-history-to-public-policy/>
- Jordanova, L., *History in Practice* (London, 2000), chapter 6.
- Tosh, J., 'In Defence of Applied History: the History and Policy website', 10 Feb. 2006, <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/policy-papers/papers/in-defence-of-applied-history-the-history-and-policy-website>
- History and Policy: <http://www.historyandpolicy.org>

## 3 TV & Films

- Aaltonen, J., and Kortti, J., 'From evidence to re-enactment: history, television and documentary film', *Journal of Media Practice* 16 (2015), 108-125.
- Barta, T., *Screening the past: film and the representation of history* (Westport, Conn., 1998).
- Cannadine, David (ed.), *History and the media* (Basingstoke, 2004).
- Crofts, S., 'Not a window on the past: how films and television contrast history', *Film and History: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Film and Television* 17 (1987), 90-95.
- David, H., 'Television and History', *History Today* 36 (1986), 54.
- Downing, T., 'TV History: Requiem or Resurrection?', *History Today* 61 (2011), 28-30.
- Ebbrecht, T., 'Docudramatizing History on TV: German and British docudrama and Historical Event Television in the Memorial Year 2005', *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 10 (2007), 35-53.
- Fickers, A., and Johnson, C., 'Transnational Television History: A comparative approach', *Media History* 16 (2010), 1-11.
- Jarvie, I., 'History on Television', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 21 (2001), 97-99.
- Lundgren, L., 'The Forerunners of a New Era: Television History and ruins of the future', *Media History* 21 (2015), 178-191.
- Schama, S., 'Fine Cutting Clio', *The Public Historian* 25 (2003), 15-25.
- Taves, B., 'The "History Channel" + Reviewing the latest cable TV channel offered by the Arts-and-Entertainment-Network', *Public Historian* 19 (1997), 137-141.

#### 4 Museums and Heritage

- Arnold, J., Davies, K. and Ditchfield, S. (eds), *History and Heritage: Consuming the Past in Contemporary Culture* (London, 1998).
- Beranek, C. 'Founding Narratives: Revolutionary Stories at Historic Houses', *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 17/2 (2011), 102-115.
- Bloxham D., and Kushner, T. 'Exhibiting Racism: Cultural imperialism, genocide and representation,' *Rethinking History* 2 (1998).
- Harrison, R., *Understanding the Politics of Heritage* (London, 2010).
- Hayden, D., *The power of place: urban landscapes as public history* (London, 1995).
- Hobsbawm, E., and Ranger, T., *The invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983).
- Jackson, A., 'Local and Regional History as Heritage: The Heritage Process and Conceptualising the Purpose and Practice of Local Historians,' *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 14 (2008).
- Littler, J., and Naidoo, R., *The Politics of Heritage, the Legacies of Race* (London, 2005).
- Samuel, R., *Island Stories: Unravelling Britain* (London, 1998).
- Schama, S., *Landscape and Memory* (London, 1995).
- Smith, L. J., *Uses of Heritage* (London, 2006).
- Tosh, J., *The Pursuit of History: Aims, Methods and New Directions in the Study of Modern History*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (London, 2006).

#### 5 Democratizing History: The Internet & Community History

- Cameron, F., 'Digital Future I: Museum collection, digital technologies, and the cultural construction of knowledge', *Curator* 46/3 (2003), 325-340.
- Cohen, D., 'History and the Second Decade of the Web,' *Rethinking History* 8 (June 2004), 293-301.
- Rosenzweig, R. 'Can History be Open Source? Wikipedia and the Future of the Past,' *Journal of American History* 93 (2006).
- [http://www.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/resources/articles/community\\_history.html](http://www.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/resources/articles/community_history.html) "Place and the Intellectual Politics of the Past"
- <http://historyonics.blogspot.ca/2012/07/place-and-politics-of-past.html>
- <http://blog.history.ac.uk/2013/01/blogging-for-historians-2/>
- <https://bloggingforhistorians.wordpress.com/>
- <http://warhistorian.blogspot.co.uk/>

#### 6 History, Memory and Commemoration

- Ashplant, T., Dawson, G. and Roper, M., *Commemorating war: the politics of memory* (London, 2004).

- Ashton, P., and Kean, H. (eds), *People and Their Pasts: Public History Today* (London, 2009).
- Blaikie, A., *The Scots Imagination and Modern Memory* (Edinburgh, 2010).
- Brockmeier, J., 'Introduction: Searching for Cultural Memory', *Culture & Psychology* 8/1 (2002).
- Connerton, P., *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge, 1989).
- Cubitt, G., *History and Memory* (Manchester, 2007).
- Hamilton, P., and Shopes, L. (eds), *Oral History and Public Memories* (Temple, 2008).
- Klein, K. L., 'On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse', *Representations* 69 (2000).
- Nora, P., 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire', *Representations* 26 (1989), 7-24.
- Radstone, S. and Schwarz, B. (eds), *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates* (London, 2010).
- <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/the-big-question-are-apologies-for-historical-events-worthwhile-or-just-empty-gestures-426138.html>

## 7 Assessments and Conclusions

**Relevant Journals:** *Film and History: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Film and Television Studies*; *The Public Historian*; *Rethinking History*; *International Journal of Heritage Studies*

### ASSESSMENT

#### 1) Reviewing Public History 3,000 words (60%)

Students identify, analyze and critically review a particular act, institution, or piece of 'public history'. This can be, for example, a TV series, a public debate among historians, an exhibition, a commemorative event, or even a blog. The review should explain why the subject was chosen, its significance, reflect on how this public history relates to 'academic history', and to think critically about how history is presented and consumed.

2) For the second assessment, choose between these two options:

**Work Placement Report** 2,000 words (40%)

The report will be based on a work placement scheme, undertaken during the Easter break or - by arrangement with the work placements co-ordinator (Dr Heidi Mehrkens) - at another appropriate time. The report should indicate the way in which your historical skills were utilised in the work environment, and - if appropriate - how the work-placement experience enhanced your historical skills and/or ideas about history.

OR:

**Practicing Public History** 2,000 words (40%)

In this project students identify a topic, theme or aspect of History and, reflecting on the knowledge, issues and solutions considered in the course, construct their own version of a 'Public History.' **NB: the subject used for the Reviewing Public History exercise cannot be reused in the Practising Public History element**

To view the CGS Descriptors please go to **MyAberdeen- Organisations- Divinity, History, & Philosophy Student Information for Undergraduates**. The link to the CGS Descriptors is on the left hand menu.

**PLEASE NOTE: In order to pass a course on the first attempt, a student must attain a Common Grading Scale (CGS) mark of at least E3 on each element of course assessment. Failure to do so will result in a grade of no greater than CGS E1 for the course as a whole.**

If you submit your work on time, you can expect that feedback will **normally be provided within three working weeks** (excluding vacation periods) of the submission deadline.

**ASSESSMENT DEADLINES**

- **Reviewing Public History** 3,000 words (60%), due **Tuesday 19 March**, 3pm (week 10)
- **Work Placement Report** 2,000 words (40%), due **Tuesday 23 April**, 3pm (revision week) OR **Practicing Public History** 2,000 words (40%), due **Tuesday, 23 April**, 3pm (revision week)

## SUBMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

When uploading assignments, please do the following:

1. Submit a .doc or .docx and include the word count.
2. Submit by the due date, no hard copy will be required unless directly requested by the Course Coordinator through [My Aberdeen](#).
3. In advance of uploading, please save the assignment with your student ID number listed in the filename, i.e. 59999999 HI4518 Essay 1.
4. When asked to enter a title for the assignment, please enter a title identical to the name of your saved assignment, i.e. 59999999 HI4518 Essay 1.

**Please note: Failure to submit by the due date (unless a prior arrangement has been made) will result in a deduction of marks. Where no submission is received, this will result in a mark of zero.**

**Please note: *Safeassign* text-matching software will be used. However the School of Divinity, History and Philosophy reserves the right also to submit material to *TurnitinUK* when deemed necessary.**