

## *The Oral History Connection: Engaging the Arts and Oral History for Community Dialogue*

HUM4930, section 2338

T/TH 11:45am-1:45pm, Matherly 0102

### **Instructors**

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### **Course Description**

In this course, students will study the underpinnings of the practice of critical oral history and experience the process of devising performance material derived from oral histories. Through collecting new interviews and exploring the extensive collection of interviews in the SPOHP archive, students will address relevant social issues affecting our local, national, and global communities and ultimately create work that functions as activism in the community. Work can be exhibited on a variety of platforms including but not limited to: theater, film/video, literary arts (poetry, short story, spoken word), blog and podcast, visual arts, photography and innovative combinations (photo/voice, etc.) of the arts and technology. Devised works will be exhibited online, on the UF campus, in the community, and nationally and internationally.

### **Course Topics**

1. Basic theory and history of oral history as a field
2. Oral history methods and best practices
3. Using oral history to promote and engage with social justice
4. Community engagement through oral history
5. Applying narrative forms and techniques to interviews
6. Devising performance
7. Performing oral history

### **Objectives**

1. Students learn to use oral history to promote and engage with social justice.
2. Students learn basic OH skills: interviewing, transcription, audio and/or video editing.
3. Students identify and combine narrative techniques.
4. Students propose and devise an oral history performance project.
5. Students assemble and arrange oral history interviews into a performance script.
6. Students produce and perform original work.

### **Course Format**

1. Lectures, readings, and discussions (Tuesdays).
2. Fieldwork and research (Thursdays, and other days) Fieldwork includes: conducting oral history interviews, transcribing oral history interviews, community outreach, admin tasks, and rehearsals.
3. A performance, podcast, or video presentation.

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## Schedule of Work

### Week 1 Oral History Workshop I

Lecture: What is oral history? Why do we do it? What is the value?  
Introduction to the SPOHP oral history collection, shared drive, and office.

Exercise: Practice interview: 'the story of your name.'

Assign Readings: 1, 2, & 3

### Week 2 Oral History Workshop II

Lecture: Theory and History of Oral History.  
What is the Role of Memory? Objectivity? Steering the narrative?  
Transcribing & Audit Editing

**Discussion 1: Readings 1, 2, & 3**

Assignment: Transcribe a 60-minute interview

Assign Readings: 4 & 5

### Week 3 Oral History Workshop III

Lecture: Interview guides, best practices, interview techniques and methodology.

**Discussion 2: Readings 4 & 5**

Assign Readings: 6 & 7

### Week 4 Oral History Workshop IV

Lecture: Interviewing part II: active listening, follow-up questions, & depth.

**Discussion 3: Readings 6 & 7**

Assignment: Schedule & conduct a 60-minute interview.

Assign Readings: 8 & 9

### Week 5 Oral History Workshop V

Lecture: Roadside Theatre & Story Circle Methodology

Watch: *Thinking Outside the Box* - Diversity Project  
*South of the Mountain* - Act 1, Roadside Theatre

Exercise: Practice Story Circle

Assign Readings: 10 & 11

### Week 6 SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND RESEARCH METHODS

Presentation: Smathers Library Special Collections

**Discussion 4: Readings 8, 9, 10, 11**

Assign Reading: 12

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### Week 7 Oral History & Performance I

Watch: *Gator Tales* (Albert White & Gladys Thompson segments)  
<https://youtu.be/U6BU6Vfxw1o>

Discussion 5: **Gator Tales Panel Discussion with Kevin Marshall**

Assign Reading: 13

### Week 8 Oral History & Performance II

Lecture: Navigating collecting and producing narratives; authorship, subject & audience.

What are cultural narratives? How can cultural narratives be performed?

Assign Readings: 14 &15

### Week 9 Oral History & Performance III

Watch Film: Anna Deavere Smith "Twilight"

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/gperf/twilight-los-angeles-full-episode/3972/>

Assign Readings:16

### Week 10 Oral History & Social Justice I

Lecture: Social Justice and Oral History/Storytelling: What can you achieve?

Discussion 6: **Readings 13, 14, 15, 16 & Anna Deavere Smith**

### Week 11 Oral History & Social Justice II

Watch: Tectonic Theater: *The Laramie Project*

Assign Reading: 17

### Week 12 Oral History & Social Justice III

Lecture: Storytelling & Narrative Structures

Watch: Lyfe n Rhyme: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yfFg8zNkXZM>

The Power of Digital Storytelling:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jA2cTZK9hzw>

Assign Reading:18

### Week 13 Oral History & Social Justice IV

Discussion 7: **Readings 17 & 18**

### Week 14 Reflection & Discussion 8

### Week 15 Presentations & Performances

### Week 16 Presentations & Performances

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### Assigned Readings

- 1) Chafe et al. *Remembering Jim Crow: African Americans Tell About Life in the Segregated South* (excerpt). New York and London: New Press. 2001.
- 2) Basso, Keith. *Wisdom Sits In Places* [excerpt from pp. 111-143]. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press. 1996.
- 3) Raphael, Timothy. *Something to Declare: Performing Oral History*. Transformations: The Journal of Inclusive Scholarship and Pedagogy, 04/2006, Volume 17, Issue 1.
- 4) Portelli, Alessandro. The Death of Luigi Trastulli. In *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History*. Albany: SUNY Press. 1991.
- 5) Llonca, Miren. *The Healing Effect of Discourses: Body, Emotions, and Gender Subjectivity in Basque Nationalism*. In *Memory, Subjectivities, and Representation: Approaches to Oral History in Latin America, Portugal, and Spain*. Eds. Rina Benmayor, María Eugenia Cardenal de la Nuez, and Pilar Domínguez Prats. Pp. 77-92. New York and London: Palgrave. 2016.
- 6) Ritchie, Donald. Chapter 3: Conducting Oral History Interviews. In *Doing Oral History*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Oxford: Oxford UP.
- 7) Anderson, Kathryn, and Dana C. Jack. *Learning to Listen: Interview Techniques and Analysis*. In *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*. Pp. 11-26. Routledge: London. 1991.
- 8) Friedman, Jeff. *Fractious Action - Oral History Based Performance*. Handbook of Oral History, Chapter 15. Altamira Press, 2006.
- 9) Roadside Theater. *Booklet: You and Your Community's Story*. <https://roadside.org>. May 26, 2014. <https://roadside.org/asset/booklet-you-and-your-community's-story>.
- 10) Stucky, Nathan. *Performing oral history: Storytelling and pedagogy*. Communication Education, 01/1995, Volume 44, Issue 1.
- 11) Soans, Robin. *Verbatim Verbatim: Contemporary Documentary Theater*. Chapter 1. Oberon, 2008.
- 12) Albert White & Gladys Thompson Interviews (SPOHP Archive)
- 13) Ridner, Judith A & Clemens-Bruder Susan W. *Taking Their Place Among Giants: Performing Oral Histories of Pennsylvania's Black Freedom Struggle*. The Oral History Review, Volume 41, Issue 1, 01/01/2014, pp.48-76.
- 14) Devere Smith, Anna. *Introduction to Twilight: Los Angeles 1992*. New York: First Anchor Books, 1994.
- 15) Matsuoka, Naomi. *Murakami Haruki and Anna Devere Smith: Truth by Interview*. Comparative Literature Studies, Volume 39, Number 4, pp. 305-313.
- 16) SOHP, *Press Record podcast*, episode 7: Oral History for Social Movement Building <https://soundcloud.com/sohp/episode-7-oral-history-and-movement-building>
- 17) Hull, Glynda A; Katz, Mira-Lisa. *Crafting an Agentive Self: Case Studies of Digital Storytelling*. Research in the Teaching of English, 08/2006, Volume 41, Issue 1.
- 18) Roque Ramírez, Horacio N. *My Community, My History, My Practice*. Oral History Review 29(2): 87-91. 2002.

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### Evaluation of Grades:

Grading will be dependent on a **300 point scale**.

### Attendance and Participation (60 pts, 1 point per class for attendance, 1 point per class for participation)

If you will be late or absent, please email the instructors before class. Attendance at all rehearsals is mandatory and students are expected to arrive on time and ready to work and participate in all exercises, discussions, and rehearsals. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case bases providing the director is contacted BEFORE the rehearsal begins.

### Course Discussion (16 pts)

You will be assigned readings that will provide more detailed information about the process of oral history and some that supplement the projects and tasks you are working on. The required texts have been made available

through Canvas (<http://elearning.ufl.edu/>). The dates for discussions are provided in the syllabus. You will be expected to have read the assignment before arriving to class, and be prepared to participate in a discussion about the text.

Students will create and submit one question per weekly reading assignment for a total of **2 points** per week. Questions are due at **5pm** the day before the class discussion is scheduled. Question must demonstrate reading comprehension and be useful for spurring discussion during the **8 class discussions** to receive full credit. Not all student questions will be used in class, but everyone must submit a question for each reading to receive credit.

Time spent reading for class and in class sessions does not count toward weekly hours.

### Weekly Activity Log (90 pts total; 6 pts per week, 1 point per hour, 1 point per reflection)

Students will log how much time they spend on course required activities including but not limited to: research, transcribing, community outreach, writing, and rehearsing. **A total of 5 hours logged for these activities are required each week to receive full credit—1 point per hour completed.**

Each week's activity log must also include a 300-word summary/reflection of work completed, the writing portion of the activity log is worth **1 point** each week. Course required reading does not count toward this time commitment and must be excluded from the activity log.

### Research (34 pts total)

Conduct an Oral History Interview – **10 pts**

Transcribe an Oral History Interview – **10 pts**

Other relevant fieldwork - **14 pts**

### Final Project (80)

Students will present a final project at the end of the semester. This project, created in collaboration with other students and the course instructors, will be performative in nature: a play or dramatic reading, podcast, short film or video, interactive website, photovoice, etc., and must involve oral histories.

### Reflection Paper (20 pts)

Students will complete a 3-4 page paper at the end of the semester reflecting on their experience in the internship and production.

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**Academic Honesty:** Academic integrity is a fundamental value at the University of Florida. It must be at the heart of all our endeavors and must guide our actions every day as students and as members of the faculty, administration, and staff. Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity free from fraud and deception and is an educational objective of this institution. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating of information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students.

**Plagiarism:** It is plagiarism if you present the ideas or words of someone else as you own. You are responsible for understanding the University's definitions of plagiarism and academic dishonesty. Please read the Student Honor Code and ask us if you have any questions. Keep in mind that plagiarism is a serious violation of the student academic honor code and university policy recommends that, at a minimum, instructors should impose a course grade penalty and report any suspected academic dishonesty to the Office of the Dean of Students.

**Accommodation for Disabilities:** We are more than happy to work with anyone who needs extra help on a project or assignment. In line with university policy, students requesting accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the professor. Please be sure to provide this documentation to the instructors or program director Dr. Paul Ortiz as soon as possible.

### Grading Policy :

Each intern will earn a letter grade for their internship at SPOHP. Grades will be assigned according to the following scale.

A	93-100	A-	90-92	F	<64
B+	87-89	B	83-86	B-	80-82
C+	77-79	C	73-76	C-	70-72
D+	68-69	D	66-67	D-	64-65

### Grade Points:

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-
4.0	3.67	3.33	3.0	2.67	2.33	2.0	1.67	1.33	1.0	.67