

HISTORIC INTERPRETATION

Rutgers-Camden Department of History

Spring 2013

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This seminar will focus on knowledge and skills necessary for interpreting history to the public, especially research and methods of communication using a variety of means and media. Readings will focus on Mid-Atlantic history, to prepare students for public history work or advanced research in the Mid-Atlantic region. The seminar also will function in the manner of a public history consulting group to produce new research and interpretation of the Cooper Street Historic District that borders our campus.

Historic Interpretation Portfolio Assignments

1. Camden in Context outline and bibliography
2. Visions of Camden text panels
3. Blog posts about research (minimum of two)
4. Research report for 312 Cooper Street (5-8 pages)
5. Walking tour proposal
6. Interpretation Plan for 312 Cooper Street (c. 10-15 pages, possibly more)

In the process of the assignments above, you will:

- Gain expertise in the history of the Mid-Atlantic region and understand its place in current historiography.
- Build skills in written and oral communication.
- Compile research on one Cooper Street property, c. 1850-c.1950, and enter data into a database using a Google spreadsheet.
- Learn to use the Wordpress blogging platform.
- Learn to use Omeka and add items to the Omeka site for Cooper Street Historic District
- Lead or co-lead a walking tour for the Public History Community Forum on April 26 (or another audience, in cases of conflict).

Books (in the order to be used; * indicates recommended for your professional library):

Jeffrey Dorwart, *Camden County, New Jersey*.

Howard Gillette, *Camden After the Fall*.

*Robert P. Marzec, ed., *The Mid-Atlantic Region: The Greenwood Encyclopedia of American Regional Cultures*.

*Eric Foner and Lisa McGirr, *American History Now*.

*Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage*, fourth edition with introduction by R. Bruce Craig.
Jessica Foy Donnelly, *Interpreting Historic House Museums*.

Ned C. Landsman, *Crossroads of Empire: The Middle Colonies in British North America*.

Brian Black and Michael Chiarappa, *Nature's Entrepot: Philadelphia's Urban Sphere and Its Environmental Thresholds*.

*Gabrielle Lanier and Bernard Herman, *Everyday Architecture of the Mid-Atlantic: Looking at Buildings and Landscapes*.

Kenneth Ames, *Death in the Dining Room and Other Tales of Victorian Culture*.

Policies & Procedures

Grades will be weighted as follows: 40% for portfolio assignments 1-5; 40% for interpretation plan; 20% for participation (defined as thorough preparation, collegial teamwork, and leadership). Regular attendance is assumed; absence from more than two classes will result in a reduction of participation grade to C or F, depending on the extent of additional absences.

Rutgers Graduate Grade Definitions:

A	Outstanding
B+	
B	Good
C+	
C	Satisfactory
F	Failing

Communication: E-mail is welcome; write to cmires@camden.rutgers.edu. Please check your own Rutgers e-mail regularly. Please also check in advance before sending attachments of documents; printouts are preferred. To leave a voice message, call 856-225-6069.

Office hours: Regular office hours are held in 429 Cooper Street, Room 102, on Tuesdays from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m.; other times to be announced as needed for projects; and by appointment.

Electronic devices: Please stow all laptops, phones, and other electronic devices unless needed for in-class work on projects. An exception: devices necessary for reference to e-books.

Inclement weather: Rutgers rarely closes due to severe weather, but if this occurs an announcement will be posted on the campus Web site and will be available by calling the campus operator at (856) 225-1766. Closings also are announced on KYW Radio (1060 AM). The KYW closing numbers for Rutgers-Camden are 605 (day classes) and 2605 (evening classes). In the unlikely event that our class is canceled, please watch your email for adjustments to the reading schedule.

Books and other readings. The required books are widely available online, some as ebooks. Additional materials will be posted as links or PDF files on the Sakai site for this course. See <http://sakai.rutgers.edu> (use your email login).

Public history organizations and web resources:

- Rutgers-Camden Public History Links & News – <http://publichistory.blogs.edu>
- American Association for State and Local History - <http://www.aaslh.org>
- American Association of Museums - <http://www.aam-us.org>
- H-Public discussion listserv - (H-Public) - <http://www.h-net.org>
- National Association for Interpretation (under construction): <http://www.interpnet.com>
- National Council on Public History - <http://www.ncph.org>
- National Park Service - Cultural Resources - <http://www.cr.nps.gov>
- National Park Service - Teaching with Historic Places - <http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/twhp>
- National Trust for Historic Preservation - <http://www.nthp.org>

Schedule

Assignments in **bold** will be submitted on the dates indicated and graded at that time. Before they are submitted with the final portfolio, revisions are permitted (and encouraged).

The blog for posting about research discoveries is: <http://CooperStreet.wordpress.com>

Reading	Assignments / Applications
<p>January 22 Camden</p> <p>Dorwart, <i>Camden County, New Jersey</i> Gillette, <i>Camden After the Fall</i></p>	<p>In class, we will develop themes and questions for interpretation of the City of Camden</p> <p>--</p> <p>Introduction to Cooper Street Historic District Project and Wordpress blog site</p>
<p>January 29 Camden in Context</p> <p>Skim and read selectively: URS Corp., “<i>A Bright Pattern of Virtue and Economy</i>”: <i>Phase II and Data Recovery Archaeological Excavations of the Smith-Maskell Site, Camden, New Jersey</i> (Sakai, large PDF 54 MB)</p> <p>For a selected topic, use <i>The Mid-Atlantic Region: The Greenwood Encyclopedia of American Regional Cultures</i> and <i>American History Now</i> to identify contexts and connections between Camden and wider contexts of history or historiography.</p> <p><u>Guest for first part of class:</u> Tracy Elliott, Rutgers-Camden Assistant Chancellor for Development, to discuss plans for 312 Cooper Street</p> <hr/> <p>Events of interest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday, Wednesday, and Friday this week, 3:45-4:30, History Dept. conference room: Meet candidates for new faculty position in digital/public history. • Tuesday, January 29, 12:00pm – 1:30pm Visions of Camden lecture series, Stedman Gallery: Father Jeff Putthoff, founder and Executive Director of Hopeworks ‘N Camden, a youth technology portal using the technologies of web site design/development and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to work with youth ages 14-23. 	<p>For your selected topic: In a presentation of 5 to 10 minutes, highlight one or two significant connections between the history of Camden and the history or historiography of the Mid-Atlantic region and/or the nation.</p> <p>For your topic, also provide each class member with copies of a 1-2 page outline of connections you have discovered and a bibliography of 8-10 relevant books and/or articles. Include the most recent scholarship and follow the <i>Chicago Manual of Style</i>, precisely).</p>

<p>February 5 Principles of Historic Interpretation</p> <p>Freeman Tilden, <i>Interpreting Our Heritage</i>, <u>fourth</u> edition with introduction by R. Bruce Craig. NPS handout, “What’s In, What’s Out in Interpretation” (Sakai)</p> <hr/> <p><i>Event of interest</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday, Feb. 4, 3:45-4:30, History Dept. conference room: Meet the last visiting candidate for new faculty position in digital/public history. 	<p>Prior this class, visit any historic site or museum exhibit and observe interpretation in practice. Report to the class (5-10 minutes) on your experience; what did you observe that relates to or contradicts this week’s reading?</p>
<p>February 12 Exercise in Interpretation</p> <p>Excerpts from <i>Exhibit Labels: An Interpretive Approach</i> (Sakai) AASLH Technical Leaflet <i>Telling a Story in 100 Words: Effective Label Copy</i> (Sakai)</p> <p>Add research as needed to complete the label-writing assignment.</p> <hr/> <p><i>Events of interest:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday, February 12, 12:00pm – 1:30pm: Visions of Camden lecture series: Vibiana Cvetkovic, Paul Robeson Library; Daniel Sidorick, historian and author of <i>Condensed Capitalism: Campbell Soup and the Pursuit of Cheap Production in the Twentieth Century</i> (Cornell University Press); moderated by Charlene Mires. • Friday, February 15, 5 p.m.: Lees Seminar Andrew Shankman, “A Synthesis Useful and Compelling: Anglicization and the Intellectual Achievement of John M. Murrin.” Comment by Rick Demerjian will comment. 	<p>Prior to this class, visit the <i>Visions of Camden</i> exhibit in the Stedman Gallery (Fine Arts Building). Write three text panels to re-interpret the materials as a history exhibit. One should be an introductory panel identifying a title and theme with up to 250 words of text; two should be for individual items on exhibit with text of 100 words.</p>
<p>February 19 Meet in Robeson Library computer classroom (lower level) for Omeka training</p> <p><u>Guest for Omeka training:</u> Rebecca Goldman</p> <p>No new reading. Prior to this class, complete research in city directories and the U.S. Census for your selected Cooper Street property.</p> <hr/> <p><i>Event of interest:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday, February 19, 12:00pm – 1:30pm: Visions of Camden lecture series. Howard Gillette and Paul Jargowsky, moderated by Charlene Mires. 	<p>Before class this class, enter property research data in the Google spreadsheet for your selected Cooper Street property and post on the project blog about your findings.</p> <p>During and after class, use Omeka to create a collection for the property you researched.</p>

<p>February 26 Historic Houses and Interpretation Plans</p> <p>Jessica Foy Donnelly, <i>Interpreting Historic House Museums</i> NPS, <i>Planning for Interpretation and Visitor Experience</i> (Sakai)</p> <p><u>Guest:</u> Jennifer Janofsky, Curator of Whitall House, Red Bank Battlefield Park</p>	<p>In class, we will organize the research for 312 Cooper Street (the “Red Cross building”)</p>
<p>March 5 New Scholarship on the Mid-Atlantic</p> <p>Ned C. Landsman, <i>Crossroads of Empire: The Middle Colonies in British North America.</i></p>	<p>Progress reports on research</p>
<p>March 12 New Scholarship on the Mid-Atlantic</p> <p>Brian Black and Michael Chiarappa, <i>Nature’s Entrepot: Philadelphia’s Urban Sphere and Its Environmental Thresholds.</i> Background on Petty’s Island (Sakai)</p> <p><u>Guest:</u> Bob Shinn, Petty’s Island project</p>	<p>Progress reports on research.</p>
<p>March 19 – NO CLASS -- Spring Break</p> <hr/> <p><i>Event of interest:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 22-23, Temple University Barnes Club graduate conference, Temple Center City. 	
<p>March 26 Research Synthesis and introduction to walking tours and guiding techniques.</p> <p>AASLH Technical Leaflet: <i>Historic Walking Tours</i> (Sakai) NPS Facilitated Dialogue training materials (Sakai)</p> <p><u>Guest for guide training:</u> Bob Skiba, President, Association of Philadelphia Tour Guides, and archivist, William Way Community Center</p>	<p>Prior to this class, add a blog post about your research findings for 312 Cooper Street.</p> <p>In class, submit a formal research report of 5-8 pages, plus footnotes and bibliography.</p>
<p>April 2 Interpreting the Built Environment</p> <p>Gabrielle Lanier and Bernard Herman, <i>Everyday Architecture of the Mid-Atlantic: Looking at Buildings and Landscapes.</i> Kaufman, Chapter 2, “Protecting Storyscape,” from <i>Race, Place, and Story</i> (Sakai)</p>	<p>With a partner, for an assigned block of Cooper Street use the readings, especially the methods in the Lanier/Herman book, to explain the architecture and its evolution.</p>

<p><i>Event of interest – very relevant to our class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday, April 4, regional conference with the National Park Service, Campus Center Free Hour: Program about NPS career opportunities Afternoon: Two panel discussions of the OAH/NPS report “Imperiled Promise: The State of History in the National Parks” http://www.oah.org/programs/nps/imperiled_promise.html Reception following 	
<p>April 9 Interpreting Material Culture</p> <p>Kenneth Ames, <i>Death in the Dining Room and Other Tales of Victorian Culture</i>. Prown, “The Truth of Material Culture: History or Fiction?” (Sakai) Fleming, “Artifact Study: A Proposed Model” (Sakai) AASLH Technical Leaflet: <i>How to Write a Furnishings Plan</i> (Sakai)</p>	<p>In class, create a hypothetical furnishings plan for one of Cooper Street’s Victorian-era houses</p>
<p>April 16 No class – work on tours and interpretation plans.</p>	
<p>April 23 Working Session: Practice walking tours of the Cooper Street Historic District.</p> <p>--</p> <p><i>Additional events of interest</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wednesday, April 24, 5-7:30 p.m. Miller Memorial Lecture in Public History / New Philadelphia History Forum of Temple University, joint event at the Philadelphia History Museum. Panel discussion of documentary photography and <i>Still Philadelphia</i>, now in its 30th year; panelists will include <i>Still Philadelphia</i> co-authors Morris Vogel, now president of the Lower East Side Tenement Museum, and Allen Davis. • Friday, April 26, 3rd annual Public History Community Forum (PubComm), on our campus. • Friday, April 26, 5 p.m., Lees Seminar Paper by Sam Lebovic on the First Amendment, classification, and domestic political culture. Comment by David Farber, Temple University. 	<p>Submit a walking tour proposal with a rationale that identifies the historical questions or themes for <u>facilitated dialogue</u>; the tour route (must begin at Johnson Library); and brief descriptions of stops with their connections to the identified questions or themes.</p> <p><u>We will provide tours for the Public History Community Forum</u> on our campus Friday afternoon, April 26.</p>

<p>April 30 Synthesis and outlook for Cooper Street Review the National Register nomination form (Sakai)</p>	<p>Portfolio due, except for revisions of Tour Proposal and Interpretation Plan.</p>
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Interpretation Plans and revised tour proposals due Friday, May 10. (Optional drafts of interpretation plans may be submitted for feedback no later than Friday, April 26.)

Some notes about projects

Cooper Street Property Research: This will involve primarily the U.S. Census (which can be accessed online via Ancestry.com; two-week free trial period) and city directories located at the Camden County Historical Society. One-year memberships to CCHS are \$15 and include admission to the library as well as other programs and exhibits. CCHS web site: <http://cchsnj.com/>. Robeson Library has microfilm of many Camden newspapers, which may also be useful; a list is posted on the Sakai site for our course.

Interpretation Plan for 312 Cooper Street: This is the major paper for the course, and samples will be posted on our Sakai site. It is expected that this paper will draw upon course readings; research of your own; and the bibliographies and interim research reports by others in the class (properly credited). An interpretation plan typically has several parts, and we will determine together the precise requirements for purposes of our class. These will likely include:

- Introduction
- Statement of Purpose – that is, the original purpose(s) of the structure at 312 Cooper Street, its subsequent uses, and its intended purpose(s) in the future
- Statement of Significance – that is, connections to broader historical patterns and contexts
- Proposed interpretative themes, explained
- Identification of audience(s) and goals for visitor experiences, related to the interpretive themes
- Resources for interpretation, such as documents, photographs, maps, and artifacts (available or projected)
- Recommendations for interpretive media and methods
- Plan for evaluating interpretation
- Recommendations for additional research, if needed
- Bibliography

For purposes of this class, document all sources with footnotes or endnotes, as you would for any other research paper. Follow the *Chicago Manual of Style*, precisely.