

## 284-15 ORAL HISTORY SYLLABUS

Oral history is a method of documenting recent history through recorded interviews. This course surveys the theory and practice of oral history as a means to supplement the historical record, with an emphasis on the relationship between library science and oral history. Students interested in public history, archives, or simply curious about oral history will enjoy the class. There are no prerequisites.

Using the life-cycle model students will design and implement an oral history project from conception to archiving. Each student will create a project design statement; select a narrator; prepare, conduct, transcribe, and process an audio recorded interview. Students will apply the methodology we learn in class to their oral history project.

Though students work individually on their oral history project, there are many opportunities for discussion and collaboration. Learning is primarily by doing, accompanied by exercises, discussions and reading/listening/viewing assignments. Guest speakers will enliven our weekly lessons and provide a fresh perspective on current oral history practice. The course is organized into five learning modules:

### Introduction to Oral History

- Week 1. Course Orientation
- Week 2. Introduction to Oral History
- Week 3. Oral history life cycle

### Planning an Oral History Project

- Week 4. Planning a Project: Overview
- Week 5. Planning Project Content
- Week 6. Special topics
  - Oral History and the Law
  - Recording technology
  - Relationship with repository

### The Interview

- Week 7. Interviewing overview
- Week 8. Oral History Interview Step-by-Step
- Week 9. Transcribing
- Week 10. Reflections on the Interview

### After the Interview

- Week 11. After the Interview: Overview
- Week 12. Cataloging Oral Histories
- Week 13. Access Issues in Oral History
- Week 14. Thanksgiving Week Break
- Week 15. Using Oral Histories

### Evaluation

- Week 16. Reflection
- Week 17. Wrap-Up and Farewell

The week cycle runs from Monday through Sunday. Unless otherwise noted, assignments are due at 11:59 p.m. Pacific Time on the Sunday due date. The workload is heaviest during the interview and transcription stage, around weeks 6-12.

Most course content will be delivered on Collaborate through prerecorded and live lectures. Unless noted otherwise, live sessions are scheduled on Sundays at 5 p.m. Pacific Time. Students are strongly encouraged to attend live sessions, especially for guest speakers, however no live attendance is required. All Collaborate meetings as well as prerecorded lectures archived on our Canvas course site for access throughout the semester.

## **Course Requirements**

### **Technology**

In addition to the standard technology required for iSchool, students will work with audio files. Students will use a digital audio recorder of their choice to record the interview (or video with special permission), transfer the sound file to their computer, upload it to an external server, and transcribe the interview from the sound files.

### **Assignments**

1. **Project Design Statement.** Create a project design statement using the template provided. (15 points)
2. **Narrator profile.** Create a biographical profile of the chosen narrator using the template provided. (5 points)
3. **Quiz.** This short quiz will test comprehension of oral history best practices we've discussed in class. (Ungraded)
4. **Interview.** Prepare and conduct a 60 minute audio recorded interview. (15 points)
5. **Interview Summary.** Summarize the circumstances and content of the interview using the template provided (10 points)
6. **Transcript.** Transcribe and audit edit interview, then submit transcript to the narrator for correction and approval. (15 points)
7. **Cataloging.** Catalog classmates' interviews using the Cataloging workform. Evaluate the process. (15 points)
8. **Final paper.** Present and evaluate your oral history project according to instructions. (20 points)
9. Graded discussions announced throughout the semester
10. Extra credit opportunities will be announced in class.