ST 397: Oral History in the Twentieth Century

Oral history is a field of study and a method of gathering, preserving and interpreting the voices and memories of people, communities, and participants in past events. Oral history is both the oldest type of historical inquiry, predating the written word, and one of the most modern, initiated with tape recorders in the 1940s and now using 21st-century digital technologies. Oral History is considered a subfield of Public History. Public History encompasses the practice of historical research and interpretation outside of the academy. Public historians work at historic sites, museums, historical societies, government agencies, archives, and in the private sector. Public historians care for historical documents, artifacts, and images. They also interpret history for the public and professional audiences. Public historians create exhibits, historical brochures, interpretive programs, and digital products. Public historians also research and write about the past. Like all historians, public historians view the past as offering limitless opportunities for inquiry. Public historians tend to be generalists rather than specialists. Although many have dedicated research interests, they have to learn about new subjects as needs arise. Public historians often conduct original research. In many cases, however, their work is not aimed at publication but, rather, exhibit development, historical programs, and restoration plans.

Readings
Patricia Leavy, *Oral History: Understanding Qualitative Research*
Frisch “Oral History and Hard Times”
Yow “Interview Techniques”
Leavy “The Matrix of Eating Disorder Vulnerability : Oral History and the Link between Personal and Social Problems” (optional)
Johnson “Rural Spaces: The Final Frontier”, Baggett, The Creation of A Community
Shopes "Oral History and the Study of Communities: Problems, Paradoxes and Possibilities"
Boyd “Where is the Subject”
De Angelo,

Oral history websites with technical information and resources:
Oral History Association: http://www.oralhistory.org/
H-Oralhist: https://networks.h-net.org/h-oralhist
Baylor Institute for Oral History: http://www.baylor.edu/oralhistory/
Southern Oral History Program, UNC-Chapel Hill: https://sohp.org/
Vermont Folklife Center: http://www.vermontfolklifecenter.org/
Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling, Concordia University:
https://www.oralhistory.org/about/principles-and-practices-revised-2009/

In Meyer Library
Veterans https://www.loc.gov/vets/stories/index.html
Ozarks: https://digitalcollections.missouristate.edu/digital/collection/OzarksVoice/search

**Grades**

Class Participation 100 points

First Interview: Methodology 25 points, Interview 25 points, Transcription 25 points, analysis 50 points (150)

Second Interview: Methodology 50 points, Interview, 50 points, Transcription 50 points, Analysis 100 points (200 points)

Peer Evaluation 50 points

Total 500 points

500-450 A
449-399 B
398-348 C
347-297 D
296 F

Interview #1 You may interview anyone you wish for your first oral history interview. It may be a family member, friend, veteran, teacher, political activist, etc. This interview is a practice for your second interview. You will design a project, create a questionnaire and do a literature review with at least three scholarly sources. You will write a 5-7-page paper with a transcription, a description of your methodology and research findings analyzing what you see as the significance of the results. Invitation and Thank you notes. 100 points

Interview #2 You will interview former or current board members of the Gay and Lesbian Community Center of the Ozarks in an attempt to determine what happened at their annual meeting in January 2020 that led to charges of racism within the LGBTQ community. Your oral histories will be placed in OLGA, the Ozarks Lesbian and Gay Archives housed in Special Collections and Archives in the MSU Meyer Library. You will include a transcript and 7-10-page paper describing your methodology and give an analysis of the interview within a historical context. Invitation and Thank you notes. 200 points.

**Schedule**

**Part One: History, Readings, Listening Exercises,**

8/18 Introduction, Slave Narratives https://www.loc.gov/collections/voices-remembering-slavery/about-this-collection, Interview with Fountain Hughes,

8/20 Leavy, Introduction


8/27 Dr. Brooks Blevins

9/3 Leavy Chapter 2

9/8 Readings: Yow “Interview Techniques”, Morrissey “Two Sentence Format”, Ralph Smith interviews #1 and #2.

9/10 Interview Classmates

9/15 Leavy Chapter 3

9/17 Leavy, Chapter 4

9/22 Dr. Bill Meadows, Department of Anthropology, Begin Interview #1


9/25-10/6 Interviews

10/8 interview # 1 due

Part II LGBTQ Community and Racism

10/13 Visit to Special Collections Look at OLGA/SOGI Archives, and SOGI https://digitalcollections.missouristate.edu/digital/collection/Guides/id/4006/rec/134 before our visit.

10/15 LGBT Part 1 “Rural Spaces”, Shopes "Oral History and the Study of Communities: Problems, Paradoxes and Possibilities"

10/20 LBGT Part II Boyd, “What is the Subject”, OLGA Interviews

10/22 Readings from De Angelo, What Fragility, OLGA Interviews

10/24 Meeting with Professor 1:00-4:00

10/25-11/5 Begin Interview #2

Part Three: Evaluations

11/10 Interviews, transcripts and Papers due

Peer Evaluations: You will select the interview from one of those posted interviews and answer the following questions: Discuss its strengths and weaknesses in a short 1-2 page essay (specific references include in your postings the following): What does the oral history tell you about the interviewee? About the interviewer? What mistakes did you spot? What especially good practices do you notice and what made them good? Did the interviewer probe deeply enough -- or were the questions too superficial?
What should the interviewer have done to improve the depth of the interview? How well were controversial issues handled (if they were at all)? What about the recording quality -- the technical aspects of the interview; was it poor, fair, good, exceptionally good, and why? How might the technical aspects have been improved? 50 points Due 12/1

11/12 Reports
11/17 Reports
11/19 Reports
11/23 No Class
11/26 No Class Thanksgiving
12/1 Final Class Discussion: What Did We Learn? Papers returned. Evaluations of Classmate Papers due.
12/3 Open

Policies:

COVID-19 policy in class: For the first two weeks we will remain in our assigned seats to assist with contact testing if that becomes necessary.

In accord with the MSU Mask and Face Covering policy (https://www.missouristate.edu/Coronavirus/masking-policy.htm), Greene County Health Department (https://www.springfieldmo.gov/5140/Masks-and-Face-Coverings), and the Springfield City Ordinance (https://www.springfieldmo.gov/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Item/14780?fileID=203417), masks or face coverings must be worn at all times during a traditional (seated) class. This measure is being implemented to reduce COVID-19 related health risks for everyone engaged in the educational process. Masks or face coverings must be worn over the nose and mouth, in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-wear-cloth-face-coverings.html). Face shields are not considered masks or face coverings for purposes of this requirement.

Students who cannot wear a mask or face covering due to a disability must contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) (https://www.missouristate.edu/disability/) to initiate the interactive accommodation process.

In the absence of an approved accommodation, a student’s refusal to wear a mask or face covering will be considered a classroom disruption, consistent with Op3.04-11 Class Disruption, and may result in the student being administratively dropped from the class section.

You may also not eat or drink in class without a letter of accommodation.
Attendance: This class depends heavily on in-class listening exercises and discussion of the readings. Class participation is 100 points. Anyone who misses 3 unexcused classes will be dropped a letter grade.

Illness: While missing class is usually not advisable, it is important to stay at home when sick to avoid the spread of communicable illness. If you are sick or not feeling well, please do not come to class but rather seek medical attention from your doctor or at Mager’s Health and Wellness Center. They can provide you a medical excuse and advise you when it is safe to return to class. Contact your instructor to let them know that you are sick and will not be in class.

IF CLASS IS INTERRUPTED DUE TO COVID-19.

How will our class meet?

If we are unable to come to campus to meet we will meet on zoom at the same exact time as our class. I will e-mail you with further instructions.

How will I meet with my Instructor?

I will hold virtual office hours during my designated office hours (except when the university is closed). Emails sent during the week (Monday – Friday), will be responded to within 24 hours. Emails received over the weekend or during breaks/holidays will receive a response within 48 hours.

How will instruction be delivered?

We will have class discussions via zoom. The readings and other assignments are posted on BB.

How often do I need to go to the online course?

You are expected to participate in the online activities for as long as we are unable to meet on campus. This may be one day if we experience an ice storm or it may be several weeks if we experience something like COVID-19. I will send Announcement emails throughout the entire time we are not meeting on campus.

Is it possible to receive course announcements as a text?

If you are using the Blackboard app, you can have announcements sent to you as a text message using the instructions in this step-by-step guide - https://missouristate.teamdynamix.com/TDClient/1931/Portal/KB/ArticleDet?ID=91391

How will I turn in homework?

Homework and other assignments will be turned in using the Assignment Link in Blackboard. The instructions for how to submit will be included in the assignment instructions.

What about exams?

There are no exams for this course.
How will I know what grade I received on an assignment?

You can view grades and feedback in My Grades.

University Policies – it is your responsibility to know these policies:

Nondiscrimination Policy

Missouri State University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution, and maintains a grievance procedure available to any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against. At all times, it is your right to address inquiries or concerns about possible discrimination to the Office for Institutional Equity and Compliance, Park Central Office Building, 117 Park Central Square, Suite 111, 417-836-4252. Other types of concerns (i.e., concerns of an academic nature) should be discussed directly with your instructor and can also be brought to the attention of your instructor’s Department Head. For more information please visit the Office for Institutional Equity and Compliance office’s website.

Disability Accommodation

If you are a student with a disability and anticipate barriers related to this course, it is important to request accommodations and establish an accommodation plan with the University. Please contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC), located in the Meyer Library, Suite 111, 417-836-4192, to initiate the process to establish your accommodation plan. The DRC will work with you to establish your accommodation plan, or it may refer you to other appropriate resources based on the nature of your disability. In order to prepare an accommodation plan, the University usually requires that students provide documentation relating to their disability. Please be prepared to provide such documentation if requested. Once a University accommodation plan is established, you may notify the class instructor of approved accommodations. If you wish to utilize your accommodation plan, it is suggested that you do so in a timely manner, preferably within the first two weeks of class. Early notification to the instructor allows for full benefit of the accommodations identified in the plan. Instructors will not receive the accommodation plan until you provide that plan, and are not required to apply accommodations retroactively.

Academic Dishonesty

Missouri State University is a community of scholars committed to developing educated persons who accept the responsibility to practice personal and academic integrity. You are responsible for knowing and following the University’s academic integrity policy plus additional more-specific policies for each class. A copy of the university policy, formally known as the “Student Academic Integrity Policies and Procedures” is also available at the Reserves Desk in Meyer Library. Any student participating in any form of academic dishonesty will be subject to sanctions as described in this policy.

Emergency Response
At the first class meeting, students should become familiar with a basic emergency response plan through a dialogue with the instructor that includes a review and awareness of exits specific to the classroom and the location of evacuation centers for the building. All instructors are provided this information specific to their classroom and/or lab assignments in an e-mail prior to the beginning of the fall semester from the Office of the Provost and Safety and Transportation. Students with disabilities impacting mobility should discuss the approved accommodations for emergency situations and additional options when applicable with the instructor. For more information, visit Safety and Transportation.

Dropping a Class

It is your responsibility to understand the University’s procedure for dropping a class. If you stop attending this class but do not follow proper procedure for dropping the class, you will receive a failing grade and will also be financially obligated to pay for the class. For information about dropping a class or withdrawing from the university, contact the Office of the Registrar at 836-5520.

Religious Accommodation

The University may provide a reasonable accommodation based on a person’s sincerely held religious belief. In making this determination, the University reviews a variety of factors, including whether the accommodation would create an undue hardship. The accommodation request imposes responsibilities and obligations on both the individual requesting the accommodation and the University. Students who expect to miss classes, examinations, or other assignments as a consequence of their sincerely held religious belief shall be provided with a reasonable alternative opportunity to complete such academic responsibilities. It is the obligation of students to provide faculty with reasonable notice of the dates of religious observances on which they will be absent by submitting a Request for Religious Accommodation Form to the instructor by the end of the third week of a full semester course or the end of the second week of a half semester course.

Mental Health & Stress Management

As a student you may experience a range of personal issues that can impede learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance and may reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. Learn Visit the Missouri State University Counseling Center website to learn more about free and confidential services available to assist you.

Title IX

Missouri State University has a Title IX policy that guides our response to instances of sexual violence. Sexual Violence includes: Rape, Sexual Assault, Sexual Misconduct, Sexual Discrimination, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Stalking, Sexual Harassment and Pregnancy issues. The Title IX policy can be
located on the MSU Title IX website. This website is also a good resource for any questions or issues involving Title IX and contains contact information for the MSU Title IX Office and staff. Read an overview of the Title IX office.

If an MSU student discloses a Title IX related issue to a MSU faculty or staff member who is deemed to be a “Responsible Employee” under the policy, that faculty or staff member is required to report such disclosure to the Title IX Coordinator. A responsible employee includes any employee who has the authority to take action to redress sexual violence; who has been given the duty of reporting incidents of sexual violence or any other misconduct by students to the Title IX Coordinator or other appropriate school designee; or whom a student could reasonably believe has the authority or duty to take action. Taylor Health employees and MSU Counseling Center Clinicians are not considered to be Responsible Employees under the policy, and therefore, are not required to report Title IX issues to the Title IX Coordinator.

Cell Phone Policy

As a member of the learning community, each student has a responsibility to other students who are members of the community. When cell phones or pagers ring and students respond in class or leave class to respond, it disrupts the class. Therefore, the Office of the Provost prohibits the use by students of cell phones, pagers, PDAs, or similar communication devices during scheduled classes. All such devices must be turned off or put in a silent (vibrate) mode and ordinarily should not be taken out during class. Given the fact that these same communication devices are an integral part of the University’s emergency notification system, an exception to this policy would occur when numerous devices activate simultaneously. When this occurs, students may consult their devices to determine if a university emergency exists. If that is not the case, the devices should be immediately returned to silent mode and put away. Other exceptions to this policy may be granted at the discretion of the instructor.

The use of technology is a part of our everyday lives at the university and there is important information you should know about your own computer’s capabilities, Internet access, Blackboard, and other technology tools whether you are participating in a classroom on campus or taking an online class. The link below will provide you with the information you need to know.
https://missouristate.teamdynamix.com/TDClient/1931/Portal/KB/ArticleDet?ID=107376