

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY
SPRING 2010

ORAL HISTORY METHODS
HIST 4903-02
Wednesdays 1-3:50pm

Professor: Dr. Kate Landdeck

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Office Hours: M 12:30-1:30 and By Appointment

Required Texts: Donald A. Ritchie, *Doing Oral History: A Practical Guide*; Perks and Thomson, ed., *The Oral History Reader* (OHR) 2nd Edition.

Course Description and Goals: In this class you will learn the theories, methods, and debates surrounding the oldest historical tool, oral history. We will discuss how and why oral history can be useful, and you will learn the “nitty-gritty” aspects of it by completing two oral histories and transcriptions. When you complete this course you will be familiar with the theory, methodology, and practical aspects of oral history. This knowledge will help you better understand the tools available to historians (and other scholars) beyond static sources. You will have a better understanding of both individual and collective memory and how it influences all historical sources. You will leave this class with the tools needed to begin an oral history project in your own classroom, school, or community.

Expectations: This is, without a doubt, a “hands-on” type of course. You will be expected to come to class prepared to discuss the issues presented in the readings. You will be expected to have ideas of your own, to share them with your classmates, and to listen in an open-minded manner to their ideas. In your interviews you will be expected to follow the guidelines as established for this course. With the oral histories you are creating an historical document. **You must take your work seriously – future scholars are counting on you.** I expect you to attend class, to arrive on time, and to stay the duration. And finally, I expect all of us to be courteous to one another. That means that not only will we listen and be open to different ideas during class, but also we will not eat food, read newspapers or other material, study for other classes, or use our cell phones. No electronic devices may be utilized in this class other than a laptop for note-taking. If you are caught using your computer for any other purpose you will be asked to put it away. If a second person is caught the entire class will put them away. If a third person is caught utilizing their laptops for purposes other than directly related to the task at hand in class then laptops will no longer be allowed.

Evaluation: Your evaluation in the course will be based on your preparation and skills as an oral historian, the seriousness of your participation in our discussion, and individual work with various readings.

- Your preparation and initial classmate interview questions will be worth 5% of your grade. They should reveal evidence that you have followed the proper question development guidelines as discussed in readings and in class, and that you have completed appropriate research on your subject.
- You will write a 3-4 page paper evaluating your experience as both interviewer and interviewee. This first person work should be thoughtfully and critically written, providing evidence of the lessons learned from both experiences and in the context of class discussions and readings. It will be worth 10% of your course grade.
- Your Classmate Interview Packet which will include the audio of the interview, the transcript and more which will be clearly explained in a separate handout will be worth 20% of your course grade.
- Your work editing your own interview will be worth 10%
- Your preparation and initial former student interview questions will be worth 5%
- A brief abstract of an individual article will be worth 5%
- Your Former Student Interview Packet will be worth 25%
- Participation (including evidence of reading, active participation in discussion, and attendance) will be worth 20%

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Date Due</u>	<u>Percentage of Grade</u>
Classmate Draft Questions	February 3rd	5%
Interviewer/Interviewee Paper	February 17th	10%
Classmate Interview Packet	March 3rd	25%
Edit of Own Interview	March 24th	5%
Former Student Draft Questions	March 24th	5%
Article Abstract	March 31st	5%
Former Student Interview Packet	May 5th	25%
Participation	Throughout Semester	20%

Blackboard: We will be utilizing Blackboard for a variety of purposes this semester including communication. Make certain that your email address in the Blackboard system is correct. If you are unfamiliar with Blackboard the University offers courses to help you learn it. Please ask for more information if you are interested.

Make-up Work: Make-up work will be allowed begrudgingly and only in the case of severe, documented trauma. If you must miss a due date because of a University event, you must turn in the work early. Late papers or other assignments lose 10% per calendar day (note that is not class day or even week day, but calendar day). I do not accept emailed assignments, although in case of emergency I might be open to discussion. As should be clear: do not miss class and do not miss an assignment.

Academic Dishonesty Statement: My statement on academic dishonesty: Plagiarism or cheating of any kind absolutely will not be tolerated. Any work found to be the result of academic dishonesty will receive a grade of zero and could result in a COURSE grade of F. Disciplinary action will be taken – in other words, your cheating will be reported to Student Life, possibly leading to expulsion from the University. I have no patience or indulgence for cheating of any kind. If I catch you, you WILL fail the class and you WILL be reported. Quite simply: don't cheat. If you are not sure what plagiarism is, we will discuss it extensively in class and you can always feel free to come ask me about it. You will be required to take the library's Plagiarism Tutorial and that will help you to understand it as well.

The University Statement on Academic Honesty:

"Honesty in completing assignments is essential to the mission of the university and to the development of the personal integrity of the student. Cheating, plagiarism, or other kinds of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will result in appropriate sanctions that may include failing an assignment, failing the class, or being suspended or expelled. Suspected cases in this course may be reported to Student Life. The specific disciplinary process for academic dishonesty is found in the TWU Student Handbook. Tools to help you avoid plagiarism are available through the TWU Libraries at <http://www.twu.edu/library/tutorial/plagiarism/player.html>."

"In an effort to ensure the integrity of the academic process, Texas Woman's University vigorously affirms the importance of academic honesty as defined by the Student Handbook. Therefore, in an effort to detect and prevent plagiarism, faculty members at Texas Woman's University may now use a tool called Turnitin to compare a student's work with multiple sources. It then reports a percentage of similarity and provides links to those specific sources. The tool itself does not determine whether or not a paper has been plagiarized. Instead, that judgment must be made by the individual faculty member. Some of the required assignments in this course may be checked for plagiarism using Turnitin"

Disability Statement: If you anticipate the need for reasonable accommodations to meet the requirements of this course, you must register with the office of Disability Support Services (CFO 106, 940-898-3835, dss@twu.edu) in order to obtain the required official notification of your accommodation needs. Please plan to meet with me by appointment or during office hours to discuss approved accommodations and how my course requirements and activities may impact your ability to fully participate.

Lecture Topics and Reading Assignments

(Note these are minimum assignments. You should expect handouts regularly. Consider this fair warning.)

- January 20 Introduction to Class
 History of Oral History
 Read: Oral History Association Website "Best Practices in Oral History"
 www.oralhistory.org
- January 27 Developments in Oral History
 Readings: OHR - Ch. 1-3,5-6;
 Ritchie - Introduction and Chapter One
- February 3 Interviewing Techniques
 Readings: Ritchie – Chapter Three and Appendix 1 & 2
 OHR – Chapters 9, 10, 14
 Draft of Classmate Interview Question Set Due
- February 10 Listening; Ethics and Legal Responsibilities
 Readings: Ritchie - Chapter 2 (especially pp. 75-79)
 OHA Website - "Evaluation Guidelines"
- Interview Classmate Sometime After This Class,
 Before Next Meeting**
- February 17 Discuss Interview One
 Transcribing
 Readings: Ritchie – Chapter Two Review;
 OHR - Chapters 8, 27, 30, 31
 Begin reading *Marking a Trail* and learning TWU History
 Interviewer/Interviewee Papers Due
- February 24 Memory – “Are you *sure* it happened that way?”
 Readings: OHR - Chapters 17-18
 Article: Alessandro Portelli, "The Death of Luigi Trastulli: Memory and
 the Event"
 Continue reading TWU history to prepare for next week's discussion
- March 3 TWU History
 Discuss Former Student Interviews
 Readings: *Marking a Trail* - history of TWU
 Classmate Full Transcript and Interview Packets DUE
- March 10 Work on Edit of Own Interview
 Work on Former Student Interview Questions
 No Class Meeting

March 17	Spring Break
March 24	Oral History as Source/Evidence Discuss Former Student Interview Plans Readings: OHR - Chapters 20,24; Ritchie - Chapter 4 Edited Own Interview Due Draft of Former Student Interview Questions Due
March 31	Presenting and Utilizing Oral History Discuss Former Student Interviews Readings: OHR – Chapter 32; Ritchie - Chapter 8; Individually Assigned Readings Abstract of your reading due Upon Instructor Approval, AFTER today's class you may Conduct Former Student Interview
April 7	Transcribing and Editing Readings: OHR – Review Chapters 27,30,31 Former Student Interview Discussion
April 14	Preserving Oral Histories - The Role of the Archives Readings: Ritchie - Chapter Six; OHR – Chapters 8, 26 Should Have Former Student Interview Completed Before Now!
April 21	Discussion of Interview Experiences, Transcription Challenges, Ethical Concerns
April 28	Work on Transcript - No Class Meeting Planned Individual or Group Meetings as Needed
May 5	Discuss Oral History Projects Future of Oral History? FORMER STUDENT PACKETS DUE

Quick summary of the readings from **your books** over the course of the semester:

OHR: 1-3, 5-6, 8-10, 14, 17-18, 20, 24, 26-27, 30-32

Ritchie: 1-4, 6, 8