

Interpreting Public Civil War Landscapes
Civil War Era Studies 360
Gettysburg College
Fall 2017

Wednesday – 6:30-9:00pm
Weidensall 411

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Office hours: Wednesday 9:00-10:00pm
Thursday 6:00-9:00 (ACHS)

Course Objectives

“The battlefield of our great fratricidal American war is not merely a place of strategy and tactics; not a place where regiments moved this way and that like checkers on the board; not merely a spot where something was decided that would lead to another decision.... For we Americans are not descendants of a regiment; we are sprung from men and women.”

Freeman Tilden, 1957

Historic landscapes are vibrant places where history comes to life. Heritage interpretation is the practice of doing just that. This course investigates the history and practice of interpretation, using the Civil War landscapes around Gettysburg as a lens and laboratory. Students will learn the ever-evolving tools of interpretation, discover historical lenses through which to craft public history products and develop interpretive presentations centering on the campus, town and battlefield. Based on curriculum developed by the National Park Service, the stewards of many of America’s Civil War sites and the leader in developing new techniques in heritage interpretation.

This course is designed to offer students with deep training on current trends and future tactics in public historical interpretations as expressed in Civil War landscapes, particularly as practiced by the National Park Service and the National Association for Interpretation. Students will explore both the history of interpretation as a career and the implications its methodologies have on public presentations and programming in Civil War landscapes. Students will discuss interpretive challenges of varied fields of historical inquiry, focusing around gender, race, religion and political public interpretive programming within landscapes.

The course is intended not only as an investigation of Brown and his times, but also as an opportunity to develop students’ ability to think and read critically, to write persuasively, and to formulate their own interpretations of the past through primary source research.

As a department, the Civil War Era Studies faculty strives to meet these four standards in all our coursework:

- Students will develop expertise in the study of the history of warfare and the American Civil War era.
- Students will learn to use primary sources and develop a sophisticated understanding of secondary literature within the field appropriate to their level of study.
- Students will gain global training in the study of war to better understand the American Civil War's historical context.
- Students will develop an interdisciplinary understanding of war taking into account, amongst other things, the study of society, culture, and historical memory.

Readings

The following books are required reading for the course:

James and Lois Horton, Eds., *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

James W. Loewen, *Lies Across America: What Our Historic Sites Get Wrong* (New York, NY: Touchstone, 2000).

Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York, NY: Columbia University, 2000).

Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

Franklin D. Vagnon & Deborah E. Ryan, *Anarchist's Guide to Historic House Museums* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2016).

Jim Weeks, *Gettysburg: Memory, Market, and an American Shrine* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009).

The following are required readings for this course, are freely available online and will be included in the class' Google Drive folder:

Brenda A. Allen, et. al., *Slavery and Justice: Report of the Brown University Steering Committee on Slavery and Justice*, (Providence, RI: Brown University, 2006).

Milton Chen, et. al., *Education and Learning Committee Report - Advancing the National Park Idea*, (Washington, DC: National Park Conservation Association, 2009).

Nina Simon, *The Participatory Museum*, (Santa Barbara, CA: Museum 2.0, 2010).

Anne Whisnant, et. al., *Imperiled Promise: The State of History in the National Park Service*, (Bloomington, IN: Organization of American Historians, 2011).

Additional short reading assignments may be distributed to the class via e-mail and/or Google Drive.

Requirements:

- **Attendance/Participation:** The course will be conducted in a free-form seminar discussion format. It is therefore imperative that you attend all class meetings and are fully prepared to discuss the day's reading assignment. I will keep track of your contributions to class discussion. Participation constitutes a significant portion of the final course grade. Quizzes may be given in order to encourage preparation. As a courtesy to your instructor and fellow classmates make sure your cell phone is set to silent when you attend class.
- **Field Trips:** There are two full-day field trips scheduled for this class.

One will take place on the Gettysburg battlefield. This will afford the class an opportunity to observe programs as they are currently expressed at the National Military Park, as well as workshopping how class members might incorporate 21st century techniques as well. This will be a full-day experience with a stop at a local restaurant for lunch. Please plan on spending 9am-5pm at this mandatory class session.

The second field trip will be to the National Museum of African-American History and Culture in Washington, DC. This optional field trip will include a group block of tickets to this brand new Smithsonian museum – currently one of the toughest tickets to get on the east coast aside from Hamilton: An American Musical. Students are responsible for arranging transportation.

- **Honor Code:** It should go without saying that the college's honor code is in effect both for all written assignments and all in-class activity during the semester. Please do your best to keep the classroom a fair and level playing field for both yourself and your peers. In the end, cheating hurts the cheater.
- **Personal Effort:** You get out of any educational experiences precisely the amount of effort you put in. This semester should offer an exciting opportunity to test your boundaries, try new ideas and build new skills. Remember, learning can be an enjoyable experience and not simply a slog through rusty dates and names. History is about who we are as a people, how we got here and where we're going. If you try hard, then you can come out at the end of the semester knowing that the work you did mattered.

Assignments:

In addition to preparing for each class meeting, students in CWES 360 have a few other major responsibilities:

- **Leading a Class Discussion:** Each student will be responsible for leading one book discussion over the course of the semester. Students may opt to distribute potential discussion questions to the class via e-mail prior to that week's meeting

in preparation for the seminar, though this is not required. Students should bring an extra copy of their brainstormed discussion questions for the professor.

- **Final Interpretive Project:** In lieu of a final examination and to fulfill the Gettysburg College Fourth Hour Requirement, each student will prepare an interpretive project, rooted in primary source research and using 21st century interpretive skills.

Students may choose one of two tracks for this presentation: **personal services or interpretive media.**

Both tracks require a 7-page minimum primary source research paper which will work as the factual grounding for the interpretive experience. This scholarly paper should investigate some aspect of the local Civil War landscape, but is not necessarily limited by the Civil War era. The paper must be based largely on primary sources (letters, diaries, official reports, newspapers, etc.) and not simply a report on readings of secondary material. The paper should require you to spend some time within an archive or with archival material obtained through ILL from a partner institution. Typically students utilize resources from archives including the College's own Special Collections, USAHEC in Carlisle, Adams County Historical Society in Gettysburg, the National Archives or Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. or other local institutions.

The research paper portion of the project is due October 18th. Please plan accordingly. The research *cannot* be adequately completed in the final days before it is due. This early due-date is to allow you to develop interpretive material from your research; the earlier you complete this portion of the project, the better your final product will be.

A brief and rough type-written prospectus / proposal (about 1-2 paragraphs) and a list of potential sources should be submitted by September 13th.

The paper should be a minimum of seven double spaced pages in length, not including footnotes and bibliography (12-point, Times New Roman, 1-inch margins).

In addition to this short research paper, students will produce one of two deliverable products, depending on their track choice:

- **Personal Services Track**
Students choosing the personal services track will develop a 10-15 minute interpretive talk, as would be delivered for visitors to a historic location in the Gettysburg area. The content of this talk should arise from the student's primary research paper; the methods and means of delivery should utilize the techniques discussed and developed during the course of

the semester. The presentation should include dialogic techniques and strategic moments of visitor interaction.

Students will **submit a video file of presenting their completed talk**, along with a full, detailed outline of the talk referencing their research paper for sources.

○ **Interpretive Media Track**

Students choosing the interpretive media track will develop a series of 3 interpretive wayside panels **OR** a 10-15 minute interpretive film presentation. The media product should utilize the student's primary research paper for its content; the methods and means of layout and design should utilize the techniques discussed and developed during the course of the semester.

Students will submit full-scale prints of their interpretive panels and an outline of their content referencing their research paper for sources **OR** a video file of their film with a copy of its script, referencing sources.

Students will present their interpretive products in a public presentation/fair during the final examination period.

- **Personal Reflection Paper:** At the end of the semester, students will write a 5-page personal reflection paper, summarizing their personal philosophy of interpretation and reflecting on the intellectual journey of the semester. More details will be distributed near the end of the semester.
- **Interpretive Facebook Posts:** Over the course of the semester, students will draft 3 **interpretive** posts for the CWES Facebook page based on their research projects. As they draft these posts, they will bring them to class to workshop with others students and the professor, then will post the collaborative outcome to the Facebook page to see their performance with a general audience. These posts should be **no more** than 3 sentences in length and should include a photo or scanned primary source.

Grade Distribution

Participation: 20%

Discussion Leadership: 15%

Midterm Exam: 15%

Final Interpretive Project: 35%

Personal Reflection Paper: 10%

Facebook Posts: 5%

Semester Schedule

Date	Topic	Reading Due	Discussion	Assignment
August 30	Interpretation vs. Interpretation	PBS Idea Channel Playlist (in class)		
September 6	Gettysburg's Memory Landscape	Weeks		
September 13	The Tenants of Interpretation	Tilden		Research Prospectus Due
September 20	Making the Past Present	Rosenzweig & Thelen (Excerpts); Loewen (intro & 20 articles)		
September 27	Structure and the Open Ended Question	NPS IDP & ICSOC readings (PDFs)		
October 4	Breaking Social Norms and Hacking a Landscape	Vagnon & Ryan, MuseumHack (PDF)		
October 11	Mid Term Examination			
October 18	Civil War Battlefields as Healing Landscapes	Nina Simon (Online)		Research Paper Due
October 21	Gettysburg Fieldtrip (Required)			
October 25	Lincoln Lyceum Lecture - Douglas Egerton - 7-9pm – Pennsylvania Hall			
November 1	Workshopping Our Stories	Loewen (20 articles)		
November 4(?)	NMAAHC Fieldtrip			
November 8	Social History in a Military Landscape	Horton		Interp. Progress Discussion (in Class)
November 15	Imagining a Relevant Future for Civil War History	Whisnant (selections) & Rudy (PDF)		
December 2	Final Practical Field Exam			
December 6	Interpreting Our Own Lives	TBD		Final Interpretive Project Due
December 11	Final Interpretive Presentations – Public – 6:30-9:30pm			Personal Reflection Papers Due