

Kennesaw State University
History 4425: Oral History

Fall 2013

Wednesday, 2:00 - 4:45

SO 2027

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This course will focus on the art and practice of oral history interviewing. Through a balance of reading, discussion, and fieldwork, we will move through every step of creating and implementing a successful oral history project, from initial planning to preservation. The end result will be a collection of digitally recorded interviews and their companion transcripts, to be housed in the KSU archives.

Course readings will expose you to the major debates in the field and offer instructive guidelines for conducting, transcribing, and preserving oral histories. You will also learn the ways in which historians, museum curators, radio producers, and artists (among others) interpret and use oral history. Most importantly, you will critically engage with oral history practice, conducting and transcribing two interviews during the course of the semester.

Required Readings: (available at the campus bookstore or online)

Perks, Robert and Alistair Thomson. *The Oral History Reader*, 2d ed. New York and London: Routledge Press, 2006. (Referred to in the syllabus schedule as OHR)

Ritchie, Donald A. *Doing Oral History: A Practical Guide*, 2d ed. New York and London: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Thompson, Paul. *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*, 3d ed. New York and London: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Reserve Readings (available on D2L): Readings will also come from other essay collections and online books and journals. They are listed in the semester schedule in annotated form; a full bibliographic citation will be provided on D2L. Many students find it helpful to print all of the readings at the beginning of the semester instead of week-by-week.

Evaluation:

Class Discussion	10%
Reading Summaries and Critical Listening Responses	10%
Year of Japan Event Attendance	5%
Interview 1 and transcription	20%
Interview 2 and transcription	25%
Final Paper	25%

Attendance and Discussion: The course will be conducted as a seminar in which everyone contributes to the conversation—you are thus expected to attend class weekly and be prepared to discuss readings. If you are sick or need to miss class for any reason, you should alert me in advance by e-mail or by phone. If an absence is deemed justifiable, you will be given an opportunity to make up the work. If you miss more than one class, your final grade will be reduced by 5 points.

Weekly Assignments:

Reading summaries: Each week you will submit a **two-page summary** of the week's assigned readings. This activity will help you to synthesize the main points and arguments of the reading and will ensure that you come prepared to discuss. You should outline the main themes and arguments of the readings and any points that you found particularly surprising or interesting. Use readings to inform your practice; they will be helpful in instructing and guiding your preparation for interviews.

Listening Exercises: I'll give you a weekly listening exercise that you will complete with a friend, family member, or acquaintance. These exercises are meant to help you build your critical listening skills, an essential part of conducting oral histories. You will write a **one-page response** that reflects on the questions in each listening exercise.

Year of Japan: Our class is part of a cluster of courses being offered in alignment with the Institute of Global Initiative's Year of Japan (YoJ). As part of our partnership, you will be required to attend **two events** from the YoJ's fall programming schedule, which I will give you in class. For more about the Country Study program, see <http://www.kennesaw.edu/globalinstitute/yearofprogram.html>.

Interviews and Transcriptions: Oral history interviews are the most important component of your coursework. With a fellow classmate, you will conduct and transcribe two hour-long interviews during the course of the semester that, upon completion, will be housed in the KSU Archives. We will cover every aspect of the oral history process—contextual research, technology, critical listening skills and interview techniques, ethics, transcription, and archival processing—to prepare you for this fieldwork.

I will give you a rubric in class that clearly outlines how the interviews and transcripts will be graded.

This semester we will be recording the voices and stories of Japanese American men and women who were detained in government camps during World War II, as well as those of their children and grandchildren, and members of the Japanese American community in Atlanta. These interviews will be a valuable resource for the Museum of History and Holocaust Education and will be used to inform the creation of a traveling exhibit on internment in the spring of 2014.

Though I have a list of interviewees already determined it will be up to you to schedule the interview at a time and date convenient for you and your interview partner. I've set aside weeks in September and October that are designated as "Interview Weeks"—class is canceled so that you can use the time to conduct your interview. We'll talk more in class about appropriate places to hold interviews and your responsibilities as an interviewer.

Technology: The KSU public history program has digital voice recorders that you may borrow for interviews. If you prefer to use your own smartphone, there are apps made for voice recording that are

available from \$1-\$3: for iPhone, see <http://lifelifehacker.com/5879232/the-best-voice-recording-app-for-iphone>; for Android, see <http://www.bestblogtech.com/2013/05/best-android-voice-recorder-apps.html>. Plan to have two recorders running at each interview—technology is never fail-proof.

Final Paper: You will write a **five- to seven-page** paper that critically engages your practice over the course of the semester. Using readings, lectures, and your own interviews, you will write a paper based on a theme of your choosing (detailed instructions will be given in class). Your research and final papers will be presented on the last day of the course. Plan to play a clip of one of your interviews in your presentation. Papers will be graded on content and composition.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Public Law 101-336, gives civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities. This statute guarantees equal opportunity for this protected group in the areas of public accommodations, employment, transportation, state and local government services and telecommunications. Should you require assistance or have further questions about the ADA, please contact: Ms. Nastassia Sanabria, ADA Compliance Officer for Students [770-423-6443](tel:770-423-6443).

Academic Honesty: The high quality of education at Kennesaw State University is reflected in the credits and degrees its students earn. The protection of high standards of academic integrity is crucial since the validity and equity of the University's grades and degrees depend upon it. No student shall receive, attempt to receive, knowingly give or attempt to give unauthorized assistance in the preparation of any work required to be submitted for credit (including examinations, laboratory reports, essays, themes, term papers, etc.). Unless specifically authorized, the presence and/or use of electronic devices during an examination, quiz, or other class assignment is considered cheating. Engaging in any behavior that a professor prohibits as academic misconduct in the syllabus or in class discussion is cheating. When direct quotations are used, they should be indicated, and when the ideas, theories, data, figures, graphs, programs, electronic based information or illustrations of someone other than the student are incorporated into a paper or used in a project, they should be duly acknowledged. No student may submit the same, or substantially the same, paper or other assignment for credit in more than one class without the prior permission of the current professor(s). Students suspected of violating the KSU statement of Academic Honesty will meet with the instructor to discuss the violation AND will be reported to the Department of Student Conduct according to the process outlined at the following link: <https://web.kennesaw.edu/scai/content/scai-misconduct-procedures>.

Plagiarism avoidance websites:

<http://plagiarism.org/>

<http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>

<http://www.library.arizona.edu/help/tutorials/plagiarism/index.html>

Writing Center: The KSU Writing Center is a free service offered to all KSU students. Experienced, friendly writing assistants work with you throughout the writing process on concerns such as topic development, revision, research, documentation, grammar, and mechanics. Rather than edit your paper for you, writing assistants will help you learn strategies to become a better writer on your own. For more information or to make an appointment (appointments are strongly encouraged), visit <http://www.kennesaw.edu/english/WritingCenter> or stop by Room 242 in the English Building.

Semester Schedule (tentative – any changes will be announced in class)

August 21 Week 1	First Day of Class	Class Introductions (and your first interview) Introduction to Japanese American internment and the power of testimony (film: <i>The Cats of Mirikitani</i>)
August 28 Week 2	An Introduction to the Field	Guest speaker: Dr. Tom Scott, Prof. Emeritus of History at KSU <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donald A. Ritchie, chp. 1 • Paul Thompson, chps. 1-2 • Frisch, "Oral History and Hard Times: A Review Essay" (OHR) • Alistair Thomson, "Four Paradigm Shifts in Oral History" (D2L) • Alessandro Portelli, "The Death of Luigi Trastulli: Memory and the Event" (Vista)
September 4 Week 3	Critical Listening: The Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ritchie, chp. 3 • Thompson, chp. 7 • Kathryn Anderson and Dana C. Jack, "Learning to Listen: Interview Techniques and Analyses" (OHR) • Hugo Slim, Paul Thompson, et.al., "Ways of Listening" (OHR) <p>*Bring laptop for in-class Institutional Review Board (IRB) Human Subjects training</p>
September 11 Week 4	Oral History and Public Radio Ethics and Oral History	Guest speaker: Amanda Plumb from StoryCorps Atlanta <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OHA Ethical Guidelines, http://www.oralhistory.org/?s=ethical+guidelines • Kathleen Blee, "Evidence, Empathy and Ethics: Lessons from Oral Histories of the Klan," (OHR) • Anna Sheftel and Stacey Zembrzycki, "Only Human: A Reflection on the Ethical and Methodological Challenges of Working with 'Difficult' Stories" (D2L) • Jack Daugherty, "Who Owns Oral History?" http://ontheline.trincoll.edu/oral-history/creative-commons/
September 18 Week 5	Research and Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wendy Ng, <i>Japanese American Internment During World War II</i>, chps. 1-4 (D2L) • Tetsuden Kashima, <i>Judgment Without Trial: Japanese American Imprisonment During World War II</i>, chp. 8 (D2L) • Explore Japanese American oral histories on the Densho website: http://archive.densho.org/main.aspx (login using their guest account) • Explore the Japanese American Relocation Digital Archives: http://www.calisphere.universityofcalifornia.edu/jarda/
September 25 Week 6	Interview 1 (No class)	Interview with person of your choice (more details to come)

October 2 Week 7	The Tedium!: Transcribing Oral History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willa K. Baum, chps. 4, 5, 8, 10 (D2L) • Linda Shopes, “Transcribing Oral History in the Digital Age, http://ohda.matrix.msu.edu/2012/06/transcribing-oral-history-in-the-digital-age/ • Francis Good, “Voice, Ear and Text: Words, Meaning, and Transcription” (OHR) <p>*Bring sound file of Interview 1 and laptop for in-class transcription exercise</p>
October 9 Week 8	On Curation: Oral History in Public History and Public Art	<p>During class time, visit the KSU 50th Anniversary Exhibit, Sturgis Library, Athenaeum Gallery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wesley Chenault, Andy Ditzler, Joey Orr, “Discursive Memorials: Queer Histories in Atlanta’s Public Spaces,” http://southernspaces.org/2010/discursive-memorials-queer-histories-atlantas-public-spaces • Anna Green, “The Exhibition That Speaks for Itself: Oral History and Museums” (OHR) • Ritchie, chp. 8 <p>*Transcripts from Interview 1 due by email</p>
October 16 Week 9	Research and Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greg Robinson, <i>After Camp: Portraits in Midcentury Japanese American Life and Politics</i>, chp. 3 (D2L) • Frank Cha, “Migrating to the ‘Broiler Belt’: Japanese American Labor and the Jim Crow South in Cynthia Kadohata’s <i>Kira-Kira</i>” (D2L) • Mitchell T. Maki, et. al, <i>Achieving the Impossible Dream: How Japanese Americans Obtained Redress</i>, chps. 4-6 (D2L)
October 23 Week 10	Public History and Memory of Internment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Betty Mitson, “Looking Back in Anguish: Oral History and Japanese-American Evacuation” (D2L) • Pamela Sugiman, “These Feelings that Fill My Heart: Japanese Canadian Women’s Memories of Internment” (D2L) • Ingrid Gressner, “(Re)Framing Memory: Japanese American Internment Experiences in Reality and Virtuality” (D2L) • Explore Smithsonian’s online exhibit, “A More Perfect Union”: http://amhistory.si.edu/perfectunion/
October 30 Week 11	Interview 2 (No class)	Interviews with members of the Japanese American community
November 6 Week 12	Oral History and Social Justice	<p>Guest speakers: (2:00) Dr. LeeAnn Lands, Prof. of History, KSU, and Sharifa Potter, KSU history student (3:30) Erin Bernard, public history graduate student at Temple Univ. and founder of the Philadelphia Public History Truck</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patricia Lundy and Mark McGovern, “‘You Understand Again’: Testimony and Post-Conflict Transition in the North of Ireland” (OHR) • Daniel Kerr, “‘We Know What the Problem Is’: Using Video and Radio Oral History to Develop a Collaborative Analysis of

		Homelessness” (OHR)
November 13 Week 13	No class	Transcription Week
November 20 Week 14	Archiving Oral History	<p>Visit with Anne Graham, Digital Collections Archivist, and Heather Oswald, Archivist & Coordinator of Rare Books, KSU Archives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elinor A. Mazé, “Metadata: Best Practices for Oral History Access and Preservation,” in <i>Oral History and the Digital Age</i>, http://ohda.matrix.msu.edu/2012/06/metadata/ • Michael Frisch, “Oral History and the Digital Revolution: Toward a Post-Documentary Sensibility” (OHR) • Ellen D. Swain, “Oral History in the Archives: Its Documentary Role in the Twenty-First Century” (OHR)
November 27 Week 15	No class	Fall Break – Happy Thanksgiving!
December 4	Last day of class	<p>Presentation of interviews and final papers *Papers and transcripts from Interview 2 due</p>