

HISTORY 402
ORAL HISTORY METHODS

Fall Semester 2011, **Tuesday 6:30-9:15 p.m.** in **LA3-108**
Course Number 17864
Dr. **ALI F. İĞMEN**, CSULB

Office: **F02-116**, Phone: **562-985-8765**, Email: aigmen@csulb.edu
Office hours: **Tuesday 4-6 p.m. & Wednesday 2-3 p.m., or by appointment**

CONTENT AND OBJECTIVES

The objective of this course is to introduce the principles of oral history research. It is designed to support the oral history projects of students from history and other disciplines such as music, anthropology and ethnic studies. This course will teach you various methods, which will help you understand memory, representation, ethical norms and the uses of recorded interviews. It will prepare you to carry out interviews properly.

Please note that we will meet **TWELVE WEEKS** this semester because you will be carrying out interviews outside the classroom. You must attend all of these sessions in order to succeed in this course. See the meeting dates below, under the weekly schedule. Depending on the number of assigned units, you must complete assigned readings, participate in class discussions, turn in the writing assignments and present a final project. See below for the details.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

Upon successful completion of the course, the student will be able to:

- A.** Evaluate the significance of doing oral history,
- B.** Demonstrate a better understanding of the methodology of oral history by articulating how memory, representation, ethical norms and the uses of recorded interviews enhance the field of history,
- C.** Assess the complexity of the field in terms of gender, ethnicity, and religion,
- D.** Develop the skills to place oral history in a larger historical context,
- E.** Acquire further interest in carrying out history projects with the help of oral history,
- F.** Utilize primary and secondary sources in order to help gain a better grasp history,
- G.** Learn to produce original materials, demonstrating scholarly oral and written skills,
- H.** Gain the skills to use conceptual methods such as periodization and interpretation
- I.** Think critically about the readings, lectures and peer comments,
- J.** Improve oral and written communication skills with peers and professors.

All of these outcomes will be assessed by weekly class discussions, reviews of primary and secondary sources, two interviews, weekly responses, a final report and oral presentations. See the specific assignments below.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SYLLABUS

Enrollment in this course implies acceptance of all rules, policies and requirements of this class. The syllabus serves as your contract for the course. I reserve the right to make small changes to this syllabus in accordance with the specifics of the class dynamic.

ORGANIZATION AND REQUIREMENTS

I will expect you to complete all the assigned readings for the day, before you come to class. You should be prepared to discuss the readings and participate in the class discussions. All the written assignments are due at the beginning of class. I will deduct points for late assignments. To pass the class, you will complete all the assignments. Failure to complete any of these components means that you may fail the course. Please contact me ahead of time if any of the assignments will be late.

INCOMPLETE

Taking an incomplete is strongly discouraged and rarely granted. I will give incompletes only if there is a case of documented family or medical emergency. (See below). In those cases, University policy states that at least 2/3 of course assignments must have been completed for an incomplete to be granted. **For incompletes, you must make arrangements with me in advance.**

MAKE-UP POLICY

You **must** contact me if a conflict arises that will prevent you from attending class. You may make up a missed exam or assignment only if you have an excused absence and approval from me.

POLICY ON ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCES

Attendance is required. Missing any of the **twelve meetings** will have a negative effect on your grade. I am not obligated to consider other absences except the following **excused absences**: including illness or injury to the student; death, injury, or serious illness of an immediate family member or the like; religious reasons (California Education Code section 89320); jury duty or government obligation; university sanctioned or approved activities (examples include: artistic performances, forensics presentations, participation in research conferences, intercollegiate athletic activities, student government, required class field trips.) If in doubt, please read the CSULB attendance policy: <http://www.csulb.edu/~senate/Policies/01-01.html>. **Please contact me immediately if you need to be absent. If I do not hear from you, I will consider your absence unexcused.**

TARDINESS

Consistent tardiness will not be acceptable and will result in a grade reduction. You need to let me know ahead of time if you are going to be late. If you are late to class **beyond 20 minutes** of class time, I will **consider you absent** for the day.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

I will not allow reading of extraneous materials, listening to headsets, private conversations between students and talking on cell phones. **PLEASE TURN OFF CELL PHONES, PAGERS AND OTHER DISTRACTIONS!**

LAPTOP USE

You may use your laptops **ONLY** to take notes.

EMAIL COMMUNICATION

Make sure you have your csulb.edu email directed toward your preferred email address in order to receive class news. It is your responsibility to make the appropriate change.

ACCOMODATION

It is the student's responsibility to notify me in advance of the need for accommodation of a **disability**.

POLICY ON CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is presenting the work, ideas, or words of another person, including one of your peers, or a web site as one's own. It is your responsibility to read **the section on cheating and plagiarism in the CSULB catalog**. I am obligated to follow these strict rules. **Please talk to me if you have any questions about giving proper credit to other people's work and academic integrity.** A single instance of cheating and plagiarism will result, at the very least, in a failing grade for that assignment. Depending on the severity of the case, other consequences may include a failing grade for the class, regardless of performance on other assignments, and further disciplinary actions, including suspension and expulsion, based on University policy as summarized in the Schedule of Classes. (**Graduate students** will be held to an even higher standard. A single act of cheating or plagiarism will result in a failing grade in the course, regardless of other graded course assignments.) **While all written work must be exclusively your work, you may study and prepare together.**

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

It is the student's responsibility to withdraw from classes. Instructors have no obligation to withdraw students who do not attend courses, and may choose not to do so. Withdrawal from a course after the first two weeks of instruction requires the signature of the instructor and department chair, and is permissible only for serious and compelling reasons. During the final three weeks of instruction, withdrawals are not permitted except in cases such as accident or serious illness where the circumstances causing the withdrawal are clearly beyond the student's

control and the assignment of an incomplete is not practical. Ordinarily, withdrawals in the category involve total withdrawal from the university. (However, drops at this time are not generally approved except in cases of accident or serious illness.)

STUDENT SERVICES

If you need help with written assignments or require guidance on note-taking and critical reading, please take advantage of the Writer's Resource Lab (LAB-312; 985-4329) or the Learning Assistance Center (Library East 12; 985-5350).

REQUIRED READING

You should acquire the text listed below, either through the University Bookstore or other means online. The required articles are available through JSTOR (see below). **It is your responsibility to access these readings ahead of time, print them out, and have them read and prepared in time for class.**

- **The Syllabus**
- **Angrosino, Michael V. *Exploring Oral History*, Waveland, 2008** (See as **EOH** in the Weekly Schedule)
- **Perks, Robert and Alistair Thomson, eds. *The Oral History Reader*, Routledge, 2006** (See as **OHR** in the Weekly Schedule)

REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS

If you are taking this course for **one unit**, **EOH** will be the only required reading for you. You will provide written responses to the **EOH** chapters. The chapters in **OHR** are optional but recommended reading.

If you are taking this course for **two units**, in addition to **EOH**, you will read **only half** of the chapters from **OHR (you should select half of the chapters assigned for the week)**. You will provide written responses to the **EOH** chapters and **one OHR** chapter per week. The other chapters in **OHR** are optional but recommended reading.

If you are taking the course for **three units**, you will complete all the requirements listed below, including the readings and written reading responses.

Weekly Reading Responses on the Required Readings: Keep a typed weekly journal on readings. Journal entries should provide a short summary (**no more than 350 words**) of the reading each week. This is a thought piece that provides a brief discussion of the following points:

- a. What are the key questions and findings of the readings?**
- b. What are the main arguments of the authors?**
- c. How do readings relate to each other?**
- d. What new information did you learn about Oral History?**

Class Participation: I will expect you to participate in class discussion. **I will call on you.** Simply attending class without participation will be insufficient and will be reflected in grades. If you are too shy to participate, you need to talk to me so that we can make other arrangements, such as written responses to readings, to make up for this portion of the grade. For the most part, the themes of this course are current and controversial. There is a great potential of passionate discussion. I will expect you to respond and refer to the topic at hand rather than the individual. In other words, please challenge your peers' view points instead of questioning their personal motives. Please voice your agreements and disagreements respectfully. According to **Mohandas Gandhi** "*when restraint and courtesy are added to strength, the latter becomes irresistible.*"

Two Interviews:

1. **One half-hour practice interview with a friend, relative, colleague, or the same person whom you will interview at the end.**
2. **One one-hour final interview. You must choose someone, about whom you are able to do preliminary research.**

The Final Report on your final interview:

A final report on your one-hour interview will be 5-6 pages long, with double spaced paragraphs and one-inch margins. Your report will present your original one-hour interview, follow-up interviews (if carried out), and plans for a future interview, describing your **interview process and experience: the preparation, the contact, the research, the sources and the results.** You are required to make use of **the readings** to construct this report. The paper must be well-structured and well-written. You must present an **interview outline, field notes, tape or digital recording with summary and index, transcription of a short passage, an evaluation of the project and a bibliography appropriate to the discipline of history.**

GRADING PERCENTAGES:

First Interview Presentation	25%
Second Interview Presentation	25%
Final Report	25%
Class Participation (Including weekly responses)	25%

WEEKLY SCHEDULE:

WEEK 1: **August 30**, Introduction

- "An Oral History Primer" by Sherna Berger Gluck

WEEK 2: **September 6**

- EOH, 1 & 2: Introduction: The Case of Oral History & A Brief History
- OHR, Introduction and Part I: Critical Development, introduction and chapters 1-4

WEEK 3: September 13

- EOH, 3: Types of Oral History
- OHR, chapters 5-8

Assignment: Prepare to talk about your plans for the short interview. Bring in a one page proposal to class. You will present your half-an-hour interview on **October 4th**.

WEEK 4: September 20

- EOH, 4: Theoretical Issues
- OHR, Part II: Interviewing, introduction and chapters 9-12

WEEK 5: September 27

- EOH, 5: Methods
- OHR, chapters 13-15

Note: You must conclude your half-hour practice interviews, and prepare your presentations by next Tuesday, **October 4th**.

WEEK 6: October 4

- EOH, 6: Technology
- OHR, Part III: Advocacy and empowerment, introduction and chapters 16-18

Assignment: You will present your half-hour practice interview. You will play a portion of your interview to discuss its problems and successes.

WEEK 7: October 11

- EOH, 7: Ethics
- OHR, chapters 19-22

WEEK 8: October 18

- EOH, 8: Practicing Oral History
- OHR, Part IV: Interpreting memories, introduction and chapters 23-25

Assignment: Prepare to talk about your plans for the final, one-hour interview.

WEEK 9: October 25

- OHR, chapters 26-29

WEEK 10: November 1

- OHR, Part V: Making Histories, introduction and chapters 30-34

Assignment: Bring to class a one-page proposal for the final, one-hour interview. You will present your interviews on **November 19th and December 6th**.

WEEK 14: November 29, Presentations

- OHR, chapters 35-39

Assignment: You will present your one-hour long interview. The presentation will include a two to three-page report, describing your interview process: the preparation, the contact, the research, the sources and the results. You will play a portion of your interview to discuss its problems and successes.

WEEK 15: December 6, Presentations

Assignment: You will present your one-hour long interview. The presentation will include a two to three-page report, describing your interview process: the preparation, the contact, the research, the sources and the results. You will play a portion of your interview to discuss its problems and successes.

WEEK 16: December 13, Final Reports are due in my office at 7:30 p.m.