

Controversy and Public History

Hist 5375L

Spring 2017, Wed. 6:30-9:20 pm

Dr. Nancy Berlage

****Use credits for traditional or public history****

On a daily basis, media stories report new controversies over how history should be presented to publics. The debates play out among competing interests within bureaucracies, the political realm, and among historians and stakeholders. For example, the Smithsonian's African-American History Museum recently opened, but only after multi-year heated debates about its purpose, scope, and broader cultural meaning. What do such debates tell us about presenting history in public? How do they reflect struggles over societal change? This course examines the politics of controversy surrounding public history practice to gain a better understanding of the contested nature of history.

Course topics include: patriotism and national narratives; "Dark Tourism" multiculturalism; contests between donors and curators; and others.

