Course Overview for Teaching with Local History Resources

Course Title: Teaching with Local History Resources

Course Instructor: Lisa Heuvel, Ed.D.

Short intro: The School of Education is collaborating with The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation to offer professional development courses in museum studies. Appropriate for classroom teachers, museum educators, and lifelong learners, the latest course, Teaching with Local History Resources, focuses on the myriad ways local history resources (e.g., archives, museums, historic sites, artifacts) can be used in teaching history. With exposure to Colonial Williamsburg’s rich historical environment through multimedia resources, historical interpretation, case studies, and assignments, this online course provides context for integrating local history resources into curricula and introduces new ways to engage with local treasures.

Description: This course is designed to provide educators with an understanding of local history and its use in the study of history and citizenship in experiential learning environments. Multimedia resources, historical interpretation, case studies, and assignments with museums/historic sites provide the context for integrating local history resources into standards-based high school and middle school curricula or participants’ personal understanding of their communities.

Each week of the course is based on sections of Nearby History: Exploring the Past around You (American Association for State and Local History Book Series). Participants receive an overview of local history resources and how these resources can support history and social studies instruction as well as interdisciplinary studies. They also learn and review types of classroom instructional methods modeled during the course. The course includes reading, assignments, and group work done using online learning technology.

Course Objectives

The participant will:

1. Understand the role of museums, historic sites, libraries, and historical societies in representing and interpreting American history
2. Locate and evaluate local history resources, including primary and secondary sources and material culture, available through historic sites, libraries, and archives in virtual and physical formats
3. Learn and practice a variety of engaging participatory instructional techniques using local history sources and historical method that develop students’ abilities to use higher-level critical thinking skills
4. Develop curriculum and strategies to help students explore the history of their communities in relation to national and global history, and their place as participants in history, through effective classroom and out-of-class activities
5. Work collaboratively in team-based learning and problem-solving
6. Develop knowledge and skills necessary to design effective instructional experiences using local history resources

Course Requirements: This course takes place over five weeks. Participants are expected to complete activities and assignments, engage in discussion forums, design a final project, and provide relevant feedback to other participants. Through videos, panels, readings, discussion posts, and assignments, participants will engage in the process of exploring local history resources and will learn strategies that will allow them to incorporate local history in their teaching.

Course Information

Audience: K-12 teachers in the social sciences and history, graduate students in related disciplines (history, American studies), and life-long learners with an interest in history, museum studies, and education

Time commitments: Participants will devote a minimum of three hours per week to completing assignments, participating in online discussions, and designing a lesson plan/course activity that applies course concepts and local history resources to classroom instruction

Duration: This course runs for 5 weeks, from Oct. 5 to Nov. 8, 2015. Weeks begin on Mondays at 12:01 a.m. PST and end on the following Sundays at midnight PST.

Credits and fee: Upon successful completion, participants will receive one to three hours of academic credit depending on their registration. The course tuition is $450 per credit. Questions about credits should be directed to Lisa Heuvel at lheuvel@cwf.org.

1 credit: Submit instructional plan and rubric for using local history resources

2 credits: Submit instructional plan and rubric plus supplementary materials (such as site photos, videos for instruction, or scans of supporting materials)
3 credits: Implement project plan in classroom instruction during Fall 2015, and submit an evaluation of the implemented lesson plan

Text: Participants also need to purchase the following text:


Prerequisites: Participants in this course should either be open to learning new technology or be proficient in educational technology tools like the Google Suite, Canvas/Blackboard, Microsoft Office applications, web cameras, and video conferencing. Enrollees will take an “Introduction to Canvas” mini-tutorial prior to the start of the course.

Course Syllabus

Week 1: Introduction to Local History

Participants will be introduced to local history and become acquainted with local history recourses in their community with an eye towards their final project. Online activities intend to create a learning community in which class participants’ insights and experiences augment the professor’s instruction.

Week 2: Documents

During this week, participants begin to explore the various types of resources available through local history sites like libraries, archives, museums. Participants will distinguish between published, unpublished, oral, and visual resources and correlate personally-selected local history documents with their state and national standards.

Week 3: Artifacts

Participants will engage with material culture via artifacts in this week. Participants will examine the ways that physical objects in the local community reveal information about history, people, spaces, and culture. Examining the meaning behind objects and the manner in which that evolves over time will also be a focus of this week.

Week 4: Archaeology and Landscapes

This week, participants will explore the definition of landscapes and the historical record implicit in them. Participants will submit a rough draft of their final project by week’s end for feedback from their instructors and peers.
Week 5: Final Project

During the final week, participants will create a lesson plan that incorporates local resources from one of the three areas—documents, artifacts, or landscapes/archaeology—covered in the course. The following list includes ideas for the final project:

- Mapping activities (landscape and buildings)
- Tours (landscape and buildings)
- Classroom timelines (documents)
- Classroom time capsules (artifacts, documents)
- An archive project using school yearbooks or newspapers (documents)
- A video or written history of your school (documents)

This project offers an opportunity for participants to synthesize skills, concepts, and research conducted during the course with classroom instruction.

Professional Development Standards: Teaching with Local History Resources aligns with the following standards:

Virginia Standards for the Professional Practice of Teachers in Specific Disciplines and Specialized Areas: Teachers of History and Social Science

- Standard 1: Professional Knowledge
  - Key Element 1,2,4,5
- Standard 2: Instructional Planning
  - Key Element 1,2,3, 4
- Standard 3: Instructional Delivery
  - Key Element 1,2
- Standard 4: Assessment of and for Student Learning
- Standard 5: Learning Environment
  - Key Element 1,2,4
- Standard 6: Professionalism
  - Key Element 1,3,4,6, 7

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards: Social Studies and History

- Standard III: Content
- Standard IV: Instruction
- Standard VI: Learning Environments: Classroom and Communities
- Standard VII: Professional Growth
- Standard VIII: Reflection
International Society for Technology Education Standards for Teachers

- Standard 1: Facilitate and inspire student learning and creativity
- Standard 2: Design and develop digital age learning experience and assessments
- Standard 3: Model digital age work and learning