



Department of History

HTST 539
Oral History
Fall 2021

Instructor: Dr. N. Janovicek

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Office Hours and Location/Method: Tuesday, 2:30 – 3:30; Wednesday, 11:00 – 12:00

I will be in my office. Students who come in person must wear a mask. You may also set up a Zoom appointment at these times.

Class Room Location, Days and Times: SS 613, Thursday, 3:00 – 5:45

Course Delivery: In person

Description

Oral history theory and practice have developed in relationship to each other. Seminar discussions will examine the methodological and theoretical developments in the field. Students will learn how to conduct an oral history interview – from ethics to interpreting the evidence of oral history – and will have the opportunity to interview one person about some aspect of the past. They will also learn how to interpret and use oral histories collected by others in a major research paper.

Learning Outcomes

- Understand the oral history theory and methodology
- Understand ethics policy and practice
- Critically assess the evidence of oral history
- Conduct an oral history
- Interpret oral history evidence

Reading Material

Required and for purchase at bookstore and available online at the TFDL:

Kristina R. Llewellyn, Alexander Freund, and Nolan Reilly, eds. *The Canadian Oral History Reader*. Montreal & Kinston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015.

Assessment

Method	Due Date	Weight
Seminar Participation	Grade posted end of term	20%
Oral History Methodology	Many components: see dates below Methodology paper due October 22	25%
Research Paper Proposal	October 29	10%
Presentation	Last 3 weeks of class	15%
Research Paper	Thursday, December 16	30%

Grading Policies

Grades will be recorded as points in D2L (i. e. seminar participation is 20 worth points). The point value is converted to a percentage grade and letter grade that accord to the grading system outlined on page 6.

It is in your best interests to meet deadlines for the assignments and papers so that you receive timely feedback to help you with the next assignments. Students who make arrangements with me before the assignment is due will always receive an extension. I do not require an explanation or documentation, but as a professional courtesy, I do insist that you send an e-mail to ask for an extension.

Details on Methods of Assessment

All assignments are to be double-spaced and written in Times New Roman 12-point font. Students will upload their assignments to D2L by midnight of the due date.

I expect that all graded assignments will have a clear thesis statement, be well-organized, and have a logical argument. Use endnotes and follow the *Chicago Manual of Style*. The basic rules are explained in the *History Students' Handbook*, which is available on the department website.

Seminar Participation

I eavesdrop in the elevator. I once heard a student say that seminars are easy because you don't have an exam so you don't have to take notes; you don't have to prepare; you just have to show up and sit there. That student was wrong.

Engaged student participation based on careful reading of *all* of the assigned readings is essential to a successful seminar. Taking reading notes – not just highlighting key passages – is necessary in order to participate effectively in seminar discussions. I'll lead the discussion but prepare for class by thinking of questions about the readings and be prepared to discuss what you thought was most interesting about each reading.

Oral History Methodology Assignment

The purpose of this assignment is to train students to conduct an oral history interview. Rather than using this interview to write a research paper, the interview will be the primary source for a methodology paper. There are many components to this assignment because you must first learn

ethics policy and do the preparatory work necessary to conduct an oral history interview. **A grade will only be assigned to the methodology paper, but to comply with ethics policy all of these assignments must be completed before I will grade the final paper.**

This may look overwhelming, but don't drop the course because there is too much work! It will be easier to break these tasks down into separate assignments. Except for the paper, the assignments are small and should only take an hour or two. Remember the paper is graded, not these tasks; write carefully, but the small assignments need not be polished.

Proposal (250 – 300 words), due Friday, September 17

In order to conduct the oral history, students must identify an aspect of the past they are interested in researching. You are not required to do research for this proposal. The purpose of this assignment is to ensure that you have a topic about the past. You will most likely interview someone you know. But you can't just sit down, turn on the recorder, and say, "So grandma, tell me what it was like when you were young." You must discuss a particular topic, such as their work, their political activism, their travel as a young person, or another specific topic. This short proposal (about half a page) will identify the topic and explain how an oral history interview would inform the research. What do you want to learn in the interview that you couldn't find in other sources? I also want to ensure that you are not going to interview the narrator on a sensitive issue. Researching sensitive topics takes a great deal of training and is not appropriate for your first interview, even if it is with someone you know well.

Ethics: Consent Form, Recruitment Materials, due Tuesday, September 21

This research project has been approved by the Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board (CFREB), which reviews all humanities and social science research that involves human subjects conducted by faculty and graduate students at the University of Calgary. **It has been reviewed under an expedited process for undergraduate teaching.** This is important because there are limitations to how you can use the research. The committee reviews and approves the instructor's application so that undergraduate students can learn research methodologies and develop skills. The data generated for this assignment can only be used for this course. You may not use this interview in future papers or in any publications. You must include this commitment to not publish the research in your consent form. To comply with ethics policy, you must also destroy the data in 2 years. Ethics boards review every aspect of the interviews, including recruitment. Submit a short script to describe the assignment to your narrator and to explain the assignment. Since you will probably interview someone you know, you can call or e-mail them. Do not text them or contact them on social media; you wouldn't do that for a research project.

We will discuss the consent forms in the seminar before you submit them for me to review. I have uploaded examples from my research on D2L. Note: writing a good consent forms takes time. Allocate at least two hours. Templates for the consent forms are available here:

<https://research.ucalgary.ca/conduct-research/ethics-compliance/human-research-ethics/conjoint-faculties-research-ethics-board>

Please note that you should not contact your narrator until I've reviewed and approved these documents.

Interview Questions, Due Tuesday, October 28

In our discussions about oral history theory and practice, we'll discuss why oral history is unique from other interviews. An important difference between historians and other social science researchers is that we aren't trying to find reproducible results. We look for patterns but are also interested in how individuals experienced and remember an event. We create the evidence with the narrator and often follow their lead if they are directing the research in an interesting direction. Because of this, oral historians don't always stick to the questionnaire. But we have to prepare before the interview! I did not expect research for the proposal, but you should do some reading about your topic so that you can prepare smart and useful questions. Include an annotated bibliography of 2 -3 sources you've read and explain how they helped you write your questions. Prepare for an interview that is 1 to 1½ - hours long. That's about a page of questions. There is an example of my interview questions posted on D2L.

Transcript of the interview uploaded to D2L by October 15

The purpose of this exercise is to make sure that you don't procrastinate. An interview takes longer than you think to transcribe. I need to read your transcript in order to grade your paper.

Oral History Methodology Paper (1, 000 - 1, 250 words/5 pages), Due Friday, October 22

Rather than using this oral history to write about the past, you'll analyze the transcript as oral history evidence. Begin by writing a self-reflexive critique about the interview. Using the articles that we're reading for seminar discussions – especially the literature on sharing authority – reflect on the experience of the interview. What did you expect to learn and what surprised you? How did the relationship with the narrator develop as the interview progressed? Consider silences and ways the narrator may have directed the interview in a different direction. I strongly recommend that you jot down a few notes after you finish the interview – keeping a research journal is a common practice. What evidence did you and the narrator produce? Then think about how you could use this in research. Analyze the transcript as you would a primary source but remember that oral history produces a unique kind of source. Answer the critical questions that a researcher would need to consider about the narrator to interpret the evidence. How could this be used in research? What are the limitations? “Faulty memory” is not a valid dismissal of the evidence of oral history. How people narrate and remember the past is central to oral history theory and practice.

Research Paper

Proposal (500 words/2 pages & Bibliography)

Your research paper will be based on oral history collections that are available in digital oral history collections or archival collections. In the research proposal, identify the collection that you will use. Select 5 interviews from the database and explain why you chose these interviews. Include a brief historiography, discussion of key debates in the field, and your research questions. Explain how you will use the evidence of oral history to write your paper. Include a preliminary bibliography with 8 – 10 secondary sources. This proposal is graded and should be polished.

Research presentation (scheduled for last 3 weeks of class)

Students will present their research in the final three weeks of the course. The presentations will be 20 minutes long – the standard length for a conference paper – that's 10 double-spaced pages in 12-point font.

The draft of the research paper must be uploaded to D2L by midnight on the Tuesday before your presentation. I will share these with the class. If you are not presenting that day, you must read the papers so that you can provide critical feedback during the question period to help the presenter improve their paper. Your participation for these discussions, based on a careful reading of the drafts, will be considered when I determine your seminar participation grade. I will provide critical feedback on the draft of the paper as well as comments and grades for your presentation on Friday.

I'll grade the presentation, not the paper. The draft doesn't need to be complete, but the more you write, the more helpful my feedback will be.

Research Paper (4,500 – 5,000 words/18 – 20 pages)

Your final paper must incorporate the critical feedback from your peers and myself. They are due a week after the classes end, but if all of your exams are scheduled early, don't hesitate to ask for an extension.

Learning Technologies Requirements

There is a D2L site for this course. All assignments are to be submitted on D2L by midnight on the due date. I will post guidelines for the assignments on D2L. Updates on seminars and any accommodations that may be required to keep us safe and healthy as we live and work through the COVID-19 pandemic will also be posted on D2L.

Inclusiveness, Accommodation, Privacy, and Conduct

I expect students to be respectful of the learning environment and the needs of other students. As a courtesy to your fellow students and your instructor, please turn off all cellular telephones and personal stereos during lectures and discussions. In accordance with university privacy policies, it is forbidden to tape or digitally record lectures and/or discussions without the explicit consent of the instructor and any students affected. Permission to record lectures will be given to students registered with the Student Accessibility Services. Using laptops and similar typing devices is

acceptable as long as it does not disrupt other students in the class. If the images on your screen distract or offend other students, I will ask you to turn your computer off and/or no longer bring it to class. Materials related to the course (including hand-written lecture notes) are for your own use only and may not be distributed to anyone not officially registered in the course.

Schedule

<p>Week 1 (September 9): Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Karen Dubinsky, “‘Who Do You Think Did the Cooking?’ Baba I the Classroom” in <i>Changing Lives: Women in Northern Ontario</i>, eds. Margaret Kechnie and marge Reitsma-Street (Sudbury: Institute of Northern Ontario Research and Development, 1996): 193 – 198. Posted on D2L.
<p>Week 2 (September 16): What is Oral History?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alessandro Portelli, “The Peculiarities of Oral History,” <i>History Workshop Journal</i> 12, 1 (1981): 96 – 107. • Linda Shopes, “What is Oral History?” <i>History Matters: The U. S. Survey on the Web</i> Available at: http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/oral/oral.pdf • Lynn Abrams, “Liberating the female self: epiphanies, conflict and coherence in the life stories of post-war British women,” <i>Social History</i> 39, 1 (February 2014): 14 – 35. • COHR, Freund, Llewellyn, Reilly, “Introduction”
<p>Proposal for Oral History Methodology paper due, Friday, October 17</p>
<p>Week 3 (September 23) Ethics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zachary M. Schrag, “How Talking Became Human Subjects Research: The Federal Regulation of the Social Sciences, 1965 - 1991.” <i>Journal of Policy History</i> 21 (Winter 2009): 3 -37. • COHR, Janovicek, “Oral History and Ethical Practice after TCPS2” • CIHR, NSERRC, and SSHRC, <i>Tri-council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans</i> (Ottawa: Secretariat on Responsible Conduct of Research, 2014) Available at: https://ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique_tcps2-eptc2_2018.html <p>Workshop: Ethics Policy and Consent Forms. Bring a copy of the template of the consent forms</p>
<p>Ethics Forms due, Tuesday, October 21</p>
<p>Week 4 (September 30): National Day for Truth and Reconciliation</p> <p>No Class.</p> <p>We will be discussion the resources on the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation in Weeks 7 & 10. Please spend some time today (re)reading the reports of the TRC: https://nctr.ca/records/reports/#trc-reports</p>
<p>Interview Questions Due, Tuesday October 28</p>
<p>Week 5 (October 7): Indigenous Oral Traditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COHR, Cruikshank, “Oral History, Narrative Strategies, and Native American Historiography” • COHR, Calliou, “Methodology for Recording Oral Histories in the Aboriginal Community • COHR, Wheeler, “Narrative Wisps of the Ochekiwi Sipe Past: A Journey in Recovering Collective Memories” <p>Workshop: The Oral History Interview – Bring your interview questions</p>
<p>Week 6 (October 14) Sharing Authority</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COHR, Zembrzycki, “Sharing Authority with Baba” • COHR, Sugiman, “I Can Hear Lois Now: Corrections to My Story of the Internment of Japanese Canadians” • COHR, Parr, “‘Don’t Speak for Me’: Practicing Oral History amid the Legacies of Conflict”
Upload Oral History Transcript by Friday, October 15
Week 7 (October 21): Trauma and Oral History
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COHR, Low & Sonntag, “Listening and Learning with Life Stories of Human Rights Violations” • COHR, Zembrzycki and High, “‘When I Was Your Age’: Bearing Witness in Holocaust Education” • National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation https://nctr.ca/map.php Explore the resources available. We will discuss selected videos posted in the archives section. • Sean Carleton, Chrystal Fraser and Jim Milloy, “Assessing the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation,” <i>Active History</i>, 26 November 2015. Available at: http://activehistory.ca/2015/11/assessing-the-national-centre-for-truth-and-reconciliation/
Oral History Methodology Paper Due Friday, October 22
Week 8 (October 28): Memory and Interpretation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COHR, Sangster, “Reflections on the Politics and Praxis of Working-Class Oral Histories” • COHR, Llewellyn, “Productive Tensions: Feminist Readings of Women Teachers” • COHR, Freund, “A Canadian Family Talks about Oma’s Life in Nazi Germany: Three-Generational Interviews and Communicative Memory”
Research Paper Proposal Due: October 29
Week 9 (November 4): Legal Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COHR, Jarvis-Tonus, “Legal Issues Regarding Oral Histories” • Jo-Anne Fiske, “From Customary Law to Oral Traditions: Discursive Formation of Plural Legalisms in Northern British Columbia, 1857 – 1993,” <i>BC Studies</i> 115 (1997): 267 – 88. • <i>Boston College Subpoena News</i>. Available at: https://bostoncollegesubpoena.wordpress.com/ Ted Palys and John Lowman (2012). “Defending Research confidentiality “To the Extent the Law Allows:” Lessons From the Boston College Subpoenas.” <i>Journal of Academic Ethics</i> 10(4), 271-297.
Reading Week November 8-12
Week 10 (November 18): Preservation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alexander Freund, “Oral History as Process-Generated Data” • Truth and Reconciliation Commission, <i>Final Report of the TRC Volume I: Summary</i>, Preface – Commission Activities Available at: http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Exec_Summary_2015_05_31_web_o.pdf
Week 11 (November 25): Presentations
Week 12 (December 2): Presentations
Week 13 (December 9): Presentations
Research Paper due: Thursday, December 16

There is no registrar-scheduled final exam.

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION APPEARS ON ALL DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY COURSE OUTLINES

Departmental Grading System

The following percentage-to-letter grade conversion scheme is used in all Canadian Studies, History, and Latin American Studies courses, except for HTST 200.

Percentage	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	Description
90-100	A+	4.00	Outstanding performance
85-89	A	4.00	Excellent performance
80-84	A-	3.70	Approaching excellent performance
77-79	B+	3.30	Exceeding good performance
73-76	B	3.00	Good performance
70-72	B-	2.70	Approaching good performance
67-69	C+	2.30	Exceeding satisfactory performance
63-66	C	2.00	Satisfactory performance
60-62	C-	1.70	Approaching satisfactory performance.
56-59	D+	1.30	Marginal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject
50-55	D	1.00	Minimal Pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject.
0-49	F	0	Failure. Did not meet course requirements.

Please Note: Students are expected to reach the grade range to receive that letter grade (ie. to receive an A- a student will have earned an 80 or 3.7 in the course). Assume that there will be no rounding up unless a faculty member announces otherwise.

Program Advising and Student Information Resources

- For program advising in the Faculty of Arts, contact the [Arts Students Centre](#) (ASC).
- For questions about admissions, student awards, common registration issues, financial aid and student fees, contact [Enrolment Services](#)
- Sometimes unexpected circumstances may affect your time table. You can change your registration during the course change period. Please see **the** [Registration Changes and Exemption Requests](#) page.

Attention history majors: *History 300 is a required course for all history majors. You should normally take this course in your second year.*

Writing

All written assignments and written exam responses are assessed partly on writing skills. Writing skills include surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) and general clarity and organization. Research papers must be properly documented according to the format described in [The History Student's Handbook](#).

Academic Misconduct

Academic Misconduct refers to student behavior which compromises proper assessment of a student's academic activities and includes: cheating; fabrication; falsification; plagiarism; unauthorized assistance; failure to comply with an instructor's expectations regarding conduct required of students completing academic assessments in their courses; and failure to comply with exam regulations applied by the Registrar.

For more information, please see the U of C Student Academic Misconduct [Policy](#) and [Procedure](#) documents, and visit the [Academic Integrity Website](#).

Plagiarism

Plagiarism occurs when students submit or present the ideas and/or writing of others as if they were their own or when they submit their own work to two different classes. Please see [The History Student's Handbook](#) for more details, but to summarize, plagiarism may take several forms:

- Failing to cite sources properly
- Submitting borrowed, purchased, and/or ghostwritten papers
- Submitting one's own work for more than one course without the permission of the instructor(s) involved
- Extensive paraphrasing of one or a few sources, even when referenced properly, unless the essay is a critical analysis of those works

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence, and written work that appears to contain plagiarized passages will not be graded. All such work will be reported to the Faculty of Art's associate deans of students who will apply the penalties specified in [the university calendar](#).

Academic Accommodation

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations according to [the Student Accommodations policy](#). Students needing an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) in accordance with the [Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities](#). Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than Disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor.

SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit [Student Accessibility Services](#).

Research Ethics

If a student is interested in undertaking an assignment that will involve collecting information from members of the public, they should speak with the course instructor and consult the [CFREB Ethics](#) website before beginning the assignment.

Instructor Intellectual Property

Course materials created by instructors (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the

instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing.

Copyright Legislation

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on [Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright](#) and requirements of [the Copyright Act](#) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorised sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under [the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy](#).

Copyright of Educational Materials

The University of Calgary has opted out of the Access Copyright Interim Tariff proposed by the Copyright Board. Therefore, instructors in all University of Calgary courses will strictly adhere to Copyright Act regulations and the educational exceptions permitted by the Act for both print and digital course material. No copyrighted material may be placed on course D2L or web sites without the prior permission of the copyright holders. In some cases, this may mean that instructors will require you to purchase a print course pack from the University of Calgary bookstore or consult books on reserve at the library. Please see the [University of Calgary copyright page](#).

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy

Student information will be collected in accordance with usual classroom practice. Students' assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty and teaching assistants. Private information related to the individual student is treated with the utmost regard.

Media Recording

The instructor may use media recordings to record the delivery of a lecture for various reasons, including lecture capture and self-assessment. Students will be informed of media recordings in advance and the recording device will be fixed on the instructor. In the event that incidental student participation is recorded, the instructor will ensure that any identifiable content (video or audio) is masked, or will seek consent from identifiable students, before making a recording available to the class.

Media Recording for the Assessment of Student Learning

The instructor may use media recordings as part of the assessment of students, by prior arrangement. This may include but is not limited to classroom discussions, presentations, clinical practice, or skills testing that occur during the course. These recordings will be used for student assessment purposes only and will not be shared or used for any other purpose.

Sexual Violence Policy

The University recognizes that all members of the University Community should be able to learn, work, teach and live in an environment where they are free from harassment, discrimination, and violence. The University of Calgary's sexual violence policy guides us in how we respond to incidents of sexual violence, including supports available to those who have

experienced or witnessed sexual violence, or those who are alleged to have committed sexual violence. It provides clear response procedures and timelines, defines complex concepts, and addresses incidents that occur off-campus in certain circumstances. Please see the [sexual violence policy](#).

Other Useful Information

Please see the Registrar's [Course Outline Student Support and Resources](#) page for information on:

- Wellness and Mental Health
- Student Success
- Student Ombuds Office
- Student Union (SU) Information
- Graduate Students' Association (GSA) Information
- Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points
- Safewalk

Department of History Twitter @ucalgaryhist

Fall 2021 (in-person)