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A Classroom of Our Own: An exploratory case study of archivists teaching outside the archives

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A Classroom of Our Own: An exploratory case study of archivists teaching outside the archives

Claire Du Laney, Outreach Archivist

Lori Schwartz, Hagel and Technical Services Archivist

UNO Libraries' Archives and Special Collections

May 22, 2024

Public History at UNO



- Conversations about archivists teaching a Public History course started in 2021, and in earnest in 2022-2023.
- History department had interest but no expertise
- Would we be willing to teach?
Yes!

Courtesy OSU's Public History Program



Public History at UNO

- Claire had strong rapport with History Department through archives instruction sessions and serving as history subject specialist.
- Both Lori and Claire have Masters from Public History programs (Go Gamecocks and Wolfpack, respectively)
- Flexibility of Library Admin
- Taught class as an overload to normal schedules, receiving monetary compensation from history department.



Courtesy Faculty



Claire Du Laney

Archives & Special
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Assistant Professor

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[read profile](#)



Lori N Schwartz

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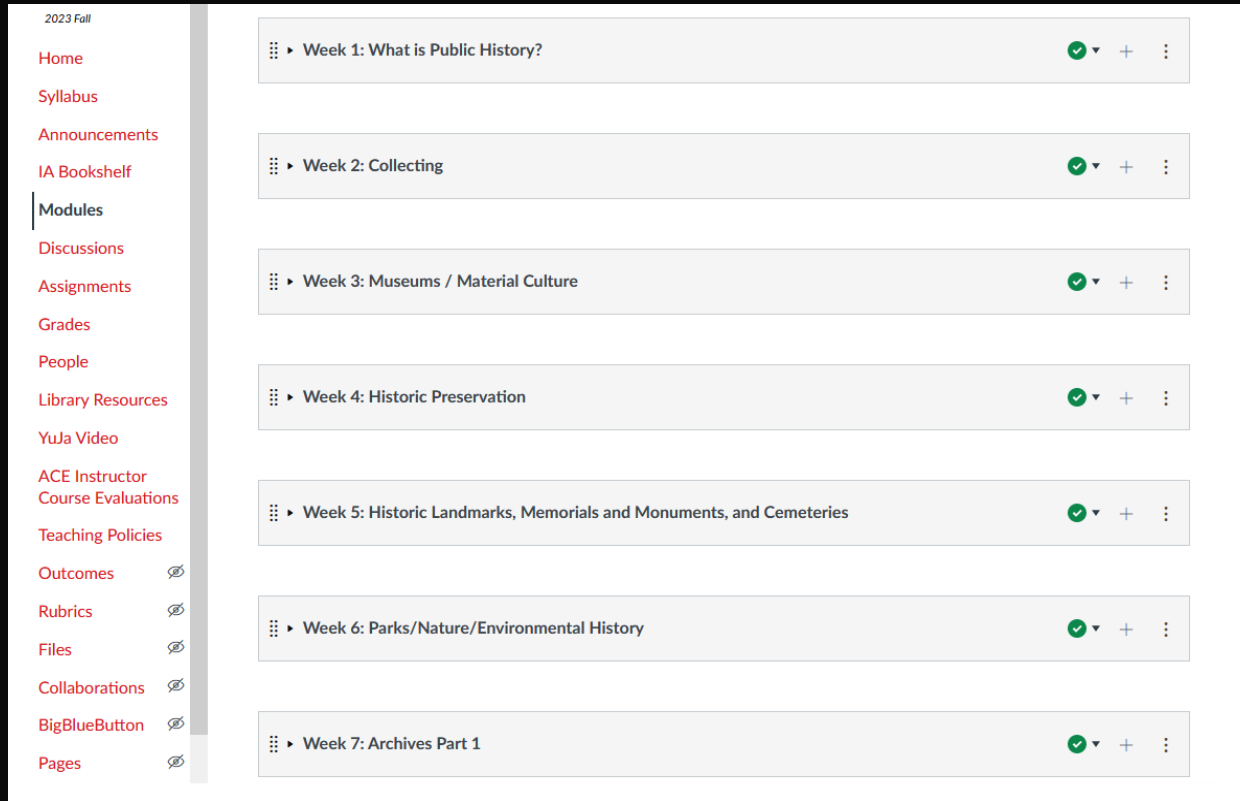
Course Design?

- No previous syllabus / new course (of sorts)
- Trust was appreciated / Named Courtesy Faculty
- What do we do next? We leaned on:
 - Instructional support
 - Public history education and experience
 - Public history syllabi online
 - Teaching experience

UNO History Department Faculty List
screenshot



Course Design: Structure



Screenshot showing first 7 modules listed in Canvas.

- Modules, weeks, classes
- Archives, Museums, Historic Pres, Parks...taking a broad view of Public History
- Memory, Collecting, & Ethics as discussion fodder
- Equal parts (ish) Discussion - Lecture - Experience



Course Design: Readings and Assignments

- Textbook selection + journal articles + book chapters = Low-cost class
- Scaffolded semester project: site visit report, encyclopedia entry, annotated bib, podcast, presentation
- Weekly reading responses
- Weekly student-led discussions

Caption: Poster advertising our course.



COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

PUBLIC HISTORY 4910/8916
PROFESSORS CLAIRE DU LANEY & LORI SCHWARTZ

FALL 2023

T/TH 10:00 A.M. to
11:15 A.M.

Arts & Sciences Hall,
Room 290



What is Public History? How do spaces like monuments and historic sites shape our history? How do theories about memory and practices like oral histories invite public engagement? This course is your opportunity to examine these topics and learn about the work of public historians at museums, landmarks, archives, parks, online spaces, and more.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:
402.554.2593 | history@unomaha.edu

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Archives and Special Collections

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About your professors:

We are both archivists, public historians, and faculty members in Criss Library and the History department. We look forward to exploring public history with you over the next 15 weeks.



Professors Claire Du Laney and Lori Schwartz in the stacks in Archives and Special Collections at Criss Library.

Co-teaching

- Divvying up lectures and grading week by week
- Some joint lectures to suit our expertise levels
- Shepherding students
- Office communication
- Finally, we were ready. We even took a first day of school photo.





Courtesy Archives and Special Collections



Archives Field Trip

- Two site visits
- In class Q&As
- Two classes in the Archives
 - In our element
 - Many students' first time in an archives
 - Processing Day – finding aid exercise (see photos)
 - Outreach Day – exhibit exercise



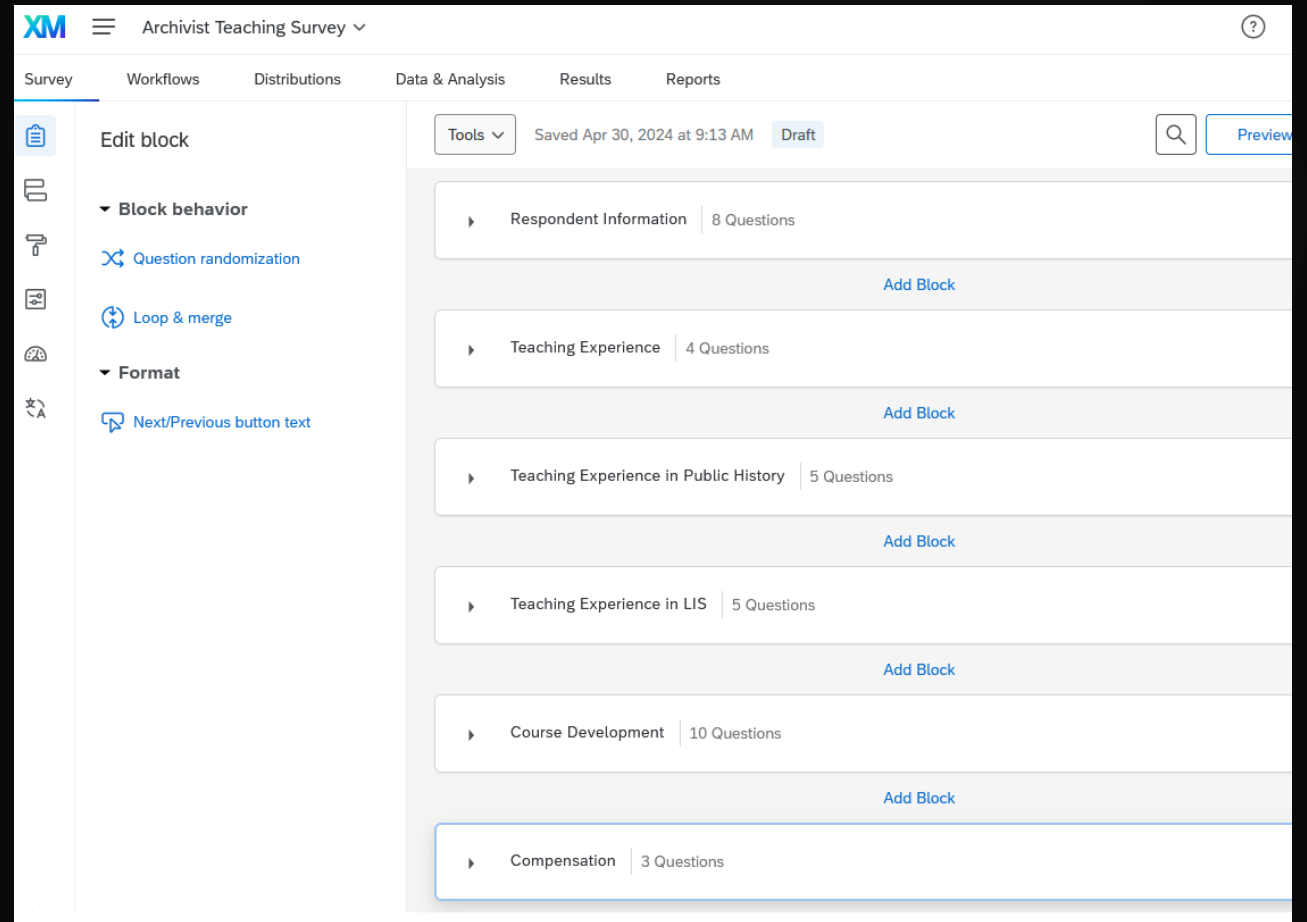
Assessment

- High expectations
- Discussions and reading responses were a mixed bag
- Understanding of public history was a sticking point all semester in a course called, "Special Topics: Public History"
- Connecting our experience to broader questions:
- How is archival work typically positioned within the library and public history disciplines?
- What do other archivists experience in teaching courses in this discipline?



Archivist Teaching Survey

- Scope
- Audience
- Questions galore
- Categories:
 - Background Info
 - Teaching Experience
 - Course Development
 - Compensation



Screenshot showing survey categories in Qualtrics.



IRB?

- No IRB!



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IRBORA Determination Tool ID#: 2153

PRIMARY CONTACT

Name: Lori Schwartz (lschwartz@unomaha.edu; (402) 554-2496)
Role: Principal investigator

PROJECT INFORMATION

Title: "An exploratory case study of archivists teaching outside the archives"
Institution: University of Nebraska - Omaha
Unit/Dept: Criss Library
PI: Lori Schwartz

DETERMINATION: NOT HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH

This project is likely NOT considered to be human subject research and would NOT require IRB review.
This determination is dependent on the accuracy of the responses provided for this project (listed below).

Screenshot from UNMC IRB Determination Tool.



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