

HH4021: Public & Applied History

Wednesdays 1430-1830

Room: LHS-TR+37

Experimental, problem-focused and socially useful, HH4021 offers a unique opportunity to reach out from beyond the walls of the NTU classroom. It is a course that will ground you in both the various methodological practices, and professional contexts, of Public History.

It begins by thinking about the ways in which our understandings of the past, and the uses it is put to, are shaped by the present. We move on to address how the past is encountered imaginatively, through objects and in the media.

During the second half of the course we move away from the consumption of public history and begin to focus on its production. This year you will be tasked by the National Heritage Board to produce some work for them – this will require you to pull together a range of non-textual sources to produce a compelling, intellectually robust but widely appealing set of public histories.

HH4021 will push you to find ways of applying historical methodologies to non-academic contexts, to evaluate the way in which these methodologies are applied and to reflect on the ethical, methodological and intellectual consequences of making historical knowledge ‘useable’.

Over the semester we have a range of visits, workshops and guest speakers. To get the most out of the course you’ll need to participate fully in these.

15 August – Week 1

Introduction

22 August – Week 2 (No class Hari Raya Haji)

29 August – Week 3

The meaning of the past in the present

Reading: Extracts from D. Lowenthal *The Past is a Foreign Country* & others

5 September – Week 4

Museums and their publics

Reading: Extracts from J. Barrett *Museums and the Public Sphere* & others

12 September – Week 5 (at National Gallery of Singapore)

Understanding exhibitions

Reading: Extracts from J. Thompson *The Manual of Curatorship*

19 September – Week 6 (with Qinyi Lim)

Workshop: Exhibition development

Reading: Extracts from K. Moore *Museums and Popular Culture*

26 September – Week 7 (with Eva Wong Nava)

Workshop: Imaginative history

Reading: TBC

Recess

10 October – Week 8

Workshop: History and journalism

Reading: Extracts from P. Ramos Pinto and B. Taithe (Eds.) *The Impact of History?* & others

17 October – Week 9

Workshop: individual portfolios

Reading: TBC

24 October – Week 10 (with Charmaine Chua)

NHB briefing & Ethnography workshop

Reading: M. Desmond, 'Relational Ethnography' & others

31 October – Week 11

Project field work: plus individual group consultations

7 November – Week 12

Project field work: group presentations

14 November – Week 13

Project field work: plus individual group consultations

//Assessments

1) **Review essay** set on 19 Sept due 1pm on 10 October (15%)

2) **Individual portfolio** set on 10 October, due 1pm on 24 October (30%)
(Full details will be given nearer the time, but the basis of the portfolio is the tasks we do in class weeks 6,7 and 8.)

3) **Group portfolio** set on 24 October, due 30 November @ 5pm (30%)
(Full details be given on the briefing on 17 October)

4) **Reflective essay** set on 7 November due 7 December @ 5pm (25%)

//A note on attendance

You are expected to attend every class and keep up with the readings and between class tasks. This is especially important bearing in mind the nature of a Public History course and its assessments. Please notify me if you are unable to attend a session. Attendance at guest workshops is mandatory and failure to attend will result in a marks deduction at the end of the semester.