University of Wisconsin-Madison
History 401: Public History

HISTORIES OF RELIGION IN WISCONSIN

Spring 2023
Wednesdays, 1:20-3:15 PM
Mosse Humanities 5245

Dr. Ulrich Rosenhagen
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Course Description

This course is somewhat of a hybrid. It will bring together the practice of public history with the history of religion in American life. Students will examine some of the theory and methods of public history, while assessing different histories of religion in Wisconsin. During the course of the semester, students will have a chance to meet with and interview several professional historians who built their careers outside the academy in fields like documentary film making, broadcasting, archival preservation, and oral or public history.

A textbook that surveys the different and complex histories of religion in Wisconsin or the Midwest does not exist, and any class on these histories can offer only a highly selective picture. Nevertheless, this course will go far in introducing students to many of the different forms of religious expression in Wisconsin, while giving students the tools for further inquiry. Among our topics are: the religious

history of American Indians and the encounter between American Indians and Christian missionaries, the religious histories of a number of European immigrant groups (i.e., Germans, Norwegians, Poles, Jews, Welsh) as well as the religious histories of more recent immigrants from Mexico and Vietnam (Hmong). We will take a look at 19th-century spiritualists and freethinkers, and at the religious history of African Americans in Milwaukee during the Great Migration and the Civil Rights movement. Students will also discover some rather peculiar religious stories like the one of the Marian Shrine in Necedah, WI, or the Jewish agricultural colony of Arpin, WI, or the renowned Buddhist-feminist teacher Rita Gross from Rhinelander, WI.

Students are tasked to make some of these stories transparent for a wider public. Over the course of the semester, they need to choose their own public history project, apply the tools of a public historian, and present their project in class at the end of the semester. Students will also be expected to write a short argumentative essay on how to publicly remember a specific person or an event of significance for the histories of religion in Wisconsin, and they need to summarize two historical essays for class discussion.

Course Objectives

As a 401 Public History course, a significant portion of it is dedicated to introducing students to the practice and methods of public historians. I hope you will enjoy meeting and discussing these practices with our guest speakers and during our field trips, while you are becoming more familiar with the multilayered and multi-faceted histories of religion in Wisconsin in and outside of the classroom.

Specifically, we will explore:

- Wisconsin's religious history before it was settled by Europeans
- The intertwined connections between ethnic, immigrant, and religious history
- The great diversity of the religious experience in Wisconsin history
- Different methods and practices of public history
- Different media (i.e., film, radio, exhibitions) used by public historians to reach broader audiences
- How to prepare your own public history project from research to presentation

In order to acquire the abilities of a public historian of religion, you need to come prepared to our course sessions once a week. Over the course of the semester, you will write two 100-word responses to some of the assigned readings, a four-page (ca. 1200 words) argumentative essay, and a final public history project on a topic (and in a format) you may choose. You need to write a one-page proposal of your project (due on April 5) and present the completed project in 10-15 minutes to the class on May 3.

Course Credit

This three-credit course is practice oriented and includes some beyond-the-classroom instruction. There are no exams. Weekly attendance is mandatory. (In case of sickness or family emergency you need to notify me immediately.) The course meets for 115 minutes each week over the semester. Students are expected to spend ca. seven hours per week outside of each session reading, writing, and preparing for it, for a total of 135 hours over the course of the semester including the final assignment (= 45 hours per credit). The course is open to honors students. (Please let me know if

you are planning to take this course for honors so we can work out the particularities of your workload.)

Course Assignments

Grading will be determined as follows:

- Discussion/participation/attendance: You will be expected to attend all class sessions and engage actively in class discussions and group work = 30%
- Two short 100-word responses on an assigned class reading that you will share in class (5% each). You will need to summarize a text or argument, or evaluate the historical evidence of a text. Students sign up for two texts at the beginning of the semester = 10%
- A four-page argumentative essay (ca. 1200 words) in which you make a plea to publicly remember a specific person or event of significance of the histories of religion in Wisconsin. You need to bring enough copies to class on April 26 for peer review = 20%
- A final public history project: You will submit your (one-page, ca. 300 words) project proposal that combines a topic of the histories of religion in Wisconsin with a specific public history practice (plus a bibliography of your sources) in class on April 5. The class will provide feedback to your proposal. The completed project needs to be presented in class on May 3, and submitted to the instructor by May 10 at 6:00 PM = 40%
- I will provide more details about these assignments over the course of the semester.

The grade scale is: A=100-93%; AB=92-88%; B=87-83%; BC=82-78%; C=77-70%; D=69-60%.

ALL PAPER ASSIGNMENTS NEED TO BE SUBMITTED AS HARDCOPIES AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS. YOU NEED TO BRING ENOUGH COPIES FOR YOUR CLASSMATES AND YOUR INSTRUCTOR.

ALL READINGS WILL BE UPLOADED TO CANVAS, OR I WILL SEND YOU THE INTERNET LINK TO IT. I WILL PROVIDE YOU WITH A COMPLETE LIST OF SOURCES ON CANVAS. I STRONGLY SUGGEST PRINTING THE TEXTS SO YOU CAN DO YOUR READING FROM A HARDCOPY.

Late Work Policy:

Assignments turned in late will be downgraded half a letter grade for every 24 hours unless a special agreement has been made with the instructor prior to the deadline of the assignment.

Meeting Your Instructor

I am very approachable and usually respond within 24 hours to your emails. I hold regular office hours, though I ask to let me know in advance when you are planning to stop by. If you cannot come to my office hours on Wednesdays, 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM, I would be happy to arrange for a meeting outside of them. I will meet with each student on April 12 for feedback and comments on the proposal of your final paper.

The History Lab

The History Lab is a fabulous resource for students. At the Lab, doctoral students in History are ready to assist you while writing your papers. I encourage you to make use of this extraordinary resource. The History Lab is located at 4255 Mosse Humanities.
https://history.wisc.edu/undergraduate-program/the-history-lab/

Special Notes Regarding Covid-19

As hard as it is to believe, the global COVID-19 pandemic is not over. Therefore, we must prioritize our collective health and safety to keep ourselves, our campus, and our community safe. As a university community, we must work together to prevent the spread of the virus and to promote the collective health and welfare of our campus and surrounding community.

Students should continually monitor themselves for COVID-19 symptoms and get tested for the virus if they have symptoms or have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19. Students should reach out to me as soon as possible if they become ill or need to isolate, in order to make alternate plans for how to proceed with the course. Students are strongly encouraged to communicate with me concerning their illness and the anticipated extent of their absence from the course. I will work with the student to provide alternative ways to complete the course work.

Please make sure to follow the current mask policy on campus.

Academic Integrity

"By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UW-Madison's community of scholars in which everyone's academic work and behavior are held to the highest academic integrity standards. Academic misconduct compromises the integrity of the university. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these acts are examples of academic misconduct, which can result in disciplinary action. This includes but is not limited to failure on the assignment/course, disciplinary probation, or suspension. Substantial or repeated cases of misconduct will be forwarded to the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards for additional review." For more information, go to: studentconduct.wiscweb.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

McBurney Disability Resource Center syllabus statement, which is adhered to in History 401: "The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA." For more information on this issue, go to http://mcburney.wisc.edu/facstaffother/faculty/syllabus.php

Diversity and Inclusion

UW-Madison's Statement on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, which is adhered to in History 401: "Diversity a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world." For more information regarding UW-Madison's diversity policy, go to https://diversity.wisc.edu/

Land Acknowledgment

Especially in a course on the diverse religious history of what would come to be known as "Wisconsin", we should be mindful that "the UW-Madison occupies ancestral Ho-Chunk land, a place their nation has called Teejop (day-JOPE) since time immemorial. In an 1832 treaty, the Ho-Chunk were forced to cede this territory. Decades of ethnic cleansing followed when both the federal and state government repeatedly, but unsuccessfully, sought to forcibly remove the Ho-Chunk from Wisconsin." Therefore, we should "acknowledge the circumstances that led to the forced removal of the Ho-Chunk people, and honor their legacy of resistance and resilience. This history of colonization [should] inform our work [in this course, as well as our] vision for a collaborative future. We recognize and respect the inherent sovereignty of the Ho-Chunk Nation and the other 11 Native Nations within the boundaries of the state of Wisconsin."

Class Schedule and Readings

January 25 **Introduction to Seminar**

February 1 **What is Public History I?**

- Read: Lyon et al., *Introduction to Public History*, 1-32; Grele, "Whose Public? Whose History? What Is the Goal of a Public Historian?," 40-48; Weible, "Defining Public History," online.
- Prof. emer. Tom Broman will introduce the class to the *Wisconsin 101* website, its objectives, and talk about possible student contributions.

February 8 **What is Public History II?**

- Read: Lyon, *Introduction to Public History*, 83-141.
- Inform yourself about the UW-Madison Public History Project: https://publichistoryproject.wisc.edu/
- Curator Kacie Butcher will speak about the UW-Madison Public History project and exhibition at the Chazen Museum of Art. Butcher will talk about the planning and research for the project, organizing and choosing the material for the exhibition, logistics and communication with the UW administration, public feedback, etc.

February 15 **What is Religious History?**

- Read: Myhre, "What Is Religion?," 3-14; Smart, *Dimension of the Sacred*, 1-25; Wolffe, "Religious History," 56-72.
- Troy Reeves, Head of the UW-Madison Oral History Program, will introduce the class to the OHP and to oral history as an important historical method.

February 22 **Visit to the Wisconsin Historical Society**

- Read: Zeitlin, *Germans in Wisconsin*, short selections; Fapso, *Norwegians in Wisconsin*, short selections; González, *Mexicans in Wisconsin*, selections; Wyman, *The Wisconsin Frontier*, 185-214.
- Cynthia Bachhuber, Librarian at the Wisconsin Historical Society, will speak to the class about collections and resources at the WHS and how to use them for your own work as public historians.

March 1 **First Nations Walking Tour on Campus**

- Read: Loew, *Indian Nations of Wisconsin*, selections (read for the following key terms: religion, sacred, spirit, faith, Christian, Catholic, missionary); Saler, *The Settler's Empire*, 185-214.
- Learn about the American Indian religious history before Christian missionaries and other Europeans came to Wisconsin. Explore a history of spirituality and religion that is ongoing and alive and a major part of any story of religion in Wisconsin. Get introduced to a special form of public history by walking a place to feel and grasp what stories are still present in forms of architecture, archaeology, landmarks, names, etc.

March 8 **Jewish and Welsh Immigrants**

- Read: Swichkow, "The Jewish Community of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1860-1870," 34-58; Swichkow, "The Jewish Agricultural Colony of Arpin, Wisconsin," 82-91; Polsky, "A Study of Orthodoxy in Milwaukee," 325-335; Pollock, "Jewish Problems: Eastern and Western Jewish Identities in Conflict At the University of Wisconsin, 1919–1941," 161-180; Knowles, "Religious Identity as Ethnic Identity. The Welsh in Waukesha County," 282-299.
- Rabbi Laurie Zimmerman will talk about "Judaism in Wisconsin" against the backdrop of her own biography and career path. Laurie is a UW-Madison History graduate.
- Start thinking about your own public history project

March 15 **Spring Break**

March 22 **Freethinkers and Spiritualists**

- Read: Bednarowski, "Spiritualism in Wisconsin in the Nineteenth Century," 2-19; Cooper, "Die Freien Gemeinden in Wisconsin," 53-65; Cooper, "Die Freie Gemeinde. Freethinkers on the Frontier," 53-60.
- Steve Paulson, Producer of *To the Best of Our Knowledge* (WPR) will talk about his work, his approach to religion and its phenomena, and radio as a specific medium of public history and storytelling.
- Listen to two-three radio pieces suggested by Steve Paulson.
- Be prepared to share your ideas for your own public history project.

March 29 **Visit to PBS Wisconsin**

- Read: Janik, *A Short Story of Wisconsin*, selections; Beltman, "Rural Church Reform in Wisconsin during the Progressive Era," 3-24.

- PBS Wisconsin Producer Joel Waldinger (*Wisconsin Life*; *Wisconsin's Nazi Resistance: The Mildred Fish-Harnack Story*) will talk to the class about his work (as a producer), and about TV as a specific medium to tell history. The visit gives the class an opportunity to peek behind the production of *Wisconsin Life*.
- Watch two-three pieces from *Wisconsin Life*.

April 5 **The Catholic Church**

- Read: Johnson, "Unofficial Beginnings of the Milwaukee Catholic Diocese," 3-16; Rozga, "March on Milwaukee," 28-39; Kselman and Avella, "Marian Piety and the Cold War in the United States," 403-424; Zimdars-Swartz, "Religious Experience and Public Cult: The Case of Mary Ann Van Hoof," 36-57; Zimdars-Swartz, *Encountering Mary*, 3-12; Pienkos, "Politics, Religion, and Change in Polish Milwaukee, 1900-1930," 178-209; Spaeth, et al., "A Priest in the Woods: The Journal of Fr. Adrianus Dominicus Godthardt, O.F.M., 1848- 1850," 117-140.
- Report on the progress of your own public history project.

April 12 **African Americans in Milwaukee**

- Read: Smith, "Breaking Faith: Religion, Americanism, and Civil Rights in Postwar Milwaukee," 57-92; Trotter, *Black Milwaukee 1915-1945*, 122-145; W. E. B. Dubois, "Of the Faith of the Fathers," Sernet, *Bound for the Promised Land*, selections.
- Dr. Vaneesa Cook, historian for the MIA Recovery and Identification Project, who earned her Ph.D. at the UW-Madison History Department, will share her own career trajectory, talk about her work as a teacher and author, how she approaches religion as a historical subject, and her work as a public historian, including her work at the MIA Recovery and Identification Project.
- Listen to a radio interview with Cook.
- Some guidelines on making oral presentations.

April 19 **Hmong and Muslim Immigrants, and a Buddhist Example**

- Read: Lee, et al., Culture and Customs of the Hmong, 23-45; Xiong, et al., "Hmong Shamanism," 439-454; Gross, "How Did This Ever Happen to Me?," 23-44; Omar, et al., *Interfaith Engagement in Milwaukee*, selections.
- Dr. Dan Hummel, Director of University Engagement at Upper House, will talk about his work as teacher and author, how he approaches religion as a historical subject, his engagement with the broader public, his work at Upper House, and his recent research on UW-Madison's religious history. Dan earned his Ph.D. at the UW-Madison History Department.

April 26 **How to Remember (Religious) History?**

- Read: Cronon, "Father Marquette Goes to Washington: The Marquette Statue Controversy," 266-283; Smith, "Monuments to the Unthinkable," 24-41; Two-three short articles on the removal of monuments in the U.S.
- Present your own case in class: What person or event of the histories of religion in Wisconsin should be publicly remembered? How and why should they/it be remembered?
- We will peer review your essay and evaluate it together in class.

May 3 **Presentation of Public History Projects**

May 10 **TURN IN YOUR PUBLIC HISTORY PROJECT TO THE INSTRUCTOR NO LATER THAN 6:00 PM.**