

What are the Public Humanities?

English 4/6346: Studies in American Literature



Professor:

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Class Information:

T/Th 1:00-2:25pm

Course Content:

For the last decade or so, an increasing number of literature scholars have undertaken research and community engagement projects aimed at non-academic audiences. This course will introduce late-stage undergraduates and early graduate students to these 'public humanities' initiatives: how they differ from traditional scholarship, what they share and where they depart in their own methods, and how they open up new careers for humanities students. This class will be interactive and project-based: you will end the course having made something.

Rather than an overview of a theme or time period in American literature, the primary texts will be public humanities projects on literary topics. Some will be large, expensive, and archival (the Emily Dickinson Archive, the Colored Conventions Project, UbuWeb), while others will be small-scale, inexpensive, and practical (Junebug Productions, The Bench by the Road Project).

Assessment/Assignments: Students will contribute to an ongoing public humanities project in Memphis, lead a presentation on a case study project, and (in groups) write a proposal for and create a sample for their own public humanities project.