

SPRING 2020

LGBT ORAL HISTORIES OF CENTRAL IOWA



GWS-395

Mon/Wed 10:00 – 11:20

202 Mears

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Course Description

Oral history is often described as a “people’s history” method: it can be used to gather first-hand accounts from communities that wouldn’t otherwise be captured by the historical record at all. As a result, oral history has long been a preferred method for documenting histories of marginalized groups, and it’s been used prominently by queer historians, since little LGBT community life is preserved by traditional written sources. But oral history is a “queer” method in a less literal sense too: it recurrently blurs distinctions between history and memory, fact and fiction, and narrative and documentary forms. So beyond being a practical strategy for preserving a record of the past, oral history also raises basic questions about what history *is*.

In this class, we’ll become acquainted with the robust scholarship on LGBT oral history. However, beyond reading scholarly work, **this is a practice-oriented seminar, focused on learning how to actually do oral history interviewing** (and then doing it!). Students will learn interviewing techniques, a host of related practical skills, and throughout the semester, you’ll plan and conduct interviews with LGBT community members in the central Iowa region. You’ll begin by interviewing individuals with ties to the College (mainly as practice) but the majority of your work will be dedicated to identifying, recruiting, and interviewing LGBT Iowans beyond campus. These interviews will be archived publicly as part of the [LGBT Oral Histories of Central Iowa](#) project, established by Grinnell students last year.

Learning Objectives

- Understand major issues and debates in the larger field of oral history, and be able to apply scholarly debates to your own research
- Become familiar with major conversations in LGBT oral history -- including why it's been an important method for LGBT studies, and how oral history has unfolded in relation to both LGBT history and queer/feminist theory.
- Understand and apply to your research major critiques in rural queer studies
- Become adept at the nuts and bolts of oral history research. Practice ethics in conduct and correspondence! Plan and schedule things! Be a detective in your hunt for narrators! Also learn to use recording technology better than your geriatric professor.
- Do a crap ton of oral history interviews
- Become better listeners and better human beings!

Required Text:

E. Patrick Johnson, *Honeypot: Black Southern Women Who Love Women* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019).

All other readings are available on PWeb, or in the case of journal articles, should be accessed through the library website.

About This Class: Structure, Content, Ethics

Basic Class Structure and Work Expectations

This is a practice-oriented class that centers community-engaged research, specifically, building the [LGBT Oral Histories of Central Iowa](#) archive. It will be different from most of your other courses. Becoming an oral historian involves many skills that cannot be learned by sitting in a classroom or reading scholarship. Oral history requires strong organizational skills, a nuanced command of research ethics, proficiency at the interpersonal dynamics of interviewing (this is huge and takes practice!), competence with recording tech and audio editing, familiarity with metadata and archiving practices, and some administrative work (e.g., managing forms and datasheets). Like all original research, completing oral history interviews also requires ingenuity from the researcher--that's you--in performing the detective work to identify and recruit narrators (oral history's term for interviewees). **All these skills are best learned by doing.** Ergo, we will work on the "practical/practice" end throughout the term, in tandem with the "scholarly" content. **To that end, the class takes the following basic structure, with some exceptions:**

- **Mondays** are our main day for **scholarship**, i.e., writing that comments on or uses oral history methods (we'll have additional emphasis on rural queer studies generally). The majority of scholarly readings fall on that day. Mondays will be more like a traditional class.
- **Wednesdays** are our day for oral history **practice**. This includes training sessions and class visitors. You'll have practical-type readings on Wednesdays. Sometimes you'll have listening assignments. **All your assigned work towards developing the LOHCI project is due on Wednesdays** (see below for more). Wednesdays will also be time to just check in, talk about how things are going, strategize, etc. **If you have a laptop, bring it to Wednesday classes** (if you don't have one, speak with me so we can look into getting you a loaner).

NOTE: Again, all oral history project assignments are due on Wednesdays. **However, these assignments cannot be completed in the 48-hour window between Mon/Wed classes. You need to be working on them throughout the week--that's why they're frontloaded each week on your syllabus. Sometimes you need to be working much further in advance.**

You'll likely have to plan and schedule your work differently from other courses. You cannot pass this class if you do not plan ahead, practice strong organizational skills, stay on top of assignment details, and often, begin assignments way before they are due. Note that I do not expect you to work *longer* hours than a typical 300-level seminar, simply that you spread those hours out wisely. Original research entails many variables beyond your control, making timelines to completion unpredictable. Much of this work requires participation of other humans and cannot be performed on your own scheduling whims. Sometimes, you'll get lucky and quickly land an interview subject who has a wide-open schedule, responds to correspondence promptly, and actually shows up to their interview. Other times, you may search tirelessly without recruiting a narrator, and once you do, they may not be available to meet for days or weeks. Your narrator may back out and you'll have to start over. You may realize that a narrator filled out a form improperly, making your interview effectively useless until you can get a new one from them. You'll also work collaboratively with your classmates, and may get delayed by their schedules or work habits. **All these variables are basic, unavoidable facts of doing original research, especially with human subjects.** Since delays are unpredictable but inevitable, the only way to ensure the completion of work is to *assume* delays will occur and plan for them.

Know, however, that ***if you are putting in decent effort and planning like responsible adults, I will not penalize your grades for forces beyond your control.*** Sometimes you may do everything "right" and still be unable to meet a deadline--that's fine! This is why you have a **weekly progress report assignment:** you submit a log of activities each week so I can give support and feedback, tell you if it looks like you're slacking (I warn before penalizing). And if you find you can't complete an assignment, we'll have a record of what happened so we can evaluate whether you've simply had bad luck, or if you've been blowing things off. In the former cases, we'll simply figure out an alternative: that might mean giving you an extension or establishing other pertinent work you can do instead. Some of you will end up with too many narrators to interview whereas others will struggle--most often due to sheer luck--and students will share extra narrators with peers. But in cases where you've simply been negligent, late or incomplete work will receive penalties or zero credit.

Class and Coursework Content

Again, this class is mostly nontraditional coursework, and most of that work is fun and rewarding! You get credit for going to bars/shows/community events; chatting up locals; flyering; you'll do a lot of exploratory traveling around the state; you'll also do a lot of internet and social media sleuthing as part of the outreach process. You'll meet new people and form new relationships. "Find the gays!" is an informal research mantra for this project, which requires creative detecting.

But more substantially, oral history is an experience that many -- interviewers and narrators -- find distinctly rewarding and powerful. As interviewers, you bear witness to your narrators' lives. Not

many of us have the opportunity for another to sit down with us, for two hours or longer, and simply *listen*--with attentiveness, compassion, and respect--to what we regard as our most important experiences. Certainly, not many LGBT people have this opportunity, or are told that our lives have intrinsic political and historical value. And LGBT young people (like you!) infrequently get to meet, listen to, and learn from LGBT elders. The interviewing experience can be intimate and produce ongoing relationships. Also, you'll just get to hear really cool stories. Last but not least, the interviews you conduct for LOHCI are valuable: socially, politically, and historically. LGBT history is extremely under-documented in this state. There are no readings on the syllabus about LGBT history in Iowa because those readings simply don't exist. In many cases you will be the first to begin that documentation. Your work for this class is public-facing, so LGBT communities within and beyond Iowa can benefit from having their histories preserved.

That said! While the majority of work for class is "sexy/fun/cool," a **minority** of oral history work is unsexy and menial. **You must diligently complete the unsexy work to do the sexy work:** you can't produce an amazing interview without putting in the administrative labor to set up and schedule that interview, and that interview is effectively useless if you don't fill out and file all legal formwork properly, update the archive website to publish it, etc. Collectively, **the "unsexy" work for this class does not require significant time or effort** -- these tasks take seconds or minutes to complete. But there are still **more** administrative details to keep track of compared to other classes, and you may need to adopt new organizational strategies to stay on top of them.

Research Ethics and "No Flaking" Policy

Again, while administrative tasks don't require much time or labor, that labor can't be blown off. As a human subjects research project, these tasks have **much** greater significance. In traditional classes, if you forget an email or format a paper incorrectly, you simply irritate your professor. In this class, if you ghost on a narrator, you disrespect *their* time and generosity; if you don't finish a flyer by a deadline and your peer needs it to continue their outreach, you negatively impact them. Serious ethics violations can occur simply because paperwork isn't in order: if you fail to upload a consent form page specifying that an interview is restricted access, then a peer ends up publishing that interview and they unknowingly publish it publicly, you've violated your narrator's privacy rights and perpetrated an ethical infraction that--in worst cases--can endanger or harm them. Comparable infractions can occur via negligence in other formwork and administrative tasks.

Because these administrative tasks are small but have high political/ethical stakes, the class standard for them is strict: we follow a **"no flakiness policy."** Generally, your grades exist to incentivize you to complete work on time, per instructions. But your grades aren't a good failsafe when the stakes of dropping the ball are much higher. **Ergo, if any student demonstrates they cannot be relied on to work without negatively impacting others (peers or community partners), I will simply reassign that student to tasks that *can't* impact others.** You will not enjoy these tasks as much! E.g., I may put you on doing transcripts or metadata until you can re-establish dependability. **But do not panic: everyone** is capable of meeting administrative requirements of this class--they're the easiest part by far. In virtually all cases, if you simply communicate and **tell** me when you're struggling or if you've dropped the ball (and are correcting it), you will not be in trouble. **I also give everyone one no-penalty "flake" as a warning before I reassign you to low-stakes-but-boring**

work. And to be clear, the “no flaking” policy applies **only** to menial tasks that require only responsibility, not special skills or time (“flaking” doesn’t refer to difficulties with substantial work in this class, which I expect us all to run into -- e.g., lazily leaving fields blank on a data form is flaking, ditto for failing to reply to an email or make a phone call you promised to; in contrast, taking longer than expected to lock down a narrator from, say, the Iowa Gay Rodeo Association is not flaking -- that’s a legit research setback).

Evaluation

Attendance/participation:	20%
Oral history project research:	65%
- Interviews (x8):	(30%)
- Interview reflections and reports:	(10%)
- Weekly progress reports:	(10%)
- Misc written work (e.g., transcripts):	(15%)
- Narrator tracking	(0% but see below)
Final Project:	15%

Attendance/Participation, or “Showing Up” (20%) - This class will be highly participatory and collaborative. Your presence and engagement is key! As a basic policy, **I allow three absences**, which you may use for whatever you want, but absences beyond those incur a grade penalty (so I suggest reserving absences for unforeseen emergencies).

I also expect students to be thoughtful and active contributors in class. Beyond simply raising your hand, there are six interrelated qualities I especially look for in student participation. Together, they constitute what I call “**Showing Up**” (with thanks to my colleague Dr. Cáel Keegan for the idea):

1. **Investment**—Demonstrating that you value the course, your classmates, and me. Also: demonstrating that you’re willing to struggle with concepts when they’re difficult!
2. **Preparation**—Being ready to talk, think, and be in community with people different from you.
3. **Openness**—Showing us what you care about. This includes sharing viewpoints respectfully with your peers and me—not just when you disagree, but also when you admire others’ contributions. It also includes being candid about what you **don’t** know. One of the questions that impresses me **most** is: “*I don’t get it. Can you explain that again?*” This shows me you’re paying attention, and you care about learning more than your image of being an infallibly woke genius (see also “risk-taking” and “questions”).
4. **Risk-taking**—Willingness to **try and fail** in order to expand your skills and thinking. In the words of Dr. Kyla Wazana Tompkins: “[we aren’t here to learn what we already know.](#)” Intellectual and political growth occur by encountering ideas we **aren’t** already familiar with. Dealing with new ideas and issues means that we will—indeed, should—mess up sometimes.
5. **Questions** – Ask them promiscuously! **And ask them of your peers**—not just me. You do not need to have invaluable, unique insights to raise your hand – you only need to want to know more about something. I regard question-asking as one of the most valuable kinds of

participation: it demonstrates your investment and curiosity. Moreover, you almost always do a service to your peers (and me) by asking questions. We will all usually benefit both from the question itself and the answer(s) it prompts.

6. **Integrity**—Honesty, generosity, and respect in your behavior and work.

So beyond physically attending, “showing up” means being present, being real, and contributing sincerely to the class community. It’s showing that you value other students by offering your thoughts/feelings and responding respectfully to theirs. It’s risking disagreement while still practicing empathy. And it means recognizing that you are a resource to everyone else in the room.

LGBT Oral Histories of Central Iowa: Project Development Work (65%)

*Work towards building our LGBT community oral history project constitutes the majority of your grade. **Directions on how to submit all relevant assignments are under the “Oral History Project” PWeb tab. The following is the component breakdown:***

Narrator Tracking Sheet (0%) – This isn’t really an assignment but it’s a very required task.

Any/all contact you make with prospective narrators must be logged in the google excel spreadsheet, linked to on the PWeb page. Logging communications with narrators is key to our ability to work not just collectively and efficiently, but also **ethically**. We need to know who’s in touch with whom and what their status is in order to avoid inadvertently contacting people against their will, or pestering them redundantly.. **Before initiating contact with any prospective narrator, check the tracking sheet first to see if they’ve been contacted already and if so, what their status is.**

Interviews (30%) – Over the semester, each student is required to conduct **at least eight oral history interviews with individuals connected to the LGBT community in the region.** Some of these interviews have specific parameters (e.g., interview a classmate). I use the following criteria to evaluate interviews:

- Were all interviews actually completed, and were they completed on time?
- Did the student arrange for an appropriate meeting space and use recording equipment properly to ensure high quality audio?
- Did the student secure all necessary paperwork (signed release form, narrator data form, narrator photo)? Did the student properly submit/upload that formwork?
- Is the interview actually an in-depth interview?
 - As a general rule, oral history interviews should run about two hours – they can run longer, if the narrator has the stamina and interest. Sometimes they’ll be shorter, that’s fine. But if an interview is significantly shorter, and that’s clearly because the student was underprepared and ran out of questions, that will incur a penalty.
- Does the student demonstrate ethical, culturally-sensitive conduct in interviewing?
 - Ethics and cultural sensitivity are paramount in any research with live human beings! We’ll read a **lot** about this. In reality, everyone makes little flubs sometimes when we interview, usually minor (for instance: an interviewer uses inaccessible or context-specific language when asking a question, the narrator doesn’t understand, then the narrator feels momentarily alienated or ashamed—I’ve done this). But if I

hear a student perform a major indiscretion in an interview, especially if it's about something we've specifically covered in class, I'll penalize that.

- Does the student successfully apply interviewing techniques covered in class?
- Does the interview explore basic content pertinent to the oral history project -- i.e., does the interview explore LGBT community life in an in-depth way?
 - The evaluative bar for historical content will be raised as you get more practice! Initially, I mostly just care that you ask detailed questions about LGBT issues. But as we learn more about historiography and interviewing, I'll expect you to demonstrate the ability to think historiographically *while* interviewing (time is precious during interviews, meaning that if you spend an hour asking your narrator things that could be easily gleaned from other sources, that's basically wasted time -- avoiding that requires you to have a basic sense of what types of historical content get preserved through means *other* than oral testimony, and what doesn't).

Interview Reflections and Reports (10%) – For your first four interviews, you're required to turn in brief write ups, **1-2 paragraphs**, reporting on how the interview went and commenting on connections to class readings and discussions. You're also required to submit an interview guide in advance of your first "off campus" interview (details about writing guides will be covered in class). In general, students receive full credit for these reports simply for completing them on time, per basic assignment parameters. See the "Oral History Project" PWeb tab for submission instructions (ditto for everything else).

Weekly research progress reports (10%) – This class centers original research, which requires students to exercise self-direction, planning, and general problem-solving skills. Identifying and contacting narrators, then setting up interviews **takes time!** Students need to work on this throughout the semester. To ensure you're actually progressing on this front, students are required to submit brief progress reports each week. These are basically work reports, they should not take more than a few minutes to jot down – I'm really only looking for a rundown of everything you're doing to arrange, plan for and set up interviews, and any project development work. The reports can be a brief bulleted list, for example, a student might write:

- Put up flyers advertising the project in Saint's Rest
- Emailed prospective narrator [give me a name] to ask if they'd be interviewed
- Had a fifteen-minute meeting with another professor [tell me who] to ask about potential leads [also tell me if the meeting produced any leads].
- Read an outside article [tell me what] to familiarize myself with [some specific issue] that will help me prepare for upcoming interview with [a particular narrator]
- Hung out in Deadwood bar in IC for a few hours to find out if it's really "gay"

In general, students get full credit for this assignment if they 1) simply complete it, and 2) their reports indicate that they've actually been advancing research. Exactly how much work—and what kind of work—students need to be doing each week varies on a host of factors, including forces beyond students' control. Since it's impossible to stipulate a universal formula for what students need to be doing each week, if any student is **not** making satisfactory progress, I will notify you before inflicting a grade penalty. Again, these reports are your opportunity to demonstrate that you've been putting in effort to advance your research even if you run into external setbacks. Basically: these reports ensure that you get credit for work you put in, even when those efforts fail to

produce results, which is inevitable in original research. Thus, although progress reports are directly worth only 10% of your grade, they're also the safety net that protects the rest of your grade if you run into common setbacks affecting *other* assignments.

Miscellaneous Written Work (15%) – Additional work needed for LOHCI project development will emerge throughout the semester (for example: we need to make new outreach flyers; we may want to update our “FAQ” document--many unforeseeable tasks may crop up). This is another area of work that is impossible to predict in advance, so just know that we will reach collective agreement about these tasks, distributing them amongst students in an equitable way, and per individual students' interests. I do not tyrannically inflict unwanted, unreasonable extra work with unreasonable deadlines.

Final Project (15%) – Your final project for this class is open-ended, the only requirements are that it:

1. Engages LGBT oral history research conducted for class.
2. Advances the principle of **reciprocity** in community-driven research -- that means your final project needs to do something to directly support the LGBT Iowan community that we're working with.

Your project can definitely be collaborative or group-based (most work for class will be). Because students will be doing considerable research throughout the semester, the volume of work expected for final projects will be light for an upper-level seminar. We'll begin discussing final projects halfway through the semester and I will be in conversation with each student to establish that everyone has an appropriate final project plan. Final projects will be due by the end of finals week (anytime by the end of the week is fine, I honestly don't care).

General Class Policies and Expectations

Readings and other Course Materials – You're expected to come to class having done the readings, identified questions you have, and prepared yourself to contribute per the “showing up” parameters. **Bring all readings to class that are assigned for that day, whether that's hard or electronic copies.**

Laptops, gadgets, etc – I monitor gadget use! We will be using laptops and other tech in class a lot. But if I catch you using a gadget for affairs unrelated to class, **I will simply mark you absent for that day.** I don't care if you eat or drink in class as long as you don't snack disruptively.

Course Communications - I hold office hours twice a week and by appointment. **My office hours are the appropriate venue for discussing any substantive issue with me** – i.e., any issue that cannot be resolved via a brief email. I have a policy of responding to emails within 36 hours. **You are responsible for checking your own email regularly and keeping up with changes in assignments, readings, etc.** **Course communications are uniquely important in this class.** Note that you imperil my mood if you email me with questions that are answered on this syllabus!

Additionally, as a collaborative, practice-driven class, you will probably need to be in touch with me outside class hours more than you would in a typical class. **I will make my personal cell phone number available and authorize you to make use of it!**

Coursework policies and academic integrity – Barring an extension, late assignments receive a grade penalty. **However, I recognize that life happens.** If you anticipate difficulty meeting a deadline, or are having difficulty keeping up with coursework, get in touch with me ASAP to discuss. In general, I'm happy to work with students to establish a reasonable timeframe for the completion of all work. However, I give last minute extensions only under exceptional circumstances, and almost never grant retroactive extensions after a deadline has passed.

Plagiarism – just don't. If you haven't already, familiarize yourself with Grinnell's academic integrity policy (see "resources" below). You pledge to adhere to these standards when you submit work.

Accessibility - Your college is required by law (and ethical commitment!) to make reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. If you need to establish documentation of a disability, you should be in touch with the Coordinator for Disability Resources, John Hirschman, located on the 3rd floor of the Rosenfield Center, 641-269-3089.

I also strongly encourage students with disabilities or distinctive learning needs to be in touch with me throughout about accommodations. Ditto for students with religious observances that may impact class, or students who speak English as a non-native language and anticipate language-related challenges. I also encourage **all** students to consult [Grinnell's Disability Resources page](#).

Content Warnings - Much of this class will involve reading and talking about oppression, including forms of interpersonal and institutional violence. Accordingly, course content may at times be personal, charged, uncomfortable, or demanding in unexpected ways. Due to the course foci and to the wide variability of individual triggers, generally, I do not **independently** issue trigger warnings. I treat trigger warnings like any other access consideration: if you anticipate that your ability to participate in the learning environment may be compromised in any way, please speak with me to discuss accommodations—this can include developing specific parameters for trigger warnings as needed, which I am happy to do. I also provide the option to notify me anonymously of triggers and other access considerations on the first day of class.

Campus Resources

Disability Resources for Students:

<http://www.grinnell.edu/about/offices-services/accessibility-disability/disability-services>

The Writing Lab: <https://www.grinnell.edu/academics/resources/writing-lab>

Academic Integrity Policy:

<https://catalog.grinnell.edu/content.php?catoid=12&navoid=2537#Honesty in Academic Work>

Syllabus

Note that syllabus is subject to change with reasonable advance notice

Week 1

Assignments: Unless otherwise noted, all weekly assignments are due by class on Wednesday—they are frontloaded each week because usually you need to begin working on them BEFORE Monday:

- Read the syllabus, in totality!
- Come to class with questions, thoughts, observations, concerns and any suggestions you may have for modifications to enhance the overall class structure and to support you through your oral history work.

Wednesday, January 22

Introductions! Plus: what the course will look like, expectations, etc.

Week 2

Assignments:

- Weekly progress report
- Come to class having given some thought to why you want to contribute to a community oral history project and to building a record of LGBT community history (as covered in class last week, this is an ethics-related question for a project like this).

Monday, January 27

Alessandro Portelli, “The Death of Luigi Trastulli” (PWeb)

Hayden White, “The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality,” *Critical Inquiry* 7 no. 1 (Autumn, 1980).

Kevin Murphy et al, “What Makes Queer Oral History Different?” *Oral History Review*, 43 no. 1 (April 2016)

Recommended (but required if the idea that sexuality is socially constructed is new or surprising to you!):

Carol Vance “Social Construction Theory: Problems in the History of Sexuality” (PWeb)

Wednesday, January 29

Nan Boyd, “Who is the Subject? Queer Theory Meets Oral History,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 17 no. 2 (May 2008)

Week 3

Assignments:

- Weekly progress report
- **Mandatory office hours meeting** (factored into your participation grade)

- This week or next, every student is required to come to my office hours to talk about plans/feelings/thoughts/experiences with the class so far and to strategize a research plan. If you cannot make my regular office hours, email to set up an appt.

Monday, February 3

Elizabeth Kennedy, “Telling Tales: Oral History and the Construction of Pre-Stonewall Identity,” *Radical History Review* no. 62 (1995).

Listening Assignment:

- Visit the oral history projects listed on the ‘Oral History Hub’ at <http://lgbtqdigitalcollaboratory.org/oral-history-hub/>. Pick one of the projects, and listen to one of the interviews (in entirety). Consider the challenges that queer theory offers oral history, as a method, as outlined in our readings. In your chosen interview, how does the interviewer approach identity categories like “gay” or “trans”? Does the interview assume the categories in the form of questions (“when did you come out as gay?”)? If not, how does the interviewer prompt the narrator, or not, to discuss their sexuality or gender expression? **Note time-codes so we can find the clip**, and be ready to discuss in class.

ONGOING: whenever we have listening assignments, keep an ongoing list of useful things the interviewer does that you might want to bring to your own interviewing. You can make notes as you listen—it should not take additional time. Items to track include, but are not limited to:

- Specific **questions** asked that you might want to ask in your own interviews.
- Ways of **phrasing** questions that seem successful
- Interpersonal techniques used to make the narrator comfortable and promote a successful interview, for instance:
 - Rapport-building questions
 - Affirmations, other expressions of support, etc. Or: does the interviewer have a general tone or demeanor that supports the interview?
 - Note how interviewers **probe** (sometimes we’ll want to dig deeper into something a narrator is describing, or gently push back on something they say – this is a tricky areas to handle!)
 - You can also note things you think the interviewer does **badly**, as a reminder to not do them!

I recommend keeping a personal “Interviewing Tips and Tricks” word doc that you add to as you listen to interviews throughout the semester.

Wednesday, February 5

In-class:

101 interviewer training by yours truly (AJ)

Discuss strategies for identifying/contacting narrators.

Read:

Valerie Yow, “Chapter 3: Preparation for the Interviewing Project,” in *Recording Oral History* (PWeb)

Read the NYC Trans Oral History Project Interviewer Handbook, available here:

https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/be0b9c_fa604a2db8cf40649be69caa949bc03e.pdf

Optional reading (if you feel anxious about interviewing and want more prep):

Donald Ritchie, “Chapter 3: Conducting Interviews,” *Doing Oral History: A Practical Guide* (PWeb)

Week 4

Assignments:

- *Interview #1:* Schedule and conduct an oral history interview with one of your classmates
- Interview reflection/report (1-2 paragraphs) on how the interview went: what went well, what was surprising, challenges, etc. These reports will be uploaded to PWeb so your peers can benefit from others' experiences.
- Weekly progress report

Monday, February 10

Kennedy and Davis, *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold* (selections, PWeb)

Listen:

AJ interviews Jay Toole for the NYC Trans Oral History Project, available here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/2i2m5eadm7wj4bh/2017-11-24%20Jay%20Toole%20%28part%203%20of%203%29.mp3?dl=0>

Wednesday, February 12

In-class:

- Mini recording tech training (if we get the recorders in time)
- More outreach and project development strategizing
- Initial talk about research ethics!

Read:

Valerie Yow, "Ethics and Interpersonal Relationships in Oral History Research." *Oral History Review* 22, 1 (1995): 51-66.

Michael David Franklin, "Calculating Risk: History of Medicine, Transgender Oral History, and the Institutional Review Board," from *Queer Twin Cities* (PWeb)

Optional:

Martha Norkunas, "The Vulnerable Listener" from *Oral History off the Record* (PWeb)

Week 5

Assignments:

- *Interview #2:* Conduct an interview with another student (not in our class) or faculty/staff connected to the LGBT community
- Interview reflection/report
- Weekly progress report

Monday, February 17

John Howard, *Men Like That: A Southern Queer History* (selections, PWeb)

Jack Halberstam, "The Brandon Archive," from *In a Queer Time and Place* (PWeb)

Wednesday, February 19

Scott Herring, "Out of the Closets, Into the Woods: 'RFD,' 'Country Women,' and the Post-Stonewall Emergence of Queer Anti-Urbanism," *American Quarterly* 59 no. 2 (June 2007).

Review (since we didn't cover last week):

Michael David Franklin, "Calculating Risk: History of Medicine, Transgender Oral History, and the Institutional Review Board," from *Queer Twin Cities* (PWeb)

Week 6

Assignments:

- *Interview #3:* Conduct an oral history interview with a non-student connected to the college (faculty, staff, alum, whatever -- **or** do your first off-campus interview)
- Interview reflection/report
- Weekly progress report

Monday, February 24

E. Patrick Johnson, Introduction, "Part I: GRITS;" Chapter 1: "It's Thick Here;" Chapter 6: "I'm Sweet on You;" Chapter 10: "I'm Happy as Hell;" and Epilogue from [*Black. Queer. Southern. Women.*](#) (e-book)

Colin Johnson, Brian Gilley, and Mary L. Gray, introduction to *Queering the Countryside* (PWeb)

Wednesday, February 26

Listen: at least one interview from each of the following (your choice). Come to class prepared to discuss how our readings on non-urban LGBT life relate to these interviews.

- [Southwest Virginia LGBTQ+ History Project](#)
- [Queer Appalachia Oral History Project](#)

Yow, Chapter 4, "Interviewing Techniques" from *Recording Oral History* (PWeb)

Kathryn Anderson and Dana C. Jack, "Learning to Listen: Interview Techniques and Analyses" (PWeb)

In Class:

Mini recorder training session

Week 7

Assignments:

- No required interview – use this time to get on top of your outreach, planning, and scheduling so you'll be positioned to interview community members for the rest of class.
- Submit an **interview guide** for your first "off-campus" interview, due next week.
- Weekly progress report

Monday, March 2

Anne Balay, *Steel Closets: Voices of Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Steelworkers* (selections, PWeb)

Wednesday, March 4

Jack Dougherty and Candace Simpson, "Who Owns Oral History? A Creative Commons Solution," *Oral History in the Digital Age*, available here:

<http://ohda.matrix.msu.edu/2012/06/a-creative-commons-solution/>

Week 8

Assignments:

- *Interview #4:* conduct an interview with an LGBT community member **not** connected to the college
 - **Note:** this is your first “off campus” interview, and the first that we will assume will be archived with LOHCI (in certain circumstances, one of your prior “on campus” interviews may be archived -- we will discuss).
- For the rest of class: each student is expected to conduct at least **five** interviews with narrators connected to the LGBT community in the Grinnell area (four more after the one due this week). These don’t have weekly due dates, however you’re expected to plan ahead. I highly recommend spreading them out over the remaining weeks of class.
- Weekly progress report

Monday, March 9

Class visitor: Aiden Bettine, Transgender Oral History Project of Iowa

E. Patrick Johnson, *Honeybot: Black Southern Women Who Love Women*

Wednesday, March 11

In class: discuss interview progress so far, strategize about interviewing for the rest of the term.

E. Patric Johnson, *Honeybot: Black Southern Women Who Love Women* (cont’d)

****spring break****

Week 9

Assignments:

- Generate a written transcription of any interview you’ve done so far (your choice).
- Plan and progress your remaining interviews!
- Weekly progress report

Monday, March 30

No readings/class! we get caught up with life post COVID

Wednesday, April 1

[10:00 CST - Zoom session](#)

[Review agenda here](#)

Week 10

Assignments:

- Do your interviews!
- Weekly progress report

Monday, April 6 → Class will be experimentally meeting at 10:30AMCST via Zoom:

<https://zoom.us/j/404750049?pwd=am0xbklqc0pKLytZcCtrRjB3bGVtZz09>

Listen: [ACT/UP Oral History Project](#) (choose any two interviews)

Watch: [*United in Anger: a History of ACT UP*](#), dirs. Jim Hubbard and Sarah Schulman
Jennifer Brier, "I'm Still Surviving: Oral Histories of Women Living with HIV/AIDS in Chicago," *Oral History Review*, vol. 45 no. 1 (April 2018).
Ann Cvetkovich, "AIDS Activism and the Oral History Archive," *Scholar & Feminist Online*
<http://sfonline.barnard.edu/ps/printacv.htm>

Optional:

Ann Cvetkovich, "AIDS Activism and Public Feelings: Documenting ACT/UP's Lesbians" from
An Archive of Feeling (PWeb)

Wednesday, April 8

10:30AM CST: [Project planning session](#) (plus initial discussion of NYC TOHP and institutional politics of oral history project development).

Meeting Link: <https://zoom.us/j/395209390>

Find your local call-in number: <https://zoom.us/j/395209390>

Come to class having given some thought to the questions -- be as expansive and specific as possible with your answers:

- 1. What should oral history be documenting now, i.e., what's oral history's role in a pandemic?*
- 2. What should LGBT oral history projects specifically (ie, you) be documenting right now?*

Forward and Introduction to *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Nonprofit Industrial Complex* (PWeb)

^ prioritize this reading if you have to weight one over the other

Highly Recommended: [Dylan Rodriguez, "The Political Logic of the Non-Profit Industrial Complex"](#)

Optional (OK I just demoted this reading to optional after telling you all in class that it was compulsory):

Alexander Freund, "Under Storytelling's Spell? Oral History in a Neoliberal Age," *Oral History Review*, 42 no. 1 (2015)

Week 11

Assignments:

- Weekly progress report
- Do your interviews!

Monday, April 13

1030 CST - Virtual Class with Michelle O'Brien and Nico Fuentes, NYC Trans Oral History Project

New Join Meeting info!

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/94257068921?pwd=Rjkzb1N6NW4vUitzem1ickJFaVNYdz09>

Meeting ID: 942 5706 8921

Password: 8W5gWf

Listen: [Michelle O'Brien interviews Cecilia Gentili for the NYC Trans Oral History Project](#)
(Enjoy dropbox link as the NYC TOHP archive page seems to be down atm)

Wednesday, April 15

10:30 CST: Project Planning Session, join via zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/93072770291>

For those joining synchronous class -- I'll begin by having us all look over project proposals together, so if you want to save time -- I invite you to start browsing the proposals on PWeb early.

No new readings - complete your proposals for final projects and catch up on your interviews!

Please post proposals as attachments to the "[Final Project Proposal](#)" Forum on PWeb

Week 12

Assignments – due each week for the rest of class:

- Weekly progress report
- Do your interviews!

Monday, April 20

In lieu of "class" - I'm having everyone schedule one-on-one check-in meetings with me about the project, their status, how everyone's doing, desires for the rest of term, etc. Please schedule via my Outlook Calendar, ideally sooner in the week vs. later (if you don't know how to propose a meeting time in a Prof's calendar, figure it out! Many of your faculty use this function for scheduling and you should know how to do it anyway)

Martha Norkunas, "The Vulnerable Listener" from *Oral History off the Record* (PWeb)

Elise Chenier, "Privacy Anxieties: Ethics versus Activism in Archiving Lesbian Oral History Online," *Radical History Review*, no. 122 (May 2015): 129-141.

Optional:

Katherine Fobear, "Do You Understand? Unsettling Interpretative Authority in Feminist Oral History," *Journal of Feminist Scholarship* 10 (Spring 2016): 61-77.

Wednesday, April 22

10:30 CST - LOHCI Project Strategizing Session

*READINGS FOR THE REST OF CLASS ARE TBA: We'll determine readings depending on how work for the oral history project is unfolding – you'll probably find that you'll benefit from reading in particular areas of either historical context or practical interviewing techniques. But it'll be impossible to determine what those specific areas will be until you actually get started interviewing. If everyone is making remarkable progress and students don't feel they **need** additional readings, there is also the option to have no readings at all for the final weeks of class.*

Week 13

Monday, April 27

10:30 CST - [Mutual aid discussion and LOHCI Project cowork session](#)

Read:

Dean Spade, "Solidarity Not Charity: Mutual Aid for Mobilization and Survival," *Social Text* Vol 38 no. 1 (March 2020) -- [available open access here](#)

Mini-Assignment:

As with typical mutual aid conditions, we are uncertain whether institutional structures (i.e., the college), will provide funding to the project in a timely enough way to actually get the communities we're working with support in the near future. Therefore, give some thought to the question: what kind of work can we move on **now** with LOHCI to support the communities we're working with, drawing from the resources we already have (ie, no extra budget)? **Please [post your thoughts to this common google document](#)** (a brief paragraph or some bullet points are fine -- you don't have to write me an essay).

Wednesday, April 29

[10:30 CST - Project Planning Session](#) - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82317541686>

Week 14

Monday, May 4

[10:30 CST - project planning meeting/cowork session](#)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83608811027>

One tap mobile

+13126266799,,83608811027# US (Chicago)

+19294362866,,83608811027# US (New York)

Wednesday, May 6

[10:30 CST - project planning meeting/cowork session](#)

Please review meeting notes from last Monday before we convene, especially if you weren't able to join the meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85014911132>

Meeting ID: 850 1491 1132

One tap mobile

+13126266799,,85014911132# US (Chicago)

****reading/finals week****

Final Projects due

Wednesday, May 13

10:30CST Share final project work! [Join here:](#)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82735153375?pwd=cy9LVml5c0pKNFpjWFVhbnhkbkZlZz09>

(If you cannot join synchronously, please make your work somehow available to class in advance -- ie, upload it to the website, whatever, and email me some brief comments explaining what you've done so I can relay to class -- this can be informal presentation notes, not a polished longwinded essay)