

ARCL0215: PRESENTING THE PAST TO THE PUBLIC

2023-24, Term 1

MA/MSc module
15 credits

Co-ordinators:

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING ASSESSMENTS:

The **coursework coversheet** is available on the course Moodle pages and here: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/current-students> under “Policies, Forms and Guidelines”. Please enter **your five-digit candidate code on the coversheet and in the subject line** when you upload your work in Moodle.

Please use **your five-digit candidate code as the name of the file** you submit.

Please refer to:

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/current-students/ioa-student-handbook/13-information-assessment>
<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/current-students/ioa-study-skills-guide/referencing-effectively-and-ioa-guidelines>

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/exams-and-assessments/academic-integrity>

<https://library-guides.ucl.ac.uk/referencing-plagiarism/acknowledging-AI>

for instructions on coursework submission, IoA referencing guidelines and marking criteria, as well as UCL policies on penalties for late submission, over-length work, the use of text generation software (AI) and academic misconduct.

1. MODULE OVERVIEW

Module description

Students enrolled in this module will learn to think critically and strategically about the dynamics, ethics, and practicalities of engaging diverse publics with research about the past. Rooted in archaeology and heritage studies but with relevance to public history and anthropology, students will consider the historical and contemporary relationships between narratives about the past, how these narratives are curated, and the audiences they are intended (or not intended) for. Through a portfolio of work designed to build key professional skills in the heritage industry, students will gain experience connecting critical scholarship with best practices for researching and communicating with public audiences through a variety of media.

Module Aims

1. To enable students to think critically about the relationships between research, media, and audience in the process of presenting the past to the public.
2. To encourage students to reflect on the histories of their discipline and how these have engaged, marginalized, or exploited past and present communities.
3. To equip students to consider how diverse media and environments shape peoples' experiences of the past, and how these have been produced historically.
4. To understand how knowledge is produced socially, and how the key theories explaining this enable an understanding of publics as actively involved in making information about the past.
5. To connect a theoretically rigorous understanding of public engagement with practical interventions appropriate to the heritage industry.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Explain the historical and contemporary development of the major social institutions involved in presenting the past to the public, and the impacts that these have had on the heritage industry in Britain today.
2. Identify and utilize an appropriate range of media for communicating information about the past to diverse audiences.
3. Develop presentation strategies grounded in a critical awareness of how knowledge is socially produced.
4. Design and deploy appropriate evaluations of media and strategies for presenting the past.
5. Locate communication strategies within the priorities and resources available to diverse heritage institutions in Britain.

Methods of Assessment

Students will be assessed on the basis of a portfolio of work that represents 100% of the final mark but with elements weighted individually toward that mark. Portfolio work will be

developed in class during the course of the module with feedback from peers and instructors before submission.

Communications

- **Moodle is the main hub** for this course.
- Important information will be posted by staff in the **Announcements section** of the Moodle page and you will automatically receive an email notification for these.
- Please post any general queries relating to module content, assessments and administration in the **Q&A forum**. The forum is anonymous and will be checked regularly.
- For personal queries, please contact the co-ordinators by email.

Week-by-week summary

Week	Date	Topic	Lecturers
1	4 Oct	Course intro: public engagement and beyond	GM+NB
2	11 Oct	Audiences, inclusion and knowledge production	GM+NB
3	18 Oct	Creating content for popular audiences Part 1 – words	GM+NB
4	25 Oct	Creating content for popular audiences Part 2 – images	GM+NB
5	1 Nov	Internet memes in museums	GM
6	READING WEEK		
7	15 Nov	Social media: strategies, practicalities, limitations	CF
8	22 Nov	Creating, communicating and evaluating heritage projects	NB
9	29 Nov	Events and promoting participation	VP
10	6 Dec	Portfolio planning session and workshop	GM+NB
11	13 Dec	Careers panel	GM+NB

Lecturers and other contributors

NB – Nadia Bartolini

GM – Gabriel Moshenska

CF – Charlotte Frearson

VP – Vicky Price

Weekly Module Plan

The module is taught through a mixture of lectures, practical sessions, and seminar discussions. Students will be required to undertake set readings and viewings, complete pre-class activities, and take part in group discussions and activities. The classroom sessions are on Wednesdays from 9 to 11am in Room 209.

Workload

This is a 15-credit module which equates to 150 hours of learning time including session preparation, background reading, and researching and writing your assignments. With that in mind you should expect to organise your time in roughly this way:

20 hours	Staff-led teaching sessions (face-to-face lectures, seminars, tutorials, discussion-board sessions)
60 hours	Self-guided session preparation (reading, processing pre-recorded material, other online and/or offline activities), about 6 hours per week
70 hours	Reading for, and writing, the portfolio assessment

2. ASSESSMENT

Each assignment and possible approaches to it will be discussed in class, in advance of the submission deadline. If students are unclear about the nature of an assignment, they should discuss this with one or both of the module co-ordinators in advance (via email, office hours or class Moodle forum). You will receive feedback on your written coursework via Moodle, and have the opportunity to discuss your marks and feedback with the co-ordinators in their office hours. For more details see the 'Assessment' section on Moodle.

- The coursework coversheet is available on the course Moodle pages and here: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/current-students> under "Policies, Forms and Guidelines".
- Please make sure you enter your five-digit candidate code on the coversheet and in the subject line when you upload your work in Moodle.
- Please use your five-digit candidate code as the name of the file you submit.

The [IoA marking criteria](#) can be found in the IoA Student Handbook (Section 13: Information on assessment). The [IoA Study Skills Guide](#) provides useful guidance on writing different types of assignment.

Please note that **late submission, exceeding the maximum word count and academic mis-conduct (unacknowledged use of text generation software and plagiarism)** will be penalized and can significantly reduce the mark awarded for the assignment and/or overall module result. Please consult:

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/current-students/ioa-student-handbook/13-information-assessment> with sections 13.7–13.8: coursework submission, 13.10: word count, 13.12–14: academic integrity

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/exams-and-assessments/academic-integrity> for UCL's guidance on academic integrity

<https://library-guides.ucl.ac.uk/referencing-plagiarism/acknowledging-AI> for UCL's guidance on how to acknowledge the use of text generation software.

Assignment – Portfolio Assessment: 3,000-word limit

This is the assessed work that will determine your grade for the module. The aim of the portfolio is to demonstrate your understanding and ability in presenting the past to the public. You will be submitting all portfolio elements in a single document, but we will workshop each element during the course of the term. You are strongly encouraged to develop your portfolio throughout the term and there is no expectation that you must wait until the module is completed before starting it. The portfolio consists of three elements:

Part 1: critical essay. This is a review of a public-facing medium such as an exhibition, a festival or event, a documentary film, or a popular book. You can select the subject yourself, but please get course coordinator approval. Your review should include an overview of the content, a discussion of intended and potential audiences, and a balanced assessment of the

strengths and weaknesses. It's fine to include your own subjective opinions, as part of your critique. We recommend reading examples of reviews, such as the exhibition reviews section in the journal *Curator: The Museum Journal*.

Word limit – 1000 words

Part 2: communication strategy. Take a real (or imaginary, if you prefer) heritage event or exhibition and develop a communications strategy for promoting and publicising it, including: identifying target audiences and key messages; taking into account accessibility and inclusivity; and outlining an evaluation plan.

Word limit – 1000 words

Part 3: a pamphlet, poster, or panel. This should be aimed at presenting a heritage site or exhibit of your choosing to a specific audience (e.g. international tourists, or children aged 7-11). Use text and images to communicate the key narratives, and create an attractive and engaging design. We recommend using Powerpoint for creating posters or panels, or Word for pamphlets, but please submit the final product as a pdf file.

Word limit – 1000 words. No limit on number of images, but be sensible.

Submission deadline for the portfolio is 19 January 2024. Marks and comments will be provided within 28 days of the submission date.

Please note that the use of software to generate content is not allowed for assessments for this module and will be penalised; the use of software for language and writing review and improvement is permitted, and the software and the way it has been used must be indicated in the relevant boxes on the coursework coversheet. UCL defines language and writing review as checking "areas of academic writing such as structure, fluency, presentation, grammar, spelling, punctuation, and language translation".

3. RESOURCES AND PREPARATION FOR CLASS

Preparation for class

You are expected to read the Essential Reading(s) each week. Completing the readings is essential for your effective participation in the activities and discussions that we will do, and it will greatly enhance your understanding of the material covered. **Further readings are provided via the Online Reading List** for you to get a sense of the range of current work on a given topic and for you to draw upon for your assessments. The online reading list is accessible through the Moodle page of the module, or directly here:

<https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/hsuforum/view.php?id=5146409>

4. SYLLABUS



Week 1. Oct 4. Course introduction: public engagement and beyond. GM+NB

In this first session we will introduce the course, its aims and our expectations, and discuss the assessments. We will place 'presenting the past to the public' in its wider context of public engagement, the heritage industry, and the public humanities.

Essential Readings:

Smith, G. S. (2006). 'The role of archaeology in presenting the past to the public', in Russell, I. (ed) *Images, representations and heritage: moving beyond modern approaches to archaeology*. New York: Springer, pp. 123-137.

Video: *In Conversation with Greg Jenner*, an interview with the leading public historian about his popular writing and broadcasting, and his work on the show *Horrible Histories*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OpFdDwN4AFk>

Website: The Wellcome Collection is a huge and wealthy public science institution, based next door to UCL. Their exhibitions, publications, and website contain a huge amount of excellent public-facing materials, much of it historical. Read this short article *Gay men in London, from persecution to Pride* at

<https://wellcomecollection.org/articles/Ylls6REAACIAwMlj>, and browse some of the articles, comics, essays, images and more on the site at <https://wellcomecollection.org/stories>

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Week 2. Oct 11. Audiences, inclusion and knowledge production. GM+NB

In this session we will explore how publics and audiences fit within the epistemologies of archaeology, museums, and heritage. There is a bad habit in some fields to regard public-facing work as a bolt-on or optional extra to the 'real' work. In fact, as we will demonstrate, publics and audiences have always been a key part of knowledge production in the natural sciences, humanities and beyond. These histories can and have informed public engagement with the past in the present.

Essential Readings:

Samuels, K.L. (2008). 'Value and significance in archaeology', *Archaeological Dialogues*, 15(1), pp.71-97.

Fredheim, Harald L. (2020). Decoupling 'open' and 'ethical' archaeologies: Rethinking deficits and expertise for ethical public participation in archaeology and heritage, *Norwegian Archaeological Review*, 53(1), pp.5-22.

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Week 3. Oct 18. Creating content for popular audiences Part 1 – words. GM+NB

Writing for non-academic and non-professional audiences is a vital skill in heritage work, whether producing text for websites, information panels, press releases, magazine articles or trade books. In this session we will look at good and bad examples of public-facing

writing, and talk about the different ways of getting your writing ‘out there’ in front of public audiences.

Essential Readings:

No set essential readings this week, but please bring in a popular book about the past that you like, and be prepared to talk about it. It can be anything from children’s picture books to modern best-sellers, but please don’t bring *Sapiens*. Please.

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Week 4. Oct 25. Creating content for popular audiences Part 2 – images. GM+NB

Is a picture really worth a thousand words? Yes. In this session we will explore the use of images in communicating heritage narratives, as well as some of the pitfalls and challenges they present. We will consider a range of media including reconstruction artwork, photographs, comic strips, technical drawings, and digital art. In the second part of the session we’ll try our hand at zine making to practice telling stories with images and text.

Essential Readings:

Moshenska, G., 2011. ‘Impudent Lies’: Rhetoric and Reality in Wartime Heritage Protection, 1943-2003. *Present Pasts*, 3(1), p.null.DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5334/pp.46>
<https://presentpasts.info/articles/10.5334/pp.46>

Moshenska, G; Salamunovich, A; (2013) Wheeler at War. *Papers from the Institute of Archaeology*, 23 (1), Article 12. [10.5334/pia.436](https://doi.org/10.5334/pia.436)
<https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/1447256/>

Perry, S. (2014). ‘Crafting knowledge with (digital) visual media in archaeology’, in Chapman, R. and Wylie, A. (eds) *Material evidence: learning from archaeological practice*. (Abingdon: Routledge, pp.209-230.

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Week 5. Nov 1. Internet memes for museums. GM

Internet memes are a culturally significant aspect of digital media and communication. Many memes draw on themes and sources from museums and heritage, including specific objects and images. This has significance for museums’ digital communications and audience development, presenting opportunities for engagement but also reputational risks. In this session we will discuss concepts and practices in memetic media and introduce some key definitions and dynamics of internet memes. We will look at case studies of ‘museum memes’ to illustrate some of these concepts.

Essential Readings:

Dawn, Mel. '20+ Cheeky Memes That Might End Up in the British Museum'. Accessed 1 May 2023. <https://cheezburger.com/15337477/20-cheeky-memes-that-might-end-up-in-the-british-museum>

Koszary, Adam. 2018. 'Look at this absolute unit', Accessed 1 May 2023. <https://medium.com/@adamkoszary/look-at-this-absolute-unit-763207207917>

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Week 6 – READING WEEK – no classes

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Week 7. Nov 15. Social media: strategies, practicalities, limitations. Charlotte Frearson

For this session we are joined by Charlotte Frearson, the UCL Institute of Archaeology social media coordinator, to talk about the values and challenges of digital media as a mechanism for communicating with public audiences. This will include running social media for an institution, managing multiple channels, strategies for publicizing specific events, and how to deal with a social media crisis or disaster – or unexpected success.

Essential Readings (see also further resources on Moodle):

International Council of Museums (ICOM), (2019). *Social Media Guidelines for ICOM Committees*. Available at: <https://icom.museum/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Social-media-guidelinesEN-1.pdf>

Taylor, J. and Gibson, L.K. (2017). 'Digitisation, digital interaction and social media: embedded barriers to democratic heritage', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 23(5), pp.408-420.

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Week 8. Nov 22. Creating, communicating and evaluating heritage projects. NB.

In this session, we'll talk about how heritage projects can be catalysts for communities to discover overlooked histories and for heritage institutions to engage with new audiences. To do this, we'll ground our discussions through an empirical case study: the creation of a Spiritualism exhibition in a working pottery museum in Stoke-on-Trent. The case study will help us investigate creativity in displaying the past; negotiating diverse stakeholder interests; using various media to engage different audiences; applying consistent branding; and the importance of planning how to communicate and evaluate.

Essential readings:

Chase & Chalke Landscape Partnership. 2020. *Cranborne Chase and Chalke Valley Landscape Partnership Scheme Communications Strategy*. https://cranbornechase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Chase-and-Chalke-Communications-Strategy_Final.pdf

Tariq, H. 2021. Five components of a successful strategic communications plan. Forbes Communications Council.
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescommunicationscouncil/2021/06/22/five-components-of-a-successful-strategic-communications-plan/?sh=71c7e8dd5813>

Heritage Fund. 2017. Evaluation guidance. <https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/funding/good-practice-guidance/evaluation-guidance>



Week 9. Nov 29. Events and promoting participation. Vicky Price

Vicky Price is head of Outreach at UCL Special Collections. In this role she runs a range of events and projects including The New Curators Project, run in collaboration with Newham Heritage Month. In this session she will be giving insights into her work within UCL and with partner organisations. More details, including readings, will follow on Moodle.



Week 10. Dec 6. Portfolio planning and discussion session. GM+NB

This session is focused on the assessment portfolio. We will provide more detail on the specific elements, answer your questions, and work through the assessment criteria. We will use a sample of written work to present a 'live' marking exercise, to demonstrate how these criteria work in practice, and how you can make sure that you get all the marks you deserve.



Week 11. Dec 13. Careers panel. GM+NB

In this final session we will host a panel discussion with colleagues who have previously or are currently working in public engagement (varyingly defined) within the archaeology and heritage industries. This is an opportunity to ask questions and learn more about the practicalities and experiences of those pursuing engagement as a career in the UK and elsewhere.

