

# Introduction to Public History

## Overview

Public history is history outside academia. It is the presentation of the past to the public. Public historians are individuals, usually trained historians, who work in either a professional or academic capacity and who engage in the practice of communicating the past to the public. Since its beginning in the United States in the 1970s public history has developed from a separate entity, a sub-discipline, outside of the mainstream of the discipline of history, into an integrated and essential element of the subject's research and communication. The methods developed by public historians have broken down the barriers between professionals and the public and made history more accessible and relevant to the wider society. As a result, history has become an agent of social change and has played a role in new forms of historical knowledge creation. Public history is active, reactive, and relevant in the present, and, as such, relevant to the wider public, enabling them to connect to the past, present, or future.

Public history covers the diverse ways in which the past is presented today. Apart from government and private institutions such as archives and museums, it encompasses history presentation in the print and electronic media, the digital and social media, and topics including family history, local/community history, heritage, conservation and preservation, and ownership of the past.

### **Course Objectives:**

- (1) To explore the nature of public history, how it has developed, and the mechanisms used for its application in practice, and key questions regarding the methodological and practical differences from the academic discipline of history.
- (2) The course aims to enable students to understand the issues of interpretation, audience response, and the use and exploitation of history in the "real world".
- (3) To learn the variety of methods and skills that historians use and require to practice history in the public domain.
- (4) Students will get to know how through various modes of interpretation and presentation, a range of institutions, including museums, archives, government agencies, community history societies, and the media, make history accessible to the wider "public" audience.
- (5) To examine critically public presentations of history, an awareness of general principles of interpretation required for public history presentations, and the basic skills in advocating, researching and presenting history in the public sphere.

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<b>Modules</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Nature, types, definition, and the history of public history</li> <li>2. Debates in public history</li> <li>3. Public history, cultural landscape and memory</li> <li>4. Oral history</li> <li>5. Museums</li> <li>6. Archives</li> <li>7. Photographs and public history</li> <li>8. Heritage</li> <li>9. Local and Community History</li> <li>10. Family history</li> <li>11. Media and public history: television</li> <li>12. Digital media and public history-online case studies of the <i>Dictionary of Sydney</i>, the ACPH memorial data base; <i>Locating Suburbia</i> (ebook), and <i>Public History Review</i>(ejournal).</li> <li>13. Historic Preservation: case studies</li> <li>14. Field Visits</li> <li>15. Tutorials on Project Assignment</li> <li>16. Presentation and evaluation of students' Project Assignment</li> </ol> <p>Number of participants for the course will be limited to fifty. Course duration: 15-30 March 2016</p>
<b>You Should Attend If...</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ you are an Under-Graduate/Post-Graduate/doctoral student, researcher, and faculty member in a college/university/academic or research institution especially in the social sciences and humanities.</li> <li>▪ you are a leader in an NGO, social or cultural organization, an activist in the field of heritage management and preservation, an officer in government or private organization, a journalist, or a member of media organizations and companies.</li> </ul>
<b>Fees</b>	<p>The participation fees for taking the course is as follows: Students, faculty members, and researchers (All modules) : Rs. 200/- Others: (All modules) : Rs. 1,000/- Participants from abroad : US \$500</p> <p>The above fees include all instructional materials, computer use for project assignment, and 24-hour free internet facility. The participants will be provided with single bedded accommodation on payment basis.</p>

## The Faculty



**Paul Ashton** (BA [Hons] Dip Ed PhD Mcq PHANSW), Director of Public History Australia, was Professor of Public History and Co-Director of the Australian Centre for Public History (ACPH) at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) until 2015. He is currently an Adjunct Professor in the ACPH and co-editor of the journal *Public History Review*. Before joining UTS in 1995, Paul was a consulting historian for twelve years. He has worked in a broad range of areas including heritage, community history, oral history, commissioned history and exhibitions. Paul is a past President of the Professional Historians Association NSW Inc, a founding member of the Australian Council of Professional Historians Associations, a past Board Member of the National Council of Public History in the USA and Chair of the digital Dictionary of Sydney. Paul has worked with community groups, local, state and federal

## Course Coordinator

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government agencies and not-for-profit and corporate organizations.

### **Research Interests**

Australian urban history and urban studies; Planning history; Public/applied history; Australian history.

### **Research Profile**

Paul has taught in the public and cultural history areas and supervises many post-graduate students in history. Paul has a strong interest in facilitating historical work for wider audiences and promoting links between the academy and the public sphere. Over his career Paul has researched in the areas of public history, planning history, community history, Australian History, heritage and Sydney's history.

### **Teaching areas**

Public history; Australian history; Cultural history

### **Latest and forthcoming books**

Paul Ashton and Jacqueline Z. Wilson (eds), *Silent System: Forgotten Australians and the Institutionalisation of Women and Children*, Australian Scholarly Publishing, Melbourne, 2014.

Lisa Andersen, Paul Ashton and Lisa Colley (eds), *Creative business in Australia: Learnings from the Creative Industries Innovation Centre, 2009 to 2015*, UTSePress, Sydney, 2015.

David Aylward and Paul Ashton, *The Ten Apostles: Australia's Iconic Winemakers*, forthcoming, Halstead Press, Sydney, 2015.

Paul Ashton, Anna Clark and Robert Crawford (eds), *Writing with History: Making Something of the Past*, Australian Scholarly Publishing, forthcoming, Melbourne, 2016.



**Joseph Lalzarliana** is Assistant Professor, Department of History and Ethnography, Mizoram University. His research interests cover the broad range of fields that are covered in public history.