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ORAL HISTORY

From wax cylinders to reel-to-reel to digital video, recording technologies expanded the historical profession dramatically during the twentieth century. We will read some classics, such as Barbara Myerhoff's Number Our Days and Alessandro Portelli's Death of Luigi Trastulli, as well as scholarly pieces aimed at working historians. This course centers on methodology—students will learn about 'best practices' in the field and will work toward creating an interview record that can be housed in an archive and accessed by other researchers. All students will use digital video and will practice creating accessible links to both video and audio material, although your interviewees may choose an audio format.

NOTE: ***Neither audio nor video recordings of interviewees may be posted on youtube nor any other internet site unless that posting is done by the person interviewed or their family members. Please also NOTE: ***Each person interviewed maintains rights to the interview material. Interviewees' privacy and intellectual property rights will be respected by all seminar participants.

Assignments:

Do a set of interviews with a person (or various) over 70, and interpret that interview in the context of scholarly writing by others. Completing our coursework means that you write a paper (about 15 pg) or create a multi-media website that engages methodological and interpretative questions raised in class. We'll do this one big project in parts:

P1) Contact an archive for the donation of the interviews, so that they are preserved if narrator allows for that.
P2) Share a practice video clip of you reading an introduction to the project and a "permission to record" script.
P3) Prepare an interview-specific bibliography, and a formal contact letter.
P4) Share with the class a prepared "interview map" and (optional) an a/v album-archive to carry to interview.
P5) Do at least one recorded interview of about 90 min each & right away create a backup copy.
P6) Arrange for a meeting to deliver the material to the narrator and (hopefully) do follow-up interviewing.
P7) Upload video/audio clips, with some portions transcribed, to a password-protected Penn Box folder.
P8) Present your work, including digitized clips, in class.
P9) Deliver a copy of the recorded interview to the person recorded and ask them to consider donation to archive.
P10) Upload to our canvas site (along with final project), documentation recording check-off dates for above steps

Grading:
Pre-class writing assignments (8 submissions worth 5 pts each)   40pts
        Rubric --Thoughtfulness (3 pts), Submitted on time (1pt), Carefully proofread (1pt).
Final project, as measured by timely completion of multiple steps involved (5pts each):   30pts
        Rubric --3 points each for the preliminary steps listed above.
Final project, as measured by professor's assessment of scholarly quality: 30pts
        Rubric as follows:
                10 points, grammar, syntax, careful editing, clarity of writing
                10 points, depth and skill in analyzing recorded material
                 5 points, quality of methodological reflection
                 5 points, submitted on time

Books:
                Davis and Kennedy   Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold
                DeBlasio et. al.   A Practical Guide to doing Oral History.
                Portelli,   Death of Luigi Trastulli.
                Myerhoff   Number Our Days.
                Menchú/Burgos.   I, Rigoberta Menchu.
                Abrams   Oral History Theory

1/18   Introduction

1/25   Class includes hands-on work (we'll walk over to Weigle), and we'll begin a discussion of DeBlasio et. al., chs 1 and 8-9. *Please post an agenda for discussion with specific examples from the reading. **1st posting due Thurs. evening.

==**Please purchase an SD card that will hold 3 hours of high quality video and bring it to class.==

2/1   We will continue our discussion of the DeBlasio et. al. chapters, and do additional hands-on work in class.

2/8   Yow, selected chapters, also her 'sample guide,' in an appendix, as well as Anderson and Jack, "Learning to Listen." 2nd posting due. **See also the massive site maintained by the Oral History in the Digital Age project, Link.

2/15   Reading: Passerini, "Memories of Self," and Portelli, Ch. 1, 4-7, (3rd posting)

2/22   Reading: Number Our Days, with "Surviving Stories" and Kaminsky's introduction to Myerhoff 1992 (4th posting)

3/1   Break

3/8   ****P1-3 are due. Additionally, please post 2 oral history links to share, along with 1-2 paragraphs of reflection/analysis and methodological questions relevant to your proposal. *Links should be to people speaking in audio/video recordings or to transcripts.

Examples:
    http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/story/loc.natlib.afc2001001.52555/#vhp:clip (Lib. of Congress veterans' project)
    https://densho.org/   (An archive focused on Japanese-Americans experiences in the USA in 20th C.)
    http://blog.quipu-project.com/ "Interactive documentary" about forced sterilizations in Peru in the 90s
    http://www.visionaryproject.org/   (Focuses on African-American experiences, includes John Hope Franklin interview)
    http://www.tellingstories.org/   (High School Students at a Special School in SFO, working with great equipment)
    https://lgbtqreligiousarchives.org/oral-histories/charlotte-doclar (From an Oral History Project on Lesbian Nuns)
    https://mediaburn.org/video/studs-terkel-raw-interview-for-anthem/(Studs Terkel)

3/15   Presentation in class of prepared "interview map," contact letter, bibliography, and a/v album-archive. ****P3-P4

3/22   Excerpts from Stoll, Menchú, and from social scientists responding to Stoll/Menchú controversy. (5th posting)

3/29   Interpreting memories: Essays by Borland and Thomson (6th posting.) ****P5-6?

4/5   Discussion of Davis and Kennedy. (7th posting.)

4/12   Discussing Oral History with an eye to theories historians work with. Lynn Abrams, selected chapters. (8th posting)

4/19   Anna Sheftel and Stacey Zembrzycki. "Who's Afraid of Oral History? Fifty Years of Debates and Anxiety about Ethics." *Oral History Review* 43, no. 2 (2016): 338-366. https://muse.jhu.edu/ (accessed January 11, 2019).

4/26   Student Presentations ****P7-10