

PUBHM 1101 Practicing the Public Humanities: Data, Data Publics, and Decolonization

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Prof. Lisa Gitelman, English and Media, Culture, and Communication

Tuesdays, 11:00-1:30
45 W 4th St, B02

The public has never been of one kind, yet it is often misconstrued as such. The collapsing of the public into a homogenous unit has significant consequences for those who can participate in, and who are considered to be audiences for the 'public' and those who are not. In the contemporary present there is an urgent need to address who and how a public is constructed and conveyed and for what purpose. This course asks students to consider how we understand public scholarship in the humanities, both as a way of knowing and doing in the world and as a practice of holding that pronoun "we" open to question. In addition to delving into one or two selective episodes in the history of the public humanities, the course will focus on themes related to data, data publics, and decolonization. The course will benefit from the contributions of guest interlocutors who have mobilized humanities training beyond the academy and in collaboration with others, whether in museums or other nonprofits, for funders or as consultants, in the arts or as community organizers. This course is deeply concerned with creating a critical dialogue about the humanities and the public in practice.

Assignments and Grading:

Participation: Students are expected to attend all classes having read the assigned material; accessed any web content discussed in the literature; and prepared for rigorous discussion on the week's topic. Most of the **course readings** will be available as PDF files, either in a "Resources" area of the course Brightspace site or (mostly) via persistent links in this syllabus. (Make sure you are logged into the NYU Libraries, not just NYU global home, when clicking on links in the syllabus.) If you notice any dead links on the syllabus or in Brightspace, please email us a.s.a.p., and we will try to help.

A. Over the course, students will help present material to the class: give a 10-minute presentation on the week's themes, authors' main argument(s), and how these relate to our class; and then be ready to help guide discussion. We expect that you will speak for about 10 minutes (you may use powerpoint, keynote, or prezzi to aid you in your presentation, though this is not required), concluding with 2-3 questions for class discussion. Recall that everyone will have done the reading, so mere summary is unnecessary. You will take a leadership role during our discussion on that particular day, and if any of the readings are

marked “selections,” let’s collaborate the week before to identify productive foci for the coming week’s discussion.

B. Short responses each week - except the week you are presenting material to the class. Writing is something to work on, not to assume competence in. Practicing writing weekly really helps grow writing skills and capacity to express ideas. Each week, we want you to do approximately 3 paragraphs responding to the readings: what you liked, what they made you think about, what extra questions you would like to explore. Please post these reflections at 5pm on Monday before class on Tuesday in Brightspace.

Participation, as outlined above, will be worth 20% of your final grade.

2) Short Assignment 1: Visit the new [Northwest Coast Hall](#) at the AMNH (advance tickets required) and write a review geared to a specific audience/publication that you identify. Aim for approximately 1000-1250 (4-5 pp.). Due online and in hard-copy at the beginning of class in week 5. 20% of final grade.

3) Final Paper: This assignment is an opportunity to further develop concepts from the course: you may expand on case studies or a thematic body of literature we’ve discussed, or choose your own topic in consultation with the professors. In either case, you are required to draw on course materials; this is an opportunity to research in depth something of interest to you, but you must use at least one example from class discussion(s), museum visits, reading, film screenings, and/or guest speakers in your final paper, in addition to 5-7 outside academic sources. This will be a ~10-page paper worth 50% of your final grade. We’re very open to non-academic genres such as whitepapers, op eds, advocacy documents: please check with us as you consider your options.

4) Presentations on Final Paper: The last week of class is a presentation on your final paper as a work in progress. This is a 5-10 minute presentation where you can use slides. We want to hear about what inspired your paper, what your research question is, how are you answering it and if you have any questions that you would like some class input on. The class will respond to each paper for 5-6 minutes. This presentation will be worth 10% of your final grade

Policies and Procedures:

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Readings and Required Materials:

Readings are required unless marked as recommended (those marked as recommended are for your reference and are designed to facilitate further research). Some weeks will include film screenings. These are required course content, and if you must miss class, it is your responsibility to view the film in your own time.

Submission of Work:

All assignments are to be submitted online (via NYU Brightspace) by the beginning of class-time on the date they are due (unless otherwise noted). Assignments that are submitted after the beginning of class-time on a due date will be considered late. Anything submitted up to seven days late will be penalized by a full grade and may not receive detailed feedback; after seven days, without a serious problem documented by a licensed medical or mental health professional, your assignment will not be accepted. If your assignment is late because of illness or a death in the family, please contact one of us within 24 hours of the due date, and we will set a new due date.

Structure and Style:

Please follow directions! Part of doing an assignment well is adhering to recommended guidelines of succinctness or depth. Similarly, these are opportunities for you to demonstrate your learning—the more polished and professional your written work is, the more worthwhile our feedback will be for you. We approach each class as a path to learning, so our comments are meant to be a dialogue/exchange with you. We hope you will read them as thoughtfully as we write them.

You are being graded partly on your ability to answer a question/follow directions/respond to a prompt: your successful mastery of content *as well as* your ability to make a convincing argument. Make a claim, and support your claim with evidence from readings, films, class discussions, museum visits, guest speakers' remarks, and/or outside research. Conclude all paragraphs in your own words, explaining how/why a quote or an example relates to your overarching argument. In other words, use quotations toward your own ends, don't simply select and display them.

Remember, YOU are an instrument of your own research. Objectivity is NOT the goal; in fact, one of the most important things we'd like you to learn is that knowledge is partial and positioned, and always up for debate and reconsideration. Feel welcome to use first person, if this is useful/helpful to your personal style.

Bibliographic and Citation Form:

Please follow Chicago-style citation and formatting guidelines. These can be found in Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 8th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), or in *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), available in the Reference Section of Bobst (non-circulating). Students may also use Endnote, Zotero or another bibliographic software program.

Please include your name on all submitted work. Double-space your essays, use 12-point Times New Roman font, and 1-inch margins all-around. Number your pages, cite your sources (including online content), and staple multiple pages together. Digital photographs or other visual materials are welcome (though not required), and should always be attributed. Provide a title and section headings, if useful to you. Please also

include a Works Cited or Bibliography section at the end of any written submitted work. If you use web-based materials, be sure to include the url and the date accessed in your citation.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism—employing ideas or phrases that are not your own without explicitly and sufficiently crediting their creator—will not be tolerated. If you plagiarize, the Program Chair and the University will be notified of your actions, and appropriate steps will be taken. We urge you to err on the side of caution: take careful notes, cite your sources carefully and consistently, and do not leave assignments to the last minute. For this and other University policies, see the Graduate School of Arts and Science Policies and Procedures Manual.

University Statement for Students with Disabilities:

New York University is committed to providing equal educational opportunity and participation for students with disabilities. It is the University's policy that no qualified student with a disability be excluded from participating in any University program or activity, denied the benefits of any University program or activity, or otherwise subjected to discrimination with regard to any University program or activity. The Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) determines qualified disability status and assists students in obtaining appropriate accommodations and services. Any student who needs a reasonable accommodation based on a qualified disability is required to register with the CSD for assistance.

Contact information:

Henry & Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities

726 Broadway, 2nd Floor

<http://www.nyu.edu/life/safety-health-andwellness/students-with-disabilities.html>

212-998-4980

Additional University Resources:

NYU Expository Writing Program's Writing Center

411 Lafayette, 4th Floor

http://www.nyu.edu/cas/ewp/html/writing_center.html

212-998-8866 / writingcenter@nyu.edu

NYU Information Technology Services

10 Astor Place, 4th Floor

<http://www.nyu.edu/its/>

212-998-3333 / AskITS@nyu.edu

NYU Library Services

70 Washington Square South

<http://library.nyu.edu/>

212-998-2505 / ask a librarian online request form: <http://library.nyu.edu/ask/email.html>

[Thomas McNulty, Museum Studies Reference Librarian](#)

[212-998-2519 / tom.mcnulty@nyu.edu](mailto:tom.mcnulty@nyu.edu)

NYU Office of Global Services

561 LaGuardia Place

<http://www.nyu.edu/life/student-life/international-students-and-scholars.html>

212-998-4720 / ogs@nyu.edu

NYU Social Media Hub

<http://www.nyu.edu/life/student-life/hashtagNYU.html>

NYU Wellness Exchange

Departments include: Student Health Center; Counseling and Wellness Services; Health Promotion Office; and the Office of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Student Services, and are at various locations on campus.

<http://www.nyu.edu/999/>

212-443-9999 / wellness.exchange@nyu.edu

Calendar of Class Meetings and Assignments

(Any changes will be announced via Brightspace)

Fourteen Tuesdays

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Week 1 - Sept 6 Historicizing Publics and Data, an introductory conversation

The 'public' has never been of one kind, nor has it been an all-inclusive frame of reference. This week we begin our course by problematizing the 'public' and also introducing thinking about information accumulation - or data.

Readings:

1. W.Battle-Baptiste and B.Rusert (eds) (2018), "[Introduction](#)" and S. Munro, "[Introduction to the Plates](#)" and selected plates from: *WEB Du Bois's Data Portraits: Visualizing Black America*. Princeton Architectural Press
2. Binkley (1935) "[New Tools For Men of Letters](#)"
3. Benjamin (1936) "[The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility](#)"
4. Recommended/You May Also Like: Bruno Latour and Adam Lowe (2011) "[The Migration of the Aura, Or, How to Explore the Original Through Its Facsimiles](#)"

Week 2 - Sept 13 Part I - Theorizing Decolonization: Introduction

This course prioritizes decolonial methodologies for opening new connections in thought and activism. This week we begin a three-week module introducing you to key thinking in decolonization and decoloniality from a variety of perspectives.

Readings:

1. P. Wolfe (2016), '[Settler-Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native](#)' in *Journal of Genocidal Research*.
2. E. Tuck and W. Yang, (2012) '[Decolonization is not a Metaphor](#)' in *Decolonization: Indigeniety, Education and Society*.
3. W. Mignolo and C. Walsh (2018), "[The Decolonial For: Resurgences, Shifts and Movements](#)" in *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis* Duke University Press 2018.

Week 3 - Sept 20 Decolonization and Coloniality

Silver and the Cross - Haruki - 12mins (To watch in class)

1. W. Mignolo and C. Walsh (2018), '[What Does It Mean to Decolonize](#)' in *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis* Duke University Press 2018.
2. L. Tuhawai Smith, (2008) '[Imperialism, History, Writing, Theory](#)' in *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*.
3. Jean O'Brien interviewed by J Kēhaulani Kauanui on the radio show [Indigenous Politics](#)
4. M. Lugones, (2016), '[Coloniality of Gender](#)' in the Palgrave Handbook on Gender and Development.

Week 4 - Sept 27 Decolonial Futures

1. *A. Ghosh (2021) [The Nutmeg's Curse](#) selections (link should allow you to download PDFs; it's finicky. please read at least Ch 1, browse further. Chs. 1-4 are also loaded as PDFs in Brightspace)
2. L. Simpson (2016) '[Islands of Decolonial Love](#)'
3. K. Yusoff (2019), [A Billion Black Anthropocene's or None](#)
4. W. Nanibush and W. Mignolo (2018), [Thinking and Engaging with the Decolonial: A Conversation between Wanda Nanibush and Walter Mignolo](#).

Week 5 - Oct 4 Part II: Whose Publics?

Guest Speakers: Marina McDougall and Rick McCourt, discussing the making of Botany of Nations Exhibition - Academy of Natural Science, Lewis and Clark Herbarium

1. K. Bowrey and J. Anderson (2009) '[The Politics of Global Information Sharing: Whose Cultural Agendas are Being Advanced?](#)' *Social and Legal Studies*.

2. L. Daston, (2004) '[Type Specimens and Scientific Memory](#)' in *Critical Inquiry*.
3. J. Salick and J. Solomon, (2014) "[Herbarium curation of biocultural plant collections and vouchers](#)" in *Curating Biological Collections: A Handbook*.
4. A. Kuhlman and J. Salik, "[Database Standards for Biocultural Collections](#)" in *Curating Biological Collections: A Handbook*.

No class meeting October 11th, a legislative Monday

Week 6 - Oct 18 Knowledge Commons, an introductory conversation

1. E. Ostrom and C. Hess, (2011) '[A Framework for Analyzing the Knowledge Commons](#)' in *Understanding Knowledge as a Commons*.
2. C. Schweik (2011), '[Free/Open Source Software as a Framework for Establishing Commons in Science](#)' *Understanding Knowledge as a Commons*.
3. M. Hardt and A. Negri, (2009), Preface and Part 1 - Republic and the Multitude of the Poor' in [Commonwealth](#)
4. G. Hardin (1968), [The Tragedy of the Commons](#) Science and [The Tragedy of the Commons](#)
5. C. Rose, (2003) '[Romans, Roads and and Romantic Creators: Traditions of Public Property in the Information Age](#)' in *Law and Contemporary Problems*.

Week 7 - Oct 25 Organizing and Categorizing Knowledge

Guest Speaker - [Alexandra Provo](#), Bobst Library, NYU

1. L. Gitelman (2014) "[Searching and Thinking About Searching JSTOR](#)" in JSTOR
2. *KULA* Volume 6:3 (2022) [Metadata As Knowledge](#) selections.
3. Recommended/You may also like: If you've never encountered Sanford Berman's 1971 classic, [Prejudices and Antipathies: A Tract on the LC Subject Heads Concerning People](#), . . .

Week 8 - Nov 1 - Landscapes of Difference/Places of Knowledge

Guest Speaker - James Eric Francis, Snr - Director, Department of Cultural and Historic Preservation, Penobscot Nation "Penobscot River, Language and the Places of Knowledge:

1. J. Anderson and J. Francis, "[Decolonial Futures of Sharing: Protecting Our Voice, Intellectual Property and Penobscot Nation Language Materials](#)"
2. [The Penobscot: Ancestral River, Contested Territory](#) Sunlight Media Collective.

3. Penobscot control of research video: Local Contexts(12 mins)
4. E. Tuck and W. Yang (2016),, [R Words: Refusing Research](#)

Week 9 - Nov 8 - Activating the Land Acknowledgement Public (TBA)

Felicia Garcia and Vanessa Smith

Show/Discuss/Explain Public Humanities Activism Projects

Readings:

- M. Rifkin, “[Indigenous Orientations](#)” in Beyond Settler Time: Temporal Sovereignty and Indigenous Self-Determination, Duke University Press, 2017.
- Emily Johnson catalyst: decolonial rider
<http://www.catalystdance.com/decolonization-rider>
- Joseph Pearce - [Your Land Acknowledgment Is Not Enough](#)
- âpihtawikosisân, ‘Beyond Territorial Acknowledgments
<https://apihtawikosisan.com/2016/09/beyond-territorial-acknowledgments/>
- M. McKenna, ‘Tokenism or Belated Recognition: Welcome to Country and the emergence of Indigenous Protocol in Australia 1991-2014. Journal of Australian Studies 38(4) 2014.

TO DO BEFORE CLASS

- - - Visit the resource: <http://landacknowledgements.org/>
 - Read the [Guide](#)
 - Review the institutions that have been submitted on the [Database](#)
 - Fill out a [survey](#) review for two institutions that are not already represented on the database

Week 10 - Nov 15 - Data Publics

1. Wilkinson et al, (2016) [The FAIR Principles for Scientific Data Management and Stewardship](#). Nature.
2. [CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance](#) (2019)
3. S. Carroll et al (2020) [The CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance](#), *Data Science Journal*
4. Stevens, Hallam (2013) [Life Out of Sequence: A Data-Driven History of Bioinformatics](#)

Week 11 - Nov 22 Tactics/Strategies for Data Control

Guest speaker: [Scott Casper](#), President of the [American Antiquarian Society](#) (Scott will visit for 45 min at the beginning of class to introduce himself, introduce the AAS along with questions of institutional identity, constituencies, strategic planning.)

1. Elizabeth McHenry Ch 2, "[Thinking Bibliographically](#)" (2021)
2. Jackie Goldsby and Meredith McGill, "[What's Black about Black Bibliography?](#)" (2022)
3. Katherine McKittrick, "[Footnotes \(Books and Papers Scattered About the Floor\)](#)" (2021)

Week 12 - Nov 29 Colonial Space, Mapping and Decolonial Options

1. W. Mignolo (1995), 'The Movable Center: Ethnicity, Geometric Projections and Co-existing Territorialities' in *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality and Colonization*. (PDF)
2. W. Mignolo, (1995) 'Putting the Americas on the Map: Cartography and the Colonization of Space in *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality and Colonization*. (PDF)
3. M. Wilson, (2018), '[The Cartography of WEB Du Bois's Color Line](#)' in *WEB Du Bois's Data Portraits: Visualizing Black America*. Princeton Architectural Press

Week 13 - Dec 6 - Digital Systems of Change (TBA)

Guest Speaker - Michael Wynne, Mukurtu Digital Manager

Mukurtu and Local Contexts

Week 14 - Dec 13 - Class Presentations on Final Paper

Final papers are due by end of business December 20th without exception