

NATIONAL  
PUBLIC HOUSING  
MUSEUM



## “Syllabus”: Goals, Principles, Essential Questions & Suggested Inter-Session Exercises

Contact: Liú Chen, [lchen@nphm.org](mailto:lchen@nphm.org), (206) 482.9923

Last updated: Aug. 15, 2022

### Learning Goals of Program

- Graduates will develop an understanding of how to use oral history as a tool for social change.
- Graduates will be able to:
  - Grasp key oral history concepts like deep listening, oral history ethics, and participant-centered dialogue.
  - Conduct an oral history interview.
  - Use basic audio recording tools and editing tools.
  - Design an oral history project.
  - Utilize their oral history training in their everyday lives, such as in
    - to create podcasts, creative writing projects, visual art or action research plans.
    - Situate oral history practice within the legacy of public housing in Chicago.

### Beauty Turner Principles [of Narrative History & Education]:

- Actively inclusive, accessible, equitable, and anti-elitist
- Imbued with radical care and responsive to the needs of those involved and impacted.
- Justice-centered, liberation-centered, BIPOC-centered, and community autonomy-centered in focus and elevation.
- Applicable to everyday lives (for a wide variety of interests, ex., organizing work, art, culture)

## Essential Questions & Inter-Session Exercises by Week

### Wk 1 (July 14, 2022), Intro Pt. I: Laying the Foundations—Essential Questions:

Featuring: Willie “JR” Fleming & Ben Austen

- What is the basic history of public housing and housing justice? Why are they important?
- What is oral history?
- How is oral history used?
- What skills are used in oral histories? (e.g. deep listening)
- How are oral history interviews unique?

For additional follow-up questions and discussion: [bausten@gmail.com](mailto:bausten@gmail.com) (Ben), [jr@chicagoantieviction.org](mailto:jr@chicagoantieviction.org) (JR), [lisayunlee@gmail.com](mailto:lisayunlee@gmail.com) (Lisa, NPHM Exec. Director), [lchen@nphm.org](mailto:lchen@nphm.org) (Liú)

### Wk 1.5 Inter-session Exercises (July 14-21, 2022):

Spend a few minutes journaling about 1 or more of the following prompts. Listen to one or more of the following podcasts/interviews, if you have time.

#### *Suggested Exercises:*

- *Finding our Way* Season 1, Episode 7: “Remembering with Alexis Pauline Gumbs” [Oct. 19, 2020]
  - <https://www.findingourwaypodcast.com/individual-episodes/s1e7>
- *AirGo*, Episode 29: “Mariame Kaba” [Feb 4, 2016]
  - <https://soundcloud.com/airgoradio/ep-29-mariame-kaba?in=airgoradio/sets/airgo-podcasts>

#### *Reflection:*

- Q: What are ways that you and your community are already engaged in practices of oral history, narrative history, or storytelling? Are there different words that your communities use to describe the storytelling encounter? (Ex, *kiki*, *chismeando*, *cafecito*)
- Q: What value(s) does storytelling bring to your community?
  - What community values do you bring to storytelling?
- Q: Reflect on your relationships to your ancestors, the past, memory, and listening. What are the different ways that you do or can “listen”?
- Q: Reflect on the interview styles of the *Finding Our Way* and *AirGo* hosts (Prentis Hemphill; Damon A. Williams, and Daniel “Kiss” Klsslinger). What do you notice about how they ask questions and how they listen?
- *Bonus bonus:*
  - Whole Larry Turner interview [July 8, 2022]. Mr. Turner has some advice for y’all, more background on the GHETTO bus tours, and more...

- [https://soundcloud.com/the\\_nphm/larry-turner-interview?utm\\_source=clipboard&utm\\_medium=text&utm\\_campaign=social\\_sharing](https://soundcloud.com/the_nphm/larry-turner-interview?utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=social_sharing)

Wk 2 (Jul. 21, 2022), Intro Pt II: OH from a Justice- & Liberation-Centered Approach—Essential Questions:

Taught by: Dr. Nikki Yeboah

- What is the background/lineage of oral history? Who are the experts of oral history that I want to focus on?
- What are the central values, techniques, and methods of oral history?
- What does it mean to work from a justice-centered and liberation-centered approach?
- How do interviewers hold power? How CAN this resemble oppression?
  - How do I own my mistakes and allow space to listen deeply?
  - Why is it important to approach interviews this way?
- When, how, and why does oral history subvert oppression?

*For additional follow-up questions and discussion: [nyeboa@uw.edu](mailto:nyeboa@uw.edu)*

Wk 2.5 Intersession Exercises (Jul. 21-28, 2022):

*Spend a few minutes journaling about 1 or more of the following prompts, and listen to 1+ interview, if you have time.*

*This week, I also included three reading selections about indigenous oral history. The writing is a bit academic so it's totally okay if you don't have capacity to read them in their entirety. I encourage you to skim or read the beginnings of one or more of the chapters/articles. Any level of engagement is great!*

*Suggested Listening:*

- Explore the National Public Housing Museum's researcher oral history collection, [through its database](#) and the [Google Drive of files](#).
  - Listen to at least 1 interview—we suggest listening to 1 full length interview (each are about an hour), but you can listen to more or snippets of more if you'd like.

*Reflection:*

- Q: In oral history, we typically use the word “narrator” instead of “interviewee” when we refer to the person who is being interviewed. What does this difference mean or signify to you?
- Q: Reflect on the NPHM interview(s) that you listened to. What did you notice? What stood out to you about the narrator and the interviewer? Are there any points at which you would have conducted the interview differently (ex, asked a follow-up question, gone in a different direction, etc).
- Q: Define oral history with what you've learned thus far. Refer back to the essential questions of week 1-2 for some prompts to help you get started.

- What core values brought you to oral history? What core values has oral history introduced or deepened for you thus far? Why and how is oral history valuable?
- Q [Related to the readings]: Think of a time when you, your family, or your community preserved a narrative or perspective on history that was not preserved elsewhere—or, perhaps even went against the dominant narrative of that time period or event. In what ways did you/they preserve that history? How do you feel about that history and why is it important?

*Suggested Reading:*

- Chapter 8: “The Indigenous Truth of Oral History,” *Rethinking Oral History and Tradition: An Indigenous Perspective*, Nēpia Mahuika (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019)
  - Can be found in the “Extras” subfolder of the [Beauty Turner Academy Google Drive folder](#) under the name “Wk 2–Rethinking Oral History and Tradition\_Mahuika”
- “Reflections on the Social Relations of Indigenous Oral Histories,” Winona Wheeler, *Saskatchewan History* 51, 1 (1999): 29-35.
  - Can be found in the “Extras” subfolder of the [Beauty Turner Academy Google Drive folder](#) under the name “Wk 2–Reflections on the Social Relations Indig OH\_Wheeler OCR”

*Bonus bonus:*

- *An Indigenous OH Reader*, ed. Bryan P. Schwartz (2022)
  - Can be found in the “Extras” subfolder of the [Beauty Turner Academy Google Drive folder](#) under the name “Wk 2–An Indigenous Oral History Reader\_ed. Schwartz”
  - “Introduction,” Bryan P. Schwartz (p. 7-9 in the pdf)
  - “The Personal Point of View in Orally Communicated History,” Barbara Allen (p. 14-23 in the pdf pages, p. 5-14 in the printed page numbers)

Wk 3 (Jul. 28, 2022): Freestyle Week I–Essential Questions:

Facilitated by: Liú, Noor, and Tamara

- What is working well for you about the structure of BTA, and what could be changed to improve your experience and learning?
- What are my learning and personal goals for the Beauty Turner Academy?
- How can our community (mentors and other participants) support my learning? How can I support others?
- What topics that we’ve learned about thus far are you confident about? Unsure about?

For additional follow-up questions and discussion: [lchen@nphm.org](mailto:lchen@nphm.org) (Liú), [noor.alzamami@gmail.com](mailto:noor.alzamami@gmail.com) (Noor), [t.waite.santibanez@gmail.com](mailto:t.waite.santibanez@gmail.com) (Tamara)

Wk 3.5 Inter-session Exercises (Jul. 28-Aug. 4, 2022):

Our Week 4 educator, Alissa Rae Funderburk, has suggested excerpts from 3 readings, all of which can be found in the [Extras Subfolder](#) in a single doc called “Wk 3–IS 3.5 Readings OCR”. As usual, **engage with whatever exercises are enriching for you, and that you have capacity for. Any level of engagement is great!**

I've included the same suggested listening exercise for this week—you can pick a second interview to listen to if you already listened to one last week. Lastly, I've kept two of the same writing exercises from last week and added one more.

*Suggested Readings from Alissa Rae (Wk 4 Educator):*

- “Evidence, Empathy, and Ethics: Lessons from Oral Histories of the Klan,” by Kathleen M. Blee
  - For the Blee article I would suggest paying special attention to the section on “Empathy and Ethics” which begins on page 603 for Blee’s thoughts on building rapport with her narrators.
  - Dr. Nikki mentioned this article towards the end of our week 2 session, in regards to transparency with narrators
- *Barracoon: The Story of the Last “Black Cargo,”* by Zora Neale Hurston
  - For Barracoon I have provided the introductory materials and first few chapters but I would suggest students focus on the introduction from Deborah G. Plant (xiii-xxv).
- “Teaching to Listen: Listening Exercises and Self-Reflexive Journals,” by Martha Norkunas
  - And Norkunas’ article I would recommend starting from the beginning and reading up to at least page 70, which provides some broad strokes on how listening can differ according to persons and situations.

*Suggested Listening:*

- Explore the National Public Housing Museum’s researcher oral history collection, [through its database](#) and the [Google Drive of files](#).
  - Listen to at least 1 interview—we suggest listening to 1 full length interview (each are about an hour), but you can listen to more or snippets of more if you’d like.

*Reflection:*

- [Related to listening exercise] Q: Reflect on the NPHM interview(s) that you listened to. What did you notice? What stood out to you about the narrator and the interviewer? What did you like about how the interviewer conducted the interview? Are there any points at which you would have conducted the interview differently (ex, asked a follow-up question, gone in a different direction, etc)?
- Q: What are your core values and beliefs about community and relationships?
  - What responsibilities come with conducting oral history interviews?
  - How can you enact and apply your values to oral history interviews?

- Practice writing an interview guide by writing a set of 5-8 open-ended questions specific to a particular person. The person could be a loved one, a community member, the person you wanted to interview from week 1's icebreaker, a family member, someone else in the Beauty Turner Academy, etc. It doesn't matter **who** it is, but the **questions should be tailored to an individual person**.
  - After writing the interview guide, reflect on the process. Was it easier or more difficult than you expected? What stands out about the process?

#### Wk 4 (Aug. 4, 2022): The Oral History Interview—Essential Questions:

Taught by: Alissa Rae Funderburk

- What are the legalities of oral history interviewing?
  - What are the types of copyright?
  - What are the types of ownership?
  - What is a release form?
- What is a pre-interview?
  - What are the benefits and drawbacks of conducting one?
  - How do I decide?
- What is different about oral history interviewing?
  - How should we ask our questions?
  - What is deep listening?
  - What is shared authority?
  - What are life history questions?
  - How do we use follow up questions?
- How does one's identities inform the power dynamic of the interview? The way a narrator answers questions?
  - Who are we?
  - What kinds of differences may we have to overcome in an interview setting?
- How does one address the impact of their own positionalities in an interview?
  - What are intersubjectivity, intersectionality, difference, community, empathy, equality/equity, recognition/misrecognition?

For additional follow-up questions and discussion: [alissa.funderburk@gmail.com](mailto:alissa.funderburk@gmail.com),  
[alissa.funderburk@jsums.edu](mailto:alissa.funderburk@jsums.edu)

#### Wk 4.5 Inter-session Exercises (Aug. 4-11, 2022):

*It's practice interview time! There's no amount of reading or listening that can replace practicing the actual thing. I'd really like you to make the time for this if you can, so this is the only suggested exercise this week. **If you are more comfortable practicing with a friend or family member, you can do that instead.** Let Liú know if so, so they can facilitate the rest of the logistics more easily.*

*Suggested Exercise:*

- Paired-up Practice Interview Pt I: As you are able, plan to “meet” up with 1 other person in the cohort over Zoom or in person to do practice interviews.
  - Make the decision about whether to meet in person or Zoom based on your comfort levels and whether meeting up is practical. Though many oral historians prefer the in-person interaction, it’s good to get some practice with Zoom interviews as well because, you know, pandemic.
  - Don’t try to do both interviews back-to-back! This week, one person is the interviewer and the other is the narrator. Next week, we will switch.
  - Each person should be interviewed for 1-2 hours.
  - Record your interview on your phone or with Zoom’s built-in recording functionality this week. You’ll learn how to use your new recorders during Week 5’s session.
- As a writing exercise, those who are the interviewers should practice preparing for the interview by writing an interview guide of 5-10 questions for the other person, based on what you know about them. You don’t have to use the interview guide during the interview if you don’t want, but this is good practice for how to prep.
- After the interview is over, both people should spend 5-15 minutes writing fieldnotes.
  - You can do pretty much whatever you want for fieldnotes! For my interviews, I tend to write bullet points, semi-free-writing style, about my experience during the interview: *how was I feeling before? During? What went well? Were there things that could have gone better? What decisions could I have made to improve the interview?*
  - As a narrator who will do an oral history interview next week, field notes are a chance to reflect on what the experience was like for you and imagine what your future narrators will feel when you interview them.

*Bonus Suggested Listening:*

- As I said above, the practice interview is the high, high priority for this week’s intersession. BUT if you’re looking for additional listening exercises to stir the narrative history pot...
  - “Chapter 7: The Belly of the Beast, Part II” *Mother Country Radicals*, Zayd Ayers-Dohrn [July 6, 2022]
    - <https://crooked.com/podcast-series/mother-country-radicals/>
    - This is quite a bit into a season-long story arc, but I think it can be understood without the previous episodes (the whole season is great though!). I picked this episode because of the way that many narrators are brought in to tell the story of the episode.
    - Multiple narrators also talk about how sometimes it’s important to keep secrets and not break silences—something that is



contrary to a lot of what we are taught as oral historians. It's a great episode and a great series.

- “Episode 1: James Baldwin & Darnell Moore” *Bughouse Square with Eve Ewing*, Eve Ewing [Oct. 5, 2018]
  - <https://studsterkel.wfmt.com/bughouse-square>
  - This is a brilliant combination of archival interview and contemporary interview. Pay attention to how Dr. Eve uses the two to bounce off of the other.

### Wk 5 (Aug. 11, 2022): Tech Week—Essential Questions:

Taught by: Lex Brown

- What is the Zoom H5?
  - How is it different or similar to other recording equipment?
  - What basic equipment is needed to record an interview?
  - Why is formatting an SD card important?
- What information or details do I need to adjust or pay attention to during recording?
  - How do you read levels?
  - How do you adjust levels?
  - What is a T or P pop?
  - Why should environmental noise be paid attention to?
- How can you do basic edits in Audacity?
  - Clipping, copy and pasting
  - Post editing levels
  - Adding additional media to audio
- How is a recorded interview different from other media types?

For additional follow-up questions and discussion: [alexisbrownies@gmail.com](mailto:alexisbrownies@gmail.com),  
@lex\_brown\_ (ig)

### Wk 5.5 Inter-session Exercises (Aug. 11-18, 2022):

*Same as Inter-session 4.5: practice interviews! There's no amount of reading or listening that can replace practicing the actual thing. I'd really like you to make the time for this if you can, so this is the only suggested exercise this week. **If you are more comfortable practicing with a friend or family member, you can do that instead.** Let Liú know if so, so they can facilitate the rest of the logistics more easily.*

#### *Suggested Exercise:*

- Paired-up Practice Interview Pt I: As you are able, plan to “meet” up with 1 other person in the cohort over Zoom or in person to do practice interviews.
  - Make the decision about whether to meet in person or Zoom based on your comfort levels and whether meeting up is practical. Though many oral historians prefer the in-person interaction, it's good to get some practice with Zoom interviews as well because, you know, pandemic.



- Don't try to do both interviews back-to-back! This week, one person is the interviewer and the other is the narrator. Next week, we will switch.
- Each person should be interviewed for 1-2 hours.
- Record your interview on your phone or with Zoom's built-in recording functionality this week. You'll learn how to use your new recorders during Week 5's session.
- As a writing exercise, those who are the interviewers should practice preparing for the interview by writing an interview guide of 5-10 questions for the other person, based on what you know about them. You don't have to use the interview guide during the interview if you don't want, but this is good practice for how to prep.
- After the interview is over, both people should spend 5-15 minutes writing fieldnotes.
  - You can do pretty much whatever you want for fieldnotes! For my interviews, I tend to write bullet points, semi-free-writing style, about my experience during the interview: *how was I feeling before? During? What went well? Were there things that could have gone better? What decisions could I have made to improve the interview?*
  - As a narrator who will do an oral history interview next week, field notes are a chance to reflect on what the experience was like for you and imagine what your future narrators will feel when you interview them.

*Bonus Suggested Listening:*

- As I said above, the practice interview is the high, high priority for this week's intersession. BUT if you're looking for additional listening exercises to stir the narrative history pot...
  - "Chapter 7: The Belly of the Beast, Part II" *Mother Country Radicals*, Zayd Ayers-Dohrn [July 6, 2022]
    - <https://crooked.com/podcast-series/mother-country-radicals/>
    - This is quite a bit into a season-long story arc, but I think it can be understood without the previous episodes (the whole season is great though!). I picked this episode because of the way that many narrators are brought in to tell the story of the episode.
    - Multiple narrators also talk about how sometimes it's important to keep secrets and not break silences—something that is contrary to a lot of what we are taught as oral historians. It's a great episode and a great series.
  - "Episode 1: James Baldwin & Darnell Moore" *Bughouse Square with Eve Ewing*, Eve Ewing [Oct. 5, 2018]
    - <https://studsterkel.wfmt.com/bughouse-square>

- This is a brilliant combination of archival interview and contemporary interview. Pay attention to how Dr. Eve uses the two to bounce off of the other.

### Wk 6 (Aug. 18, 2022): Freestyle Week II—Essential Questions:

Facilitated by: Liú, Noor, Tamara, and Troy

- What are my learning and personal goals for the Beauty Turner Academy?
- What has brought me joy and excitement thus far, and how can I build on that with the remaining time in the Beauty Turner Academy training and apprenticeship periods?
- What topics that we've learned about thus far am I confident about? Unsure about?
- How can our community (mentors and other participants) support my learning? How can I support others?
- How can I start ideating (brainstorming, planning) my own project that uses oral history?

*For additional follow-up questions and discussion: [lchen@nphm.org](mailto:lchen@nphm.org) (Liú), [noor.alzamami@gmail.com](mailto:noor.alzamami@gmail.com) (Noor), [t.waite.santibanez@gmail.com](mailto:t.waite.santibanez@gmail.com) (Tamara), [4blmchicago@gmail.com](mailto:4blmchicago@gmail.com) (Troy)*

### Wk 6.5 Inter-session Exercises (Aug. 18-25, 2022):

*If you still have not done a practice interview, we strongly encourage you to do so! If you feel comfortable, you can add the fancy-tech layer to your interview by conducting it with your new digital audio recorder and external microphones. But you can also just record on your phone if you prefer.*

*For other enriching work, I have suggested 2 podcast episodes. Not all podcasts draw on oral history methods/values, but I think both of these do in different ways. Enjoy!*

#### Suggested Listening:

- “Chapter 7: The Belly of the Beast, Part II” *Mother Country Radicals*, Zayd Ayers-Dohrn [July 6, 2022]
  - <https://crooked.com/podcast-series/mother-country-radicals/>
  - This is quite a bit into a season-long story arc, but I think it can be understood without the previous episodes (the whole season is great though!). I picked this episode because of the way that many narrators are brought in to tell the story of the episode.
  - Multiple narrators also talk about how sometimes it's important to keep secrets and not break silences—something that is contrary to a lot of what we are taught as oral historians. It's a great episode and a great series.
- “Episode 1: James Baldwin & Darnell Moore” *Bughouse Square with Eve Ewing*, Eve Ewing [Oct. 5, 2018]
  - <https://studsterkel.wfmt.com/bughouse-square>

- This is a brilliant combination of archival interview and contemporary interview. Pay attention to how Dr. Eve uses the two to bounce off of the other.

### Wk 7 (Aug. 25, 2022): Action Modules Week—Essential Questions:

Facilitated by Elisheba Johnson, Inye Wokoma, Walis Johnson, and Cherish Chang (see session notes below)

- What are some of the different ways that people are practicing oral history?
- What are some of the different ways that people are using oral history?
- How can I practice and use oral history in my current [interests, hobbies, jobs, etc]?

Session 1 (Early Session): Listening to the past: Ancestor Memory as a Tool for Understanding your Purpose, led by Elisheba Johnson & Inye Wokoma

Session 2a: Creative & Interactive Community Project Design, led by Walis Johnson

Session 2b: Visual Design for Oral History, led by Cherish Chang

*For additional follow-up questions and discussion:*

[elishebajohnson@gmail.com](mailto:elishebajohnson@gmail.com) & [inye@ijoarts.com](mailto:inye@ijoarts.com), [Wanawari.org](http://Wanawari.org), [@wanawariseattle](https://www.instagram.com/wanawariseattle) (ig)

[walisjohnson@gmail.com](mailto:walisjohnson@gmail.com)

[cherishprie@gmail.com](mailto:cherishprie@gmail.com), [@cherish.jpg](https://www.instagram.com/cherish.jpg) (ig)

### Wk 7.5 Inter-session Exercises (Aug. 25-Sept. 1, 2022):

### Wk 8 (Sept. 1, 2022): Closing Week—Essential Questions:

Facilitated by Liú, Noor, Tamara, and Tiff, with special guest Brandon Black

- What have I learned in the 8 weeks of the Beauty Turner Academy of Oral History Training Period?
  - What have been the most meaningful part(s) of the Beauty Turner Academy for me?
- What is a goal that I have accomplished in the last 8 weeks through the Beauty Turner Academy?
- What is a new goal that I have for myself, after graduating from the Beauty Turner Academy?
  - What do I want to do next? What do I still want to learn?
- What words or images describe your hopes for your future as an oral historian (or someone who uses oral history methods/values)?

*For additional follow-up questions and discussion:* [lchen@nphm.org](mailto:lchen@nphm.org) (Liú),

[noor.alzamami@gmail.com](mailto:noor.alzamami@gmail.com) (Noor), [t.waite.santibanez@gmail.com](mailto:t.waite.santibanez@gmail.com) (Tamara),

[4blmchicago@gmail.com](mailto:4blmchicago@gmail.com) (Troy), [tbeatty@nphm.org](mailto:tbeatty@nphm.org) (Tiff)