

IDH 2931 – Honors Symposium

Local History Leadership Project – Telling the Story

Academic Honors-by-Contract | 1 Credit Hour

Instructor: Patrick Brennan, Ph.D., Ed.D. **Meeting Time:** Fridays at 1:00 PM **Locations:** Panama City Publishing Museum (St. Andrews) & GCSC Library (Panama City Campus)
Course Duration: 6 Weeks/Session C Fall 2026

Course Description

This Honors Enrichment Symposium immerses students in the practice of **public history**, combining museum apprenticeship, archival research, performance-based interpretation, and scholarly writing. Students will train as emerging public historians, assist with live walking tours, and develop original research suitable for professional presentation.

A new essential component of the course requires students to produce a **five-page Chicago-style research paper** for presentation at the **American Journalism Historians Association (AJHA) Southeast Regional Conference**, held in Panama City the **first weekend of February 2027**.

Course Objectives

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

- Demonstrate foundational skills in public history, including museum literacy, historical interpretation, and voicework.
- Collaborate effectively during apprenticeship phases, contributing research, reflection, and performance support.
- Lead a historically informed walking tour, synthesizing archival research with engaging narrative strategies.
- Develop an original historical argument grounded in primary sources and produce a polished five-page research paper for AJHA 2027.
- Apply scholarly communication skills—thesis development, historiographical framing, source analysis, and professional presentation techniques.
- Connect public history practice with academic research, demonstrating how museum work informs scholarly inquiry.

Learning Outcomes for the AJHA Paper Component

Students will learn to:

- Identify a compelling research question rooted in local history.
- Construct a clear, arguable thesis supported by archival evidence.
- Analyze primary sources (newspapers, council minutes, museum collections) with attention to context and narrative.
- Integrate secondary scholarship to situate their argument within broader historical conversations.
- Produce a conference-ready paper using Chicago Style formatting.
- Prepare and rehearse a professional oral presentation suitable for an academic conference.

Course Modules & Timeline

Phase 1: Foundations & Training

Dates: October 24 & October 31 **Focus:** Public history skills, museum orientation **Outcomes:** Historical thinking, storytelling, voice & stage presence

Activities include:

- Seminar: “*What Makes History Come Alive?*”
- Voice & story workshops (students bring one joke per session—professional, clear, audible delivery)
- Introduction to AJHA expectations and topic selection
- Digitizing project: Panama City Council Records (1909–present)

Phase 2: Apprenticeship & Assistance

Dates: November 7 & November 21 **Focus:** Guided experience during walking tours **Outcomes:** Historical research, live interpretation, collaboration

Responsibilities:

- Assist on **two walking tours** (Fridays @ 1 PM)
- Research during museum hours (Tues–Fri, 1–5 PM)
- Quiz 1: Walking Tour Script (10 multiple-choice questions)
- Mini-presentations with peer feedback
- Conference-style thesis pitch
- Continued digitization of primary sources

Phase 3: Capstone & Reflection

Date: December 5 **Focus:** Independent tour leadership **Outcomes:** Leadership, public engagement, reflective synthesis

Final Tasks:

- Lead full walking tour or designated segment
- Submit annotated bibliography
- Submit AJHA paper outline
- Participate in peer and mentor feedback
- Schedule January writing check-ins (outside the 6-week course window)

Weekly Expectations

- Attend class weekly (Fridays at 1 PM).
- Assist with two walking tours before the capstone.
- Maintain a weekly journal with prompts.
- Rehearse and refine narrative segments.
- Conduct archival research during museum hours.
- Progress steadily on AJHA paper (topic → thesis → outline → bibliography).

Assignments & Evaluation

Course Rubric

Category	Points	Weight	Description
Capstone Tour Leadership	10	10%	Clarity, historical insight, stage presence, sensory details, public impact
Attendance	20	20%	Weekly participation, creativity, professionalism, respect for museum partners
Mini-Presentations & Peer Feedback	10	10%	Thesis strength, narrative experimentation, engagement in critique
Tour Assistance	20	20%	Participation, collaboration, source use
Quizzes (2)	10	10%	Mastery of walking tour script and content
AJHA Research Paper	30	30%	Original research, Chicago Style, argument clarity, conference readiness

AJHA Research Paper Requirement

Overview

Students will produce a **five-page Chicago-style research paper** based on archival materials from the Panama City Publishing Museum, Bay County newspapers, or related regional collections. This paper will be prepared for presentation at the **AJHA Southeast Regional Conference** in February 2027.

Components

- Topic proposal & preliminary thesis
- Annotated bibliography (Week 6)
- Paper outline (Week 6)
- Draft submission (January)
- Final conference-ready paper (January)
- Optional presentation rehearsal

Attendance Policy

Students are permitted **one absence** over the 6-week course. A second absence may result in withdrawal for non-participation.

Excused absences (serious illness, family emergency) require documentation. Because this course operates as a hands-on apprenticeship, physical presence is essential.

Suggested Research Resources

- Bay County Historical Society – www.baycohistory.org
- NWRLS Local History (search “graphic”)
- Archive.org – Panama City Publishing Co. Museum
- Delta Historical Society (Escanaba, MI) – www.deltahistorical.org
- Florida Hidden Treasures – www.flhiddentreasures.com
- UF Smathers Library – *St. Andrews Buoy*
- Florida Memory – www.floridamemory.com