

History 346, Spring 2012
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Online Exhibition

Overview

By the end of the semester, as a class, we will create an online exhibition about Idaho women's amateur arts and crafts. The exhibition will be optimized for a screen the size and resolution of an iPad's.

Because this is an upper-division history course, and because I am not burdening you with individual research papers that would distract you from this group project, I have very high expectations for this exhibition. I do not consider it a "class project"; rather, I see it as a contribution to the professional practice of public history.

In consultation with Sarah Phillips, curatorial registrar at the Idaho State Historical Museum, we will select art and artifacts representative of Idaho women's artistry and craftsmanship.

We will look at these types of arts and crafts made by women, with one group of students examining each of these categories:

- clothing
- quilts
- needlework
- beadwork
- basketry
- ornaments made from human hair
- taxidermy
- plein air painting

Groups

Each working group will comprise five students. Select your group members carefully. Think about, for example, individuals' schedules, knowledge, enthusiasm, and skills. In particular, pay attention to writing, editing/proofreading, photography, and research skills, and try to have a combination of people who can see the "big picture" and those who tend to be more detail-oriented. Group members should complement one another's strengths and weaknesses.

Work must be equitably distributed within groups, but how that work is distributed is at each group's discretion—with one exception: every student must contribute to the research and writing of the working group's submitted text.

I reserve the right to intervene in group work if group members alert me to students who are not doing their fair share of the work or, conversely, are micromanaging the project so much that its progress slows demonstrably. My intervention may take the form of removing students from groups and/or reconstituting groups. Students who do not participate significantly in their group's efforts will see their lack of effort reflected in their final grades.

Everyone in your group will receive the same grade, unless it comes to my attention that effort by individual students within the group was significantly inequitable.

Once the project is complete, individual students will turn in confidential descriptions and assessments of their own work, as well as of the other students in their group.

Project parameters

Each group's contribution to the larger project will include

- curation of 5-10 objects within its adopted category;
- clear photos of each object, from two or more angles;
- close readings of each object;
- as much history of each individual object as available;
- a 1,500- to 2,000-word essay providing background information, as well as thoughtful analysis of, their category of craft; and
- a descriptive label (caption) for each of their objects.

Furthermore, each group will

- conduct thorough research in primary and secondary sources;
- contextualize its objects in the history and practice of the craft, in women's work and cultural roles, and in Idaho;
- revise, revise, and then revise again, until the writing is flawless;
- submit only original work, and cite all sources; and
- be careful not to violate copyright laws or any museum's or archive's rules for use of images and texts.

I will provide each group with a way to log in to the exhibition platform so that it may submit and edit its work.

Important dates

February 9: Working group sign-up

March 1: Working group calendar and work plan due

April 12: Informal presentations on work to date and challenges

May 7: All work must be completed.

May 8: In-class working group presentations during final exam period. Individual assessments of group members' contributions due.