 Public, popular and academic histories

Year 12 history extension – teacher-developed study

4 weeks (6 hours)

This document references the [History Extension Stage 6 Syllabus](https://syllabus.nesa.nsw.edu.au/history-extension-stage6/) © 2017 NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales.

Description of unit

Students review and critique the features and roles of public, academic and popular histories. They compare work on a single subject from these three types of history. The investigation culminates with a collaborative project in which students representing the three types of history work together to plan a program of events and writing focused on a contemporary historical issue.

Focus questions

What different interpretations exist of the historical or historiographical issue? Why do those interpretations differ? What is your position on the issue? How does your position compare to existing sources on the issue?

Outcomes

* HE12-1 analyses and evaluates different approaches to history and the complexity of factors that shape historical interpretations.
* HE12-3 communicates through detailed, well-structured texts to explain, argue, discuss, analyse and evaluate historical issues.

Objectives

Knowledge and understanding

Students

* Develop knowledge and understanding about significant historiographical ideas and methodologies.

Skills

Students:

* Design, undertake and evaluate historical inquiry.
* Communicate their understanding of historiography and the results of historical inquiry

Assessment

Formative – teacher review of notes constructed after each session and final historical commemoration group task.

Summative – trial HSC examination

| Outcomes/content | Teaching and learning | Evidence of learning |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Academic and Popular Histories  HE12-1 analyses and evaluates different approaches to history and the complexity of factors that shape historical interpretations. | Session One (90 minutes):   1. Prior to the session, students read one article on academic history and one article on popular history for background 2. Either Gordon Wood’s article ‘In Defense of Academic History Writing’ from Perspectives on History (48:4; April 2010) or ‘That Barnes and Noble Dream’ (D. Greenberg, Slate, May 17 2005), or 3. Elizabeth Norton’s blog post on popular history – [‘Writing Popular History: Comfortable, Unchallenging Nostalgia-Fodder?](http://www.historymatters.group.shef.ac.uk/popular-vs-academic-history/)’ (2013) 4. During the session, teacher gives an overview of both types of history drawing and expanding on points made in pre-reading. Key focus points include: 5. The rigorousness of research – footnoting, peer review 6. The specificity of academic histories 7. The role of the historical process as per von Ranke 8. The role of narrative in popular histories 9. Accessibility of popular histories, especially digitally – podcasting, games, and so on. 10. Film history 11. Who is influenced by each type and how much? 12. Students take structured notes under the following headings for both academic and popular history: 13. Purpose 14. Methodologies 15. Sources used 16. Institutional influence (universities, publishers, and so on) 17. Publication, communication and audience 18. How audience access it – type, ease, scale 19. Students are given two pieces of history on the same topic, one academic in form, one popular. A great example is writing about Australia during the First World War – texts could include 20. Chapter 1 of Peter Fitzsimons’ Gallipoli (2014) 21. Professor Joan Beaumont’s 2015 article ‘Remembering Australia’s First World War’ Australian Historical Studies 41(1), 1-6 22. Students work in groups to read and analyse these two texts looking for the features that distinguish them in terms of style, methodology and content 23. Peter Fitzsimons’s interviews found in the DET’s Writers Talk resource are very valuable here – videos 2-6 contain reflections on his purposes and processes of writing history | * Detailed, structured notes on academic and popular histories |
| Public Histories  HE12-1 analyses and evaluates different approaches to history and the complexity of factors that shape historical interpretations. | Session Two (90 minutes):   1. Prior to the session, students read about the nature and value of public history in preparation for their field trip 2. Prior to the session, they read Irina Savelieva's article ''Public History' As A Vocation' (Working Paper, National Research University Higher School of Economics, 2013) 3. Prior to the session, students review the National Council for Public History’s website and resources on the nature of public history (USA) 4. Prior to the session, students download the Sydney Culture Walks app 5. During the session, students go on a field trip to experience local public history firsthand 6. Suggested field trip uses the Sydney Culture Walks app to take selected podcast-guided tours around Sydney’s historical sites – WWI tour will allow direct comparison to Gallipoli and ‘Remembering Australia’s First World War’ from Session 1 7. Other suggested field trips include museums, history talks at museums or historical sites designed for access by tourists 8. Take advantage of this opportunity to target some local history 9. Students use Voice Memos to record their discussion/thoughts on the use of public history as they take part in the field trip 10. Students transcribe notes at home using the same headings used in Session 1 | * Detailed, structured notes on public history |
| Evaluation of the three types of history  HE12-1 analyses and evaluates different approaches to history and the complexity of factors that shape historical interpretations.  HE12-3 communicates through detailed, well-structured texts to explain, argue, discuss, analyse and evaluate historical issues. | Sessions 3-4 (180 minutes)  Part One:   1. Students are divided into three groups representing public, academic and popular histories 2. Groups read one of the following articles: 3. Paul Ham's article 'Human Factors’ (SMH March 22 2014) 4. Paula Michaels' article 'What Is Academic History For?', The Conversation March 25 2014 5. Robert Weible's article from Perspectives on History March 2008: 'Defining Public History: Is it Possible? Is it Necessary?' 6. Students prepare one point in favour of their assigned type of history with one example from contemporary history 7. In Part One of the session, students debate the strengths and weaknesses of the three types of history 8. Students present their points in favour of their school of history and discuss their example 9. Once each point is presented, students are invited to respond to one another with critiques or comments on each type of history 10. Teacher to record debate with Voice Memo to transmit to students at end of session 11. After sessions, students record at least one strength and critique of each type of history, with examples   Part Two:   1. In Part Two of the session, students design a program of history focused on a contemporary issue 2. Teacher presents students with a contemporary historical issue – an important person who has recently died and needs to be commemorated, an upcoming anniversary, and so on – make sure it is very current, very relevant and preferably local 3. Students work together (or in small groups) to design a program of history writing and/or events that educates the public on the historical issue, commemorates the point of history and incorporates all three types of history 4. Program should include writings commissioned, events planned, books published, and so on, and a timeline. It should highlight how the three types of history can complement each other in creating a rich public awareness of important historical issues. | * Student presentation of the features of their school of history * Detailed, structured notes critiquing and evaluating each type of history * Plan for historical commemoration incorporating all three types of history |

Reflection and evaluation: