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## **ASSIGNMENT Capstone Project: Curating a Class Exhibit “A History of Voting Rights in Tennessee”**

Patricia Rutenberg

*University of Tennessee, Knoxville*

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## ASSIGNMENT

# Capstone Project: Curating a Class Exhibit “A History of Voting Rights in Tennessee”

**Teacher Scholar Fellow:** Patricia Brake Rutenberg, PhD

**Course:** The City as History: Introduction to Public History

**Possible Course Adaptations:** History, Political Science

## OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the process of curating a small exhibit on “A History of Voting Rights in Tennessee.”
2. To work as a class on a final, capstone project.
3. To incorporate prior research and class assignments to develop a deeper understanding of the theme of the exhibit.
4. To articulate change over time with a visual product.

## Preliminary Research

Since this is a final, end-of-term, capstone project, the student exhibit will build upon prior assignments, such as the examples below.

1. Read materials on voting rights for your state. For example, in Tennessee, students could read pertinent sections from: Franklin, Sekou M. and Ray Block Jr. 2020. *Losing Power: African Americans and Racial Polarization in Tennessee Politics* Athens: University of Georgia Press; and Douglas, Joshua A. 2014. "The Right to Vote Under State Constitutions." *Vanderbilt Law Review* 67 (1).
2. Complete a working timeline on a history of voting rights in the United States.
3. Visit local historic sites that have a connection to voting rights. For example, in Knoxville, Tennessee, students could visit the historic Blount Mansion, home of William Blount, signer of the US Constitution from North Carolina. Enslaved as well as free persons lived at Blount Mansion. It is the site of the drafting of the first state constitution of Tennessee.
4. Read and compare the first and subsequent constitutions of your state, paying special attention to voting rights.
5. Complete research and participate in a class debate on women's suffrage.
6. Read and write a book review on John Lewis's *March*.
7. Complete document analysis on the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

## Creating the Exhibit

Using information and guidance from the Smithsonian, <https://exhibits.si.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Guide-to-Exhibit-Development.pdf>, we will think about the class exhibit in terms of:

1. Theme
2. Key materials (archival and digital)
3. Critical Questions

### **Next, we will develop the exhibit, using the Smithsonian guidelines:**

1. We will create an interpretive master plan.
2. We will develop a concept design.
3. We will conduct research at the McClung Historical Collections and the UT Special Collections.
4. We will make selections of images.
5. We will write labels.
6. We will peer-review labels and images.
7. We will send our exhibit posters to the UT Print Shop.
8. We will install exhibit.

## STUDENTS WILL BE ASSESSED ON THE FOLLOWING:

1. **Research:** after initial overview research, each student will conduct more extensive research on 3 exhibit items, including the following: documents, photographs, objects.
2. **Writing** of 3 labels.
3. **Peer-review** of 3 labels.
4. **Overall participation** in the project.

## Other useful websites on curating exhibits:

1. "Making Museum Exhibits Accessible for All." 2014. <https://openexhibits.org/wp-content/uploads/papers/MakingMuseumExhibitsAccessibleForAll.pdf>.
2. Museum Environments. 2024. <https://museumenvironments.com/planning-the-affordable-museum-exhibit-9-tips/>.