



Conference Title: Vulnerable Voices: Power and Privilege in Oral History

Conference Dates: March 15-16, 2018

Location: American University, Washington, DC

Deadline for Submissions: January 15, 2018

Oral History in the Mid-Atlantic Region (OHMAR) invites paper and panel proposals for its 2018 Annual Meeting, “Vulnerable Voices: Power and Privilege in Oral History.” The conference will be held at American University from Thursday, March 15 to Friday, March 16, 2018.

In this Digital Age, electronic media stokes the creation and consumption of oral histories. Through communication, creation, capture, and curation, oral histories cross traditional social divisions and explore race, class, age, health, and gender. When considering both community and thesis-driven projects, interviewers must be mindful of both audience and privilege, as well as the legacy of their work. How do we effectively—and ethically—record and preserve narratives from vulnerable voices? In turn, how can we acknowledge distinctions, record perspectives, and interpret experiences while maintaining the narrator’s ownership or agency? When interviews conclude and release forms are signed, how much control do narrators have over the content of “their” stories?

OHMAR encourages presenters to creatively interpret the conference theme in the context of their own work and community projects.

Possible topics may include:

Thematic and Methodological Ideas

- Interpretive challenges of oral histories among vulnerable populations
- Legal, ethical, and moral questions regarding narrator-interviewer power dynamics and informed consent, including the contextual use of interview release forms.
- Oral history and public practice: using oral history for social change, activism, public art, policy initiatives
- Specialized training for interviewers who engage vulnerable populations
- Defining vulnerable populations: what special considerations do we need to keep in mind in developing such projects?
- Technology and access in oral history with vulnerable populations
 - How do we bring the interviews back to the narrators?
 - Should oral histories with compromising content be made available online?

Content Ideas

- Oral history projects that address:
 - Homeless populations
 - Mental health



- Disability/Health conditions
- Veterans
- Survivors of natural disaster
- Survivors of state violence, domestic abuse
- Substance abuse
- Children
- Older or aging populations
- Oral histories with healthcare workers caring for vulnerable populations
- Oral histories with advocates/public interest lawyers/policymakers
- The experience of living in environmentally vulnerable areas
- Oral history and therapy
- Oral history of the sick and dying
- Issues of documentation, residency, transience, mental health
- Federal oral history projects (e.g., the WPA slave oral history collection)

Application Guidelines:

The program committee invites proposals for panels or roundtables, as well as for individual papers. We encourage proposals from students and early career oral historians, and we welcome presentations that feature audio-visual components. We also welcome proposals for alternative session types, including experiential modules, “point-counterpoint” debates, and community viewpoints comprising the narrators and interviewers of an oral history project.

Individual paper/presentation proposals should include a brief abstract of 250-500 words, a biographical summary about the author, and contact information. Roundtable proposals should include a 250-500 word abstract of the roundtable topic, a brief biographical summary for each invited participant, and contact information. Panel proposals should include a broad description of the panel theme and brief abstracts of 150-200 words for each paper.

OHMAR also encourages poster submissions, comprising a 200-300 word abstract, a brief biographical summary of the creator, and the creator’s contact information. Posters can be no larger than 36” x 48” and may also use multimedia options (e.g., oral history recordings or GIS “Story Maps”) as a complement (presenters must bring their own technology).

The deadline for all submissions is January 15, 2018. All submissions should be emailed with attachments to ohmar.conference@gmail.com. Please feel free to contact us at that email address at any time with questions.



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OHMAR invites proposals for the 2018 conference program cover design! The prize for the winning design is free conference registration, including lunch at the Pogue Award luncheon.

**Design Submission Requirements:**

letter size (i.e., 8.5" x 11")

include OHMAR logo (large)

include AU Public History logo (small)



include conference title: Vulnerable Voices: Power and Privilege in Oral History

conference dates and location: March 15-16, 2018, at American University in Washington, DC

include social media info: (@OHMidAtlantic #OHMAR2018)

include OHMAR's website: <http://ohmar.org>

submitted as a PDF

**Submission Deadline:** January 15, 2018