This course introduces students to collaborative humanities methods that encourage democratic participation among publics more broadly conceived than the academy. The first half of the course provides an introduction to the methods by which marginalized communities become partners in research and not simply objects of study. We investigate indigenous research methods, participatory archives, queer public history, collaborative ethnography, and interactive theater.

The second half of the seminar explores case studies, focusing on projects that enable communities to frame research questions, project design, and interpretation, with the goal of generating social change. Final projects draw on JHU’s archival, museum, and library collections. Throughout the semester, students benefit from hands-on workshops, course sessions co-taught by community partners, guest lectures, and public talks.

This introductory course does not require background in public humanities or previous coursework.