

HIST 301a and 301b
NAME & NUMBER OF COURSE

SYNONYMOUS COURSES:

(a) replaces _____
 (course #)

(b) cannot take _____ for further credit
 (course #)

SUPPLIES/MATERIALS: Materials required for practicum to be supplied by employers.

TEXTBOOKS, REFERENCES, MATERIALS (List reading resources elsewhere)

Benson, et al., eds., *Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public*
 Howe, *Careers for Students of History*
 Howe and Kemp, eds., *Public History: an Introduction*
 Kyvig and Marty, *Nearby History: Exploring the Past Around You*
 Leffler and Brent, eds., *Public History Readings*

OBJECTIVES:

- To be knowledgeable about the ways in which history has and can be applied outside academic work, enriching the students' capabilities, understanding and interest in history;
- To enhance employment opportunities, by developing students' applied skills, providing them with work experience and building contacts with local employers;
- To introduce students to various career options outside of an academic setting which history prepares one for; and
- To enrich other course offerings in the History Department by providing the opportunity to rethink the practice and application of history.

METHODS:

- Use a seminar setting to challenge students to critically read/observe, analyse and discuss a variety of historical applications (articles, books, films, museum displays, popular and business histories, grade school curricula, journalism, policy papers, legal research, and the like);
- Emphasize problem-solving techniques and group work to broaden students' skills;
- Use guest speakers from local companies and organizations to acquaint students with the various job options outside the university, utilizing 'hands on' demonstrations;
- Place students with local companies and organizations to hone applied skills and provide experience – combining work on a specifically defined project and more general job skills;
- Review the progress of practicums in monthly class meetings during the practicum period; and
- Sharpen presentation skills by presenting final projects during the post-practicum seminars.

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STUDENT EVALUATION PROCEDURE:

[NB: The value attributed in parentheses to each assignment is the percentage of the final grade for the full year.]

1. An essay providing a critical review of assigned readings or appraisal of an application of history (eg. film, display). [5%]
2. A group presentation, to be given in seminar, in which students tackle an assigned project in applied history. [10%]
3. The practicum journal, in which students record in detail their work experience; to be consulted in monthly meetings and submitted at the end of the practicum. [15%]
4. A final work report, in which students reflect upon and assess what was achieved during their practicum. [5%]
5. An employer evaluation form (this will be consulted by the instructor in setting the grade; the employer will not fix a letter or numerical grade, but provide a qualitative assessment). [15%]
6. The final project is the culmination of the practicum experience; it will have been the primary piece of work agreed upon by student and employer at the beginning of the practicum, and toward which the student has worked. Projects will be presented in shortened form to the post-practicum seminars. [30%]
7. A written career-related assignment, due during the post-practicum seminars, in which students directly consider the career options and implications opened up by this course and the practicum experience. [10%]
8. Seminar participation. [10%]

COURSE CONTENT

Stretching over a full academic year, HIST 301a–301b will be divided into three parts: 1) pre-practicum seminars; 2) practicum; and 3) post-practicum seminars.

- 1) Pre-Practicum Seminars: From September through October, the class will meet in weekly, 4-hour seminars. The content of these seminars will include:
 - A. Through critical consideration of the established literature on applied history (see **TEXTBOOK** section) and other applications (film, monuments, etc.), we will address the conceptual, methodological and ethical issues raised by the application of history outside the university classroom. Questions or issues to be tackled include: What role does and has history played in society? How has it been used, and abused? How and why do people undertake the “invention of tradition”, in the words of Eric Hobsbawm? We will then turn to the varieties of nonacademic history (museums, historical tourism, business history, and so on), addressing the particular challenges these present. What new skills and procedures do these demand? Are there questions (ethical or otherwise) which arise from producing history “for hire” rather than for academic purposes? If so, how can one handle them while still maintaining integrity as a historical scholar?
 - B. Guest speakers from local organizations and companies will visit the seminars to introduce students to the world of nonacademic work. Such speakers will range from museum directors and archivists, to lawyers and journalists, and most likely will be prospective practicum employers. The guest speakers will introduce students to the job opportunities outside academics which history prepares one for and inform them of the skills needed for each vocation, throughout making use of hands-on presentations and projects.

COURSE CONTENT (continued)

- C. Finally, time will be given in later seminars to arranging practicum placements. Students will be presented with the placements available, and proceed to secure one they deem most appropriate. We also will go over the organization and supporting documentation involved in the practicums (learning contract, journal, etc.).
- 2) Practicum: From November through February of the Winter term, students will be working 8 hours per week in a local company or organization in an arranged practicum. The main features or details of this practicum include:
 - A. The learning contract or agreement sets out the tasks and responsibilities of those involved in the practicum. Drafted in discussions between the student and employer, and approved by the instructor, the contract will: define the goals the student hopes to achieve (vocational, personal and intellectual); clearly specify the major project, along with general work tasks, the student will undertake; specify the work schedule and location; and identify the individual from the employer's organization who will serve as supervisor for the student.
 - B. The student will keep a daily work journal of her/his practicum experience. Here, she/he will keep a record of the work done, the progress of the major project, the new skills acquired; also, the student will reflect upon how the practicum company or organization functions (how it is organized, and the like). The journal, which is to be submitted for grading after completion of the practicum, will be consulted during the monthly progress meetings and will provide the basis for the final work report.
 - C. The class will reassemble for monthly meetings to discuss the progress of their practicums.
 - D. The final project will be the crowning achievement of the practicum experience. Defined in the learning contract, it will take whatever form most appropriate – from written and illustrated reports or pamphlets, to historical videos and multi-media displays. The employer will retain a copy of the project; the student will present another copy to the post-practicum seminars.
 - 3) Post-Practicum Seminars: Held from March through April, these seminars will give students an opportunity to present their practicum work, reflect upon what they have learnt during the practicum, and consider the career possibilities opened to them by the course.
 - A. As noted above, students will present their final projects to the seminars, receiving feedback from their fellow students.
 - B. The post-practicum seminars will give students an opportunity to draw upon their practicum experience to revisit some of the literature and issues introduced in pre-practicum classes. Conceptual questions (such as the issue of ethics) will be addressed, along with more pragmatic questions of methods, skills, and the like. The issues and questions addressed will arise from specific practicum situations experienced by students.
 - C. Finally, students will consider career-related questions raised by the course: What applied skills has this course developed, and how might these be presented to a future employer when seeking work? Has the practicum experience opened up employment opportunities? Has this course helped the student in deciding upon a future career? Students will actively investigate future career or education paths; material for this will range from Howe's *Careers for Students of History*, to resources from the career advising offices of the college.