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**HIST 890-002: Professional Lives of Historians**  
**Department of History, UNC-Chapel Hill**  
**Spring 2016**

Wednesdays, 4:40-7:10 pm, New East 301

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Office Hours: Monday, 4-5 pm; Friday, 9-11 am; and by appointment

**Course Description**

In this course, students will explore the many identities of professional historians. Historians are professors, teachers, archivists, journalists, museum directors, policy analysts, publishers/editors, and more. In this course, students will learn about these different fields and careers and meet with invited guests and potential mentors from UNC, the UNC alumni network, and beyond. Through readings and assignments, students will gain familiarity with the debates about the state and future of the historical profession, identify and develop skills that will serve them in any future career as a historian, and explore their own goals as professional historians and public intellectuals.

Class discussions will focus on questions including:

- What defines the modern historical profession?
- What challenges and opportunities currently face higher education, and how do these affect historians?
- How should historians engage the public in meaningful discussion about the past and the present, and how does this vary by field?
- How do public history, digital humanities, and other sub-fields relate to the broader profession?
- How can current graduate students cultivate skills relevant to both academic and non-academic careers?
- Outside of higher education, which domains are most promising for historians to pursue—freelancing, journalism, public history, nonprofits, and so on?

**Course Goals**

Students will:

- Develop practical skills crucial to success in any career
- Examine the cultures and structures of academia in general, and academic history in particular
- Examine the cultures and structures of other fields in which professional historians work

- Articulate a strategy for achieving their immediate and long-term career goals
- Understand some of the challenges they will face in working toward those goals

### **Required Texts**

Readings include assessments of the state of the profession; analyses of opportunities and challenges facing higher education; theoretical discussions and commentary on the role of historians as public intellectuals; and practical examples of applied history and public engagement. The following texts are required and available for purchase at Student Stores.

- Leonard Cassuto, *The Graduate School Mess and How We Can Fix It* (Harvard University Press, 2015)
- Mary Ann Mason et al. *Do Babies Matter? Gender and Family in the Ivory Tower* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2013)

### **Course Assignments**

Because this course is as much a practicum as a seminar, assignments include hands-on activities such as writing an op-ed; creating an individually tailored professional website; practicing oral presentation skills; developing CVs and resumes; visiting and evaluating a museum exhibit, website, or other form of public engagement; and conducting and reflecting on informational interviews with historians or professionals in closely related fields. Students will assemble a portfolio of their work, with opportunities to tailor assignments to their own professional interests and add any components they wish to their website.

#### **Graded Assignments:**

- Participation in discussion, including one day of leading discussion (15%)
- Op-ed (10%)
- Evaluation of a museum exhibit, website, or other public history product (10%)
- Reflection on Informational Interviews (10%)
- Professional Portfolio: professional website, CV/Resume, career goals and strategy statement, revised op-ed (20%)
- Research Brief/Position Paper on the Historical Profession (25%)
- Oral presentation of research brief/position paper (10%)

## Schedule of Course Meetings/Readings\*

\*Please note: There are active discussions and news coverage about many of the topics we are discussing, and I may revise or adjust readings as we progress.

### Week 1, Jan 20: Introductions

- Anthony T. Grafton and James Grossman, “No More Plan B: A Very Modest Proposal for Graduate Programs in History,” *Perspectives on History*, Oct. 2011
- L. Maren Wood and Robert B. Townsend, “The Many Careers of History PhDs: A Study of Job Outcomes, Spring 2013,” Report to the American Historical Association
- Edward J. Balleisen, “The Career Question in History,” *Perspectives on History*, Dec. 2011
- Thomas Bender, “What’s Been Lost in History,” *Chronicle Review*, Feb. 12, 2012
- Cassuto, “In Search of a Usable Future,” in *The Graduate School Mess*

### Week 2, Jan 27: Cultures and Structures of Higher Ed I: The Big Picture

Assignment:

- This week, spend some time each day reading headlines on *Inside Higher Ed* and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*

Readings:

- Derek Bok, “The American System of Higher Education,” in *Higher Education in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015, revised edition), 9-27.
- Cassuto, “Admissions,” “Degrees,” and “Professionalization” in *The Graduate School Mess*
- Anthony Grafton, “Humanities and Inhumanities,” *New Republic*, Feb. 17, 2010
- David J. Leonard, “Imposter Syndrome: Academic Identity under Siege?” *Chronicle of Higher Ed* (blog), Feb. 5, 2014.
- Louis Menand, “The PhD Problem,” excerpts from *The Marketplace of Ideas: Reform and Resistance in the American University* (2010) reprinted in *Harvard Magazine*, Nov.-Dec. 2009

### Week 3, Feb 3: Cultures and Structures of Higher Ed II: Tenure, Adjuncts, and Faculty Positions of Many Types

- Anna Peak, “So You Want to be a Tenured Ally,” *The Academe Blog*, Aug. 31, 2015
- Christopher Newfield, “Time for a New Strategy,” *Inside Higher Ed*, July 30, 2015
- Jedediah Purdy, “Tenure, Fairness, and Fear(lessness),” *Huffington Post*, June 9, 2015
- M. Kevin Eagan, Audrey J. Jaeger, and Ashley Grantham, “Supporting the Academic Majority: Policies and Practices Related to Part-Time Faculty’s Job Satisfaction,” *Journal of Higher Education* 86, no. 3 (May/June 2015): 448-83.

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- Selections from “Community College Historians in the United States,” a status report from the Organization of American Historians’ Committee on Community Colleges, 1999.

#### **Week 4, Feb 10: Cultures and Structures of Higher Ed III: Identity and Marginality**

**[Facilitator: Virginia]**

- Mason et al., *Do Babies Matter* (all)
- Colleen Flaherty, “Bias Against Female Instructors,” *Inside Higher Ed*, Jan. 11, 2016
- Eric Anthony Grollman, “On Being ‘Conditionally Accepted’ in Academe,” *Inside Higher Ed*, Jan. 8, 2016

#### **Week 5, Feb 17: Setting Goals, Time Management, and Networking**

**Due: Proposal for Research Brief/Position Paper**

Assignments:

- Find and review the profiles of five historians on academia.edu and linkedin.com. Create a profile for yourself on at least one site.
- Draft a schedule “budget” for the next week in your working and non-working life. This should include not only formal meetings and commitments, but also your individual work plans. In the same document or app, keep track of what you actually do versus what you had planned.

Readings:

- Eva Lantsoght, “Time Management in Academia: Balancing Teaching and Research,” *PhD Talk* (blog), Jan. 21, 2014
- Nate Kreuter, “Learning Time Management,” *Inside Higher Ed*, May 30, 2012.
- Jan Goldstein, “Precocious Professionalism: An Academic Epidemic?” *Perspectives on History* (April 2014)
- Leonard Cassuto, “The Problem of Professionalization,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 23, 2015
- Marine Thomson, “Conference Chic, or, How to Dress Like an Anthropologist” (2013)
- Karen Kelsky, “How to Tailor your Online Image,” *Chronicle Vitae*, June 8, 2015
- Katherine McDonough, “Online Presence for Your Early Career,” *Dissertation Reviews*, Nov. 14, 2014

#### **Week 6, Feb 24: The Academic Job Market and Job Hunt**

Assignment:

- Skim job adds on H-Net, look at trends in your field.
- Schedule your first informational interview

Readings:

- Cassuto, “The Job Market Reconceived,” in *The Graduate School Mess*

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- “How to get the Mentoring you Want: A Guide for Graduate Students,” Rackham Graduate School, University of Michigan, 2014.
- Londa Shiebinger, Andrea Davies Henderson, and Sharron K. Gilmartin, *Dual-Career Academic Couples: What Universities Need to Know* (2008), pp. 1-9.

**Week 7, Mar 2: History in the Public Sphere**

**Due: Op-Ed on a topic of your choice**

**Guest speaker: Peter Coclanis, Albert R. Newsome Professor, History; Director, Global Research Institute, UNC**

- Christopher Phelps, “Removing Racist Symbols Isn’t a Denial of History,” *Chronicle of Higher Ed*, Jan. 8, 2016
- Thomas Bender, “How Historians Lost Their Public,” *Chronicle Review*, Mar. 30, 2015
- Andrew J. Hoffman, “Isolated Scholars: Making Bricks, Not Shaping Policy,” *Chronicle of Higher Ed*, Feb. 9, 2015
- Paul Dicken, “You Want to Write for a Popular Audience? Really?” *Chronicle of Higher Ed*, June 9, 2015
- Jonathan Zimmerman, “How to get your Op-Ed Published” (<http://historynewsnetwork.org/article/159150>)
- Selections TBA from Alex Pang, *Relevant History* (blog)

**Week 8, Mar 9: Public History and Digital Humanities**

**Due: Evaluation of a museum exhibit, website, or other public history product**

**Guest speaker: Stewart Varner, Digital Scholarship Librarian, UNC**

**[Facilitator: Tine]**

Assignment:

- Explore National Council on Public History website

Readings:

- Selections TBA from *The Public Historian*
- Daniel I. Cohen and Roy Rosenzweig, *Digital History: A Guide to Gathering, Preserving, and Presenting the Past on the Web* (2005)
- “Interchange: The Promise of Digital History,” *Journal of American History* 95, no. 2 (Sept 2008)

**Spring Break, Mar 14-18**

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**Week 9, Mar 23: Alt-Ac**

**Guest speaker: Anne Mitchell Whisnant, Deputy Secretary of the Faculty; Adjunct Associate Professor of History and American Studies, UNC**

**[Facilitator: Angelica]**

Assignments:

- Explore AHA “Career Diversity for Historians” website
- Search #altac on Twitter and spend some time reading the results

Readings:

- Susan Ferber, “Turning ‘Plan B’ into a ‘Plan A’ Life,” *Chronicle of Higher Ed*, July 23, 2012
- Emily Mace, “Alt-Ac or Bust,” *Vitae*, Feb. 24, 2015
- Allen Mikaelian, “Name That Career: The Difficulties of Writing about Those Jobs,” *Perspectives on History*, Sept. 2013
- Marc Bousquet, “Moving the Goalposts in Graduate Education,” *Inside Higher Ed*, Oct. 20, 2015

**Week 10, Mar 30: Non-academic Jobs: Non-profits, Think Tanks, and Public Sector**

**Guest Speaker: Kim Kutz, US History Content Fellow, Khan Academy**

- Annalee Newitz, “Out of Academia,” *Salon*, Nov. 6, 1998
- Susan Basalla and Maggie Debelius, “So What Are You Going to Do with That?” *Chronicle of Higher Ed*, April 28, 2015
- “FAQs about Seaching for Job,” [beyondacademe.com](http://beyondacademe.com)

**Saturday, April 2: Transferable PhD Conference (Joint conference with Duke)**

**Week 11, April 6: Non-academic jobs: Business and Entrepreneurship**

**Guest Speaker: Alisa Harrison, Director, Alisa Harrison, Inc.; Executive Director, Victoria Division of Family Practice**

Assignment:

- Choose and read five profiles in Jennifer Polk’s “Transition Q&As” (<http://fromphdtolife.com/resources/transition-q-as/>)

Readings:

- Joshua B. Gross, “Information Technology: The Accidental Career for PhDs,” *Chronicle of Higher Ed*, July 29, 2015
- Fatimah Williams Castro, “Quitting While Black,” *Vitae*, Aug. 6, 2015
- Ms. Mentor, “Who Are You Trying to Impress?” *Chronicle of Higher Ed*, Oct. 27, 2014

**Week 12, April 13: Transferable Skills and Marketing Yourself in Print and in Person**

**Due: Draft of Professional Portfolio**

**Guest speaker: Amy Blackburn, Senior Assistant Director for Graduate Students, UNC Career Services**

- Paul Edwards, “How to Give an Academic Talk, v5.2” (2014)
- UNC Career Services, “Interviewing Basics”
- Columbia University History in Action, “Skills Profile” ([http://historyinaction.columbia.edu/about\\_hia/skills-profile/](http://historyinaction.columbia.edu/about_hia/skills-profile/))
- Selections from Susan Basalla and Maggie Debelius, *So What Are You Going to Do With That* (University of Chicago Press, revised ed., 2007): pp. 28-42 (ch 1); pp. 99-147 (chs. 4-5)
- Megan Doherty, “The Humanities Ph.D. at Work,” *Chronicle of Higher Ed*, Feb. 20, 2013

**Week 13, April 20: Oral Presentations**

**Due: Position Paper/Research Brief**

**Week 14, April 27: Graduate Training Revisited**

**Due: Reflections on Informational Interviews**

**Due: Professional Portfolio**

- Cassuto, “Classwork,” “The Comprehensive Exam,” “Advising,” and “In Search of an Ethic,” in *The Graduate School Mess*
- Derek Bok, “Graduate Education,” in *Higher Education in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015, revised edition), 225-46.
- Thomas Bender et al., “The National Shape of Doctoral Education,” in *The Education of Historians for the Twenty-First Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, for the American Historical Association, 2004)
- Paula E. Findlen, “Why Go to Graduate School?” *Chronicle Review*, Nov. 17, 2014
- Francis Bryant, “Have I Become an Educated Rita?” *Chronicle of Higher Ed*, July 22, 2015
- James M. Van Wyck and Joseph M. Vukov, “Give Us a Voice in Our Own Future,” *Chronicle of Higher Ed*, Aug. 26, 2015