

History 512: The Profession of History

This course will help prepare students for life with a History Ph.D. You are completing your Ph.D., and the specter of post-degree employment looms large. What now, as you transition out of coursework? How best can you prepare for the future? Through a combination of readings and hands-on activities, students will consider the various opportunities both in and, to a lesser extent, without academia. Assigned readings will deal with various aspects of the history and practice of professional history, including the state of higher education, career management, job markets, grant writing, time management and work/life balance, cultivating a professional identity, diversity, and all the low-down nitty gritty aspects of making History your life's work. Along the way, students will write, discuss, and perform weekly topics. Students will also produce and review a dissertation prospectus as the main final project of the semester.

required readings

- Robert Townsend, *History's Babel: Scholarship, Professionalization, and the Historical Enterprise in the United States, 1880-1940* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 2013) 978-0226923932
- Marc Bosquet, *How the University Works: Higher Education and the Low Wage Nation* (NYU Press, 2008) 978-0814799758
- Julia Miller Vick and Jennifer S. Furlong, *The Academic Job Search Handbook*, 4th Edition (Univ. of Penn Press, 2008)
- Paul J. Silvia, *How to Write a Lot: A Practical Guide to Academic Writing* (American Psychological Assn, 2007) 978-1591477433
- Jeffrey L. Buller, *The Essential College Professor: A Practical Guide to an Academic Career* (Jossey-Bass, 2010) 978-0470373736
- Michèle Lamont, *How Professors Think: Inside the Curious World of Academic Judgement* (Harvard Univ. Press, 2010) 978-0674057333
- Ken Bain, *What the Best College Teachers Do*, (HUP, 2004) 978-0674013254

required work

Students taking this course for credit are required to attend all seminar meetings, and finish all writing exercises. The writing exercises for this semester are designed to push you further into consideration of your own research, and how

to present it to a variety of audiences academic and otherwise. We will be considering grant applications, the cv, job materials, and also importantly, your dissertation or thesis prospectus. Additionally, as the core of any given week will be discussion of assigned readings or colleague's writing, this work will need to be done substantially prior to our class meetings in order to give your colleagues time to consider it.

weekly:

- Group email prior to class reflecting on the week's readings, when some have been assigned.

other writing assignments:

- Project description – 1 sentence, 1 paragraph, 1 page.
- Grant application project narrative – 3 pages, single-spaced.
- c.v.
- Course descriptions – 1 undergrad, 1 grad. Dream class.

Week 1: Introduction (January 13)

Now What?

Readings:

- Karen Kelsky, [Graduate School is a Means to a Job](#) *Chronicle of Higher Ed* (March 27, 2012)
- Eunice Williams, [Going Rogue](#), *Chronicle of Higher Ed* (October 9, 2012).
- Julie Miller Vick and Jennifer S. Furlong, [From Advisee to Peer](#), *Chronicle of Higher Ed* (November 20, 2012)
- R. Townsend, [What Makes a Successful Academic Career in History? A Field Report from the Higher Ranks](#), *Perspectives* (Dec 2012).
- L. Maren Wood and Robert B. Townsend, *The Many Careers of History PhDs: A Study of Job Outcomes, Spring 2013*.

Institutionalized

Week 2: How the Game Conceived Itself (January 20)

The only history book of the semester. But really, there has to be at least one.

Readings:

- Robert B. Townsend, *History's Babel*.

Week 3: State of the Game (January 27)

The hardest week, so let's get it out of the way.

Readings:

- Marc Bosquet, *How the University Works*
 - Gerry Canavan, [Meritocracy](#), [Lottery](#), [Game](#)
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Thinking and Writing as Working

Week 4: How *do* professors think? (February 3)

Readings:

- Michèle Lamont, *How Professors Think: Inside the Curious World of Academic Judgement*

Week 5: Project Conception and Definition (February 10)

1 sentence, 1 paragraph, 1 page due

Bring list of 3 potential grants and fellowships (libraries, national, international, regional research fellowships) and their requirements.

Readings:

- Jeffrey I. Buller, *The Essential College Professor*, pp. 220-288.

Week 6: Workshopping Proposals (February 17)

Grant Narrative Workshop

Week 7: Work habits for Writers (February 24)

Bring in a schematic/description of your personal research workflow.

Readings:

- Paul Silva, *How to Write a Lot*
- Michael Hattem, [Digital Workflow for Historians](#)
- Miriam Posner, [Embarrassments of riches: Managing research assets](#). Also, pick a few of the posts in the General Resources of this article and read on what others do. William J. Turkel and Shane Lundrum's pieces are of special interest to historians.

Teaching as Working

Week 8: (March 3)

- Ken Bain, *What the Best College Teachers Do*

Week 9: (March 10)

Course Descriptions due.

Write a statement of Teaching Philosophy.

Readings:

- Buller, *Essential College Professor*, pp. 87-219.
- Betty Dessants, [Preparing the Teaching Portfolio Perspectives](#) (Sept 2003)

Building Careers

Week 10: Spring Break, no class meeting (March 17)

Ahead of the next few weeks, use this week off from class to read up on Academic Job Searches.

Readings:

- Buller, *Essential College Professor* pp 1-86.
- Vick and Furlong, *The Academic Job Handbook*, get started. You'll want to read and consider the whole thing over the next few weeks.

Week 11: (March 24)

Special Guest, *Adam Kane, Acquisitions Editor at the University of Oklahoma Press*

Readings:

- J. Muller, [Style Is Not a Luxury Option: Reflections on the Prose of the Profs](#), *Perspectives* (March 2006)
- Elaine Maisner, [Getting Published by a University Press](#), *Perspectives* (May 2002)
- Roger Whitson, [#AltAc and the Tenure Track](#), *Chronicle of Higher Ed* (May 23, 2012)
- Miriam Posner, [What Alt-Ac Can Do, and What it Can't](#) (Nov 25, 2013)

Week 12: (March 31)

Special Guest, *Lincoln Bramwell, Chief Historian of the USDA Forest Service*

Readings:

- Terran Lane, [On Leaving Academe](#) *Chronicle of Higher Ed* (Aug 19, 2012)
- Kathleen McDonough, [Constructing a Historical Documentary: A Director's Tale](#), *Perspectives* (Dec 2003)
- Art Gómez, [Looking for a Federal Job? Some Practical Advice](#) *Perspectives* (May 2006)
- FYI: <http://www.beyondacademe.com/>

Week 13: Networking, Conferences, Reputation, Community (April 7)

Readings:

- Linda K. Kerber, [Conference Rules: Everything You Need to Know about Presenting a Scholarly Paper in Public](#), *Perspectives* (May 2008)
- Linda K. Kerber, [Conference Rules Part II: Everything You Need to Know about introducing speakers and running a panel discussion](#), *Perspectives* (Sept. 2008)
- Kim Barbour and David Marshall, [The academic online: Constructing persona through the World Wide Web](#), *First Monday* 17.9 (3 Sept 2012).
- Put together a panel proposal for a conference

Week 14: The Job Dossier (April 14)

Choose a job ad and write the cover letter

Bring in your C.V.

Readings:

- David D. Perlmutter, [Embrace Your Inner North Dakotan](#) *Chronicle of Higher Ed* (Aug 12, 2012)
- A. Lord, [Location, Location, Location](#) *Chronicle of Higher Ed* (Sept 12, 2012)
- Steve Hochstadt, [The Convincing Cover Letter](#) *Perspectives* (Sept 2003)
- S. Goodfellow, [How to Apply for a Position at a Small College](#) *Perspectives* (Feb 2010)
- D. Harvey, [Applying for a Job at a Liberal Arts College](#) *Perspectives* (Sept 2003)
- Emily Sohmer Tai, [Teaching History at a Community College](#) *Perspectives* (Feb 2004)
- Natalie Kimbrough, [Going to a Community College](#) *Perspectives* (Dec. 2008)
- Anthony Grafton, [Letters of Recommendation: Some Songs of Experience](#) *Perspectives* (Oct 2007)
- Joshua Eyler, [The Rhetoric of the CV](#) *Chronicle of Higher Ed* (April 4, 2012)
- Martin Holstijn, [What Our CV's Don't Say](#) *Chronicle of Higher Ed* (Jan 22, 2013)

- E. Hargittai, [The Ever-Evolving CV](#) *Inside Higher Ed* (Jan 2013)

Week 15: (April 21)

I'm reserving our final week for flexibility. As the semester develops, and we see something we need to spend extra time on, or a topic you want included, we'll put it in here.