

PUBLIC HISTORY

Do you like to study history but wonder what you can do with a history degree? If so, the public history program, designed by the Department of History, Philosophy, and Religious Studies at North Dakota State University, may be for you. This innovative program is the first of its kind in the Upper Midwest. It provides students with the opportunity to explore a variety of nonteaching careers in history and prepares them for employment in the expanding field of public history. New opportunities for history majors in recent years include historical societies, museums, corporations, municipalities, labor and farm organizations, and state and federal government agencies.

The Program

The department developed this program after careful examination of successful public history programs at such institutions as the University of Connecticut, the University of Delaware, Arizona State University and the University of California Santa Barbara. In addition, local and regional historical agencies, including the State Historical Society of North Dakota, were consulted on the development of the program. The core is the professional major of 69 to 81 credits, which consists of a well-integrated combination of courses designed to provide students with training in the general field of history as well as the specific field of public history. The intent of the program is to provide a structured framework of courses and allowance for some flexibility to reflect personal interests.

Internship Program

The public history major provides students with a solid background in history and introduces them to such fields as archival and museum work, historical editing, historic preservation, costume conservation and design and archaeology. A crucial part of the program is an approved internship of nine credits at a historical agency, often the State Historical Society of North Dakota in Bismarck. In recent years, students have interned at the Colorado and Minnesota Historical Societies and at various historic sites from South Pass, Wyo., to Yorktown, Va. This internship is designed to provide students with practical on-the-job experience in public history.

Career Opportunities

Recent graduates in public history are employed at the State Historical Society of North Dakota, the National Park Service and several county museums and historic sites. Currently, the U.S. Department of Labor predicts that openings for archivists and curators will “increase about as fast as the average for all occupations through the year 2024.” Further information on career opportunities can be found in the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* published by the U.S. Department of Labor. Some students decide to pursue further graduate study after completing a Public History degree at NDSU. Several of our students have been admitted to graduate school in the leading public history programs in the country.

The Curriculum

Students begin with nine to 15 credits at the 100-200 level to provide a foundation for their later work. Public history courses at the 200 level may be used to meet this requirement. Year-long survey courses in U.S. history and western civilization are provided to give students a basic knowledge of the history of our own country and of the wider cultural heritage of the western world. After completing their 100-200 level courses, students complete a course on historical research and writing. At the junior or senior level, students take a sequence course in modern American history. These courses are important in providing students with a more in-depth historical background that they will need in their careers. Courses in archival theory and practice and archival photography are required to give students necessary experience in the processing of archival material. Archival photography deals with the restoration and preservation of photographs, a major source for our understanding of America's social past. The resources of the North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies are employed in these classes.

Credits in European history and in the Widening Horizons category at the junior or senior level are required to provide greater depth of historical knowledge in areas of the world outside the United States. This is necessary for a historian's overall perspective, although he or she may later concentrate on the history of our own country and, specifically, a region of the country. Three to nine more credits of history at the junior or senior level are required to gain further historical knowledge; these courses are chosen after consultation with an advisor. A three-credit senior seminar is required of all history majors as a capstone experience.

Courses such as introduction to public history, museum studies, and collections management provide knowledge of related areas within the broader field of public history. The intro to public history course provides an overview of the fields within public history and provides students with an opportunity to conduct a public history project. The museum studies course is intended to familiarize students with the theory and practice of museum work. The collections management course provides an introduction to care and management of museum collections. These courses and the required historical content courses provide students with an understanding of the cultural, political, social and economic changes within our civilization as a whole. They also teach students how to craft an interpretation of those changes.

Finally, a nine credit internship provides practical experience in the field of public history. The State Historical Society of North Dakota (and other local and regional historical agencies) provide opportunities in such areas as archival work, historical editing, historical preservation and interpretation of historic sites.

Public History Plan of Study

Please note this is a sample plan of study; actual student schedules will vary depending on start year, individual goals, applicable transfer credit, and course availability. Students are encouraged to work with their academic advisor on a regular basis to review degree progress and customize their own plan of study.

First Year			
Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits
HIST 101 or 103 Western Civilization I or U.S. to 1877	3	COMM 110 Fundamentals of Public Speaking	3
ENGL 120 College Composition II	3	HIST 102 or 104 Western Civilization II or U.S. Since 1877	3
Gen Ed Social & Behavioral Sciences	3	Gen Ed Social & Behavioral Sciences	3
Gen Ed Science & Technology	3	Gen Ed Science & Technology	3
Minor/Elective	3	Gen Ed Science & Technology Lab	1
		Minor or Free Elective	3
	15		16
Second Year			
Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits
HIST 251 Introduction To Public History	3	HIST 252 or 352 Introduction to Museum Work or Museum Collections Management	3
Gen Ed Science & Technology	3	AHSS Fine Arts Requirement	3
AHSS Social Science Requirement	3	US or Non-US History Requirement	3
Gen Ed Wellness	2-3	Gen Ed Quantitative Reasoning	3
Minor/Elective	3	Minor/Foreign Language/Elective	3
	14-15		15
Third Year			
Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits
HIST 390 Historical Research and Writing	3	HIST 352 or 252 Museum Collections Management or Introduction to Museum Work	3
HIST 401 Archival Theory and Practice	3	HIST 403 Archival Preservation	3
HIST 404 Digital History	3	HIST 415 Public Memory and Memorialization in America	3
US or Non-US History Requirement	3	HIST 496 Field Experience	3
Minor/Foreign Language Requirement	3	Minor/Foreign Language/Elective	3
	15		15
Fourth Year			
Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits
HIST 489 Senior Seminar	3	HIST 496 Field Experience	3
HIST 496 Field Experience	3	US or Non-US History Requirement	3
US or Non-US History Req.	3	Minor/Elective	3
Minor/ Foreign Language/Elective	3	Minor/Elective	3
Minor/Elective	3	Minor/Elective	3
	15		15
Total Credits: 120-121			

View NDSU equivalencies of transfer courses at: www.ndsu.edu/transfer/equivalencies

For Further Information

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